



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Latest BCDAccess Exclusion Tracker Report Reveals Alarming Trends in Patterns of Exclusion

VICTORIA, BC – The BCDAccess Society has released its 2022-23 Exclusion Tracker Report, the 5th year tracking the exclusion of disabled students from K-12 education in British Columbia. The new report highlights alarming trends around nursing supports and physical care, Kindergarten exclusion, exclusions lasting over 4 months, and the continued use of restraint and seclusion on disabled children.

Executive Director Tracy Humphreys stated, "This report is a wake-up call. The data clearly shows we cannot wait any longer to address these systemic issues head-on. Every child has the right to equitable access to education, and access delayed is access denied." She went on to remind school districts and independent school authorities that under the Accessible BC Act, they should all have accessibility plans, along with a committee and a feedback mechanism, to identify and address barriers to access. Many do not yet have one or all of these things in place, and the root causes of exclusion are barriers that need to be reduced or eliminated.

[BC School District Accessibility Plans](#)

The report highlights the following issues that stood out from the 2022/23 data:

Disproportionate Impact on Vulnerable Groups: The data confirms that disabled students who are Black, Indigenous, People of Colour, 2SLGBTQ+, and from low-income backgrounds face compounded barriers due to systemic racism, ableism, and other forms of discrimination.

Alarming Rise in the Length of Time Students are Excluded: The 2022/23 data indicates a significant surge in exclusions lasting over four months, suggesting a concerning trend of normalizing exclusion.

Restraint and Seclusion Concerns: Reports continue to come in of the use of restraint and/or seclusion on disabled children, practices with severe psychological and sometimes physical repercussions.

Issues with Nursing Support and Physical Care: Recent changes in Nursing Support Services have led to increased exclusions, particularly affecting students with physical disabilities or chronic health impairments.

Kindergarten Exclusions: Kindergarten and grade 1 students are being excluded at higher rates than in the first couple of years of tracking, impacting their academic progress and social development.

BCDAccess Chair Nicole Kaler stated, "Our province is at a critical juncture. The findings of this report should prompt urgent action." She noted that BCDAccess meets with Ministry of Education and Child Care staff on a regular basis and efforts are made to address barriers to access for students but current legislation and policy does prevent a lot of resolution to individual issues. "The Minister of Education and Child Care is aware of the Exclusion Tracker and several school district boards have seen our presentation on the Tracker data which includes suggested solutions."



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A concerned parent shared, "It's heartbreaking to see my child being left behind. We need immediate action to ensure that every child has the support they need to succeed in school."

70 students chose to fill out the optional section where BCEdAccess asked 3 questions:

1. Tell us about how you were excluded:

"I missed the year end waterslides event and a walk to the ice cream shop because I got mad" - 7 year old student with ADHD, lower mainland BC

"I get yelled at all the time, even by grownups. I know I did some wrong things but they always blame me even when it wasn't me. Then I get sad and scared. I used to have a helper, even in Gr1. Why can't I have a helper?" - 9 year old autistic student, central coast, BC

"I didn't want to go to school anymore because I would keep getting bullied. No one cares about me. They want me to get hurt." - 8 year old autistic student, central BC

2. Did anyone at school talk to you about why you were being excluded?

Just over half responded no to this question.

3. What do you hope will happen now?

"I hope my new school will have nice kids and I will be safe. If not, I will try and protect myself." - 8 year old autistic student, lower mainland BC

"That my class will do things I can do and not leave me behind." - 9 year old physically disabled student, central coast, BC

"I want to stay in [new teacher's] class, I like to go outside and play with my friends, I don't want to go in the room again.." - 5 year old student waiting for assessment, northern BC

BCEdAccess urges media, policymakers, and the public to engage with the findings of this report and join the movement towards a more inclusive and equitable education system. The full report is available on the BCEdAccess Exclusion Tracker web page:

<https://bcedaccess.com/exclusion-tracker/>

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About BCEdAccess Society:

The BCEdAccess Society is an organization of families of children and youth with disabilities and complex learners all over the province of British Columbia. We champion and support children and youth who have disabilities and who are complex learners to reach their full potential in BC education, and in all aspects of their lives.

This is achieved through families supporting families, sharing information, providing education to families, allies, professionals and students, providing community engagement and awareness, and other activities to promote equitable access to education and inclusion for all. We run a well respected annual parent/guardian [advocacy conference](#), bringing together families, self-advocates, educators and allies of children and youth with disabilities. We also do research into the exclusion of students with disabilities from school and community, and other disability issues impacting children and youth. We advocate to local and provincial government on behalf of families to improve accessibility in all aspects of the lives of children and youth with disabilities.

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