



STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2024

ATLANTIC PROVINCES SPECIAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY

WWW.APSEA.CA

MARCH 2021

Introduction

The Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) is an interprovincial co-operative agency established in 1975 by joint agreement among the Ministers of Education of New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. The agreement gives APSEA the authorization to provide educational services, programs, and supports for persons from birth to 21 years of age with low incidence sensory impairments in Atlantic Canada.

Over the past three years, APSEA has pursued this mandate with the support of the *Strategic Plan 2017-2020*, which focused on three strategic themes: creating a safe and inclusive culture within APSEA, enhancing service delivery, and improving communication. We are pleased to report that APSEA made excellent progress on the specific initiatives outlined in the *Strategic Plan 2017-2020* and that the outcomes for children, youth and families in Atlantic Canada have been positive.

With the new *Strategic Plan 2021-2024*, APSEA will continue building on the positive momentum created by the success of the previous strategic plan to provide enhanced programs, services, and supports within Atlantic Canada. The three key themes of the new strategic plan are as follows:

Maximizing our programs, services, and supports

APSEA remains committed to providing high quality, culturally and linguistically responsive, inclusive, equitable, and accessible programs, services, and supports to children, youth, and families within our mandate. The primary focus of the next three years will be examining the current service delivery model and making the appropriate changes to ensure that we are maximizing the effectiveness of our resources for the benefit of children and youth on the APSEA caseload and their families.

People are APSEA's most valuable resource

Now, and in the future, children, youth, and families benefit the most when APSEA's team works in a collaborative manner to support the organization's mission, vision, and strategic plan with a shared commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. It is critical that APSEA fosters and supports employees' continuous professional learning and growth in these areas.

APSEA's network has untapped potential

APSEA is one of many organizations within Atlantic Canada that delivers programs, services, and supports to children, youth, and families. Over the next three years, APSEA will take substantive steps to deepen our relationships with existing partners and foster new ones throughout Atlantic Canada and beyond.

APPROACH

The purpose of our strategic plan is to help APSEA move toward our vision for the future. It outlines our goals and the process for achieving them.

In developing the strategic plan, we felt that it was important to hear from our partners and to incorporate their feedback. Throughout the process, we heard from learners, families, employees, and community and educational partners through surveys and a series of focus groups. For those who participated in the process, we really appreciate you sharing your perspective. Your feedback was instrumental in updating our mission, vision, and guiding principles and formed the foundation of the *2021-2024 Strategic Plan*. Barrington Consulting facilitated development of the plan and we thank them for their efforts.



The completed strategic plan was approved by the Board of Directors on March 23, 2021. The Board of Directors consists of twelve persons, three from each province. This includes the Deputy Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development / Education and Lifelong Learning from each province as well as two additional members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council. The Board is responsible for establishing APSEA's long-term goals and providing support through oversight and governance.

MISSION, VISION, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our mission, vision, and guiding principles lay the foundation for APSEA's *2021-2024 Strategic Plan* and define what we do, why we do it, and how we do it. The mission, vision, and guiding principles have been updated to reflect the feedback we received from learners, families, APSEA employees, and community and educational partners.

Mission

APSEA, in collaboration with our partners, provides culturally and linguistically responsive, inclusive, equitable, and accessible educational services and supports to children and youth who are blind or visually impaired and/or Deaf or hard of hearing and their families.

Vision

The children and youth that we support reach their highest potential for an independent, self-sufficient, and fulfilling life.

Guiding Principles

APSEA is child-focused, family-centred, research-based, collaborative, and inclusive.

APSEA's Strategic Goals for 2021-2024

APSEA has identified four strategic goals for 2021-2024. These goals will provide clarity, direction, and focus as we strive to meet our commitment to provide culturally and linguistically responsive, inclusive, equitable, and accessible programs and services.

MAXIMIZING APSEA'S PROGRAMS, SERVICES, AND SUPPORTS

Goal #1: Service delivery model review and redesign

APSEA redesigns the current service delivery model to further strengthen our ability to provide culturally and linguistically responsive, inclusive, equitable, and accessible programs, services, and supports.

PEOPLE ARE APSEA'S MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE

Goal #2: Performance management process

APSEA redesigns the current performance management process to align with industry best practice with a commitment to acknowledging, examining, and addressing bias to ensure a fair, transparent, and collaborative process.

Goal #3: Operational model review and redesign

APSEA redesigns the operational model to align APSEA's people and processes with the redesigned service delivery model.

APSEA'S NETWORK HAS UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

Goal #4: Partner engagement

APSEA maximizes existing strategic partnerships and builds new ones to ensure that through collaboration we provide high quality, culturally and linguistically responsive, inclusive, equitable, and accessible programs, services and supports to children and youth on the APSEA caseload and their families.

TIMELINE (BASED ON ACADEMIC SCHOOL YEAR)

	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Goal 1: Service Delivery Model Review and Redesign			
Document current service delivery model			
Investigate and analyze other service delivery models			
Determine the needs of learners, families, and partners			
Develop a redesigned service delivery model			
Analyze and outline operational requirements of the redesigned service delivery model			
Communicate redesigned service delivery model			
Implementation of redesigned service delivery model			
Goal 2: Performance Management Process			
Redesign performance management program			
Create new performance management materials			
Communicate redesigned performance management process			
Implement redesigned process across APSEA			
Goal 3: Operational Model Review and Redesign			
Integrate Autism in Education (AIE) further within APSEA			
Document current operational model			
Analyze operational requirements to deliver redesigned service delivery model			
Develop the redesigned operational model			
Transition to redesigned operational model			
Goal 4: Partner Engagement			
Document and examine existing partnerships			
Explore and document potential partnerships			
Implement a process for documentation and reporting			

Maximizing APSEA's programs, services, and support

GOAL 1: SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL REVIEW AND REDESIGN

In support of APSEA's mission and vision, and to maximize the success of the programs and services provided to children and youth on the APSEA caseload and their families, a review and redesign of the APSEA service delivery model will ensure 21st century learning principles are reflected in our programs, services and supports. Integrating professional practice and technology to optimize student learning will be key components in the process.

In collaboration with our partners, as part of the review and redesign, APSEA will seek feedback from learners, families, employees, community and educational partners to ensure that all perspectives are captured. The review and redesign will reflect the understanding that children and youth learn better, when they see themselves reflected in their learning environment, learning experiences, learning resources and have a sense of belonging.

To this end, an awareness and growing understanding of cultural and linguistic identities and responsiveness will be embedded and reflected in both the process and product of the review. The inherent relationship between APSEA and the Atlantic Provinces will be emphasized by ensuring the redesign process further aligns APSEA's service delivery model with provincial programs and objectives.

Goal

APSEA redesigns the current service delivery model to further strengthen our ability to provide culturally and linguistically responsive, inclusive, equitable, and accessible programs, services and supports.

Outcome

APSEA delivers culturally and linguistically responsive, inclusive, equitable, and accessible, programs, services, and supports maximizing the impact to children and youth on the APSEA caseload and their families.

Key Initiatives

Initiative	Additional Details
<p>A. Document current service delivery model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document: Document current service delivery model, describing all APSEA provincial and centre-based programs and services for early childhood and school-aged children. • Define: Document current usage of tele-practice documents, products and resources used to support programming for children and youth. • Outline: Identify operational requirements for each program and service.
<p>B. Investigate and analyze other service delivery models</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research: Investigate other service delivery models and/or best practices. • Explore: Explore further how video conferencing and online tools can be used to deliver APSEA’s programs and services. • Document: Document programming opportunities for APSEA service delivery model to align with research findings.
<p>C. Determine the needs of learners, families, and partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect: Gather needs-based information and feedback from learners, families, and partners. • Analyze: Analyze the data to determine thematic needs and programming requirements. • Identify: Identify opportunities to align APSEA programs and services with culturally and linguistically responsive educational planning within the Atlantic Provinces.
<p>D. Develop a redesigned service delivery model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop: Develop and document the redesigned service delivery model. • Measure: Develop mechanisms to measure the impact of the redesigned service delivery model to ensure APSEA is meeting its commitment to provide culturally and linguistically responsive, inclusive, equitable, and accessible programs and services.
<p>E. Analyze and outline operational requirements of the redesigned service delivery model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop: Develop implementation and communication plans for the redesigned service delivery model. • Identify: Identify the associated operational requirements to support and implement the redesigned service delivery model.
<p>F. Communicate redesigned service delivery model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate: Communicate redesigned service delivery model and implementation plan with APSEA employees, learners, families, educational and community partners while highlighting the changes and benefits.
<p>G. Implementation of redesigned service delivery model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement redesigned service delivery model.

Measures

1. APSEA implements redesigned service delivery model for the 2022-2023 school year.
2. 70% of learners and families report that the redesigned service delivery model is accessible.
3. 70% of learners and families report that redesigned service delivery model is equitable.
4. 70% of learners and families report that they feel their cultural and linguistic identities are valued and respected through their learning experiences.

People are APSEA's most valuable resource

GOAL 2: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS

APSEA redesigns the current performance management process to align with industry best practices with a commitment to acknowledging, examining, and addressing bias to ensure implementation of a fair, transparent, and collaborative process. The redesigned process will clearly describe how employees work with their direct supervisor to set professional goals that align with APSEA's mission, vision, and strategic plan.

Performance management is a communication process where supervisors and employees work together to plan, monitor, and review an employee's work objectives, professional goals and overall contribution to the organization. This is a continuous process, and all employees will be required to have a completed performance review and engage in a goal-setting exercise on an annual basis. APSEA will strive to create an environment for feedback and goal setting that is accessible, collaborative, supportive, respectful and safe, reflecting APSEA's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Goal

APSEA redesigns the current performance management process to align with industry best practice with a commitment to acknowledging, examining, and addressing bias to ensure a fair, transparent, and collaborative process.

Outcome

APSEA employees are working toward individual goals that align with APSEA's mission, vision, and strategic plan; reflect the commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion; and that support the employee's professional growth goals and objectives. Employees have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities with respect to achieving the identified goals.

Key Initiatives

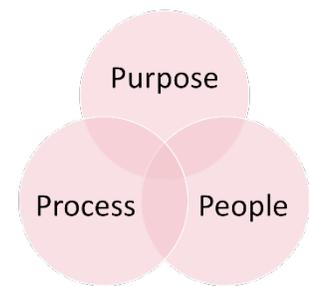
Initiative	Additional Details
<p>A. Redesign performance management program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review: Examine current research literature to determine best practice in performance management. Examine APSEA’s existing performance management process and determine necessary changes to align with best practice recommendations. Explore integration with Human Resource system. • Analyze: Assess proposed changes against identified goals and desired outcomes of program. Consider resource requirements. • Develop: Create a framework that supports the development of individualized performance plans that value diversity, equity, and inclusivity. Establish processes, clear roles, responsibilities, and guidelines for providing feedback in an accessible, safe, welcoming, and constructive environment. Update current Performance Management Policy and Procedure. • Plan: Develop plan to communicate and implement redesigned process.
<p>B. Create new performance management materials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop: Create materials for the performance management process (process overview, performance plan templates, performance plan examples, guidelines). • Measure: Seek feedback on materials from a select group of employees for input. Update as necessary.
<p>C. Communicate redesigned performance management process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate: Communicate overview, expectations, and implementation to all APSEA employees. • Professional Learning (PL): Provide PL opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to ensure all employees understand the importance of recognizing, examining, and addressing bias and the role it can play in the performance management process. - to ensure all employees understand the alignment between the performance management process and APSEA’s ongoing work in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion. - to ensure direct supervisors understand their roles and responsibilities within the framework of the new performance management process and have the knowledge and skills necessary to support the process.
<p>D. Implement redesigned process across APSEA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement: Direct supervisors begin conducting the first round of reviews and goal-setting meetings with employees. Meetings continue in phases until all employees have a performance management plan with clearly defined goals.

Measures

1. All employees receive ongoing performance evaluation, have a performance review completed annually and collaborate with their supervisor to set annual professional goals.
2. All employees receive professional learning to support the redesigned performance management process.
3. 80% of employees report that the performance management process was fair, transparent, collaborative, and provided in a setting they felt was safe, accessible, and respectful.
4. 80% of employees report that the professional learning provided has assisted them to understand their role in the performance management process.

GOAL 3: OPERATIONAL MODEL REVIEW AND REDESIGN

As we work through the process of reviewing and redesigning the service delivery model for the benefit of children, youth and families, the operational model will also be examined to ensure it supports the service delivery model. APSEA’s operational model includes, but is not limited to, APSEA’s organizational structure and design; team members; roles and responsibilities; organizational governance and accountability; and processes including communication and decision-making. These elements should be aligned towards the efficient and effective implementation of the redesigned service delivery model. Broadly speaking, APSEA will work to connect and align its **people** (the team) and **processes** (communication, administrative, etc.) to the **purpose** (vision).



Goal

APSEA redesigns the operational model to align APSEA’s people and processes with the redesigned service delivery model.

Outcome

The people, processes, structure, governance, and communications within APSEA work together to support the redesigned service delivery model efficiently and effectively.

Key Initiatives

Initiative	Additional Details
<p>A. Integrate Autism in Education (AIE) further within APSEA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate: The AIE website is folded into APSEA’s website; reference to ‘partnership’ is retired; AIE branding disappears (but Autism in Education name remains in use). • Synthesis: The APSEA team develops plan for expanding AIE’s strength of educational instruction.
<p>B. Document current operational model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document: Document the various elements of APSEA’s operational model – structure, strategy, people, finance, information technology, governance, communications, mentorship, etc. This will serve as a reference for changes moving forward.
<p>C. Analyze operational requirements to deliver redesigned service delivery model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze: Review the <i>proposed</i> redesigned service delivery model and identify the operational requirements to effectively achieve desired outcomes. Analyze cost of the new model, and the associated cost to change. Analyze the impact of operational limitations on redesigned service delivery model. Adjust service delivery model accordingly. • Communicate: Consult with APSEA employees and partners to identify missed requirements/opportunities for greater alignment.
<p>D. Develop the redesigned operational model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop: Develop and document new operational model for the redesigned service delivery model, including key changes and impact on current resources. • Plan: Create a phased implementation plan to transition APSEA to the new operational model. This implementation plan will be directly integrated with the implementation plan of the redesigned service delivery model.
<p>E. Transition to redesigned operational model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate: Communicate the implementation approach and changes to roles and responsibilities to employees and partners. • Implement: Phased implementation of the redesigned operational model. Occurs in tandem with implementation of redesigned service delivery model.

Measures

1. Autism in Education website is folded into APSEA’s website and ‘Partnership’ naming is retired. AIE is a full unit within APSEA.
2. Operational model (structure, strategy, people, finance, information technology, governance, communications, mentorship, etc.) is fully aligned with redesigned service delivery model as measured by progress against set goals.

APSEA’s network has untapped potential

GOAL 4: PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

APSEA is one of many organizations within Atlantic Canada that delivers programs, services, and supports to children, youth, and families. Over the next three years, APSEA will take substantive steps to deepen our relationships with existing partners and foster new ones throughout Atlantic Canada and beyond.

Goal

APSEA maximizes existing strategic partnerships and builds new ones to ensure that through collaboration we continue to provide high quality, culturally and linguistically responsive, inclusive, equitable, and accessible programs, services and supports to children and youth on the APSEA caseload and their families.

Outcome

APSEA solidifies strategic partnerships that enhance service delivery to children and youth on the APSEA caseload and their families.

Key Initiatives

Initiative	Additional Details
A. Document existing partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document: Consult with APSEA employees to document existing community and educational partnerships.
B. Explore and document potential partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate: Consult with APSEA employees and existing partners to identify potential partners. • Document: Explore and document additional community and educational partnerships.
C. Implement a process for documentation and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop: Develop a process for documentation and reporting of partnerships. • Communicate: Communicate with APSEA employees who will engage with partners. • Implement: Establish, document and report on partnerships. • Review: Gather and analyze feedback from APSEA employees and partners to maximize opportunities for collaboration.

Measures

1. All existing partnerships are documented.
2. APSEA identifies and collaborates with additional community and educational partners.
3. APSEA reports enhanced programming and services for children and youth on the APSEA caseload and their families, as a result of the partnerships.