

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION vs INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

### **UNITED NATIONS & CANADIAN RESPONSES**

#### **Abstract**

Education for students with disabilities is at a crossroads. Traditionally, under the Special Education Model educational settings for these students were segregated in special schools and classes. More recently a different model, the Inclusive Education Model, has attracted the attention and support of the United Nations and educators. This article deals with the development of the two models and the positions taken by governments and educators. Canada is used as an example of the differential responses of Ministries of Education of Territorial and Provincial Governments and of society in general.

The World Bank (2016) reports that 15 % of the global population experiences disability. The educational response to this population has moved through various degrees of rejection and limited acceptance by educators. A common result has been that learners with disabilities have been placed in educational settings separated from other students. In addition, a recent report out of London states that "At least half of the world's 65 million school-age children with disabilities are kept out of the classroom because little to no money is budgeted for their needs" (Light for the World, 2016.).

Education for those with disabilities is once again undergoing change. The story of change and limited acceptance is chronicled below (Bunch, 1994).

#### **The Past: Chronology of Change**

- In the distant past those born with disability were seen as less than human. Commonly, they were left to die outside villages or otherwise did not survive.
- Eventually, some families found that their disabled family member could learn. If the family was wealthy and desired to raise these children, some families employed tutors in their homes.
- As more time passed institutions for persons with disabilities were begun. These institutions had no educational components and did little more than serve as holding bins.
- This step was followed by the first institutional schools for children with sensory and physical disabilities, first in a few nations and then in more. The teachers in these institutions were the first of what we now refer to as Special Education Teachers. These institutions had no connection to the education systems for nondisabled children. Today some nations continue to rely heavily on segregated institutions.
- In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the majority of these schools were placed under Ministries of Education and staffed by specialist teachers. Until recently on the historical timeline there was little contact with the larger non-institutional education system.
- Education by Special Teachers in segregated schools continues in many nations in 2016. However, in more progressive nations, such as the UK, Canada and the U.S., the segregation policy was changed for some students with disabilities with the introduction of Special Classes in regular schools. These classes, however, are segregated from the typical student population.

- In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century this policy of segregation of students with disabilities was changed for students with the academic strength to learn at the same level as their non-disabled peers.

The following is a schematic of the present-day Special Education Model. The schematic is often referred to as Deno's Cascade after Deno (1970) who first put all the parts together.

### **Special Education Model (Based on Deno's Cascade of 1970)**

- Regular class placement. Students with disabilities able to meet regular-class academic objectives
- Part-time regular class and special class placement
- Full-time special class placement
- Special school placement
- Education at home
- Hospital or other education setting
- Non-educational setting

In 2005 a national study in French and English Special Education Provision for Canadians with Disabilities (Bunch, G., Finnegan, K., Humphries, C., Dore, R. & Dore, L.) was undertaken. Project partners were York University, People First Canada, the Université d'Quebec and the Canadian Abilities Foundation. Parents, people with disabilities, academics, advocates, government representatives and practitioners participated in a series of regional focus groups.

The recommended definition resulting for the term Special Education is

Special Education refers to educational response to the individual needs of learners with disabilities tuned to the degree of individual difference. The form of this response in terms of curricula ranges from slight change to fundamental change in what is taught. Degree of change to curricula leads to instructional placement varying from full-time integration in the regular classroom to part-time or full time placement in segregated settings. The response is closely associated with the Special Education Model.

The thrust of the Special Education Model is placement of students with disabilities in keeping with their perceived level of academic learning ability. The students involved may be moved up or down on the Model as change in academic ability is noted. Upward movement indicating increased academic ability is not frequent. Under the Special Education Model students who spend all or part of their time in regular class settings were referred to as “mainstreamed” or by the present term popular “integrated”.

The nations of our world are well familiar with the Special Education Model which characterizes the present day approach to education and disability. However, this Model is being challenged by the recently introduced United Nations advocacy for the Inclusive Education Model, a Model with only one setting, the regular classroom for all. Governments and education systems around the globe now must consider whether to continue with the Special Education Model or to move to the newer and very different Inclusive Education Model championed by the United Nations and its agencies.

United Nations policy is laid out in two major policy announcements, the 1994 UNESCO Salamanca Statement and the 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The 1994 Statement deals with disability and education only. The CRPD covers many issues impacting Persons with Disability, other than disabilities in a series of Articles. The issue of education is covered in Article 24.

The two policy statements follow:

### **UNESCO Response: Salamanca Statement**

In 1994 UNESCO convened a global meeting of experts in education and disability in Salamanca, Spain. The outcome of this meeting was a joint policy decision for nations to move away from the segregation-based Special Education Model in favour of an inclusive approach centred on placing all students, those with and without disabilities, together in regular classrooms. The Statement follows.

We believe and proclaim that:

- Every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning.
- Every child has unique characteristics, interests and learning needs.
- Education systems should be designed and educational programs implemented to take into account the wide diversity and needs.
- Those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them with a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting their needs.

- Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combatting discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover they provide an effective education to the majority of children and prove the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire school system.

The UNESCO Statement was followed by the UN 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Article 24 on Education reinforces the Salamanca Statement and extends the right to education to all children, regardless of difference, thus extending the number of groups covered by the call for Inclusive Education.

#### **CRPD Article 24 – Education**

1. States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels of life-long learning directed to:
  - a. The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity;
  - b. The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential;
  - c. Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society.
2. In realizing this right, States Parties shall ensure that:

- a. Persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability or from secondary education on the basis of disability;
  - b. Persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live;
  - c. Reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements is provided;
  - d. Persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system to facilitate their effective education;
  - e. Effective individualized support measures are provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion;
3. States Parties shall enable persons with disabilities to learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education as members of the community. To this end:
- a. States Parties shall take appropriate measures, including; Facilitating the learning of braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication and mobility skills and facilitating peer support and mentoring;
  - b. Facilitating the learning of sign language and promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community;
  - c. Ensuring that the education of persons, and in particular children, who are blind, deaf or deafblind, is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and

means of communication, and in environments which maximize academic and social development;

d. In order to help ensure the realization of this right, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to employ teachers, including teachers with disabilities, who are qualified in sign language and/or braille, and to train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education. Such training shall incorporate disability awareness and the use of appropriate formats of communication, educational techniques and materials to support persons with disabilities;

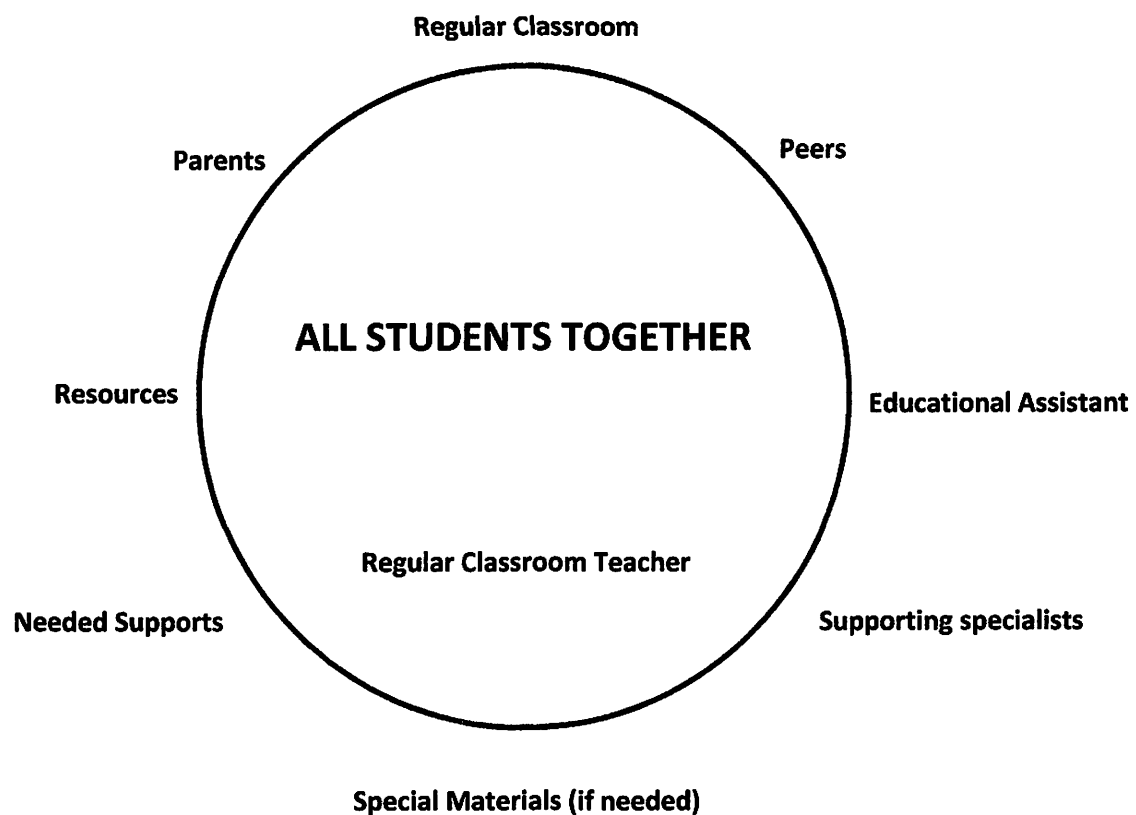
4. States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adults and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. To this end, States Parties shall ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities.

The preamble of the CRPD stresses that every group of people is included under this policy, even those experiencing 'difficult conditions'. Noted are persons with disabilities who are subject to multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion, national, ethnic, indigenous or social origin, property, birth, age or other status. As will be seen later, this widening of groups has implication for how nations respond to the challenge of inclusive Education.

The Inclusive Education Model that arises from the above recent U.N. policy and other statements lead to a concept of education for students with disabilities differing radically from the Special Education Model with its series of alternate placements. Under the Inclusive Education Model there is only one educational setting for students

with and without disabilities, the regular classroom. When necessary a Special Education Teacher may support the regular classroom teacher, but it is the regular teacher who leads and is responsible for the educational program for every student in the class without exception. In addition, there are important roles for parents, students with disabilities and other students and various others to play.

## **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**



**Bunch, G. 2013**

The recommended definition for Inclusion developed in the 2005 mentioned Canadian national study was

Inclusive education refers to educational practice based on the philosophical belief that all learners, those with and without disabilities, have the right to be educated together in age-appropriate class groups, and that all will benefit from education in the regular classrooms of community schools. Within these settings teachers, parents, and others work collaboratively using appropriate and sufficient resources to interpret and enact the regular curriculum in flexible manner in accordance with the individual abilities and needs of all learners.

#### **Problem of Two Models:**

Considerable confusion has come from the fact that two quite different models of education for students with disabilities now exist. Some believe Inclusive Education simply to be a continuance of the Special Education Model. For instance, Winzer (1999) labeled the top three steps of her version of the Special Education Model as “Regular Classroom/Integration” and the balance as “Segregation”. Others believe a sharp difference to exist Harman (2015). He addresses differences in practices which are at the centre of the disagreement.

As our children with labels enter the education system, we often hear the words ‘integrated’ or ‘included’ to describe the classroom setting they will experience. In some cases the terms are used interchangeably, referring to children being ‘integrated’ into a regular classroom’ and ‘included into a regular classroom’. There are, however, significant differences between the two. Knowing these

differences can help us to advocate for an inclusive environment that will help all children learn.

Integration models assume that there is something wrong that must be fixed in order to fit into the present system. The supports and adaptations that occur are put in place to force a child into an existing classroom setting. The child must adjust to these adaptations or fail. The child is 'going' to school.

Successful models of inclusion believe that ALL children are different, and ALL children can learn. There is nothing that needs to be 'fixed' in order for that child to fit into a system. The school system, as a whole, is enabled to change in order to meet the individual needs of ALL learners. Children are 'participating' in school.

The fundamental difference is that the Special Education Model is based on taking the student to the support services in a series of possible settings segregated from other students, whereas the Inclusive Education Model is based on taking the support services to the student in one setting, the regular classroom. This is a fundamental change in how education is delivered to students with disabilities in recognition of social justice and their rights.

As noted earlier the CRPD widens the groups of students to include those with differences other than disability. The widening of groups covered under the CRPD inclusive education umbrella is much needed in the many nations where these additional groups are excluded from education. However, in nations such as Australia, Canada and the United States where no group other than students with disabilities is

routinely excluded from education in regular classrooms, the situation is different, leading to a loophole for nations that wish to continue segregation of students with disabilities while segregating those with disabilities. Given that the CRPD widened the education umbrella to cover a variety of other student groups, governments that already include any of these newly mentioned groups (race, colour, sex, etc.), may claim that it is providing Inclusive Education. That is, governments can claim to be inclusive on the basis of including various groups while segregating significant numbers of students with disabilities. This possibility in regard to Canada will be considered later.

### **The Advent of Inclusion in Education**

O'Brien and Forest discussed the genesis of the term Inclusive Education in Thomas and Vaughn (2004).

The question has often been asked, 'When did the word inclusion first start being used in favour of integration or the earlier mainstreaming? In July 1988 a group of 14 people from Canada and the United States who were concerned about the slow progress of integration in education brainstormed around a table at Frontier College, Toronto, Canada. The group came up with the concept of inclusion to better formally describe the process of placing children and adults with disabilities in the mainstream. This group included educators, writers, parents and disabled adults who had first-hand experience of segregated education. Shifting their thinking from 'integration' to 'inclusion' at this legendary meeting was indeed a radical gesture and the use of the word inclusion caught on quickly across Canada and the U.S. and

elsewhere. It took a few years for inclusion to be accepted more readily in the UK and elsewhere. This group's discussions and subsequent actions formed a key turning point in the history of inclusive education.

A second, earlier, reference to Inclusive Education may be found in Inclusion News, a newsletter of the Centre for Integrated Education and Community of Fall 1991. (The Centre is now known as the Marsha Forest Centre.) Joe Whittaker (1991) of the Bolton Institute of Higher Education in England reviews the program of the first UK International Conference on the Philosophy and Practice and Community Living.

The above provides an idea of just when the term Inclusive Education was first introduced and beginning to spread beyond Canada. The process and content of the Frontier College meeting was obtained in an interview with Jack Pearpoint, Executive Director of Frontier College and one of those who convened the meeting. Mr. Pearpoint noted that the Canadian and United States participants were concerned that societal response to the needs and rights of persons with disabilities was primarily negative and charitable at best. Various participants brought different areas of concern to the meeting. However, all agreed that special education terms such as integration and mainstreaming lack definition and meaning. The participants were seeking a more meaningful concept, one that encapsulated their various concerns. Eventually the term "Inclusion", a term not previously used in the context of disability, was suggested. Though there were differing concerns, it seemed to participants that Inclusion covered all concerns being brought up – employment, social justice, education and other aspects of society. Inclusion was felt to be a unifying umbrella term as opposed to the Special

Education Model with its multiple levels which was seen to highlight degrees of disability.

In a commitment to action, participants agreed that, on return to their homes, they would use the term Inclusion in all contexts relative to people with disability. The term Inclusive Education spread rapidly. In 1994 the term began to appear in United Nations/UNESCO policy and documents.

### **Movement to Inclusive Education:**

The move from the Special Education Model to the Inclusive Education Model, in particular, continues to be a work in progress in most nations, though a few nations such as Italy and Malta, responded to the challenge quickly. The timeline set by the UN for global change to Inclusive Education under the banner Education for All was 2005. At the time of this writing that goal has yet to be achieved. However, the UN continues its efforts. New publications focused on the topic clarify the degree and method of progress being made. Also apparent is that many nations have not set out “unified national strategies to include all learners” (Policy Guidelines on Inclusive Education, 2009, Foreword, p. 4).

The following quotes, also from the Foreword of the Policy Guidelines on Inclusive Education, outline the UN vision of a global Inclusive Education system encompassing all students, those with and those without disability.

The concept and practice of inclusive education have gained importance in recent years. Internationally, the term now is increasingly understood broadly as a reform that supports and welcomes diversity amongst all learners. Inclusive

education is a process that involves the transformation of schools and other centers of learning to cater for all children – including boys and girls, students from ethnic and linguistic minorities, rural populations, those affected by HIV and AIDS, and those with disabilities and difficulties in learning and to provide learning opportunities for all youth and adults as well. Its aim is to eliminate exclusion that is a consequence of negative attitudes and lack of response to diversity in race, economic status, social class, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation and ability. Education takes place in many contexts, both formal and non-formal, and within families and the wider community. Consequently, inclusive education is not a marginal issue, but is central to the achievement of high quality education for all learners and the development of more inclusive societies. Inclusive education is essential to achieve social equity and is a constituent of lifelong learning (Policy Guidelines on Inclusive Education, p, 4)

As pointed out, the widening of groups covered under the umbrella of the CRPD was much needed in the many nations where a variety of groups were excluded from education. However, in nations such as Canada, where no group other than those students with disabilities is excluded, the effect of the CRPD has been to create a situation where education systems may use the term ‘inclusion’ by including some groups who differed from the dominant non-disabled student group, even though they continued to segregate students with disabilities. All other student groups, no matter how they differ, already are included in regular classrooms as their right. In Canada

these groups cannot be segregated and have the automatic right to be included in regular classrooms with all other students.

The United Nations and UNESCO have embraced the term Inclusive Education and supported its practice. However, the move from the Special Education Model to that of Inclusive Education remains hesitant in most nations. At the time of writing the goal of world-wide change to Inclusive Education has not been reached. Each action in that direction contributes to clarification of the promise, reach and methodology of Inclusive Education. Also clarified is that many nations have not yet set out “unified national strategies to all learners (Policy Guidelines on Inclusive Education. (2009, p. 4, Foreward)

Despite the many attempts by the UN, and concrete positive findings of a significant number of nations to define and implement Inclusive Education for students with disabilities, many governments and educators appear to encounter difficulty in reaching a common positive understanding. It is the analysis of the authors, based on personal familiarity with the degree of movement to Inclusive Education in twenty odd nations, that many nations have adopted Inclusive Education as policy but have not extended that policy to practice for students with disabilities, thereby avoiding movement to inclusion. However, a lesser number of nations have stated Inclusive Education as policy and are extending the policy to inclusive practice for all students with disability.

Mitchell (2010) is another who has suggested this policy-practice dynamic. He went on to investigate what barriers have acted to delay many nations in moving from policy to practice. He went on to delineate the barriers.

Reasons for this policy-practice gap in inclusive education are manifold and include barriers rising from social value values and beliefs; economic factors; a lack of measures to ensure compliance with policies' the dispersion of responsibility for education; conservative traditions among teachers; teacher educators and educational researchers; examination systems fragile democratic institutions; inadequate educational infrastructures, particularly in rural and remote areas; large class sizes; resistance from the special education sector (especially special schools); and a top-down introduction to inclusive education without adequate preparation of schools and communities. (2010, p. 24).

If a policy-practice gap is a reality, and the argument for that is strong, what would be the causal factors for governments not moving beyond policy to practice? In responding to this question Mitchell has listed a formidable number of elements. Could the number of factors noted by Mitchell be collated under one or more mega-reasons? Hahn (1988) suggested that a "minority group model has emerged to challenge the dominant 'functional limitations' model of past years. He argued that the existing medical and economic approaches were not sufficient to explain the manner in which the general society reacts to persons with disabilities. He posited a social-political interaction. In this new concept the barriers met by persons with

disabilities were the result of a disabling environment. Many of the factors listed by Mitchell deal with aspects of a disabling environment.

To test this thesis Hahn undertook a study regarding persons with physical disabilities and characteristics which would call forth apprehensions regarding persons with physical disabilities. In particular he addressed existential and esthetic anxiety. In the one, the individual would fear loss of functional capacities. Fear would be called forth by the possibility that one would become helpless and dependent on others. In the second case, fear centres on the possibility of not appearing the same as everyone else and being devalued as a result. Hahn went on to ponder what concrete effect aesthetic and existential fear have on the lives of persons with disability. At the time he conducted the study, among the effects were distancing and disparaging persons with disability, both of which would lead to difficulties in finding employment and being seen as having inferior biology and general deficiencies, all of which led to unequal societal treatment.

In 1988 Hahn's article was at the forefront of issues of disability and was built on the charity model of past centuries (Wood, 2012). Wood described the manner in which charitable organizations continue to continue the helpless and dependent view through donation campaigns painting persons with disabilities as being dependent, incapable, poor, and needy through the call for charitable donations. Such social practice would lead to separation of society into two groups: one composed of so-called "normal" people and a lesser group of people with disabilities in need to charity.

Today the perception of students with disabilities not having the same capacity as their non-disabled peers and in need of a charitable approach remains strong in many nations. The crucible for this perception is the education system. Every child in Canada enters the education system at an early age. It is at this point that segregation of many students with disabilities from their non-disabled peers comes into play. If the school system they enter has a firm policy of Inclusive Education for all students, those with and without disabilities, all enter the same classrooms. If their school system has a policy containing loopholes permitting segregation, many students with disabilities will encounter segregated Special Education.

The result is that many school systems have a policy-practice gap while others, with firm policies of Inclusive Education, do not.

### **The Canadian Response**

To this point discussion has covered the slow but steady building of the present Special Education Model over centuries and the relatively recent birth of the contrasting Inclusive Education Model. The United Nations' policy statements and its advocacy for change to the newer inclusive approach also have been outlined. From this point Canada is used as an example of how one nation has responded to the call for change.

In schools practicing Inclusive Education, all children, those considered typical and those with disabilities, enter the education system, meet and engage with each other. Both sets of students learn under the tutelage of the classroom teacher. They work together on classroom activities and play together during recess. Under the Special Education Model students with disabilities are liable to segregation in special schools or in special classes in neighbourhood

schools. They learn under Special Education teachers. Their curricula differ in various ways from those of non-disabled students. Often they arrive at and leave on time schedules different than their typical peers. Their recesses may be at different times. All of these dynamics serve to distance students with disabilities from other students and otherwise mark them as different ways. The two groups of students rarely interact in equitable ways. When they do interact, it tends to be in a giver-receiver model. Regular teachers obtain the belief that they are not prepared to teach students with disabilities and that is the responsibility only of Special Education teachers.

Canada, in 1988, six years prior to the 1994 UNESCO Salamanca Statement, initiated the concept and methodology of Inclusive Education (O'Brien and Forest, 2004.) Following the Toronto meeting mentioned earlier, the Marsha Forest Center initiated a series of national and international conferences as well as workshops and publications on Inclusive Education (Whittaker, J., 1991). Canada is composed of 13 separate jurisdictions, 10 Provinces and 3 Northern Territories. Whereas the Canadian federal government has authority over many other nationwide matters, authority for primary and secondary education systems (ages approximately 4 to 18), rests with each Province or Territory independently of the Canadian federal government.

Given development of the Inclusive Education Model, this means that each Province and Territory has been faced with the decision of whether to stay with the Special Education Model or to initiate the change to the Inclusive Education Model. All 13 Canadian jurisdictions have declared policies of inclusion. However, not all Canadian jurisdictions have extended the policy

to inclusion of students with disabilities. At this point it is interesting to consider the authors' and Mitchell's analysis of a policy-practice gap and the status of each of Canada's Provinces and Territories relative to their stated policies, as well as Hahn's existential and esthetic anxiety. Where does each Province and Territory stand?

All 13 Canadian jurisdictions have announced policies of inclusion. How is that to be interpreted when it comes to students with disabilities? At the risk of being seen as repetitive, we stress that all other groups of Canadian students, regardless of difference already have the automatic right to be part of regular classrooms and to engage on an equal level in all activities. Students with disabilities are the sole group without this automatic right. Many school systems continue with the belief that, while there are some students with disabilities who can benefit from full-time placement in regular classrooms. The majority of students with disabilities are viewed as better placed in segregated Special Schools or in part-time segregated classes in regular schools for much of or all of their education. Other jurisdictions, though, believe that all students, including those with disabilities, have the right to inclusive placement in regular classes. How do Canadian school systems respond to the UN call for social justice and child rights to right to Inclusive Education?

The following excerpts are drawn from a sub-set of randomly selected Provincial and Territorial statements of policy relative to disability. The authors leave it to the reader to analyse the policies of these jurisdictions and others not dealt with in this article, to discover whether all have firm policies of inclusion or whether some have policies incorporating loop-

holes permitting the placement of students with disabilities in fulltime or part-time segregation, thus having a policy-practice gap.

### **Nova Scotia Position Paper (Teacher Union Background Document)**

#### **Background Statement:**

Inclusion is a philosophy based on the belief that all students are integral members of the education community. Inclusion ensures equitable access to learning for those students identified as with special needs and requires necessary resources to address special needs.

#### **Guiding Principles, p. 2:**

- Children with special intellectual or emotional needs benefit from learning in the most enabling environment characterized by flexibility, responsiveness and support.
- While regular classroom placement may best serve exceptional children's needs, it is recognized that learning centres and other environments may be the most important short and long-term options for some children. The determination of placement should be based on individual student needs.
- Programs for some students with special needs require funding for "life skills" curriculum.

#### **Issues and Needs. pp. 3/4:**

- The funding necessary to support the philosophy and practice of inclusion is significant. Without jeopardizing the education programs of other students, additional dollars must be designated for the following: barrier free buildings; specialized equipment' medical

and other health services; assistive technology; trained support personnel; teacher-student ratio stipulations; designated preparation time, implementation for planning, implementation and assessment of programs.

- Given the time commitment to carry out the numerous tasks to achieve successful inclusion, and transition educational timetables must include blocks of time within the work day for educators and IPP members to meet and to complete the required documents.

**Northwest Territories: Ministerial Directive on Inclusive Schooling.**

**Introduction p. 5:** Inclusive schooling is based on a belief system which welcomes all learners and values each as both unique and capable of learning.

- The philosophy requires a compatible set of practices so that all students are not only physically included in regular instructional settings, but more importantly provided an education program, and required supports, that are responsive to the students' strengths and challenges.
- **p. 7:** Inclusive schooling. Students access the education program , and required supports in a regular instructional setting, in their home community.
- **p. 8:** Regular instructional setting. The instructional location best suited to/ necessitated by a particular course, activity or objective. For example the regular instructional setting for academic subjects is the typical classroom interspersed with settings such as the library, or field trips. Does not imply that all students are doing the same thing at the same time. Teachers may use many different group configurations and settings\_over

time and students experience many different working groups and arrangements.

Student groupings are fluid.

- **p. 10.** Inclusive schooling shall be characterized by collaboration. While classroom and subject teachers retain primary responsibility for all students in their classes, they are supported by parents, administrators, peers and other professionals who collaborate to make decisions related to the program and support needs of individual students.

### **British Columbia: Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines**

#### **POLICY**

- **p. 2, Inclusion.** British Columbia promotes an inclusive education system in which students with special needs are fully participating members of a community of learners. Inclusion describes the principle that all students are entitled to equitable access to learning, achievement and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their educational programs. The practice of inclusion is not necessarily synonymous with full integration in regular classrooms, and goes beyond placement to include meaningful participation and the promotion of interaction with others.

#### **Placement**

- A school board must ensure that a principal offers to consult with a parent of a child who has special needs regarding the student's placement in an educational program.
- A school board must provide a student who has special needs with an educational program in a classroom where the student is integrated with other students who do not

have special needs, unless the educational needs of the student with special needs or other students indicate that the educational program for the student with special needs should be provided otherwise.

- The emphasis on educating students with special needs in neighbourhood school classrooms with their age and grade peers, however does not preclude the appropriate use of resource rooms, self-contained classes, community-based programs, or specialized settings. Students with special needs may be placed in settings other than a neighbourhood school classroom with age and grade peers.

## **Ontario: The Report of the Co-Chairs with the Recommendations of the Working Table on Special Education**

**Context:** Ontario is the most populous jurisdiction in Canada. It is home to the Toronto District School Board, the largest Board in the nation. Brown and Parekh (2010) of the TDSB's Research Department prepared a Structural Overview and Student Demographics Report on Special Education. The Report calculated that TDSB had 44,063 special needs students, 17% of the Board's student population. Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy statement of 2009 refers all groups coming under the inclusion umbrella in a broad vision. One of the groups noted is those students with disabilities. The focus of the document, however is other groups under inclusive education. Specifically noted among these are: those with language other than English or French, aboriginal peoples, single parent families, same-sex parents, newcomers, visible minorities, and those who differ by religion.

### **Report Cover Letter:**

**p. 1.** We have attempted to capture the common round in the Working Table discussions, recognizing that there continue to be philosophical differences among the many stakeholder groups. Those differences are most pronounced on the issue of students with special needs in the regular classroom. There is a school of thought that would move the system as quickly as possible to a pure inclusion model-a model that would still allow for transitional congregated placements and withdrawals. Another school of thought argues that for the foreseeable future and perhaps, ideally there would be a range of placements for students with special educational needs. The Working Table acknowledges that the regular classroom should continue to be the placement of first choice but that a range of placements may at times be necessary for practical reasons.

**p. 2.** It must become clear to all – teachers, students and parents – what is meant by achievement for all students, especially for those students in modified alternative programs.

**p. 5: A System Transformed...**

- Fairness is not sameness.

In a transformed system, special education programs and services support a learning environment that enables students to acquire, demonstrate, and apply the knowledge and skills necessary to maximize their potential for success in schools and beyond. Based on their individual learning needs and abilities, all students would receive supports in schools that foster a culture of commitment to achievement.

The Ontario curriculum would be the primary focus for students' learning and demonstrated achievement. All students would be engaged in learning, and their achievements would be valued and recognized. While it is important to acknowledge the primacy of curriculum, student achievement in other skills areas would be recognized. Students would have access to the supports, services, programs, and range of placements that they need so that they can achieve their potential.

**p. 8: Student Success and Access to Curriculum**

- All students would be expected to achieve both academically and socially. The first consideration regarding placement would continue to be the regular classroom. A range of placement options would continue to be available for students whose needs would not be met within the regular classroom. These placements would be duration-specific, intervention-focused, and subject to regular reviews.

**New Brunswick: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Inclusive Education – Policy 322**

**p. 2-** Inclusive education: the pairing of philosophy and pedagogical practices that allows each student to feel respected, confident and safe so he or her can participate with peers in the common learning environment and learn and develop to his or her full potential. It is based on a system of values and beliefs centered on the best interest of the students, which promotes social cohesion, belonging, active participation in learning, a complete school experience, and positive interactions with peers and others in the school community.

- **p. 3.** Universal design for learning (UDL); a set of principles for classroom instruction and curriculum development that gives all students equal opportunity to learn. UDL provides strategies for creating instructional goals, methods, materials and assessments that work for everyone. This flexible approach to learning can be customized and adjusted for individual students.
- **p. 4.** Inclusive education practices are not only necessary for all students to develop and prosper, but also critical to building society that is inclusive of all people and their basic legal, civil and human rights.
- **p. 4 5.** Requirements/Standards is enabling each student to participate fully in a common environment that is designed for all students. It is appropriate for the child's age and grade, is shared with peers in their neighbourhood school and respects learning styles, needs, and strengths.

**p. 6.2.** The following must not occur.

1. Segregated, self-contained programs or classes for learning or behavioural challenges, either in school or in community-based learning opportunities.
2. Alternative education programs for students enrolled in kindergarten to grade eight.

**p. 8, 6-4.** Clear measures are established to ensure inclusion in the social life of the school, including co-curricular activities that provide the student access to a wide range of peers.

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