

Ministry  
of Education  
and Training

Ministère  
de l'Éducation  
et de la Formation

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MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education  
Superintendents  
Principals of Schools

FROM: Jill Hutcheon

DATE: June 9, 1994

SUBJECT: **SPECIAL EDUCATION - INTEGRATION  
OF EXCEPTIONAL PUPILS**

I am pleased to advise you of a range of new initiatives in special education which build on the current policy outlined in the June, 1992 Policy and Program Memorandum (No. 115). The Ministry of Education and Training remains committed to the principle that the integration of exceptional pupils should be the normal practice in Ontario, when such a placement meets the pupil's needs and is in accordance with parental wishes. A range of options including placement in a special class or provincial or demonstration school will continue to be available for pupils whose needs cannot be met within the regular classroom.

The ministry's commitment to integration is consistent with society's wish to give every citizen the opportunity to participate fully in the life of the community. We have consulted widely about how best to implement this commitment, and have received input from all parts of the province. As well, we have been assisted by the advice provided through the ministry's Advisory Council on Special Education. As a result, the government is undertaking two key changes to Regulation 305 which govern the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process:

1. IPRCs will be required to consider integration as the placement of first choice wherever possible, when such a placement meets the pupil's needs and is in accordance with parental wishes.

2. The role of parents in the IPRC process is being strengthened to ensure that they have a right to early and full access to all information; the right to an advocate; to be full partners in the deliberations and to have an equal say in the composition of the appeal board members.


Several related initiatives to support parents, teachers, support staff, school boards and the community in their efforts to accelerate the pace of integration are also in progress. An integration-related staff development program, to be designed collaboratively by these partners in education, is intended to support all staff in delivering effective and appropriate special education programs in integrated settings. Exemplary practices in integration will also be recognized and shared in an effort to sustain staff development over the long term.

The categories and definitions of exceptionalities will be revised and updated to reflect the recent changes to the *Education Act* resulting from Bill 4, and to assist IPRCs in determining program needs. Guidelines for annual school board reporting on special education plans are also being revised to allow the ministry to gather information regarding the success of the integration initiative. The operating procedures of Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs), will be revised to enhance their role. Combined, these initiatives will go a long way toward addressing the accountability concerns raised in *The 1993 Annual Report of the Office of the Provincial Auditor*.

I recognize that many school boards have made significant progress in integrating exceptional students into regular classrooms. Nevertheless, we will still need to work collaboratively with local and provincial agencies of the Ministries of Community and Social Services and Health to develop co-operative approaches to the delivery of health and social support services for exceptional pupils.

These new initiatives on integration build on the government's commitment to greater equity for all pupils. I look forward to working with you during the implementation of new directions for special education and to receiving your input on the proposed regulation changes during the consultation in the fall.

For further information, please contact your Regional Office of the Ministry of Education and Training, per the attached list.



Jill Hutcheon  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Policy Priorities and Curriculum Development

cc: Regional Directors

From Louise Bailey/Lynnda Langdon  
c/o 270 Simonsen Blvd  
Torn Hill, GA 37471

June 10, 1994

Dear Dave:

You won't always get letters delivered with flowers -

but we figured it was a sure way to get this to you fast.

And we want to thank you for your hard work, persistence

and commitment to our children.

A tight redrafting of Regulation 305, along with real

enforcement and Board accountability (Louise wants to be an

enforcer), solid staff development, equity and diversity

training, this policy shift and clear intent should have

the effect of mandate. By the time legislative changes come,

hopefully it will be addressing a fait accompli. (Yes, we

still want the legislated right to integration.)

You have provided us with a clear and solid

foundation for the right to integration and successful implementation.

We admit it isn't everything we wanted. We also recognize

it isn't everything you'd hoped to deliver. But it's workable.

We also feel under real time pressure to get these changes

enacted as election deadlines loom before us. We all need to

work together to ensure this happens. We are ready to help in any

way we can - please take us up on this offer.

In the interim, we trust this means our families can count

on you and your ministry for support in situations where they are

still struggling to get integration. We also trust that the red herring of

money will no longer be tolerated. And we need to stick to the headlines!

We have a suggestion for Launch Day - how about giving your

announcement surrounded by some of our kids, their brothers, sisters

and friends? You could make this a 'moral moment' in education. We

can have balloons, music etc. What do you think? (We'll make the

arrangements.)

Dave, you and your staff have worked hard. You've given us

something to work with and build on.

Louise Bailey

Lynnda

Lynnda Langdon