DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Thursday, May 13, 2010

Grimsby Lincoln Room

Committee Members Present:

Gregg Dame (for Don Love) Trustee, District School Board of Niagara
Liz Fulford Trustee, District School Board of Niagara
Tari Gough Family & Children’s Services Niagara
Selby Harris Niagara Regional Native Centre
Andrew Howcroft Community Living
Sandy Motz Down Syndrome Caring Parents – Niagara
Flavia Owitz Autism Ontario Representative

Administration/Resource:

Carol Germyn Superintendent of School Support Services
Sue Ehgoetz School Support Services Administrator
Bill Klassen NSAC Representative
Paula MacKinnon School Support Services Administrator
Gary Osmond E-22 Representative
Kelly Pisek School Support Services Administrator

Regrets:

Sharifa Al-Harazi, Niagara Support Services
Frank Beres, Voice for Hearing Impaired Children
Nicole Dumais, Learning Disability Association of Niagara
Laurie Frandsen, Community Living
Cindy Kohinski, E-22 Representative
Don Love, Trustee, District School Board of Niagara
Shannon MacDonald, C.N.I.B., Parents Association of Blind and Visually Impaired
Jennifer McDowell, School Support Services Administrator

Guests:

Jim Morgan, Superintendent of Human Resources
Maureen Alderdice, Consultant Cultural & Linguistic Diversity
Ed Fulford

Recording Secretary: Carol Germyn
CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sandy Motz called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS:

Chair Motz welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Jim Morgan, Superintendent of Human Resources, Sue Ehgoetz, School Support Services Administrator and Maureen Alderdice, Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Consultant.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Sandy Motz stated that we did not have quorum and asked the members present if they would like to proceed with the agenda realizing without quorum, no motions could be made. Those present agreed to proceed.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

March 4, 2010 & April 8, 2010 minutes deferred until June 10, 2010 meeting.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

It was brought to the attention of the SEAC Committee that the attachments were not included in the March minutes sent to SEAC members. The March minutes with attachments were resent to committee members on Tuesday, May 18, 2010 with apologies.

REPORT FROM SCHOOL SUPPORT SERVICES

Superintendent Germyn and Kelly Pisek attended a Safe Schools Conference in Toronto on April 29, 2010. Sessions included Student Safety, Bullying and Harassment, Case Studies and Legislation. One of the conference speakers dealt with building resilience in our young people by teaching and praising resilience.

Kelly Pisek presented a video entitled “What’s Beyond Secondary School” which was produced by School Support Services for Special Education students and their families. The video highlighted a recent conference for parents and students focused on post-secondary options and placements for students. Feedback received from this event was very positive.
REPORT FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Jim Morgan

Superintendent Germyn introduced Jim Morgan, Superintendent of Human Resources. Superintendent Morgan discussed the supports in place to assist Superintendent Germyn in moving forward with implementation of Special Needs student’s attendance at school during examination periods. Students in special needs classes will attend school on three of the five instructional days at the end of each semester scheduled for exams.

Exam days are ‘instructional days’ with the expectation that teachers attend school during exam days and be accessible to students. The Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation has expressed concerns re: workload issues, feeling that this change increases teacher workloads. The Board’s position is that there is no change to workload for teachers.

Tari Gough asked why we chose three days.

It was noted that some students registered in special needs classes do participate ‘regular’ classes and in exams, therefore it was determined that 3 days would be a good starting point. Other boards use similar timelines.

Bill 168

Superintendent Morgan distributed a handout entitled Protecting workers from workplace violence and workplace harassment. Changes to Ontario’s Occupational Health & Safety Act (OHSA) that will strengthen protections for workers from workplace violence and address workplace harassment will be announced on June 15, 2010. These amendments define workplace violence and harassment and describe employer duties, and will apply to all workplaces covered by the Ontario Health & Safety Act. The amendments also address Domestic Violence and the right to refuse work. The District School Board of Niagara continually works to minimize workplace violence. (Handout Attached)

The Board has done a Risk Assessment and a Supplementary Risk Assessment which identified both general and site specific issues related to Health & Safety.

Flavia asked if a District School Board of Niagara Policy on Bill 168 is on the website. Superintendent Morgan is currently developing this policy which will go to the Policy Advisory Committee May 18, 2010.

Gregg Dame asked whether the policy includes electronic harassment. Electronic harassment is part of the definition of harassment and is included.
Liz Fulford asked for an explanation of work refusal for teachers. Superintendent Morgan explained the three steps involved in a work refusal involving an employee:

1) Must inform immediate supervisor
2) Health & Safety Officer involvement and worker representative – Multi-Workplace Joint Health & Safety Committee (MWJHSC)
3) Reassignment of employee can happen during work refusal

**Equity and Inclusive Education Interim Policy**

Sue Ehgoetz
Maureen Alderdice


On Friday, October 2, 2009 Public and Catholic, English and French-Language School Boards attended the preliminary meeting of a possible Consortium of School Boards to implement Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy Guidelines (OEIE). At that meeting, it was recommended that one organization oversee the development of the project.

On October 7, 2009, it was announced that the Ontario Education Services Corporation (OESC) would co-ordinate the project on behalf of the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE) and the four Trustees' Associations. The project would include the development of a manual of policy/procedures/guideline, etc., to assist Boards in implementing the Ontario Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.

Members of the Steering Committee, under the coordination of the OESC, and with the participation of the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC), created a Draft Equity Policy which was released to Boards on March 24th, 2010.

A District School Board of Niagara Equity and Inclusive Education (EIE) Consultation Committee comprised of: District School Board of Niagara staff (from various employee groups), Federation representatives, District School Board of Niagara parents, and community advocates and agencies, has been assembled and brought together for the purpose of reviewing and providing input on the consortium Equity policy document.

The District School Board of Niagara will have an Interim Policy in place for September 2010. This will enable school staff, parents, students, and community stakeholders, the opportunity to provide further feedback on the policy over the course of the 2010-2011 school year.

Superintendent Germyn asked SEAC members to take the interim policy back to their agencies for further feedback and consideration and provide any comments to the Board.
Selby Harris questioned the use of the term “Religion” as opposed to “Multi-Faith” stating that he thought it to be a western notion. Maureen explained that “Religion” is the term stated in the PPM 119 / in the OESC template and a defined term in the Ontario Human Rights Code. It is a broad and inclusive term. Selby felt that we should further pursue the use of the term “Multi-Faith”.

The Equity & Inclusive Education Policy will be taken to the Policy Advisory Committee May 18, 2010 and to the Board May 25, 2010. (Interim Policy attached)

ASSOCIATION AND BOARD INFORMATION

Family & Children’s Services Niagara

No report.

Community Living

Andrew attended a conference about “Human Rights and Persons with Intellectual Disabilities” that was held on April 21-22 in Niagara Falls. (Report and Conference Proceedings Attached) Andrew’s attachment on the Rhetoric to Reality Conference will also be included as an attachment in the May minutes.

Autism Ontario

Flavia questioned whether the Board had guidelines around the use of Service Dogs in schools. Kelly responded that we have developed a policy that will be going to the Policy Advisory Committee and to the board for approval.

Flavia inquired about Boundary Waivers/Alternate School Request procedures. A response will be provided to Flavia and SEAC on Alternate School Request procedures.

Flavia also inquired about a policy on Isolation Rooms within the District School Board of Niagara. Kelly Pisek responded that the Board does not have a policy on Isolation Rooms and School Support Services does not support this as a strategy for students. If anyone is aware of a situation like this, please call Superintendent Germyn, who will work with the family and the school to ensure appropriate strategies and procedures are in place to meet the needs of students.

Flavia requested information about the process for parents around court orders in the Ontario Student Record (OSR). Parents have access to their student’s Ontario School Record. If access is denied, please contact your Area Superintendent. Superintendent Germyn responded that school staff must comply with court orders once they receive the documentation.

Flavia shared a flyer from Autism Ontario for a Speaker Event (Educating Students with Autism in Inclusive Schools) with Paula Kluth, Ph.D. (Flyer Attached)
Niagara Regional Native Centre
Selby Harris

Selby shared that on May 15 & 16, The Niagara Regional Native Centre will be holding their annual Pow Wow “Honoring Mother Earth”. Six Nations singers will be performing.

NSAC
Bill Klassen

No report.

E-22 Gary Osmond

No report.

Trustee Report
Liz Fulford

Liz discussed the Accessibility Policy which led to a further discussion around SEAC’s involvement and input into all policies coming forward to Policy Advisory. Superintendent Germyn indicated that Senior Administration will discuss options for further stakeholder input into policies.

Trustee Report
Gregg Dame for Don Love

No report.

Down Syndrome Caring Parents - Niagara
Sandy Motz

No report.

CORRESPONDENCE
Sandy Motz

No Correspondence.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

➢ Post Secondary Support for Identified Students
➢ Differentiated Instruction
➢ Overview by SERTS on visits to Brock and Niagara College
➢ Protocol with External Agencies (PPM 149)
➢ Preliminary Look at Budget
NEXT MEETING: Thursday, June 10, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. – Grimsby Lincoln Room

Chair Motz concluded the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Information flyer – Protecting workers from workplace violence and workplace harassment
- Equity and Inclusive Education Interim Policy (draft)
- Community Living Report and Conference Information
- Autism Ontario flyer – Speaker Event
- Rhetoric to Reality Conference Report
Changes to Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) that will strengthen protections for workers from workplace violence and address workplace harassment are coming on June 15, 2010. These define workplace violence and harassment and describe employer duties, and will apply to all workplaces covered by the OHSA.

**Bill 168 amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act**

**Definitions**

*Workplace violence means:*  
- The exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker  
- An attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker  
- A statement or behaviour that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker.

*Workplace harassment means:*  
- Engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome.

Workplace harassment may include bullying, intimidating or offensive jokes or innuendos, displaying or circulating offensive pictures or materials, or offensive or intimidating phone calls.

**Policies and programs**

Employers must:  
- Prepare policies with respect to workplace violence and workplace harassment,  
- Develop and maintain programs to implement their policies, and  
- Provide information and instruction to workers on the contents of these policies and programs.

Workplace violence programs must include measures and procedures for:  
- Summoning immediate assistance when workplace violence occurs or is likely to occur, and  
- Controlling risks identified in the assessment of risks.

Both workplace violence and workplace harassment programs must include measures and procedures for workers to report incidents of workplace violence/harassment and set out how the employer will investigate and deal with incidents or complaints.

**Assessment**

Employers must proactively assess the risks of workplace violence that may arise from the nature of the
workplace, the type or work or the conditions of work. Measures and procedures to control these risks must be included in the workplace violence program.

**Domestic violence**
Employers who are aware, or ought reasonably to be aware, that domestic violence may occur in the workplace must take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect a worker at risk of physical injury.

**Communication**
Employers and supervisors must provide information to a worker about a risk of workplace violence from a person with a history of violent behaviour if the worker can expect to encounter that person in the course of work, and if the worker may be at risk of physical injury. Personal information may be disclosed, but only what is reasonably necessary to protect the worker from physical injury.

**Work refusal**
Workers have the right to refuse work if they have a reason to believe they are in danger from workplace violence. Reprisals by the employer continue to be prohibited. Certain workers continue to have only a limited right to refuse.

**Enforcement**
Ministry of Labour health and safety inspectors will enforce the new OHSA provisions for workplace violence and workplace harassment and determine if employers are complying with their new duties. Employers and workers should always contact police first in emergency situations, if threats or actual violence occurs at a workplace.

**Resources and tools for employers and workplace parties**
Resource material is being developed by the occupational health and safety system partners – Health and Safety Associations (HSAs), the Ministry of Labour and the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) – to help employers assess workplace violence risks and develop workplace violence and workplace harassment policies and programs.

**Ministry of Labour**

A revised *Guide to the Occupational Health and Safety Act* will include a section on workplace violence and workplace harassment. (Available in June)


Workplace Violence Legislation (Bill 168), full text [http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills_detail.do?locale=en&BillID=2181&BillStagePrintId=4499&btnSubmit=go](http://www.ontla.on.ca/web/bills/bills_detail.do?locale=en&BillID=2181&BillStagePrintId=4499&btnSubmit=go)

**Health and Safety Associations**
Ontario’s HSAs are posting resources and training opportunities about workplace violence and workplace harassment on their websites; [www.wsib.on.ca/wsib/wsibsite.nsf/Public/HealthSafetyCommunity](http://www.wsib.on.ca/wsib/wsibsite.nsf/Public/HealthSafetyCommunity)

**Safe workplaces mean productive workplaces.**
In the District School Board of Niagara, we believe that all students can learn and our mission is to enable each and every student to learn effectively, to reduce achievement gaps and to improve learning outcomes for all, regardless of race, class, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and other historical forms of marginalization.

The Board upholds the principles of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Constitution Act, 1982 and confirmed in the Ontario Human Rights Code (the “Code”). The Board and its staff are also committed to the elimination of all types of discrimination as outlined in Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (the “Strategy”) and the Ontario Ministry of Education (the “Ministry”) Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119. The Board recognizes that equity of opportunity and equity of access to the full range of programs, the delivery of services, and resources are critical to the achievement of successful educational and social outcomes for those served by the school system as well as those who serve the system.

The Board is therefore committed to an equitable education system that upholds and reflects the principles of fair and inclusive education which should permeate all policies, programs, practices, and operations.

AREAS OF POLICY FOCUS:

Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation, Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (2009) “Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools” identify eight areas of focus for implementing equity and inclusive education.

Each area of focus will be introduced and anchored by a preamble and a policy statement which will serve to guide the actions of the Board and its schools, in honouring its commitments to equity and inclusive education policy development, implementation, monitoring and reporting.

1. BOARD POLICIES, PROGRAMS, GUIDELINES AND PRACTICES

Preamble:

The Board will ensure that its policy review cycle will result in the alignment and integration of the requirements of the Code, Policy/Program No. 119 and the Strategy into all Board policies, programs, procedures, and practices. Respect for the diverse perspectives of the entire school community will be reflected in all areas of the teaching, learning and administrative culture. Every effort will be made to identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers that may limit access to, and opportunity for, effective student engagement and achievement. The goal is to ensure that schools are inclusive and reflect the makeup of their diverse communities.

It is the Policy of the Board to:

Serve staff, students, and families in diverse communities by incorporating the principles of equity and inclusive education into all aspects of its operations, structures, policies, programs, procedures, guidelines, and practices, consistent with the principles of the Code.

1 The Ontario Human Rights Code identifies the following prohibited discrimination grounds: age, ancestry, citizenship, colour, creed, disability, ethnic origin, marital and family status, place of origin, race, record of offences, sex, and/or sexual orientation.
2. **SHARED AND COMMITTED LEADERSHIP**

**Preamble:**

The Board subscribes to an informed leadership philosophy that inspires, empowers, and supports all stakeholders to join together to implement institutional practices and behaviours that cultivate equity and inclusive education.

The Board is committed to providing informed shared leadership to improve student achievement and to close achievement gaps for students by identifying, addressing, and removing all barriers and forms of discrimination, consistent with the principles of the *Code*.

The Board recognizes the critical connection between student leadership and improved student achievement and will strive to include the student voice in the implementation of equity and inclusive education.

In accordance with the Ministry’s Ontario Leadership Strategy, effective Board and school leaders will encourage and promote a collaborative approach to all dimensions of equity and inclusive education, which ensures the participation of students, parents, unions, colleges and universities, service organizations and other diverse community partners.

**It is the Policy of the Board to:**

Establish and maintain collaborative relationships with diverse communities so that the perspectives and experiences of all students are recognized to help meet their needs.

3. **SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS**

**Preamble:**

The Board recognizes that the effective review, development, implementation and monitoring of equity and inclusive education policies and practices requires the involvement of all members of the entire school community.

The Board values the assets that all stakeholders can bring to enable each and every student to learn effectively and enhance educational opportunities for all.

The Board is committed to the maintenance, development, and expansion of partnerships with parents and diverse communities that support system and school improvement.

The Board will undertake to identify, examine, and remove barriers that exist which may prevent full participatory school-community relations.

**It is the Policy of the Board to:**

Establish and maintain collaborative relationships with diverse communities so that the perspectives and experiences of all students, families, and employees are recognized and addressed.
4. INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

Preamble:
When we consider inclusive curriculum and assessment practices, we need to consider both the “how” and the “what”. What we bring to students in terms of content is as important as the way it is delivered. We must consider both what is said and what is not said, as it is known that our students learn both the explicit and underlying curricula. Both in its content and methodology, inclusive curriculum seeks to recognize and affirm the life experiences of all students, regardless of race and ethnicity, gender, place of origin, religion, cultural and linguistic background, social and economic status, sexual orientation, age, and ability/disability.

Providing opportunities for formative assessment (assessment for learning) is an essential component of an inclusive curriculum. Multiple opportunities for assessment allow for student learning and accuracy of instruction and assessment, differentiated instruction and multiple and varied opportunities to demonstrate learning. Effective evaluation includes researched best practices that truly reflect the current level of achievement of the student. A student perspective on assessment and evaluation practices increases the depth of understanding.

It is the Policy of the Board to:
Implement an inclusive curriculum based on Ministry of Education curriculum guidelines and to review resources, instruction, and assessment and evaluation practices in order to identify and address discriminatory biases so that each student may maximize her or his learning potential.

5. RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

Preamble:
The Board recognizes and values the religious diversity within its community and is committed to providing a safe, respectful and equitable environment for all, free from all forms of discriminatory or harassing behaviour, including those based on religion.

Freedom of religion is an individual right and a collective responsibility. The Board and the community it serves must work together to foster an inclusive learning environment that promotes acceptance and protects religious freedom for all individuals. While the Board and its staff will take all reasonable steps to ensure freedom of religion and religious practices, it is expected that students and their families will help the Board to understand their religious needs and will work with the Board and its schools to determine appropriate and reasonable accommodations.

It is the Policy of the Board to:

Acknowledge each individual’s right to follow or not to follow religious beliefs and practices free from discriminatory or harassing behaviour and is committed to taking all reasonable steps to provide religious accommodations to staff and students.
6. SCHOOL CLIMATE AND THE PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

Preamble:
School climate must welcome all stakeholders and encourage active participation of parents, students and staff in ensuring that the principles of the Code and the Equity Strategy are applied in our schools. The Equity strategy requires Boards to use a range of tools, including an equity lens, reflection tools and Code principles to examine their policies, procedures and practices to address what may be discriminatory practices. Respectful school climate includes the active participation of underrepresented peoples as valued participants. Board mechanisms work towards the eradication of discrimination and harassment by ensuring that all members of the school community are aware of a timely and measured response to claims of discrimination of any kind.

It is the Policy of the Board to:
Commit to the principle that every person within the school community is entitled to a respectful, positive school climate and learning environment, free from all forms of discrimination and harassment.

7. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Preamble:
Professional learning increases the knowledge and skills that teachers bring to the craft and science of teaching, and, thus, engages the student with increasing complexity and precision teaching. Perpetual professional learning is the groundwork for positive changes in our schools.

It is the Policy of the Board to:
Provide administrators, staff, students and other members of the school community with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviour needed to identify and eliminate discriminatory biases and systemic barriers under the Code.

8. ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Preamble:
As a publicly funded education system, the Board acknowledges and assumes the responsibility for its policies, actions, and decisions. In the pursuit of greater transparency and accountability, the Board, in respectful collaboration and communication with the whole school community, will report on its goals and progress in the areas of policy review, school improvement planning and the implementation of The Strategy.

It is the Policy of the Board to:
Assess and monitor Board progress in implementing The Strategy; to embed the principles into all Board policies, programs, guidelines and practices; and to communicate these results to the community.

References
Administrative Procedure: Equity and Inclusive Education Compliance Guidelines
Administrative Procedure: Religious Accommodation Guidelines
“You’re Going To Love This Kid”
Educating Students With Autism in Inclusive Schools with Paula Kluth, Ph.D
Thursday, May 27, 2010 - 9:00am to 3:00pm
Pre-register by: Wednesday, May 19, 2010

Dr. Paula Kluth is a consultant, teacher, author, advocate and independent scholar who works with teachers and families to provide inclusive opportunities for students with disabilities and to create more responsive and engaging schooling experiences for all learners.

In this interactive session, participants will learn practical ways of supporting students with autism spectrum labels & other disabilities within a general education classroom. Topics addressed to the voices of those with autism, differentiating instruction, creating more active and responsive lessons, making the classroom comfortable, and providing opportunities for communication and social skill development. The session will focus on the importance of pushing beyond access and participation and asking schools to challenge students and to understand each learner as complex and capable.

This speaker event is subsidized by the Autism Ontario Realize Community Potential Program in Niagara Region.

Cost: $20 per person (salad and sandwich buffet with coffee and tea) No coffee or tea in the morning
Payment will be accepted at the door on the day of the event by cash, cheque or credit card (Visa or Master Card)

Maximum attendance: 150 people

LOCATION:
Best Western Beacon Harbourside Inn & Suites
2973 Beacon Boulevard, Jordon
Just off the QEW at exit #55

Pre-register ONLINE at www.autismontario.com/niagara by Wednesday, May 19
or email autismniagara@on.aibn.com or call 905-682-2776

Please provide your name, phone number, email address, and the number of people you are pre-registering.

NOTE: By registering and participating in this event, you are acknowledging that you may be contacted by Autism Ontario or one of its agents inviting you to participate in short surveys as part of the evaluation process for the RCP Program. However, participation in these surveys is not mandatory.

Autism ONTARIO
Niagara Region

I wanted to report to the group about the conference “Human Right and Persons with Intellectual Disabilities” that was held on April 21 - 22, 2010 in Niagara Falls.

I was pleased to see representatives from DSBN present, not only to be a part of one of the workshops, but also stayed on to see other workshops. I also was pleased to see representatives from this committee there as well.

There was a memory stick that was provided for those that were in attendance providing information about most presentations. I can get anyone copies of any of these reports if they wish. I would like draw each of you to stream #3. All these sessions dealt with this Education and Employment. In particular, I would suggest that you review the sessions by Gordon Porter, “Making Schools Inclusive: A No-Excuses and Human Rights Strategy” as well as the one presented by Jacqueline Specht and Marilyn Dolmage, “Youth in Transition: Strategies for Successful Inclusion”. Much of Jacqueline and Marilyn’s presentation involved the research report that investigates how “selected secondary schools in Ontario develop and sustain their motivation and strategies to teach students with significant disabilities as members of regular classes”, (Dolmage, Young, Stuart, Specht, & Strickland, 2009). This research was presented to our group last year at SEAC on May 14th accompanied by a letter from the Ministry.

Also I have attached information from our Provincial Group (Community Living Ontario) from their electronic Newsletter entitled “Community Living Leaders”. This month their focus was on inclusive education. I have attached two of their articles. Daron Hamel reported on both of these. Both articles are discussions with their chair. One is entitled and talks about “All students benefit from inclusive education: (says) school Board Chairman”. – April 22nd, 2010. The other “Commited Staff, Board the key ingredients to creating inclusive education: (says) Daly” – April 16th 2010.

I hope you will find time to go over these items I have submitted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrew Howcroft, M. Ed.
Stream III

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Conference Proceedings
Making Schools Inclusive:
A No-Excuses and Human Rights Strategy

Gordon L. Porter, Director of Inclusive Education Canada

This presentation is based on an article published in EDUCATION CANADA in 2008.

On March 30, 2007, I was privileged to represent CASHRA (Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies), as 80 nations, including Canada, signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN Convention, 2006). In a speech following the signing, Canada’s Ambassador to the UN pledged the Government of Canada to work with the provinces and the nongovernmental sector to effectively implement the Convention in Canada’s federal context.

For a developed country like Canada, one of the more notable provisions of the Convention is Article 24, dealing with educational services. In compelling language, it requires signatory nations to assure opportunities for “appropriate” and “inclusive” education for students with disabilities. This international convention becomes one more factor in an already complex mix of law, policy and practice that makes the education of students with diverse learning needs an issue in Canada, and indeed internationally.

How to best provide quality educational services to students with disabilities, and other special needs, is a flash point issue for education systems in Canada. The news stories are frequent and engaging. A family or parent demands one thing and a school district offers something else. Sometimes the demand is for more special services and sometimes for more access to regular education. The public often seems confused by the term “inclusion” and by the continuing struggle to establish a fair and equitable – but also sensible – Canadian approach to the matter. The struggle of parents, teachers and the educational system to find ways to move ahead with sound policy, practices and funding policies ultimately connects to human rights law and to our vision of what inclusion means in our increasingly diverse communities (Crawford, 2005).

Human Rights and Persons with Intellectual Disabilities Conference 2010
How did we get to this point? And how do we move ahead with a combination of vision, values and fairness?

While this article will not be a definitive discussion, I trust it will foster more serious and vigorous consideration about policies and practices than we have seen in recent years. I believe that we need to develop a vision for our public education system that embraces inclusion in meaningful and practical ways that make it a reality in every community. It is past time for educational leaders and policy makers to bite the bullet and purge our educational system of segregation and discrimination based on a diagnosis or clinically based label. Exceptions to inclusion will occur from time to time, but they are currently much too common in many parts of Canada. We need to make these “exceptions” truly exceptional, and they need to be restricted to “individuals” in the local school, not to groups based on clinical labels. Finally, we need a new wave of principled school reform that will contribute to accommodating the diversity of our student population, to inclusion as a guiding principle, and to school improvement on a broad basis for all our students.

In exploring special or inclusive education, my point of view has developed over several decades based on my experiences in three distinct roles. First I have an educational perspective based on more than 40 years as a teacher, school principal, district official (special education) and a university instructor (teacher educator). Second, I have an advocacy perspective from my role as a volunteer in parent and family associations for people with intellectual disabilities (CAACL) on a local, provincial, national and international level. Finally, I have a human rights perspective from my work in Canadian and international human rights efforts and as a member and current chair of the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission.

In an attempt to bring some clarity to the issue, I want to share some thoughts on what it takes to make inclusive education work. Let me proceed by identifying some key questions – and tentative answers.

What is inclusive education?

Inclusive education means, simply, that all students, including those with disabilities and other special needs, are educated in regular classrooms with their age peers in their community.
schools. Students with disabilities go to the same schools as their brothers and sisters, are provided with access to the same learning opportunities as other children, and are engaged in both the academic and social activities of the classroom. In inclusive schools, support is directed to both the students and their teachers so they can accomplish relevant individual goals. When this movement started, the word most commonly used was "integration", but for many, integration implied a less bold vision, limited to the presence of the child in the classroom. Today we understand inclusion to be about how we create environments in which all students can be successful, regardless of ability.

Why is this a critical and controversial issue?

It is an issue because it takes serious effort to change the status quo. Until fifty years ago, education was considered a privilege for the few and for those who learned easily. Many Canadian children failed to benefit from public education, and children with disabilities benefited even less than most. We developed segregated special education programs to address this gap. In some provinces, these programs were very large and well funded, and they became accepted as the way to do things. The demand to include all children in regular schools and classrooms developed in the early 1980s. In Canada, this push for reform was supported by the equality provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which came into force in 1985. Since then the push for integration, and later inclusion, has become an ongoing element of educational politics in Canada.

The controversy is fuelled in part by a strong feeling among both the public and educators that students with some types of disabilities will not benefit from what happens in a regular classroom, particularly in the higher grades where differences in student ability become more noticeable. This belief is partly caused by a lack of understanding about inclusive education and the ways in which students with varying abilities can be successfully taught in the same environment. It may also reflect the inherent belief – indeed the fear – that inclusion will water down or weaken overall educational outcomes. We also need to acknowledge that there is still some devaluing of people with disabilities (particularly cognitive disabilities).

What is wrong with traditional special education?
Traditional special education typically carried out by specialist teachers and in isolation from other children in special classes or special schools, has failed in several ways. First, it has failed to produce results. Students who experience segregated special education are not prepared for fulfilling lives in their communities when their education is finished. Research in Canada has indicated that they do less well than similar children who go to regular schools (Crawford, 2004). There is nothing surprising in this finding. A segregated school program does not prepare young people to be part of the community and society when they become adults. Growing up and interacting with their peers does that.

Second, a system that encourages schools and teachers to abandon children and youth who have learning challenges is not good policy. Presuming that any child with special needs must be sent to a special program erodes the professional stature of teaching as a profession. Individual teachers may need support in a number of areas but their professional and ethical responsibility is to teach all children. Defining the regular classroom as a place for “ordinary” learners and putting unrealistic pressure on school systems to develop a parallel system for all those thus abandoned also takes the focus off efforts for school improvement. It is bad educational policy, and in the long term it is not financially sustainable, as the struggles over funding issues experienced in many parts of Canada demonstrate.

Finally, segregated special education is not appropriate from a moral or human rights perspective. In 2007, we still have thousands of children in Canada who are confined to segregated classes, and a few still attend segregated schools. Twenty-five years after the Charter, and in an international environment where Canada should be providing leadership in the implementation of the recent UN Convention – we can do better.

What do we need to make our schools inclusive?

First we need to state clearly that our goal is to have “inclusive, effective, community schools” that are both committed to inclusion and able to effectively carry it out. Once the goal is set and before us, we can make plans to move ahead. It is a challenging goal that will take a significant investment in leadership at all levels – at the policy level; the education system level; and the school and classroom levels.
Let me list a few of the critical steps needed to implement this approach (Porter & Stone, 1998):

1. We need to make a plan for transition and change and accept that this will take at least 3-5 years to do properly;
2. School staff must know how to make their schools and classrooms effective for diverse student populations, and so we need to invest in training for existing teachers and school leaders as well as for new teachers.
3. Understanding that teachers need support to accept and meet this challenge, we need to work with them and their associations to develop supports they need.
4. We need to start by creating positive models of success – classrooms, schools and communities that do a good job and can share their success and strategies with neighbours.
5. We need to identify a cadre of leaders and innovators at all levels and assist them in building networks where they can produce and share knowledge unique to their communities.
6. We need to identify and share “best practices” from research and knowledge that is already available and can be enriched and enhanced by local experience.
7. We need to understand that innovations and changes that will make a difference will require resources. That means money and people.

**What does experience tell us about the process of creating inclusive schools?**

The schools in which I worked as an educational leader in New Brunswick began to implement inclusive education practices in 1982 and had the approach substantially in place by 1985. In the more than 20 years since, teachers and school leaders, here and elsewhere in Canada, have learned a great deal about what it takes to be successful with inclusion. They have also struggled with obstacles and difficulties, many of which continue.

On the political or policy level in New Brunswick, at least three significant province-wide reviews of inclusion have been carried out, most recently the MacKay Report (MacKay, 2006), released in 2006. All three reviews identified the value and positive features of an inclusive educational approach, identified areas for improvement, and suggested the need for
more support to teachers and students. All three also indicated the need for leadership, policy clarity, and additional resources to provide more systemic supports. I note this history because I want to emphasize that creating inclusive schools is not a one time job. Successful inclusion requires persistence and innovation to sustain the effort and to develop approaches to meet the new challenges that emerge over time.

On a personal level, I have seen many success stories where teachers and parents have worked together to achieve success for individual students. I have seen a student with no verbal language find other ways to communicate with nondisabled peers. I have seen shy and reticent children gain confidence and self worth through daily interaction with other students in a variety of classroom situations. I have also seen teachers who have persevered look back and proudly note both the progress made by individual students, and their own progress as teachers. Committed and skilled teachers who are properly supported can make inclusion work.

What about the cost?

Money is not the issue in moving from segregation to inclusion. In fact some of the smaller and less wealthy communities and provinces of Canada are leading the way. Many of Canada’s wealthiest provinces and communities spend a great deal of money on segregated special education programs, but little on making regular classrooms places where students with special needs can be welcomed and successfully included. Money spent on segregated special education needs to be re-directed to support teachers in inclusive regular schools (Crawford & Porter, 2004). In some situations the investment may need to be increased, especially during the transition period. However, because the investment to support inclusion is principally directed toward supporting classroom teachers, it has spill over positive benefits for other students and for the classroom environment as a whole. This investment is critical if we are to make our schools instruments for creating an equitable and democratic society.

What about the future?

I see inclusion as one of the sustaining pillars of public education in 21st century Canada. Our schools must reflect our commitment to democratic values, to welcoming diversity in our communities, and to inclusion as a key aspect of our society. If we are to educate all our children, and do it well, we need to ensure that every school is both effective and inclusive.

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Human Rights Commissions throughout Canada have identified special education as a critical issue. Commissions in Ontario and New Brunswick have established guidelines for accommodating students with disabilities in the education system (see: Human Rights Commissions in Ontario and New Brunswick). Other commissions have also identified this as a priority area that continues to result in many complaints each year. It will undoubtedly be the focus of future deliberations by human rights commissions (see CASHRA).

The UN Convention sets out a bold and progressive vision of education rights for children with disabilities and articulates inclusion as an essential element in that vision. Canadians can provide the world with a practical demonstration that inclusion can work to the benefit of society in general. To do so, we must set our sights on a clear target and work together to deliver nothing less to our children.

_Gordon Porter is Director of Inclusive Education Canada, an initiative of the Canadian Association for Community Living and Chair of the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission. He is a winner of the Canadian Education Association’s 2007 Whitworth Award for Research in Education._
Working with Mothers and Fathers of Children with Disabilities: Metaphors used by Parents in a Continuing Dialogue about ‘The Original’ and ‘The Alternative’

Prof. Dr. Geert Van Hove, Ghent University, Disability Studies and Inclusive Education

Abstract

While working with mothers and fathers of children with disabilities within the field of inclusive school projects for the last ten years we agree with Ryan and Runswick-Cole (2008) when they state that “there should be a greater engagement with and recognition of the role mothers (and fathers) play in negotiating disability issues” (p.199).

Ferguson (2001) and Landsman (2002) claim that we need to give attention to stories of mothers and fathers of children with a label in order to oppose to ‘old’ professional interpretations of families – (Ferguson, 2001) like the ‘neurotic parent’, the suffering parent’, the ‘dysfunctional parent’ or the ‘powerless parent’- or ‘new’ interpretations that position reactions and strategies of parents as constraints within their children’s lives, limiting their children’s opportunities and aspirations (Ryan & Runswick-Cole, 2008).

Within this article we will introduce some metaphors as they were developed and used by mothers and fathers we worked with: the traveller, the warrior, the builder of bridges, the discoverer, the trainer/teacher, the in-between-er, and the manager. We will position these metaphors as tools parents are using in their confrontation with normalising discourses of disability and education. In this sense mothers and fathers of children with disabilities can be seen as ‘parents on the margins’ from whom we can learn a lot about parenting in general.

Together with Read (2000) and Fisher and Goodley (2007), we claim that the decisions parents are making for their children should get more appreciation (and should be seen as more than just as a collection of day-to-day pragmatic choices) due to the fact that the choices and decisions are grounded in and responsive to the complexities of the context. In that sense the
metaphors we will present can be situated as a meta level parents present in their continuing process of reflection on their living together with their children with disabilities.

Background

Fathers/mothers of children with disabilities have always taken a unique – and sometimes controversial – position in the history of care. Fathers were often absent for a large part in this history or they were portrayed as onlookers who were unable to talk about their feelings and decided to immerse themselves in their work outside the home. Mothers have taken up all kinds of positions: some were overprotective and were accused of building a symbiotic relationship with their children. As a consequence of this symbiotic relationship the mothers continued to treat their children as small children, even when they were adolescents and young grown-ups. These mothers were also accused of the fact that too often they were speaking for their children instead of letting them speak for themselves.

Other mothers however were described as 'fridge mothers' who were unable to bond emotionally with their child. For a while this last instance was even regarded in some psycho-analytical circles as a possible cause for the label 'autism' that was attached to some children (Van Hove, De Belie & De Waele, 2002).

Furthermore, clinicians called the entire family of a child with a disability a 'family with a disability'. Due to the frame of mind of these clinicians, entire generations of young care assistants received their training with images such as 'the neurotic parent', 'the suffering parent', 'the dysfunctional parent', 'the powerless parent', etc. (Ferguson, 2001).

It is clear that the concept outlined above discredits those fathers and mothers who in the course of history have stood on the barricades, in their own environment or in wider society, and tried to improve the quality of life of their children and/or secure a place in society for them. The tide is clearly turning. People involved in training and research are increasingly faced with the fact that the old 'clinical view' fails to understand some fathers/mothers. Many new forms of support now take their departure from a close cooperation in equal parts with fathers/mothers and the natural network. Fathers/mothers themselves also realise more and more that their perspective is important and that it has a great deal of influence on the path their child will take.
(see Dan Habib, Ferguson, cited in Devlieger, 2003). The above lines, namely: the need for changed images so fathers and mothers are better understood and 'to work together in equality' will be at the heart of this paper.

Methodology

Writing this paper was made possible by collecting empirical data while having a close relationship with fathers/mothers of children with disabilities. For the last ten years the authors have been closely involved, in the form of action research, with a family project in Flemish speaking part of Belgium (Ouders voor Inclusie (= Parents for Inclusion)), which advocates that families decide for their child with special needs – and this often against professional advice – to be educated in a mainstream school (Van Hove et al., 2008).

As non-linguists, we still dared to collect images and metaphors as research material given to us by fathers/mothers. For our work with metaphors, we found the work by Danforth (2008) very helpful, who rightly states that "the analysis of metaphors within cognition and language has to be seen as one way to illuminate and interrogate the social meanings of disabilities that are produced within cultural activity" (p. 386).

The metaphors for this article were gathered by a 'key incidents' method (Emerson, 2004). Key incidents are events or observations that help to open up significant, often complex lines of conceptual development (Emerson, 2004). It is a research strategy that is coupled to the ethnography from the actual experience of many ethnographers that their analyses were strongly shaped by particularly telling or revealing incidents or events that they observed and recorded (Emerson, 2004). A key incident (Emerson, 2004) attracts a particular field researcher's immediate interest, even if what occurred was mundane and ordinary to participants. This 'interest' is not a full-blown, clearly articulated theoretical claim, but a more intuitive, theoretically sensitive conviction that something intriguing has just taken place. These key incidents are helpful for a naturalistic analysis that is necessarily open-ended and emergent, tied to and deriving from specific pieces of what has been seen, heard and recorded (Emerson, 2004).

It helps the 'naturalistic retroduction' moving back and forth between observations (here: images and metaphors) and theory (here: about parenting and children with disabilities and about
power mechanisms between professionals and parents). So, original theoretical statements are modified to fit observations, and observations are collected that are relevant to the emerging theory.

**Research findings and discussion**

The following metaphors will be presented: the traveller, Tintin in the land of care providers, the manager, the trainer/teacher, the bridge builder, the tight-rope walker, the strategist/diplomat, the warrior and the explorer. We are of the opinion that the metaphors we were able to collect were introduced in our communication by the fathers/mothers consciously and purposefully to make their own positions clear. In this way they try to build a barrier against the preconceived ideas of 'the parents' that were installed over the years. In this, we follow Steen (2007), who is of the opinion that there is indeed a relation between the language used and cognitive processes.

Some positions (Maccartney, 2008) (e.g. the manager – the warrior) are explicitly taken up by the fathers/mothers to protest against the defectological/deficit discourses used by some professionals (and their systems) for their children. Goodley (2007) introduces the work of Deleuze and Guattari to show that many practices of social care are based on binary thinking, where children with disabilities are put in contrast with classifications such as 'healthy', 'normal' and 'fully participating' (see also Maccartney, 2008; Winance). These practices threaten to territorialise the mind, self and body. It is from these defectological discourses stated in the position, 'Tintin in the land of care providers', that the parents are given advice about education, schooling, therapy, etc. that threatens to put them on the sideline. This advice is given by experts who underline their expert status by their specific techniques of classification, assessment and labelling and thus ignore the expertise of the fathers/mothers. It is also these processes that make the children end up in 'a special circuit', a circuit where because of their special needs they are seen as requiring a different 'treatment' than their 'normal' peers. With all this going on, we see some fathers/mothers revolt and take on the fight.

A number of other positions (e.g., the bridge builder, the diplomat, the tight-rope walker) teach us about fathers/mothers who do not revolt as such but use 'clever strategies' to retain more control over the education of their child. These positions could be compared with a kind of
'working through' as introduced by Braidotti (2004). This author describes the process in which people take up a position where on the one hand they do what is expected of them. On the other hand, people make their own assessment of the position and look for new codes and opportunities. The fathers/mothers from our study use this very deliberately to improve the participation of their child (e.g. by finding 'important allies', by networking with people who 'can help' to realise the plan for their child, by avoiding conflicts with persons and agencies that you want to be on your side when you are trying to effect more participation for children with disabilities). Fathers/mothers are transformed in their position as a parent. This transformation cannot just be described in terms of 'learning to live with' their child with a disability. The previous history and their experiences 'define' them in a certain way as a parent. "Conditions for such a transformation are for the fathers/mothers: the ability to accept their child as it is, with the intention to make the best of it, the conviction that this father/motherhood is meaningful, building up confidence and the ability to live with uncertainty" (Isarin, 2004, p. 154).

There are also positions (e.g., the traveller – the explorer) which show that people, in their role as 'father/mother' as well as in their personal development, sometimes draw on a special source of energy and consequently are far away from the linear thought that 'insecurity paralyses' (Fisher & Goodley, 2007; Goodley, 2007). These fathers/mothers will start searching, go on a journey (literally and figuratively speaking) and take unexpected steps for their child and themselves. They bring us to the concept of 'nomadism' as outlined by Braidotti (2004): these fathers/mothers do not renounce their 'old self', but exploit the situation with their child with special needs to reinvent themselves (and their family). They show us that they possess exceptional intelligence and creativity. They show us that they excel themselves and at the same time get modestly flustered when they look at their own 'achievements', their own way of grasping opportunities, their own way of developing and exceeding their own expectations.

Fully in line with the latest versions of the labelling theory (Link et al., 1989) there are also fathers/mothers who choose a position as trainer/teacher. They don't place themselves – as in earlier versions of the labelling theory – in a kind of passive victim position, feeling they cannot compete with the people who attach a label to their children (with all the negative consequences of this label as a result). On the contrary, they want to exploit the special situation
of their child to supply information in order to prepare (future) professionals for a relationship with their children.

This paper was based on:


References


Youth in Transition: Strategies for Successful Inclusion

Jacqueline Specht – The University of Western Ontario

&

Marilyn Dolmage, Integration Action for Inclusion

The invitation to this conference acknowledges that the rights of people with intellectual disabilities have historically been violated across all aspects of their lives, including education. Without effective education, all other opportunities in life may be compromised. There is thus a need for advocacy to improve opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities, to support their families and to create truly inclusive communities where people of all abilities contribute and are supported. The key goal of this presentation is to share the leading and promising research related to achieving better educational, employment and personal outcomes for youth with intellectual disabilities.

Poverty, Unemployment, and Social Exclusion

The Canadian Association for Community Living 2009 National Report Card on Inclusion of Canadians with an Intellectual Disability indicates that of working-age people (15-64 years) with intellectual disabilities who live alone, 73.2% live below the poverty line compared to 23.3% of working-age Canadians without disabilities who live alone. Additionally, the employment rate for working-age adults with an intellectual disability is only one-third of the employment rate of people without a disability (25.5% compared to 75.5%). The average income for working age people with an intellectual disability who are working is less than half of that of Canadians without a disability As long as people with intellectual disabilities continue to be excluded from the labour market there will be an over-reliance on social assistance as the primary source of income. All too often these income support systems are inadequate and stigmatizing. Clearly, we need to investigate the systems that get people with intellectual disabilities to the point of not being included in the labour force. Our education system is the one to which we turn.

Educational Policy and Exclusion
The category of *developmental disability* is defined by the Ontario Ministry of Education (2002) as a severe learning disorder characterized by:

- an inability to profit from a special education program for students with mild intellectual disabilities because of slow intellectual development;
- an ability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate slow intellectual development;
- a limited potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.

Jorgensen (2005) wrote the least-dangerous assumption when working with students with significant disabilities is to assume that they are competent and able to learn, because to do otherwise would result in harm such as fewer educational opportunities, inferior literacy instruction, a segregated education, and fewer choices as an adult. Unlike other exceptionalities, the developmental disability label might thus be called “dangerous” because it prejudices students’ potential in a way that is likely to limit the instruction they receive, alter their school experience and affect their entire lives.

In 1994, the Ontario Ministry of Education announced that placement of students with exceptionalities in regular classrooms should be the normal practice. Since September 1998, Ontario law has required the consideration of placement in regular classrooms for students identified with any exceptionality – depending on parental preferences and whether students’ needs can be met there. We may ask whether regular class is offered as a “choice” to their families, especially if schools have more power than students or parents to determine student needs and whether or not they can or will be met in a regular class placement.

In fact, Ontario students labelled with developmental disabilities are currently placed in segregated special education classes and schools to a much higher degree than students identified as having other exceptionalities (Bennett, Dwork, & Weber, 2008). This is especially true in secondary school. For example, according to the Upper Canada District School Board October 2008 report to the Ministry of Education, students with developmental disabilities are much more likely than other exceptional students to be placed in its special classes, especially in secondary school. In some places, segregation seems to persist or even increase. For example, in a 2008 Human Rights and Persons with Intellectual Disabilities Conference 2010
report, the Toronto District School Board website reveals that the number of students placed in its self-contained special education classes increased by 39% between 2002-03 and 2007-08, a time of declining enrolment overall. Over those same years, the cost of its self-contained schools increased by $11 million.

Inclusive Education

Many definitions are used and there is no one agreed upon definition. However, as a general rule, we can look at inclusion as the teaching of children with exceptionalities in the general education classroom by the general education teacher. In this way, the general education teacher assumes responsibility for ALL of his/her students (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2010).

Education in the inclusive classroom is a right. Students with disabilities are entitled to additional support, both accommodations and modifications, related to their unique, individual characteristics. The Ontario Human Rights Commission developed Guidelines on Accessible Education in 2004, to clarify rights and responsibilities. Before considering “separate or specialized services” - "education providers must first make efforts to build or adapt educational services to accommodate students with disabilities in a way that promotes their inclusion and full participation". These guidelines involve promoting inclusive (or universal) design, removing existing physical, attitudinal, systemic and other barriers, and accommodating remaining needs to the point of undue hardship.

A great deal of professional development and school change effort has taken place across Ontario because of the 2005 document: Education for All: The Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy and Numeracy Instruction for Students With Special Education Needs, Kindergarten to Grade 6. (Ontario Ministry of Education)

Learning For All: K – 12 was released by the Ministry of Education in the Fall of 2009 – to “establish classroom routines and practices that represent personalized, ongoing data-driven, focused instruction”, as inspired by the work of Fullan, Hill and Crevola, 2006. This document calls for changes in both beliefs and practices inspired by “moral purpose: education for all that raises the bar as it closes the gap.” In particular, the document is “focused on the importance of helping each student reach his or her potential” (p. 11).
Does "all" really mean "all" - especially if so many students with intellectual disabilities are still in segregated classes? Unfortunately, many people do not see people with intellectual disabilities as part of the ALL in the inclusive classroom. Burge, Ouellette-Kuntz, and Hutchinson (2008) investigated the views of the public in south-eastern Ontario, about inclusive education of students with an intellectual disability. Fifty-two percent of respondents were positive, and those agreeing with inclusion were more likely to be younger and to have known someone with an intellectual disability who was not a family member. However, 42 percent believed that education in special schools was best. Respondents said that if such students were actually included in regular schools there may be discipline problems; other students would find it harder to learn; schools would lack resources; and teachers would not be prepared. We know that both students with intellectual disabilities and their peers perform better academically and socially in inclusive classrooms (Freeman, 2000; Kalambouka, Farrell, Dyson, & Kaplan, 2007).

Burge et al. (2008) conclude that the benefits of educating children with intellectual disabilities alongside those without disabilities must be better communicated to the public in order to further strengthen support for inclusion and increase available educational resources to address the remaining challenges.

The purpose of education is to create citizens. If we want an inclusive society, we need inclusive schools. Research tells us what helps people with intellectual disabilities become included adults. We need to start there so that we may understand how to help schools know what works.

Transition

Participants in the Canadian Knowledge Network on Employment, Career Development and Life-Long Learning (2004) demanded a stop to use of the term “transition”. They pointed out that is not something to which high school students usually aspire. Transition for students with disabilities usually involves “case co-ordination” and a future trapped within the service system. Most students think about graduation – and greater freedom. This call displays the interesting issue of language. While the research literature uses the term to mean the passage from one place or phase to another, it has become a buzz word in the education system associated with a box to check on the IEP once a student with a disability is 14. The different perspectives are ones that

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are not atypical in language. The word is used here as broad concept meaning moving from the youth to adult phase in life; one in which all people partake with varying degrees of success.

Specht and Rogers (2008) carried out an extensive literature review and summarized findings and conclusions about successful transition from youth to adult, for youth with disabilities. There has been a shift in practice in the last twenty years, moving from institutionalizing and towards including persons with disabilities in their communities, from isolation to connection, and from models of deficits and dysfunction to capabilities and membership.

**We must take the whole person into consideration**

The dynamic nature of community inclusion is an interaction between individuals, families, communities and systems and is best viewed in terms of Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and Relational Cultural Theory (Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver & Surrey, 1991), which between them stress the interaction of the people with their environments and mutually empowering, reciprocal relationships.

*Inclusion means having choices*

The notion of choice implies power, and if young people with disabilities do not have choices about their next steps (e.g., choosing to work or to go to post secondary education; choosing among work places or schools), they do not have the same power to direct their own lives as do their non-disabled peers.

*Transition is a process, not a goal*

There are two key issues that must be addressed in terms of transition. First, in order to successfully make a transition, there must be a beginning point and attainment of a goal or objective. For many young people, few or limited options for employment, further education, or social opportunities once they complete secondary school, leave them with no place to transition “to” (i.e., the goal or objective is missing). *Second*, because transition is a process, it takes planning, monitoring and careful consideration of the person and his/her context. Research shows that for many people with disabilities, transition planning does not happen soon enough or in the context of their lived experience.
Outcomes for youth with disabilities tend to improve over time

It takes some extra time for youth and young adults with disabilities to achieve successful transition, (e.g., employment or further education), as compared to their nondisabled peers, but it does happen for many (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996).

Key Transition Issues

A number of key issues were identified as themes in the research literature:

Social isolation

Friendships develop over time and people with disabilities must be given the opportunities to develop friendships, in order to experience healthy development (Batchelor & Taylor, 2005).

Community attitudes

The attitudes of the community (e.g., including treating those with disabilities as invisible or providing accessible programs and spaces) act as barriers and facilitators to inclusion (Devine & King, 2006). People without disabilities need to accept that those with disabilities are a part of the community, and welcome them.

Advocacy

A community advocate who is familiar with community resources and opportunities and the needs of young people and their families, and who is able to spend time listening and engaged in effective communication with them, would be an effective facilitator for smooth transition (Benz, Lindstrom & Yovanoff, 2000).

Interagency collaboration

Research shows that interagency agreements through the use of blending or braided funding show promise in facilitating effective transition services (Crane, Gramlich, & Peterson. 2004; Timmons, 2007).

The development of roles in society for youth

We must view people with disabilities as having roles in society, and allow those roles to be tested and practiced while youth are still in the supportive school environment.
Overall Themes Detected In the Literature

Communication and stigma

The overarching barriers to both inclusion and the transition process continue to be stigma and lack of communication. To be a person with a disability in Ontario means that you cannot expect to experience competitive employment, post-secondary education, social relationships, or independent living at rates anywhere near those experienced by people without disabilities. It means to have access to possibilities means having choices. Unfortunately, all too often, youth and young adults in Ontario have no choices. Outdated ways of thinking, including a focus on deficits and service-centred models of care, must be replaced by a focus on capabilities and person-centred models.

Communication is key to knowing and understanding the needs of individuals, families and communities. With up to five Ministries with an interest in community inclusion – Children and Youth Services; Community and Social Services; Health and Long-Term Care; Education; and Training, Colleges and Universities, we must find a way to bring all stakeholders to the same table to work together to support individuals with disabilities. We must create opportunities to involve all sectors, resources, individuals and their families in planning, preparing, facilitating, and evaluating successful transitions to adult systems of care and toward participation in employment, education, social relationships, independent living, and community membership.

Coordination and Access to Services

Unlike the child system of care, where Education provides what is often the single coordination point for services, the adult system of care is characterized by unwieldy bureaucracies that too frequently do not know and understand the unique strengths and needs of the individual and their systems of support, and sectors (such as employment and post-secondary education) that are not compelled to participate in providing opportunities for youth and young adults with disabilities.

Given the research literature a number of implications arise.

For Youth
Get involved in activities and programs that offer the opportunity to get to know other people, and develop friendships and other social relationships.

Develop and practice self-advocacy and self-determination skills and ideas.

For Families

Advocate for choices, opportunities, and access in school, leisure, service learning and employment settings.

Make connections with key informants in their community who can assist in matching opportunities and resources to the youth’s needs and strengths.

Reach out to other families for support and to exchange ideas and information.

For Community Service Providers

Listen to and get to know youth with disabilities, their families and their lived experience.

Address the whole person in programming using a model that is inclusive of many facets of the person and their needs. Models that include Self-Awareness, Emotional Support, Community Knowledge, Direct Experience, System Level Facilitation, Community Education and Advocacy can provide a valuable template for systematic and effective strategy building.

This research synthesis provides a useful background for investigation change in the process of inclusion in secondary schools.

Secondary School Inclusion

Secondary school is an important time for learning, making choices and contacts, setting and meeting goals, gaining experience, and trying out new roles – not to mention spreading wings, taking flight and having fun! And yet, this is precisely the time when students with intellectual disabilities in Ontario are most segregated. It does not have to be that way.

Effective inclusive education involves setting the highest possible, individualized expectations for academic and social learning. No matter how far from grade level their learning expectations are, students with disabilities need to feel connected with other students and to the curriculum delivered in their classes. Inclusion means students feel they belong and their
teachers demonstrate a commitment to their success. There is information to be shared about how teachers and students can be supported to make this work.

Those who seek this change want “Evidence of Effective High School Inclusion: Research, Resources and Inspiration”. In fact, that is the title of a 2009 research report that investigates how selected secondary schools develop and sustain their motivation and strategies to teach students with significant disabilities as members of regular classes (Dolmage, Young, Stuart, Specht, & Strickland, 2009). Funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education, Integration Action for Inclusion in School and Community, Ontario (IAI) led this project, in partnership with the Centre for Inclusive Education at the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario.

This research supports an extensive body of literature which has provided ample information about “what” inclusive education is, and “why” it must happen. It also considers “how” to sustain and enhance secondary school inclusion, especially from the perspectives of the school staff directly involved. The Ministry and the researchers saw a need to consider how this happens in schools which have no segregated special education classes and where teachers in regular classrooms must therefore provide a very high degree of curriculum modification for some of their students.

The Essential Best Practices in Inclusive High Schools - developed at the University of New Hampshire sets out a variety of indicators which are empirically based and have been shown to relate to effective inclusive practices. This was adapted to create a questionnaire to stimulate focus group discussions (which can be found at http://www.edu.uwo.ca/inclusive_education/pdfiles/IAI%20EDU%20Indicator%20Planning%20and%20Feedback%20Tool.pdf). Staff teams at Brockville Collegiate Institute (in the Upper Canada District School Board) and St. Anne’s Catholic High School (in Clinton, in the Huron Perth Catholic District School Board) shared their experiences and perspectives.

Both schools identified remarkably similar strengths in their commitment to set high expectations for the learning of all students and in their sense that all students belong and should participate fully in all aspects of the school environment. They saw a need to improve curriculum
and instructional support as well as future planning for their students. They also called for more system support and collaboration for reflective practice. Important areas for discussion involved social relationships among students, the role of educational assistants and future access to assistive and augmentative communication. One group of parents discussed both the improved opportunities for their sons and daughters, and the need for ongoing advocacy. Teachers strongly agreed that their efforts to meaningfully include students with intellectual disabilities have helped them to teach students of all abilities more effectively.

By conducting this unique research, a family advocacy organization assisted schools to demonstrate both their work and their willingness to improve education for students of all abilities, learning together as members of regular high school classrooms. The research report can assist families and educators to better understand each others’ perspectives and discover ways to improve the future planning, academic learning and social opportunities for their students. While there is much to be learned from this project, participants called for further reflection and collaboration for continued school improvement. The challenge for the future is to connect those who have experienced secondary school inclusion and those who are determined to make it happen.

This research was conducted in a way that respected the strengths of the school teams involved, that creates new connections and focuses on change for a better future. This approach is common sense; it respects all we know about human nature. And that is precisely why we need to stop focusing on the disabilities of students, stop segregating them, and move forward with strong, united action.

SUMMARY

The Canadian Knowledge Network on Employment, Career Development and Life-Long Learning report (2004) set out promising practices in finding employment for young people with intellectual disabilities, starting while they were still in school. Funding was provided by Human Resource Development Canada for the Canadian Association for Community Living to bring together people from Alberta, Newfoundland and Ontario. This report shows that employment is more likely for students who have had an inclusive education, because they
know and are known by a wider network of people
- enjoy diverse learning experiences - in and out of school
- have had more experience at making choices
- are known for their strengths and contributions; and
- have people to advocate for future supports in their lives.

Inclusive education has already been a key part of rights agendas – in Ontario, across Canada, and internationally - for many years. It was 1994 when UNESCO brought people together in Salamanca, Spain, from all over the world, to consider the rights of students with special educational needs. Students who were not even born then are now entering high school in Ontario; will they be segregated, or included?

Research about high school and future planning for students with intellectual disabilities shows us that effective inclusion can happen. Change takes action. We can show each other how. If there really is a will, there is a way.

References


Human Rights and Persons with Intellectual Disabilities Conference 2010


Specht, J., & Rodger, S. (2008). Transitioning youth with disabilities. Knowledge Mobilization Project between the University of Western Ontario, MCYS and MCSS.

Timmons, J. (2007). Models of collaboration and cost sharing in transition programming. NCSET Information Brief, 6(1).


APPENDIX

2004 Canadian Knowledge Network on Employment, Career Development and Life-Long Learning


1. NETWORKING
   - students and families lead the way.
   - we all get jobs because of who we know
   - connect with future employers and co-workers
   - commitment helps everyone
   - relationships are persistent and personal

2. SELF-DETERMINATION
   - “nothing about me without me”
   - expectations for the semester
   - good matches
   - real choices – like post-secondary education
   - pride in achievements

3. BEYOND PLANNING – TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT
   - Use what we know about career development, for anyone
   - Start early
   - But keep options open
   - “I have a dream” – not “I have annual goals and learning”

   Change will not be achieved by OLD MINDS with New Programs,
   but by NEW MINDS with NO PROGRAMS

4. COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES – FOR ALL - ANYONE
   - Strengths focus
   - Consider passions and preferences
- Life-long learning
- Develop strengths further – but in "real" environment
- BUT be creative about supporting anyone – no matter what it takes
- Challenge the system to remove barriers

5. INCLUSIVE LIFE EXPERIENCES
   - Inclusive high school education
   - Neighbourhood life
   - Employment and work experience during high school

6. ACCESS TO RESOURCES
   - Inclusion and Informal supports?
   - Individualized Funding
   - Collectives, co-operatives
   - Challenge service systems
   - Supporters do "as little as possible and as much as necessary"
   - Job development
Your Rights and the AODA

*Vicki Mayer, ATN Access Inc., One-step Board President, London, ON*

Between February 18 and May 22, 2009, the Ontario government released the proposed Employment Standards of the AODA for public review. A standards development committee, composed of representatives from the disability and business communities, created the proposed standard. Vicki Mayer, co-presenter of this workshop, was a member of that committee.

This session will provide an overview of the AODA and the promises made specific to leveling the playing field for job seekers with disabilities. It will provide the background for the Employment Standards Committee's lengthy journey. The proposed Employment Accessibility Standards will be reviewed with explanation of the committee's intent and the compromises and promises inherent in the document. The goal of the proposed standard is to help and encourage employers to create equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities, and the presentation will discuss strategies for inclusion.

The Committee's initial proposed standard sets out specific requirements for all organizations in Ontario with at least one employee. Six classes of organizations have been indentified to represent types and sizes of organizations that may have different compliance schedules. The long term objective of the Employment Accessibility Standard is to set out policies, procedures and requirements for the prevention, identification and removal of barriers across all stages of the employment life cycle for persons with disabilities. The Ontario Human Rights Code already has provisions and regulations protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities (and all job seekers). **On March 11, 2010, Canada ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. These covenants are meant to safeguard the rights of job seekers through the process of looking for and obtaining a job. This information,**
along with a consideration of the questions an interviewer can and cannot ask, will be part of the presentation.
Employment Supports

Joe Dale, Ontario Disability Employment Network, Rotary at Work, Whitby, ON

Rising labour shortages, enhanced technology, an increasing awareness in the business sector and other economic indicators suggest employment opportunities for people with disabilities are going to improve over the next few years. While legislation and regulation may ensure fair and equal access to the labour market, many of these individuals will require services and supports to realize this goal. Currently there is no “entitlement” to employment services and supports for people who have a disability in Ontario. Issues related to employment services and supports that are available to people with disabilities and the barriers that limit or even restrict people from accessing needed services will be discussed.

There are three primary funders of employment services for people with disabilities in Ontario: ODSP Employment Supports, funded by Ontario's Ministry of Community and Social Services; Employment Ontario, funded by Ontario's Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities; and Opportunities Fund, funded by the Federal Government's Service Canada. All three of these programs are under review and in a state of transformation. Each of these programs will be reviewed, and their current status as well as trends that are emerging through the transformation process will be highlighted. Some of these may have both positive and negative consequences.

With indicators in the business sector showing improved opportunities for people with disabilities, we need to ensure that the services and supports that are designed to assist these individuals do not themselves add to or become the barriers.
Legislative and Policy Barriers to Educational Access for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

Fran Marinic-Jaffer, M.A., M.Ed., Doctoral Candidate, University of Toronto

The purpose of this presentation is to identify aspects of legislative policy that appear to provide universal access to all students but that effectively deny access to students with intellectual disabilities. Such policies have the ability to effectively deny integrated classroom placement and access to equitable educational opportunities. The areas under scrutiny are:

- The academic labels of “developmental disability” and “mild intellectual disability”
- Parental right to disclosure
- Parental right to an advocate
- Right to integration as a placement of first consideration
- Right to provision of the Parent Guide
- Right to informed consent:
  - the risks of consent
  - the benefits of consent
- your right to know what you are signing and the implications
- Parental right to appeal: SEAB and SET
- Disconnect between the right to provision of services and appropriate accommodations within the Ontario Human Rights Code and the absence of an appeal right to programs and services
- The danger of consent to psychological assessment: Alternative Assessment as a tool for universal access
- The right to appropriate education starting with regular class curriculum
- The right to parental participation and home school collaboration.
- The right to a transition plan.
- The right to know about funding and how your child’s profile is used for the acquisition of funding
- The need for accountability mechanisms that are absent from the legislation to protect the interests of these students and their families.
Accessing Post Secondary Educational Opportunities

Rodney Marsh, CICE Coordinator, Lambton College, Sarnia, ON
Rosanna To, CICE Coordinator, Humber College, Toronto, ON
Kathy Payne-Mercer, Durham College (Parent), Oshawa, ON
Laura Mercer, Durham College (2nd Year Student, CICE Program), Oshawa, ON
Jennifer Ricketts, Facilitator, Humber College, Toronto, ON
Chair: Gerry Page, (Retired) Coordinator, Community Integration through Cooperative Education, Lambton College (CICE), Sarnia, ON

"Excellent education is education that is excellent for all."
"We cannot afford to waste the potential of any of our young people."

-Judith E. Heumann (1999) Assistant Secretary,
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services,
United States Department of Education

With the introduction of the Educational Act in 1980 (Bill 82) school boards were given the responsibility for providing or purchasing special education services for their exceptional students in Ontario. While no such legislation exists in post secondary institutions, current and new programs are being developed to provide eligible students with access to a variety of post secondary programs in Ontario’s Colleges. This session will examine the importance of a post secondary education and will describe the supports available in College for students who have an intellectual disability. In addition a student and parent point of view will look at the benefits and challenges of entering the post secondary arena.

Currently four programs entitled Community Integration through Cooperative Education (CICE) exist in Ontario’s Colleges. These programs are located at Humber College (Toronto), Sault College (Sault Ste Marie), Lambton College (Sarnia), and Durham College (Oshawa).
Other colleges in Ontario are looking at offering similar programs and it is hoped that in the near future these programs will be available in other communities.

**Gerry Page**

Gerry will give a brief overview of the history of how the CICE program began at Sault College and Lambton College. He will also discuss some of the challenges involved in setting up a program and how important support from all sectors in the community is critical for ensuring a successful program. This assistance includes not only the college (internal supports), students, parents, local and regional school boards, and agencies, but also government and employer support. He will also in brief discuss the various program models that were looked at in setting up the CICE program and the different options.

**Laura Mercer and Kathy Payne-Mercer**

As a second year CICE student at Durham College, Laura will be completing her final semester this month (April 2010). Laura will discuss her area of concentration and will provide the audience with pictures taken around campus. Using photos, Laura will talk about her day to day experiences in college and also what it has been like living away from home in the students’ residence.

As a parent, Kathy will briefly discuss why having post secondary opportunities was so important for her daughter and her family. She will share as a parent about the impact college has had on Laura’s life. As well, she will talk about the challenges there have been in supporting Laura’s independence and also ensuring that the supports are in place to address Laura’s needs.

**Rodney Marsh**

Rodney will discuss how the CICE program works at Lambton College. He will describe the educational model, which supports inclusion and the supports provided to the students. In addition, Rodney will discuss some of the challenges and opportunities the students have experienced and highlight some of the successes they have achieved during their academic journey.

**Rosanna To and Jennifer Ricketts**
Rosanna will describe Humber College’s CICE program model and discuss the challenges and opportunities the students face as well as some of the many successes students have encountered. Jennifer will discuss her role as a facilitator and the opportunities students have experienced.

For more information on the CICE programs, please visit the following websites.
http://www.humber.ca/program/cice
http://www.saultcollege.ca/Programs/Programs.asp?progcode=1120&cat=overview&groupc=CIC
http://www.lambton.on.ca/Programs/program_html?PROGCODE=CICE&LASTRECORDID=1879
https://myplace.durhamcollege.ca/durham/program.do?from=subject&programID=1377
The 3Rs Project: Focus on Rights Education for Everyday Life

Frances Owen, Brock University, St.Catharines, ON
Dorothy Griffiths, Brock University, St.Catharines, ON
Leanne Gosse, Brock University, St.Catharines, ON
Stephen Agnew, Community Living Welland Pelham, Welland, ON
Brandy Sokoloski, Community Living Welland Pelham, Welland, ON

Since 2000, the 3Rs: Rights, Respect and Responsibility team of researchers, community professionals and students have been working together to develop and evaluate approaches to human rights education for persons with intellectual disabilities, their family members and community care providers. The 3Rs: Rights, Respect and Responsibility Community University Research Alliance grew out of abuse prevention research that focused on issues related to sexual education and coercion prevention (Griffiths, 1995; Griffiths, Feldman, & Tough, 1997). A combination of evolving enquiry and a funding opportunity inspired the group to move beyond the focus on victims or potential victims to examine the contexts in which abuse occurs (Owen, Griffiths, Sales, Feldman, & Richards, 2000; Owen, Sales, Griffiths, & Richards, 2001). This broad, systemic approach to the investigation of rights promotion focuses on rights enacted in the social context to reflect respect for the rights of others while also maintaining responsibility for one’s own well being and commitments.

The 3Rs team has developed educational packages to help persons who have intellectual disabilities to become aware of their rights in everyday life, including how to differentiate rights restrictions from non-restrictions and how to assert their rights in a respectful and responsible manner. These are rights that reflect the expression of individuality, such as the right to make choices related to food, clothing, personal relationships, activities, housing and employment. This commitment to a socially grounded approach to rights education arose from a concern that rights presented in an absolutist sense can give the impression that one’s own preferences must always supercede the wishes of others. In a social context, such as living and working with others, this can create situations in which individuals can infringe on another’s rights in the process of asserting their own. The 3Rs team has sought to increase awareness of personal rights and freedoms while focusing on ways in which the enactment of these rights is undertaken with
consideration of others. This is a complex process that requires examination of many examples of how rights are negotiated day to day with friends, loved ones and co-workers. To do this, the three 3Rs team has developed three related training packages to inform persons with intellectual disabilities about their rights and how these rights relate to the rights of others.

Brief History of the 3Rs Project

The genesis for the 3Rs: Rights, Respect and Responsibility Community-University Research Alliance lies in the commitment of Community Living Welland-Pelham and Brock University researchers to find ways to prevent abuse among people who have intellectual disabilities who have been shown to be at much higher risk than members of the general population (Sobsey, 1994). This commitment, together with the agency’s focus on preparing for accreditation, which included the need to establish a human rights committee, and the availability of a small grant to hire research assistants prompted the development of the first project in the 3Rs series. This initial step included the development of a Rights Statement for Community Living Welland-Pelham that was based on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Owen et al., 2004) and an agency-wide survey to examine the extent to which the commitments reflected in the Rights Statement were being enacted on a day-to-day basis (Griffiths et al., 2004). This initiative was a courageous step on the part of the agency and reflected the commitment of its managers and staff to full enactment of its commitment to rights.

Recognizing that a policy related to rights and even a survey of current practices were insufficient, Community Living Welland-Pelham, with its research partners, worked to develop training programs to ensure that the Statement would be enacted in everyday practice.

Training for Board Members, Managers and Staff

Consistent with the commitment to examining rights in the social context, a central focus of the work of the 3Rs Project has always been on providing training to members of agency Boards of Directors, managers and staff to ensure that all members of the organization are prepared to uphold the principles to which the organization has committed itself (Owen et al., 2004). While a commitment to upholding human rights may seem to be obvious in human services, the practicalities of enacting such a rights agenda can be complex. For example, a person supported by an agency complained that an area of his work environment was physically inaccessible to him without staff assistance. He felt that this barrier to his independent access...
was an infringement of his rights as he expressed this concern to agency managers who, given their commitment to upholding the rights of the persons they support, had to undertake the expensive retrofit of the work space despite the fact that it had not been planned in the year's budget. Similarly, if a group home has developed a regular meal pattern and a new resident expresses a preference for a meal change, that food preference must be considered. However, in the latter example, the practicalities of considering food preferences must also be considered. The commitment to rights in the context of respect and responsibility dictate that while a person has the right to have his/her food preferences accommodated, this does not mean that one person can dominate the meal plans for all other group home residents. That would violate their rights. Neither does it mean that three different meals will be prepared to accommodate each individual’s preferences every day. Instead, persons living in the group home should be involved in planning their meals together to accommodate the preferences of all. This can be a challenge for staff members who may have to change their previous shopping or meal preparation routines.

Training of those responsible for the operation of the agency is vital to ensure that they are prepared to respond appropriately to rights concerns such as the examples given above. In the absence of such a receptive environment, rights education for persons supported by the agency would, in essence, set them up for failure.

Training for Persons Supported by Agencies

Building on the principles enshrined in the agency’s Rights Statement, the first 3Rs educational package developed by the 3Rs Project introduces persons with intellectual disabilities to the concept of rights, how it relates to respect for the rights of other and need to take responsibility for one’s health and social commitments. The program includes games, exercises and discussion of the experiences of participants that relate to rights issues. The initial results of pre-post knowledge change for this program did not show significant results despite anecdotal reports of changes in the participants. However, on analysis it appeared that the evaluation strategy was too reliant on remembering long questions. This realization prompted the development of a second approach to training based more on interactive media.

In 2003, the 3Rs Project received grants to support the development of a CD-ROM that depicts rights scenarios that include rights dilemmas with a variety of remedial choices from which users can select the best option. They can then see the outcome of the choice they make.
The actors in these scenarios are members of the 3Rs Actors Advisory Committee consisting of persons supported by a community agency. This dedicated group has worked with the project team since the filming of the CD scenarios helping to develop subsequent training. Evaluation of the CD-ROM based training and the discussion version of the training with the use of video taped test items revealed significant pre-post increase in rights knowledge for both programs (Tardif-Williams et al., 2007).

The success of the first two versions of the educational program prompted the team to consider ways in which the program could be developed to assess learning in a more systematic manner using an approach based on applied behaviour analysis with a focus on assessing generalization to everyday life. The 3Rs team is currently in the process of completing data collection on a game-based version of the program that includes in vivo learning tests conducted outside the classroom setting.

The most eloquent evaluation of the rights education program developed by the 3Rs Project comes from members of our Actors Advisory Group, who were involved in the preparation of a demonstration video for those interested in participating in the program. When asked “How have the classes helped and what have they done for you guys and why do you think this project is important for other people to take?” Phyllis replied “I find it made me stronger, I wouldn’t be here today if it hadn’t made me strong” (Questioner: “How did it make you stronger?”) “I’m not a push over … the staff used to, just for example, not mentioning any names but staff used to say to me you’ve go to do this and you’ve go to do that” (Questioner: “And what do you say now?”) “I just say I don’t like being pushed, no thank you.”

In discussing the program Sandra said “You’ve got to make yourself tough including when you go home. … You’ve got to learn to be tough. That’s what I did.”

**Conclusion**

The 3Rs: Rights, Respect and Responsibility Community University Research Alliance now includes nine community agency partners; nine Brock University researchers from three difference faculties in the university, and researchers from three other universities in Canada and one in Australia; vitally important, creative and dedicated research assistants working with Community Living Welland-Pelham; and a large number of undergraduate, graduate and
doctoral students, some of whom have undertaken thesis research with the project. The team has developed a health rights education program, is in the process of finalizing an information package for families and is examining issues related to rights training for people who have limited expressive language.

References
All students benefit from inclusive education: school board chairperson

School board’s inclusive philosophy a driving force for 41 years

Deron Hamel

Since 1969, the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board’s (HWCDSB) philosophy — “Each belongs” — has been a driving force in the board’s effort to ensure that all students are included in every aspect of academic life, no matter their abilities.

The result of this philosophy has been that all students benefit socially and academically, says Patrick Daly, chairperson of the board of trustees for HWCDSB.

He points out that students attending schools represented by the board can expect to find themselves in supportive environments where friendships are made. Academic testing by the province and school board indicates that students of all abilities attain “positive results” in this atmosphere, Daly adds.

“It’s clear to all of us who have seen this system work over the last number of years that there have been two very important results. The first would be the fact that children (who have a disability) are able to attend their neighbourhood schools with their brothers and sisters, their friends and their neighbours, which is their right,” says Daly.

“The other is that other students have benefited — and I’ve seen this on numerous occasions. They benefit from having these young people as their classmates in their schools. They clearly have a much better understanding of the challenges of some of their peers, but also of the gifts that these young people bring to our school.”

Characterized by some as “the most inclusive school board on Earth,” HWCDSB’s philosophy stems from the “Catholic vision of the child,” says Daly.

He adds that the “Each belongs” philosophy has been ingrained in every teacher, principal and administrator in the 57 schools represented by the board. The philosophy, Daly notes, “has become part of who they are.”

“They all ensure that all of our students are included. We have no segregated programs,” says Daly.

“Since we have no segregated programs, all of our students are integrated into the full life of the school, academically, spiritually, and (with) the arts (and) athletics, depending on the abilities of the child and the wishes of the parents.”

What has sustained the philosophy, says Daly, is the support of parents and their love for their children, coupled with vigorous staff commitment.
If you have a story you would like to share with Community Living Leaders, please contact the newsroom at 800-294-0051, ext. 23, or e-mail deron(at)axiomnews.ca.

— Part 1 of a two-part series

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Commited staff, board the key ingredients to creating inclusive education: Daly

Chairperson of inclusive school board shares recommendations for success

Deron Hamel

Having a committed team of educators and board members are the key ingredients to having successful inclusive schools, says Patrick Daly, chairperson of the board of trustees for the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board (HWCDSB).

The school board, which represents 57 elementary and secondary schools, attended by approximately 30,000 students, has been characterized as “the most inclusive school board on Earth.” Schools represented by the board have practised inclusive education since 1969, something Daly is fiercely proud of.

“The key (to creating fully inclusive schools) would be to do like we did 40 years ago — to begin slowly, with a committed, compassionate principal, and select a group of very keen and supportive teachers and educational assistants,” says Daly.

“At the same time, you have to ensure, if it’s a publicly funded system, that the board of trustees is in support and is willing and able to provide sufficient human and other resources.”

Daly also recommends school boards wishing to become more inclusive consider adopting a philosophy reflective of their vision of inclusive education. This philosophy, he adds, can help “guide and sustain the program.”

“You have to ensure that people remain committed to it and stand up for the philosophy and for their beliefs — especially in the early development,” he says. “You have to stand up for what you really believe in.”

For 41 years, HWCDSB’s philosophy has been “Each belongs,” and these are words the board continues to stand by, he says.

Daly also recommends educators and board members looking to enhance inclusiveness take time to visit other school boards and schools to learn about what has worked well for them.

“Learn their strengths,” he says.

Daly notes that another reason HWCDSB has maintained a strong culture of inclusive education is the fact that its special education advisory committee, a mandatory component of every Ontario school board, has received strong community engagement over the years.
"We have had some absolutely wonderful parents and individuals and it's key that the board have a positive working relationship with that group and consult with them and get their important expertise," says Daly.

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_Part 2 of a two-part series_

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Rhetoric to Reality

A conference on Inclusive Education

Feb 25-27, 2010

Report to the SEAC (March 4, 2010)

- It’s unfortunate that there was no one available from the Niagara School Boards to be in attendance.

Many attendees were a little disillusioned over the lack of progress that has been made in the area of ensuring kids with disabilities feel included at their schools.

We learned that only 30% of all Canadian children who have an intellectual disability are included at their neighbourhood school.

School Boards, principals and teachers are very committed to what they do and they do some great work. It is clear that everything that School Boards and teachers do...they have their student’s best interests in mind. However; it seems that most school boards do not understand the merits of “true” inclusion. It was also very clear that most teachers also do not understand either. And those that do understand require support from the leaders in the School as well as at the board level. It was very telling where a supportive principal ensured inclusion was a big part of the School’s culture and where a principal did not.

Inclusion is not only an educational issue, but also a social issue (kids both disabled and non disabled do just as well, if not better in an inclusive environment). There were many stories about children feeling isolated and even bullied when kept apart or treated differently. The practice of treating certain children differently than the rest, unfortunately, only reinforces the notion to the regular students that this exclusionary practice is right and should continue all their life. It was interesting to see some of the more “hurtful” scenarios presented that most would not even expect might occur.

Teachers need to understand what true inclusion is and the value of needing to belong and the feeling of belonging. They need to learn more about differentiated learning. And finally, teachers need support.

Boards need to concern itself by setting value statements that would promote an all inclusive culture at neighbourhood schools; they should concern itself with the use of language and ensure that the culture is asset driven as opposed to deficit driven. Sometimes labels inadvertently determine our behaviour which may not be in the best interest of the child.

It was interesting to hear from people like Gordon Porter, who currently is the Director of Inclusive Education, with many years of experience in inclusive education. He is also the current Chair of the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission. He questions the strategies we have been using especially in that
they have been quite ineffective; certainly not to the degree he would like to see. He has been working on this for 30 years.

Also worth mentioning is Laszlo Galambos, Principal of Programs, Special Education with the Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board who presented how their schools have become quite inclusive. He stated that their policy says that “Each Belongs”. The philosophy of the Special Education department talks about kids going to their neighbourhood school and “Every child with challenging needs requires a sense of belonging”.

DR. Christopher Spence, who is new to the Toronto District School Board has the same views but admits his newness means he has a lot of work to do.

DR. Sheila Bennet, whom I'm sure you are aware, teaches at Brock University, also presented some research that supports the fact that all Kids learn just as well, if not better, in an inclusive environment, and all kids do better socially as well. There was also some research that supports what we already know, that kids learn from each other, which might explain the “behaviour” stuff we learn about in a congregated setting.

I have attempted to highlight what I thought members might want to hear from last weekend. I have many more notes and members are welcome to get in touch with me to discuss these and other items discussed.

I do want to ask a few questions for our consideration such as:

1. Where are we at this point with the District School Board of Niagara?
2. If we need to do some work (and I believe we do), how can we approach this?
3. Do the Trustees on SEAC and Board of the DSBN support this direction?

This is not meant to stir up issues of an adversary nature but to spar some discussion that would hopefully lead to some measures that would support inclusionary practices within the DSBN. My hope is that this would be a journey that all of SEAC and the DSBN would take together.

Respectfully Submitted

Andrew Howcroft, M. Ed.

Community Living Welland Pelham