

# education watch:

## an update on inclusive education

Volume 3, Issue 2 – Summer 2011

### New Zealand Report Draws on International Trends in the Education of Students with Special Educational Needs



**D**avid Mitchell, a former Professor of Education at the University of Waikato in Hamilton New Zealand, and now with the College of Education, University of Canterbury completed the study in July 2010. It is called ***Education that fits: Review of international trends in the education of students with special educational needs***. The purpose of the review is to outline international trends in the education of students with special educational needs, with the aim of informing the New Zealand Ministry of Education's review of special education. Professor Mitchell observes that: *How best to educate students with special educational needs (hereafter referred to as SWSEN) is one of the most dominant and controversial issues confronting educators around the world today. It is a complex and dynamic issue that demands careful and systematic analysis.*

A few of the conclusions that emerged are interesting in the Canadian context.

- The education of SWSEN is a complex process with many inter-related elements, most of which apply to education in general and some of which are specific to SWSEN.
- Educational provisions for SWSEN should not be primarily designed to fit the student into existing systems, but rather, they should also lead to those systems being reformed so as to better accommodate diversity, i.e., education should fit the student.
- Inclusive education goes far beyond the physical placement of SWSEN in general classrooms, but requires nothing less than transforming regular education by promoting positive school/classroom cultures and structures, together with evidence-based practices.
- Educational policies and practices for SWSEN (indeed all students) should be evidence-driven and data-based, and focused on learning outcomes.
- The rights of SWSEN to a quality education and to be treated with respect and dignity should be honoured.
- (Provincial) ... curricula and assessment regimes should be accessible to SWSEN, taking account of the principles of universal design for learning.
- Educational provisions for SWSEN should emphasise prevention and early intervention prior to referral for more costly special educational services, through such processes as graduated response to intervention.
- Partnerships with parents should be seen as an essential component of education for such students.
- In order to improve the quality of education for SWSEN, leadership must be exercised throughout the education system, from legislators to school principals.

For the full report, the website link is:

[http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/special\\_education/education-that-fits-review-of-international-trends-in-the-education-of-students-with-special-educational-needs](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/special_education/education-that-fits-review-of-international-trends-in-the-education-of-students-with-special-educational-needs)



Canadian Association  
for Community Living

Association canadienne pour  
l'intégration communautaire

Diversity includes. On se ressemble.



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# Specht Facilitates Inclusion Group



Dr. Jacqueline Specht

A network of university based faculty to discuss research related to inclusive education policy and practices in New Brunswick and throughout Canada. The

members form a “virtual” research team and focus on common interests and themes. While in Fredericton for Congress 2011 – they took the opportunity to meet. New Brunswick’s Minister of Education Hon. Jody Carr met with the group and shared his thoughts on inclusive education in his province. He agreed to collaborate where possible with the network members.

Dr. Jacqueline Specht, University of Western Ontario, is the chair of the group. She shares the following:

*“We can, whenever and wherever*

*we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need in order to do this. Whether we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven’t done it so far”* (Edmonds, 1979)

Many Canadian students with exceptionalities are educated in general education classrooms but may not be included in academic and social activities to the same extent as their peers without exceptionalities. Given that children who are educated in inclusive settings are in better health, enjoy going to school, progress well in school, and interact well with peers (Timmons & Wagner, 2010), it is paramount that inclusion is given priority in the education community. Research in the area of inclusion is urgently needed in order to provide answers to questions such as: What are the critical elements required to support inclusive education? What barriers exist in this regard? Why are

some children in some provinces included more than others? And, how can we best support administrators and teachers as they endeavour to include students with a wide range of exceptionalities in general education classrooms?

Although many Canadian scholars are involved in research that is directly related to inclusion, there is no national voice for research in this area at the present time. This Centre will allow researchers from coast to coast to form collaborative partnerships with local schools and community groups in order to develop a Canadian understanding of inclusion. This understanding is vitally important in a country in which education policies and practices are established and enacted provincially. By re-searching and disseminating our findings across Canada and around the world, we aim to empower teachers and others with the knowledge they need to be effective with all students, including those with exceptional needs.

## Academics Focused on Inclusive Education Gather

Professors from 10 Canadian universities met for a full day of discussion on how to work together to advance research into inclusive education in Canada. They were attending the social sciences conference Congress 2011 in Fredericton. For further information on their work as a group – contact Jacqui Specht at the University of Western Ontario.



**Front row:** Karen Gregory (University of Western Ontario), Dr. Jacqueline Specht (University of Western Ontario); Hon Jody Carr; Carla DiGiorgio (University of Prince Edward Island). **2nd Row:** Gordon Porter; Tim Loreman (Concordia University College of Alberta); Jennifer Katz (University of Manitoba); Sheila Bennett (Brock University); Scott Thompson (University of Regina); Lynn Aylward (Acadia University); Grace Howell (University of Western Ontario). **3rd Row:** Donna McGhie-Richmond (University of Victoria); Gabrielle Young (Memorial University of Newfoundland); Tiffany Gallagher (Brock University); John Freeman (Queens University); Paul Sandigan (Bohol Island State University, Philippines)

# Message from A Parent

By Sandy Phillips, British Columbia

**The day our daughter, Stephanie, came into the world I promised her she would never be excluded or segregated because of her disability. I promised her she would have equal opportunity for the good things in life- things like an education, friends, university, employment and a community that looks after one another.**

**W**e fought for our daughter, Stephanie, to be included in regular classes from kindergarten onwards and she was the first in our district 21 years ago to be taught in a regular classroom. We felt that there would be higher expectations in regular classes and good examples for her to learn to speak and act appropriately. This was born out in spades when she learned to read in grade two, made friends and was invited to children's birthday parties. Throughout her school career in Alberta, Ontario and Saskatchewan, she was in regular classes studying academic subjects alongside her peers. It was not easy because the school system could not see the benefit in her taking academic grade 12 courses if she was not going to get a Dogwood, or move on into post secondary education.

However, because of her full inclusion in the K-12 system Stephanie was exposed to subjects and ideas that motivated her to keep learning and more importantly reinforced her citizenship and right to belong in the same places as her brother and her neighbours and her classmates. As such, Stephanie became one of the first students with a developmental disability to spearhead the Inclusive Post Secondary Education movement in BC.

In 2004 she became a participatory auditing student at the University of Victoria where she followed her passions to learn about leadership, health and education. Naturally, her inclusion in public school instilled in her the right to study alongside other university students with similar career

interests. Stephanie had her course work modified and adapted to meet her learning style and with the appropriate inclusion support she became a fully participating university student.

During her time at UVic she had several summer jobs at her local recreation center where she was supported to assist in teaching children volleyball, yoga, belly dancing, food bingo and other fun activities. In 2009 Stephanie received a Certificate of Completion from the UVic Faculty of Education. Once again, our daughter graduated alongside her classmates who were also becoming leaders in their community.

We feel proud of Stephanie for pioneering the way, not only for other K-12 students, but for being in University courses in the Education department where future teachers have had an opportunity to see full inclusion at the post secondary level. If

modifications can be successfully done with university curriculum, surely they can be done in elementary and secondary schools

Today our daughter has a job at her community health and wellness store. She is about to join her local district's 'Healthy Schools' committee and continues to look for roles where she can contribute her leadership skills. Stephanie is earning enough to enjoy some of the activities she likes to do – cruises, movies, etc.. She has many friends and people who recognize her and she leads a very active life. She does not need a program and we envision her being able to live in her own apartment someday. Her confidence is growing daily and she is a very positive young woman with a great sense of humour. Inclusive education works from pre-school right through to post secondary. Our daughter's full and meaningful life is living proof.



**Diversity includes.  
On se ressemble.**



# NLACL awards two schools and one individual with the 2011 Inclusive Education Award



*Staff of Memorial Academy receiving their 2011 Inclusive Education Award.*

**I**nclusive Education is about how we develop our learning environments – schools, classrooms, programs and activities so that all students learn and participate together. It is based on the firm belief that all students have value and can best learn in regular classrooms, alongside students their own age. Inclusion means that our schools help develop positive relationships and mutual respect between all students.

On April 19 **Memorial Academy** in Botwood was awarded with the Inclusive Education award, a national award from the Canadian Association for Community Living. Examples of inclusive practices that happen at Memorial Academy are:

- All students are assigned and attend a regular homeroom.
- Providing a late bus run three afternoons a week to allow students the opportunity to participate in organized activities.
- Hosting a breakfast program every day.
- Attempting to maximize the use of technology and assistive devices to promote independent learning
- Believing and practicing that “one size does not fit all” because children do learn differently
- Understanding that all students are the responsibility of the regular

classroom but that working together is essential for the student’s growth

- Having a well-resourced literacy room to assist teachers
- The stay after 3 pm program for teacher’s professional development
- Engaging families in the grade three quilters day and the grade four grandparents day



*Sherry Gambin-Walsh, Community Inclusion Coordinator, NLACL presents Principal Mario Jarvis of Holy Name of Mary Academy with the 2011 Inclusive Education Award.*

On June 1 **Holy Name of Mary Academy** in Lawn was presented the Inclusive Education award.

Examples of inclusive practices that happen at Holy Name of Mary Academy are:

- All students are given the

opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities

- Students are supported to learn alongside their peers, in the classroom
- Teachers are provided collaboration time during school hours to plan lessons
- Strategies such as differentiated instruction and co-teaching are being implemented
- Expectations of students are high and they are encouraged to work towards an academic program which broadens their opportunities for the future
- Guided reading, literature circles, small group instruction, flexible instructional resource teacher scheduling, combining classes and collaboration on tasks are just some of the strategies being used here
- Bullying presentations, classes on stereotypes, gossip-free zone posters and active learning activities such as math bowling and identity chairs have contributed to the enhancement of an inclusive school environment



*Craig Pardy, principal for Clarenville Middle School, accepts the 2011 Inclusive Education Award from Sherry Gambin-Walsh, NLACL Community Inclusion Coordinator.*

On May 13 **Craig Pardy** the principal for Clarenville Middle School was awarded with the Inclusive Education award. It was very evident by the application that Mr. Pardy understands the meaning of inclusion. To turn the

concept of inclusion into reality takes a tremendous amount of effort, dedication and cooperation by all staff and students but most important it takes a very strong leader. Mr. Craig Pardy is such a leader.

Examples of inclusive practices that happen at Clarendville Middle School, under the direction of Principal Mr. Craig Pardy are:

- Based on the needs of the child, children are grouped with their peers.
- He constantly challenges himself and the staff to review their practices to ensure that Clarendville Middle School is doing the best that they can for all students. The motto "Where Children Come First" is evident of this.
- High expectations are defined relative to the individual students' capabilities and exceptionalities.
- He believes that all children can achieve and that success is their greatest motivator.
- He believes in the uniqueness of each student who attends this school.

- He has promoted the practices of Differentiated Instruction, encouraged staff to become well versed in these practices and provided teachers with professional development opportunities.
- He has embraced the concepts of co-teaching and creative scheduling thus capitalizing on the skill set of individual teachers, encouraging one teacher to be very innovative when it comes to developing practical and interesting science labs. These labs are successful at broadening the students' understanding, in a hands-on way, as to how these subject areas relate to everyday life.
- Mr. Pardy is committed to the journey of Inclusive Education.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living, by presenting Botwood Memorial Academy, Holy Name of Mary Academy and Craig Pardy with the 2011 Inclusive Education Award believes that they will continue to make the school community a place where all are accepted and valued members.

## Transition Top Ten Questions?



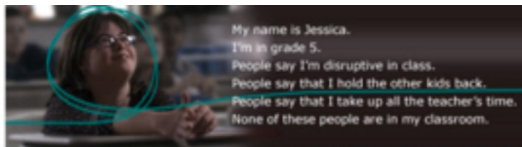
What questions should a parent ask when their son/daughter is about to transition from school to community? This a question on the minds

of many parents as schooling comes to an end.

Anne Kresta from Winnipeg has prepared a possible list. Take a look and see what you think.

Here are some questions that are top priorities when planning for a transition from school to the community as an adult.

1. When should planning begin?
2. Who should be involved?
3. How can we support our son/daughter through this process and into adulthood?
4. What do we, as parents, need to do?
5. What are some of the options that are out there for our consideration?
6. What is my son/daughter eligible for in terms of support from different service providers when they become an adult?
7. Who makes the decision about which pathway to graduation my son/daughter will take?
8. How long can my son/daughter remain within the education system receiving their supports?
9. How can we, as parents, make sure that our son/daughter remains a part of their community once they graduate?
10. Who is responsible for planning the transition from school to the community?



No excuses.

## 2009 Declaration – A Reminder

In 2009 CACL launched the No-excuses website and put forward a declaration on inclusive education.

The declaration begins as follows:

Inclusive Education...

- fosters a culture of respect and belonging in our schools and communities for all students, including students with intellectual disabilities;
- provides the opportunity to learn about and accept social and cultural diversity;
- provides quality education for every student to enhance individual development and personal growth;
- results in students with intellectual and other disabilities having a much greater chance of improved health status, being involved in their communities, completing high school and going onto post-secondary education, getting a job and having a decent income.

It goes on to define "inclusive education" and notes some thoughts on how we are doing and what is needed to do better.

If you missed this at the time, check out the website and sign on to the declaration. Your support matters.

<http://www.no-excuses.ca/Declaration/Declaration.html>



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# Superintendent Blogs Inclusive Education Canada's Gordon Porter



John McLaughlin, Superintendent of School District 15, Dalhousie, New Brunswick.

A superintendent of schools has featured inclusive education advocate Gordon Porter in his blog called “SuperPals”. John McLaughlin writes about people he finds inspiring and interviews them for his blog. Here is some information about John – and the link to his blog.

Hello world, and welcome to SuperPals! I am the Superintendent of **School District 15** in Dalhousie, New Brunswick, Canada, and the purpose of this project is to introduce you to some of the very fine people I’ve met over the years who are making a real difference in shaping Education for the new millennium. These people, who come from all corners of the world, work tirelessly to inspire our children and youth to be effective leaders in this 21st Century. Our paths have crossed at conferences and

workshops, through collaborative projects, in courses I’ve taken, and even just by happy happenstance! In any case, I am proud to share their profiles with you, and to tell you — from my perspective — why they are truly among the most important educational leaders at work today.

But before that, here’s a little about me, and why I feel it is important to write this blog. I’ve been superintendent of our school district since 2003, and in that time I’ve come to appreciate the tremendous responsibility we have to educate our students for a world that is facing so many significant challenges. Our graduates must be problem solvers, critical thinkers, collaborators and strong global citizens, and we have an obligation to nurture those talents and traits while they are in our system.

<http://superpals.wordpress.com/2011/04/29/superpal-3-gordon-porter/>

## Did you get this report? – if not download it now!

### *Inclusive Education Knowledge Exchange Initiative: An Analysis of the Statistics Canada Participation and Activity Limitation Survey*

**Vianne Timmons and Maryam Wagner** completed a very important report connecting inclusive education to parents sense of their child’s well-being. Many parents and advocates have made use of the report but it has not been as widely shared as it could be. Be sure to look at the report and download the full text as well as the executive summary – and share it with others. It has a strong message that needs to be heard.

#### **Background**

Since the 1980s, many children with disabilities in Canada have attended their neighbourhood schools with age-appropriate peers. Research exists that reveals parents’ perceptions of their children’s school. In particular, Statistics Canada’s 2001 Children’s Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS), a

post-censal survey of people with disabilities, has been undertaken. PALS provides a wealth of information about children with disabilities in Canada.

The purpose of the “Inclusive Education Knowledge Exchange Initiative” research project was to assist in creating an effective knowledge exchange process in order to accommodate a scarcity of knowledge surrounding inclusive education. Researchers from across Canada engaged in an analysis of Statistics Canada’s 2001 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey to test the hypothesis that where educational services are organized to ensure inclusion, parents are more likely to report that their children are in good general health and that their children are doing well in school.



<http://www.cclcca.ca/ccl/Research/FundedResearch/201009TimmonsInclusiveEducation.html>



# Labrador Principal

## “Inclusion Works”

**Sandra Broomfield, Principal,  
Peacock Primary School, Happy Valley, Labrador**

As principal of Peacock Primary School, my journey with Inclusive Education has been a successful one thus far. I will always refer to this change in thinking as *Inclusive Education* and not just *Inclusion* with my staff and colleagues. Inclusion on its own is simply incorporating students with disabilities into regular classrooms in a meaningful and respectable way. I see Inclusive Education as an umbrella for many traits a school should have: inclusion of ALL students, co-teaching teams, differentiated instruction, learning centers, a welcoming school environment, positive behavior supports, a safe and happy place to be! It is a school where all children's needs are met at their own respectable levels through a variety of differentiated activities and learning centers where choice is given in the way learning takes place. It is a school where children feel safe, ready and able to take new risks in their learning and development to achieve at their full potential. It is a school where children feel worth and value for their efforts. It is a school where everyone demonstrates a tolerance and acceptance for individual differences and abilities. It is a school where children learn how to manage choice and make good life long decisions. At Peacock Primary School, I feel we are

on our way to becoming this school through the celebration of differences and achievements attained by ALL students and staff!

Does Inclusive Education make our school a better place? How can it not? When you have teacher teams collaborating together for the betterment of student learning and a concentration on choice and learning styles, it is a recipe for success! Does it have its challenges? Any recipe is challenging when you are mixing many ingredients together. No change is easy, no change is fast, but the outcome is very beneficial and worthwhile for all teachers and students. It takes time, effort and collaboration to create, understand and implement the vision of Inclusive Education. All staff has had the opportunity to attend, participate and discuss the philosophy and practices of an Inclusive school. With presenters, workshops and hands on training, staff members have broadened their understanding of the variety of teaching/learning styles that can be implemented to help students achieve. Teachers have had to change their way of thinking and instructing, even down to changing classroom management, to accommodate the needs of all children in their classrooms.

All members of our school community are to be credited for

making the learning path of each and every child a successful journey in their overall academic, social, and emotional growth. All staff members are team players with the same goals. Teaching and learning is more meaningful, engaging and fun through an Inclusive Education approach. As I roam around the building popping in and out of classrooms, I have seen so many smiling, engaged, and happy learners. They enjoy their group work which allows them the choice of activity which enhances their learning style and a chance to build bonds with classmates. These engaged children have taken on a new way of learning that continues to develop general learning skills that will enable them to become life long learners.

I feel the staff at Peacock Primary School has created a very welcoming environment for the children and parents of our community. Our understanding and implementation of Inclusive Education continues to grow each day, as each individual follows the recipe in their own unique and creative ways. As our journey continues, I know we will continue to grow and learn while facing new challenges. The children's overall growth and development will continue to flourish allowing them to become the best they can be!



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On se ressemble.**

# International Perspectives on Inclusive Education

## Inclusion Controversy Heats Up in Britain

Last year's election of David Cameron as the UK's Prime Minister has led to a bitter dispute over education policy in that country. A long tradition of special schools was gradually being reduced during the Labour Government.

Special schools closed as a policy of greater inclusion of children with disabilities developed. Even so, many parents experienced many obstacles to get their children into mainstream schools. Critics said that there was indeed a move to more inclusion but it was not properly supported with resources.

Even so, the Conservatives seemed to think things had gone too far and promised to reverse what they saw as "bias for inclusion".

The 2010 Conservative Party manifesto states: "The most vulnerable children deserve the very highest quality of care, so we will call a moratorium on the ideologically-driven closure of special schools.

Mr Cameron, whose disabled son Ivan died in 2009, said that as the parent of a disabled child himself, he was "passionate" about helping parents get the education that was right for them. He said he would make it easier for parents to get what was right for their child, be it inclusion in mainstream schools or a special school education.

## Obama Advisor Suggests Caution to UK Policy

The UK Government of David Cameron's plans to overhaul the special educational needs (SEN) system could lead to vulnerable children being segregated and denied opportunities, according to an adviser to Barack Obama.

Ari Ne'eman urged caution over the Coalition's plans to end the "bias

towards inclusion" and said all pupils deserve the right to attend a mainstream school. Mr Ne'eman, who was appointed to the US National Council on Disability by President Obama, made his comment on a visit to the UK to meet politicians and autism campaigners.

United Kingdom Children's minister Sarah Teather proposed reforms to the SEN system earlier this year in a green paper, including safeguards to protect special schools. She wants to end the "bias" towards including SEN children in mainstream rather than special schools.



Ari Ne'eman

Mr. Ne'eman, who is on the autistic spectrum and is the founding president of the Autistic Self Advocacy Network, said: "I attended a special school for part

of my education, and there was a regrettable culture of low expectations.

"If I had stayed there I wouldn't have gone to college. There was nothing particularly special about me, I just had the opportunity to go to a different school and I was included there with the right support.

"I know about the debate about inclusion here. British educational policy must be decided by British people, and this is a debate for people in this country, but a lot of people try to argue inclusion doesn't work for all kinds of students.

"I find that's because they've not really tried it properly, putting services

and support in mainstream schools and giving teachers the right training. When that happens it leads to less bullying and social exclusion."

Source: TES London, June 2011

## What the Advocates for Inclusion in the UK Say –

David Cameron has acted on his threat to "Reverse the bias towards inclusion" for disabled children and other children who need extra help at school. The Government's green paper "Support and Aspiration: A New Approach to Special Educational Needs and Disability" is based entirely on the medical model of disability and will push back all the progress for which disabled people have struggled over the last 20 years. These proposals include:

- Creating many more special school places
- Removing the right of children to a legally enforceable 'Statement of Special Educational Needs'
- Re-introducing the infamous caveats in the law which allow local authorities to forcibly segregate disabled children
- Allow many more schools to opt out of local authority control (and centralised services which support inclusion)
- Put parents in control of their children's financial resources until they are 25 years old

This is in the context of a massive cut back in the rights and resources being made available to disabled people and their families.

Source: <http://www.dpac.uk.net/>

Contact us through our website: [www.inclusiveeducation.ca](http://www.inclusiveeducation.ca) or by email: [InclusiveEducation@cacl.ca](mailto:InclusiveEducation@cacl.ca)  
Please send us information, comments or feedback.

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