

# EDUCATION WATCH

## AN UPDATE ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

A Message from Inclusive Education Canada Director:

### Dr. Gordon L. Porter

Thirty years ago I was just beginning my three-year term as President of the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL). The mandate was defined by a report prepared over the previous two years to present a vision for the newly renamed association; one with a non-labelling name for the first time. That report, Community Living 2000, set out a bold vision of what the leaders of our movement believed possible in the lives of persons with intellectual disabilities by 2000. It stated they had an equal right to "citizenship, membership, and self-determination."

One of the seven specific goals was that children with intellectual disabilities receive their education in regular classes with non-disabled peers in the neighborhood/community school. There was a sense of confidence that this could be achieved in the 14 years before the end of the century.

Alas, that was not a goal we achieved.

It is true that progress has been made. A great deal of progress has been made in many parts of Canada. Indeed, Canada has been cited as a leader in the development of inclusive



education in the last 30 years.

However, many gaps exist, and many children with intellectual disabilities spend some of or all of their day in special classes, isolated from their peers. In fact, a number of segregated schools still operate in our country, including in our most wealthy and highest populated communities.

This is unfortunate, but it is more than that – it is unnecessary!

Educators now have the tools to make our schools inclusive. Inclusion is successfully practiced in hundreds of schools, at all levels, in many parts of the country every day. In the communities where it is not happening, the failure is in vision, leadership, and the tenacity to support meaningful change.

Inclusive Education Canada is committed to bringing this change about. Please join our team, follow

## » A MESSAGE FROM DR. GORDON PORTER

us online, and help make inclusive education a reality in every community in Canada.

This edition of Education Watch has several features we think you will find of interest.

We are pleased to highlight that February is Inclusive Education Month in Canada. This initiative was started by Inclusive Education Canada more than a decade ago. Provincial and local Community Living associations have done an excellent job using the month to draw attention to progress towards inclusive education. Our national inclusive education awards have been used effectively for this purpose. Watch for this year's awards in your province or community.

We have also gathered some media stories tracking the on-going discussion about inclusive education taking place across Canada. Most are from the CBC and they provide a good sense of the different perspectives of parents, advocates, teachers, teachers' unions, and academics about the challenges and the opportunities inclusive education

brings to our schools.

We also present the transcript from an interview on the CBC Radio program, *The Current*, in November 2016. The episode focused on gifted education and inclusion, thus providing an interesting context for a number of issues. We also share several press releases from Inclusion BC that highlight current issues in British Columbia about inclusive education.

In this issue, you will also find interviews with three knowledgeable individuals from other countries who share a few thoughts about inclusive education with us. Sue Swenson is a mother and movement leader from the United States; David Towell is a social policy expert and advocate from the United Kingdom who shares views on his experience in Colombia, and Elena Dal Bó is a mother and activist from Argentina. You will want to read what they have to say about inclusive education in their own country as well as the importance of Inclusive Education Canada, CACL, and Inclusion International supporting efforts on a global level.

A special feature in this edition of Education Watch is a piece by two academics who present an alternate lens to look at the rationale for inclusive education. John Valk and Anne-Dore Stein discuss the influence of the "world view" one brings to the matter of inclusive education. They draw on the vision of Canadian Jean Vanier in their discussion. Professor Valk is a professor at Renaissance College at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, and Anne-Dore Stein is a professor at the Protestant University of Darmstadt, Germany. Professor Stein has spent several extended periods researching inclusive education in New Brunswick and during one visit was hosted by the New Brunswick Association for Community Living. A second article is from a speech by Dr. Valk in Berlin on inclusive education.

We hope you will find this edition of Education Watch of interest.

Sincerely,

Gordon L. Porter, C.M., O.N.B.  
Director of Inclusive Education Canada  
[inclusiveeducation@cacl.ca](mailto:inclusiveeducation@cacl.ca)

Check out our website and follow us on social media for information and resources on inclusive education!



[www.inclusiveeducation.ca](http://www.inclusiveeducation.ca)

## Inclusion International:

# Inclusion International Announces “Catalyst for Inclusive Education”

Members of Inclusion International have always been catalysts for change. Inclusion International is harnessing our energy as catalysts and supporting our members to make progress on inclusive education.

Linking members across countries, across regions, and across the globe with technical and other partners, Catalyst for Inclusive Education will help our members’ inclusive education projects and initiatives build on larger education reform efforts.



- **Are you trying to advance inclusive education in your country or region?**
- **Do you have successful strategies to share?**
- **Do you need access to expertise and information that can help you make progress?**

Join Catalyst for Inclusive Education, share resources, and tell us about inclusive education projects and initiatives in your country.

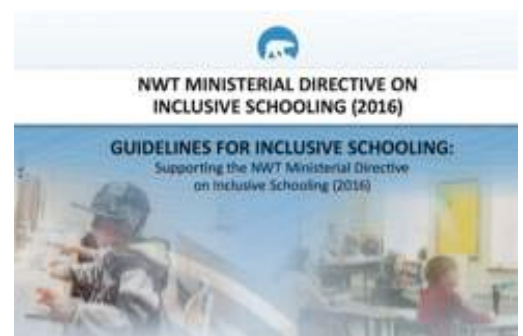
For more information, please contact Tara Levandier at [tara.levandier@inclusion-international.org](mailto:tara.levandier@inclusion-international.org).

## Northwest Territories:

# Northwest Territories Minister, The Honourable Alfred Moses, Releases New Directive and Guidelines on Inclusive Education

Northwest Territories Minister of Education, Culture, and Employment, The Honourable Alfred Moses stated: Inclusive education has been a foundational part of the Northwest Territories’ education system for many decades. Through it, we recognize that all children can learn.

The directive, and its new accompanying guidelines and evaluation tool, now clearly defines the roles of all education staff involved in inclusive schooling, encourages true collaboration of the school team to support classroom teachers in better meeting student needs, highlights the importance of ongoing professional training and development and ensures that the Government monitors the large investment being made in inclusive schooling to confirm that the intentions and goals are being met.



**Click here for full guidelines**

Interviews: We invited three inclusive education experts from Argentina, the United Kingdom, and the United States to share international perspectives on inclusive education with us.

## Elena Dal Bó, Directora Ejecutiva, Asociacion Azul, por la vida independiente de las personas con discapacidad, La Plata, Argentina



**Q: How do you feel inclusive education is doing in your country (or the countries) you are active in?**

**A:** I live in Argentina, and have contact with most countries in South America. I think that the process of inclusive education has started in Latin American education systems, but we are at the very beginning of it.

**Q: Is there resistance to the idea of inclusive education?**

**A:** There is strong resistance to inclusive education. The most powerful resistance in Argentina is from the teachers' unions. Government officials and legislators, probably because of ignorance about the meaning of inclusive education, are also resistant. I'm not sure what are the main barriers in other Latin American countries.

**Q: Or is the resistance focused on identifying barriers and resource issues?**

**A:** The resistance is global, they reject the idea of having children with disabilities in mainstream schools, and they strongly reject the idea of special schools turning into resource centers or some other form of support to inclusive education.

**Q: What do you think is the most promising factor in moving inclusion forward?**

**A:** The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), as a treaty on human rights, together with the Report of the High Commissioner on Human Rights on inclusive education and General Comment N° 4 of the Committee are promising factors to moving forward. In Argentina the Convention has Constitutional level, as every international treaty on human rights. These documents are extraordinary useful tools that strengthen the advocating capacity of parents that have built powerful organizations (this is rather new in Argentina and Latin America) in partnership with human rights lawyers.

**Q: What role do you think groups like Inclusion International and the Canadian Association for Community Living can play on this effort?**

**A:** I think that the role should be to

share expertise in many forms. As a matter of fact, we have used many materials belonging to CACL and Inclusion International along the years to inform our advocacy task. We have also studied New Brunswick's norms about certification, for example, when the national government of Argentina invited parents' organizations to discuss a national rule about certification.

These groups can help us through projects in partnership that could strengthen our abilities to address the more problematic obstacles against inclusive education in each country. They can support our governments when they are willing to make changes. This is possible today in Argentina, as our national government and some provincial governments are willing to receive support to progress towards inclusion in education.

**Q: Can you share a personal experience with a child/parent/teacher where inclusion was successful and made a difference?**

**A:** 1. My son Juan, now 25-years-old, went to mainstream school, and could have a good quality education and enter university.

2. A group of Teachers in La Plata, Argentina record good experiences, publish strategies that are relevant to the province of Buenos Aires education system, offer trainings



or individual assistance to other teachers and to students on inclusive practices, especially inclusive teaching strategies.

3. In Argentina after many years of individual struggles, a coalition called Article 24 was created, formed by more than 100 organizations mainly of parents, but also of persons with disabilities and some professionals. There is also, since 2015, a Regional Latin American Network for inclusive education called RREI.

4. Our organizations assist many families in their struggle for an inclusive education for their children. Parents are empowered through this interaction and multiply advocacy and peer support.

**Q: Can you share anything else about inclusive education?**

**A:** I would like to be sure that when advocates and government officials speak about inclusive education they are thinking about all children with any kind and level of disability. I would like to be sure that people understand that inclusion is about a complete cultural change and not just another word for integration, as we can see this misunderstanding among teachers and education authorities.

I would like for the advantages of inclusive education for every student at risk of being discriminated were highlighted. This would be particularly useful in countries where large parts of the population live in poor conditions, that have migrants, ethnic minorities, and, of course, persons with disabilities.

*Elena Dal Bó is Regional Representative for the Americas and a member of the Council of Inclusion International. She was elected at the General Assembly in October 2016.*

## Interview 2:

# David Towell Comments on His Experience Promoting Inclusive Education in Colombia



**Q: You have been working with education leaders in Colombia over the past ten years. How do you feel inclusive education is doing there?**

**A:** I was fortunate to be in Colombia only a few weeks ago when the new agreement to end more than 50 years of civil war was announced. It seems timely to comment on inclusive education there through the perspective of peace-building.

For several years Government policy has favoured inclusive education but with very limited implementation in a system with a large private sector and beset by contradictions. The need now not just to end the war but build a lasting peace puts new pressure and opens new opportunities for the education sector to play a key role, especially with young people, in building more inclusive communities. Schools which welcome everyone and prepare young people for future

citizenship are a key investment for a peaceful Colombia.

**Q: Is there resistance to the idea of inclusive education?**

**A:** Colombia is a very unequal country (one of the causes of its long history of conflict) and public education has typically been rigid and standardised. This is not an easy context for advancing genuine inclusion.

**Q: What do you think are the most promising factors in moving inclusion forward?**

**A:** In society as a whole, the emerging recognition that sustainable peace requires a stronger welcome to diversity, not just in education but everywhere. As elsewhere however, advances in inclusive education depend on good organization and strong advocacy among family



associations, progressive teachers, and civil society leaders.

**Q: What role do you think groups like Inclusion International and the Canadian Association for Community Living can play in this effort?**

**A:** Colombia has already benefitted significantly through learning from Canadian experience of inclusion in practice (for example, in New Brunswick) and through the participation of its civil society leaders in the international movement to advance inclusion.

**Q: Can you share a recent personal experience where inclusion was successful and made a difference?**

**A:** In my recent visit to Colombia, I was also fortunate to participate in the first forum on inclusion in the largest public school in the city of Palmira. Eighty children from six to 16 met together to listen to the experiences and celebrate the successes of children with disabilities at their school (very well presented with video, slides etc. by these young people) and then 'sign up' (everyone was presented with a badge for their shirts) as 'inclusion champions', offering peer support to all their school-mates in strengthening the culture of inclusion: 'making our school work for everyone'.

*David Towell is Director of the London-based Centre for Inclusive Futures, working locally and globally to build sustainable communities which include everyone as equal citizens. His pamphlet on education for peace is available [here](#).*

## Interview 3:

# Sue Swenson, USA, President-Elect of Inclusion International

**Q: How do you feel inclusive education is doing in your country?**

**A:** In the US, there are pockets of excellence, and pockets of really awful practice, and pretty much everything in between. This judgment is based on expert opinions from many professionals and parents. We do not have excellent data sets at the federal level that allow me to know where the pockets of excellence are. We ask states and local school districts to report what percent of students with IEPs spend 80% or more of their time in general education environments. Never mind that most students with IEPs have only one of two goals on their IEP, and there would be no reason for them to leave the general education setting. So, it's not a great number. There are about 18,000 separate school districts in the US. That's a lot of variation.

**Q: Is there resistance to the idea of inclusive education?**

**A:** I have to say there is resistance to inclusive education. Part of it comes from residual judgments about old failed attempts at mainstreaming, or poorly-designed inclusion. Part of it comes from parents who really still expect the IEP to cure their child's disability – so they want a lot of pull-out, separate therapy, or programs that are delivered in segregated settings that the parents believe are therapeutic. Part of it comes from ineffective practice, so a child is

constantly removed from the learning environment because no one knows how to use multi-tiered systems of supports or positive behavioral interventions and supports. (See [www.PBIS.org](http://www.PBIS.org))

**Q: Or is the resistance focused on identifying barriers and resource issues?**

**A:** I think a lot of what looks like resistance is simply a lack of knowledge or assistance. We have a centre that focuses on school-wide transformation to include all children (those with disabilities, those learning English for the first time, those who come from high-poverty backgrounds). A big part of it is helping school leaders develop the tools and skills they need to undertake coordinated change by working with staff, parents, and other stakeholders to identify problems and resources that can be brought to bear to solve those problems. (See [www.swiftschools.org](http://www.swiftschools.org))

**Q: What do you think is the most promising factor in moving inclusion forward?**

**A:** Honestly, I think there a couple of things. First, I think our culture is on a bumpy path to be more inclusive. Young people are less accepting of segregation, inequity, and exclusion than they were in the past. More and more young people grow up with strong values about diversity. They are more aware of their own power within schools and communities –



this includes siblings of kids with disabilities but also neighbors and just plain kids who have a strong sense of social justice. Second, I think parents are figuring out that our special education law brings a placement risk for each IEP, and they are shifting more and more to what we call “504 plans” that really work more like the ADA in schools and don’t bring any risk of being “placed” into a separate setting.

**Q: What role do you think groups like Inclusion International and the Canadian Association for Community Living can play in this effort?**

**A:** It is my fervent hope that more and more US citizen advocates will develop connections that allow them to see how children may be well-educated in other countries, where the focus is on rights, not so much on services. I think Inclusion International could play a big role if we can help to build networks that reach across national boundaries to help parents and self-advocates see what is universal in their experience.

**Q: Can you share a personal experience with a child/parent/teacher where inclusion was successful and made a difference?**

**A:** Well, my own son’s inclusion was often excellent but not always. I think some people don’t understand the value of inclusion for profoundly disabled kids, like my Charlie was. He did not walk or talk, he could not demonstrate his learning using any of the communication tools that were available to him, he had tendencies toward stimming and vocalizing – but he also learned very valuable things from being included, even if he was included imperfectly. He learned how to get along with other people, how to tell the difference between somebody he could trust and somebody he couldn’t. He learned how to be with other people, in community. He spent his whole life dependent on others for care, so learning about trust was really important. He became, I think, an excellent judge of character and was able to convey his opinions to people who knew him well. He learned that he was not, in fact, the center of the universe. There was one teacher, early on, who really made this happen. She let inclusion be an organic situation for Charlie, not driven by a plan or a contract, but driven by her observation and response. That took a lot of trust between her and us – but it was really worth it.

**Q: Can you share anything else about inclusive education?**

**A:** I still think we don’t spend nearly enough time thinking about the value of inclusive classrooms for all of the children. Yes, I am aware of studies of test scores going up for all of the kids. But how do we measure the kindness and compassion they learn? Even – maybe especially – the “smartest” kids need to learn that everyone has a place in our community. How do we value that? I think in today’s world, it should be the key point.

*Sue got involved with disability advocacy because her middle son, Charlie, had profound disabilities. Sue was very active in the Minneapolis schools as well as in State and Federal advocacy while working as a professional services marketing director before being named a Kennedy Fellow in the US Senate in 1996. There she worked for the Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Disability Policy on both the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Developmental Disabilities Services and Bill of Rights Act.*

*Sue just completed a term in the Obama administration in the US Department of Education as Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. These two federal programs regulate and fund states to help them support people with disabilities in American schools and workplaces. She represented the US Department of Education on the President’s Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities.*

*Sue previously served as the Commissioner for Developmental Disabilities in the US Department of Health and Human Services in the Clinton administration, as executive director of the national chapter of The Arc, and as Executive Director of the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation. She was educated at the University of Chicago (AB, AM) and earned an MBA at the University of Minnesota.*

**Click here for an audio interview with Sue Swenson**



## Media Coverage:

# Dr. Gordon Porter on CBC's The Current



*In November 2016, Dr. Gordon Porter appeared on CBC's audio program, The Current. The episode titled, "Are gifted classes necessary?" focused on the Ottawa Carleton school board announcing changes to the programs offered to "gifted learners" last year.*

*The episode interviewed a father and his son who participates in the program. The CBC received the following comment (in part) from the school board: "The current delivery model for the specialized program class has been in place for over 20 years and although it meets the needs of many students, it does not support the needs of all gifted learners. The research supports gifted learners having opportunities to learn together but opportunities can also be created by allowing clusters of gifted students to learn together for part of the day, week or school year."*

*Gifted programs fall under the umbrella of special needs in most school boards and advocates of inclusive learning say all kids — including those with special needs and the gifted — benefit from being together in a regular classroom.*

*Below is the transcript of Dr. Porter's segment in the episode with host Dave Seglins.*

**Dave Seglin (DS):** Hello Mr. Porter.

**Gordon Porter (GP):** Hello there, how are you?

**DS:** Fine, thank you. What's your response to what our first two guests (Dad - Julian and son - Damian) from Ottawa had to say?

**GP:** Well first of all, I think they're very well spoken about the needs for Damian to have a challenging and interesting school program. The thing that I would say is that my expectation is that a regular class teacher with support, with coaching from somebody who knows more about meeting the needs of a child who can be described as gifted or needing enrichment, is something that we can expect from a regular class teacher. That in fact Damian could be challenged within the regular classroom, with the right kinds of support to his teacher.

**DS:** We heard Julian say that yes a regular class teacher could do it, but that they like it better to have a specialized program to do work and focus on his unique emotional and social and academic needs.

**GP:** Well, I think all of us would like that for our children, as much individualization as possible. And the fact is that funding special education, whether it's for the gifted or for the learning disabled or children with intellectual disabilities, that's not gone very well. There's never enough money, there are always children who fall through the gaps who aren't being served. And the money that goes to support all these special programs actually takes capacity out of making the regular system an effective system. Every time a child leaves a regular class with hopefully a very high skilled well-trained teacher and goes to something specific that's different, a standalone program, it takes money out of the mainstream and it weakens the capacity of the mainstream to serve the broad number of kids that are still there.

**DS:** OK, but beyond funding, from an education academic standpoint what are the benefits of an inclusive classroom if you've got gifted children as sort of as they describe it, outliers?

**GP:** I don't think looking to serve children who are labeled as gifted in the regular classroom is just about funding. It's about seeing the role of the regular classroom and serving all children, diverse groups of children. And I think there are a lot of models of education that have emerged in the last 20 to 25 years that support that. They include the idea of enrichment instead of gifted education. They include the idea that children have multiple intelligences, some children are very high



in logical, mathematical or in verbal linguistic skills, and those are the ones that tend to get captured by traditional intelligence tests and that place them traditionally in gifted programs. But there are children who are high achievers in musical intelligence and interpersonal intelligence and spatial and athletic intelligence, all kinds of other areas. And I think schools have to be challenged to meet all of these areas, not just the traditional that go towards academic accomplishment by itself.

**DS:** And you think that that kind of expectation, teaching the wide breadth of students be it, you know, people with disabilities or needing enriched or gifted whichever term, that can be done by a regular class teacher?



**GP:** I do. And I think that in many places where it's not being done effectively, the problem is that the resources that could be used to support teachers to do these things are going to standalone special education programs. Every time you take a child out — and of course it's not usually just one child, it's a number of children — you weaken the resources available to strengthen the core of our public education system. It's a systemic challenge and it also has been clearly shown that it doesn't increase the achievement of those children who leave. And I think that the research is pretty clear that children who are bright and talented achieve just as high results in inclusive classrooms as they do in standalone classrooms.

**DS:** But we're hearing from parents like Julian and other advocates of these specialized gifted programs, they say look, you need the specialized program for their kids to reach their full potential.

**GP:** Well, we could say that about any, I mean, any program that has small numbers of students and has creative and capable, talented, innovative teachers is going to feel good to the participants that take part in it. The whole kind of experience that children get in gifted programs needs to be brought to the regular class. The innovative approaches, the project learning, the focus on identifying questions and solving problems.

**DS:** Do you see a distinction to be made between gifted children and those with learning disabilities, in terms of who gets a priority in the regular classroom?

**GP:** No, I think, not in a pure sense no. I think every child has the right to be supported to meet their learning capacity within the school system. You have to prioritize according to the needs of the child to some extent. But in a philosophical basis and in a practical basis no. I think every family that sends their child to a public education system has the right and should have the expectation that the school can design a program that can meet that child's needs, that can be challenging and rewarding for that child, whatever their ability or disability. And in many cases the people who say that regular classes won't work and won't do the job effectively, you can interpret that that maybe they're giving up on the capacity of regular education. And let's remember that 90 per cent of children receive their education there. So if we don't have standards for quality there, what do we say to all the rest of the vast majority of children who spend their five or six hours every day in the regular mainstream education system?

**DS:** Do you think there should be gifted testing to identify gifted kids at all?

**GP:** No and I don't think there should be testing at the other end of the spectrum either. I think children should go to school. We should do functional assessments of what they can do and what they can't do, what their talents are in order to inform teachers about how to challenge them and how to capture their imaginations and get them motivated for learning. But on a pure identification and label basis there's very little productive work that comes from saying that you give a label, like a child is gifted, I mean, what does that mean? Gifted in what? Gifted in verbal linguistic skills? That's usually what it means, because we use IQ tests to do that. Well, there's a whole range of human behaviour and child behaviour that has nothing to do with those tasks that were developed a 100 years ago.

**DS:** Lots to think about. Mr. Porter, thanks for joining us this morning.

**GP:** Thank you for having me.

**DS:** Gordon Porter is the Director of Inclusive Education Canada.

[Click here for full audio program](#)

In Academics:

## Inclusion and the Nature of the Human: A Canadian Perspective



**2015. Dr. John Valk. Inclusion and the Nature of the Human: A Canadian Perspective. International Congress of Heilpädagogik, Berlin.**

**Abstract:** The questions that lie behind all matters related to inclusion have essentially to do with the nature of the human, what it means to be community, and who do we include or exclude in the societies we create. This presentation seeks to address these questions from a Canadian perspective. Canada, the 5th most pleasant country in the world in which to live according to a recent UN study, is multicultural, has three founding nations (First Nations, French, British), exhibits unity within diversity, strives for consensus, and emphasizes belonging and individual and group contributions. By its nature it is an inclusive society, though far from perfect. How did Canada get there and what are the implications for Inclusive Education?

[Click here for full article](#)

In Academics:

## Worldviews and Inclusive Education: Three Ontological Positions



**2014. Dr. John Valk and Dr. Anne-Dore Stein. Worldviews and Inclusive Education: Three Ontological Positions. University of Heidelberg.**

**Introduction:** The Hebrew prophet Isaiah, in his frequent reprimands to the wayward people of Israel, reminded them that the God they followed, albeit reluctantly at times, was a God of justice, seeking from the people not pious acts of worship or reverence but social, cultural and political actions that aimed at equality and inclusion. In fact, contrary to how other nations judged themselves, Isaiah indicated that God would judge the nations by how well they took care of the widows and the orphans, that is, the most vulnerable among them. Isaiah's reprimand must have resonated with the German poet and novelist Goethe who echoed similar sentiments when he stated that "You can easily judge the character of a man by how he treats those who can do nothing for him."

The poignant words of Isaiah and Goethe expose the underbelly of a society's dominant worldview and no less its approach to education, especially that of Inclusive Education...

[Click here for full article](#)

## Press Releases from Inclusion BC:

## Government Announces Massive Step Backwards in Inclusive Education by Investing \$1 Million in Segregated Schools



October 6, 2016

**Summary:** The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states students shall receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education.

**New Westminster, BC** - The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states students shall receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education.

Wednesday, October 5, 2016, the Government of BC announced \$1 million to fund a total of 15 Special Education Schools (SES) throughout the province.

"This funding announcement sends a dangerous message that students with special needs belong elsewhere and cannot be supported in their

neighbourhood school," said Faith Bodnar, Executive Director of Inclusion BC.

"It's a massive slide backwards in best practice as well as a drain on our public education system."

Special Education Schools are designed to provide educational services to a small percentage of students who have special needs.

Inclusion BC calls for the same high level of resources, for students and teachers to be successful within the public education system.

[Click here for full press release](#)

## BC Failed a Generation of Students: Time to Rebuild Inclusion in our Public Schools



November 14, 2016

**Summary:** During the 14-year fight between the BC government and teachers, a generation of students with special needs had their supports and inclusion steadily eroded. Now Inclusion BC calls for an urgent response to ensure public schools can restore inclusion, lost access and special education supports.

**New Westminster, BC** - Canada's highest court has ended a 14-year legal fight over the B.C. government's stripping of class size and composition measures from the teachers' contract in 2002, raising urgent new questions about how public schools will meet their obligations to offer inclusive education to all students while restoring lost access and supports for students

with special needs.

In siding with the B.C. Teachers Federation in its Nov. 10 ruling, the Supreme Court of Canada rejected repeated attempts by the B.C. government to eliminate class size and composition limits, along with specialist teacher ratios, from the teachers' collective agreement. Following the ruling, B.C. Premier Christy Clark has accepted that responsibility now rests with the Province to invest new funding and lead discussion on how to restore what was lost.

Inclusion BC would applaud a Provincial response that includes sufficient new funding, along with a respectful

and broadly inclusive process to guide development of new measures to make classrooms more manageable, as this would go far in resolving some of the most chronic challenges in B.C.'s public schools.

"There is concern among families that restoring class composition limits for students with special needs without adequate funding or a real commitment to inclusion will accelerate these worrying trends and result in even more children being shut out of integrated classrooms and local public schools," said Inclusion BC President Jackie Carpenter, who is also the mother of a student with special needs.

[Click here for full press release](#)

## Kids Can't Wait: After Decade of Neglect, Thousands Losing out on Early Childhood Intervention in BC



January 4, 2017

**Summary:** After a decade of neglect for Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) in British Columbia, waitlists and wait times are growing, service providers are being stretched past their limits and thousands of preschoolers with special needs are losing out, aging out and being left behind.

**New Westminster, BC** - After a decade of neglect for Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) in British Columbia, waitlists and wait times are growing, service providers are being stretched past their limits and thousands of preschoolers with special needs are losing out, aging out and being left behind.

Families, along with agency leaders and professionals who provide ECI in community-based programs across BC, have a simple message about the urgency of fixing this: #KidsCantWait!

That's the message we heard loud and clear, as captured in two new reports released today. The first report, Kids

Can't Wait, identifies seven key challenges in BC's ECI sector along with practical and strategic solutions, as advanced by almost 100 leaders and professionals who gathered in Vancouver on November 16 for a provincial ECI Summit hosted by Inclusion BC.

"BC promised to become the most inclusive province by 2024 but young children and their families can't wait that long," said Inclusion BC Executive Director Faith Bodnar.

"Kids with special needs must be able to access these essential programs. We cannot stand by and see them being left out and left behind. We must also safeguard the amazing and committed community programs that have served children and families for decades. We are losing ground, kids are paying the price and we must do better – kids can't wait."

[Click here for full press release](#)



## Media Coverage: 2016 Year in Review

# Inclusive Education in Canadian Media in 2016



Below is a collection of media coverage on inclusive education from CBC News and the Toronto Star. Click on each image for the full online article.

## Wynne aims to remove barriers for students with disabilities

Community groups that urged action to improve schools for special needs kids call premier's promise an 'important step.'



By Andrea Gordon, Toronto Star Posted: Dec 05, 2016

## 'Inclusion' is the classroom challenge teachers are too afraid to talk about, educator says

'It's gotten to a point that the diversity in the classroom is unbelievable,' says Sally Capstick

By Holly Connors, CBC News Posted: Dec 02, 2016



## Dad 'fearful' of day autistic daughter can't go to class with peers

Kennebecasis Valley man says system isn't perfect, but it wasn't perfect before inclusion either

By Jordan Gill, CBC News Posted: Nov 25, 2016



## Regina teacher recognized for inclusion work

**Leanne Barnes teaches alternative education students at Dr. Martin LeBoldus High School**

CBC News Posted: Nov 24, 2016



## 'Stop changing': Retired teacher says leave education system alone

**Teachers need stability in system to help students falling through cracks**

By Gail Harding, CBC News Posted: Nov 24, 2016



## Student honoured for fight against word 'retarded'

**Max Liu led university campaign to stop hurtful language**

By Danny Kerslake, CBC News Posted: Nov 22, 2016



## Inclusion always a 'scapegoat' for education woes, advocate says

**Krista Carr argues problem is not the policy of inclusion but its implementation**

By Vanessa Blanch, CBC News Posted: Nov 08, 2016



## Inclusive education the top concern of N.L. teachers, report says



**Teachers say they don't have enough support to deliver on inclusive education**

By Garrett Barry, CBC News Posted: Sep 27, 2016

## 'A lot of kids' needs are not being met': Lots of labels, lack of resources for students with special needs

**Classroom teachers need more help from experts that aren't available**



By Nicole Riva, CBC News Posted: Sep 08, 2016

## Nova Scotia students speak out in favour of inclusion

**NSSSA conference attendees say special needs learners should be in regular classes**



By Diane Paquette, CBC News Posted: Apr 05, 2016

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February 2017

# February is Inclusive Education Month in Canada



February is National Inclusive Education Month!

Every year the Canadian Association for Community Living and Inclusive Education Canada in partnership with provincial and territorial associations recognize the efforts of teachers, school leaders and parents as they work to make inclusion a reality in Canadian schools.

Some provinces and territories schedule a major event to celebrate Inclusive Education Month. In past years provinces and territories have invited Ministers of

Education, Lieutenant-Governors and even a Premier or two to special events. Community Living Associations have run media campaigns, held contests, hosted special lectures and produced new promotional materials highlighting inclusive education practices and policies.

This year we want to encourage local associations across the country to do something in their town or school that draws attention to the positive outcomes of inclusion. And we want you to let us know about it so we can share the news with folks on our website [www.inclusiveeducation.ca](http://www.inclusiveeducation.ca).



[www.inclusiveeducation.ca](http://www.inclusiveeducation.ca)

To reach the editor, please email Gordon L. Porter at [inclusiveeducation@cacl.ca](mailto:inclusiveeducation@cacl.ca).