

# Inclusion!

*What is Inclusion anyway?*

*Questions and Answers about the MacKay Report on Inclusion*

# Inclusive education:

**Inclusion** is a way of thinking and acting that permits individuals to feel accepted, valued and secure.

An inclusive community evolves constantly to respond to the needs of its members.

An inclusive community concerns itself with improving the well-being of each member.

Inclusion goes farther than the idea of physical location, it is a value system based on beliefs that promote participation, belonging and interaction.<sup>1</sup>



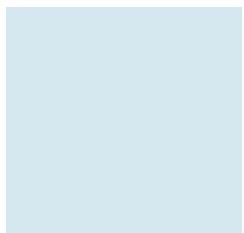
1 Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, Follow-up to the Manitoba Special Education Review: Proposals for a Policy, Accountability and Funding Framework (September 2001)



# Inclusion!

*What is **Inclusion** anyway?*

Questions and Answers about the MacKay Report on Inclusion



# A Message from the Author



Belonging and being included are deep-seated human desires and they are as complicated to satisfy as they are simple to state. In an age where technology can easily overwhelm us, the need to be a valued member of a community of real live people is even more compelling. At one level, this need explains the popularity of Facebook and My Space as part of the modern virtual reality. However, communities are formed by excluding as well as including and the emphasis needs to be on the inclusion—especially in an increasingly multicultural Canada.

As Canada's only officially bilingual province and one with more than twenty years of experience with inclusive schooling, New Brunswick can be a model for the rest of the country. I am gratified that Premier Shawn Graham has embraced not only the concept of inclusion, but also the recommendations of my Inclusion Report, designed to take inclusion to a new level of applied reality. My Report attempts to give voice to the concerns, passions and aspirations of the diverse citizens of the province and, to the extent that it has succeeded, therein lies its strength and persuasive power.

The New Brunswick school system seeks to be child centered. New Brunswick is a predominantly rural province and the traditional concept of the school as the center of the community is one that resonates with its history. A greater emphasis should be placed upon the school as the center of the community and schools as places where services of all kinds are delivered. The walls of schools should be lowered to welcome the larger community inside.

Of course, all the challenges of the modern world cannot be resolved within the school system—even a well-designed and adequately resourced one. In this rights-conscious society, it is important that all elements of society consider their responsibilities and duties in respect to their children and the larger school community.

It is my fervent hope that this booklet will be a small contribution to the important task of building, not only a more inclusive school system, but also a more inclusive New Brunswick society. Ideally it will spark many conversations and debates about how to revitalize a sense of community that thrives on diversity and finds a place for the talents of all its citizens.



A. Wayne MacKay,  
Professor of Law,  
Dalhousie University,  
July 10, 2007

## How to use this booklet

In addition to providing a snapshot of the full MacKay Report on Inclusion, this booklet can also be used as a guide to the more extensive Report and its appendices. The larger Report can be somewhat intimidating (approximately 400 pages and appendices) and the references for further reading at the back of this booklet provide a navigation route. It is my hope that parents, advocacy groups, educators, other government personnel and citizens generally, can use this booklet and its references as a starting point for a deeper and informed discussion about the promises and challenges of creating a truly inclusive school system in New Brunswick. In conjunction with my full Report, this booklet will hopefully advance the conversation about how to change New Brunswick schools by building on the strengths of its people.

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# Contents



## About the MacKay Report on Inclusive Education

- What is the MacKay Report on Inclusion and how did it happen? .....3
- Why did the previous Government ask you to do this Report and why has the current one adopted it? .....3
- Are these problems with the education system unique to New Brunswick or do others have them too? .....4
- The title of your Report is *Connecting Care and Challenge: Tapping Our Human Potential*. What does that mean? ...4
- Where should I go if I want to get into the details of your Report? .....4

## Inclusive Education and Reasonable Expectations

- What exactly is inclusive education? .....5
- Why is inclusive education the best approach for New Brunswick? .....5
- You seem to be asking a lot of our schools. What can we reasonably expect? .....6
- That is a pretty long list of expectations. Can we afford to do all these things in our schools in a relatively small province like New Brunswick? .....6
- Who are the 'exceptional' students that the Education Act addresses? .....7
- Does that mean that the schools would not have to include disabled students? .....7

## The Challenge of Diverse Class Composition

- Some of my teacher friends tell me that there are so many problem children in classrooms today that they have become glorified babysitters and many children get little time, attention or education? Is that true? .....8

## The Legal Imperative of Equality

- Are we required by law to bring all children into our schools regardless of their abilities and backgrounds? .....9
- Are you telling me that the judges and lawyers are telling the school boards and teachers how to do their jobs? ..9

## The Duty of Reasonable Accommodation

- You mentioned the need for reasonable accommodation and to me that would mean housing. But I guess it means more than that in schools. What does it mean? .....10
- It is not like we want to exclude people but sometimes we just cannot afford to include everyone.
- Who decides what accommodations are reasonable and what taxpayers can afford to pay? .....10

## Truly Inclusive Schools are Safer and Less Violent

- Everywhere you look these days there are examples of violence in our schools and it is not just in the United States, but also much closer to home. Are we trying to do too much in our schools by bringing people into our schools who should not really be there? .....12

## Human Resources and the People Focus

- What needs to be done to improve the education of New Brunswick's children? .....13
- You mentioned training for teachers and others within the school system. Aren't these people properly trained? 13
- Will it cost a lot of money to make the kind of changes that you are describing? .....13

## The Service Delivery Model

- Even with the right people operating the system there seems to be problems with how we provide education to our students. Are there problems with the current model of delivering education in the province and what do you suggest as solutions? .....14

## Leadership and Accountability

- It sounds like many things need to happen to make the education system better. Who is going to take the lead on this change? .....16
- Politicians and other leaders can talk a good show but how can we make them accountable for really taking action to make our schools better? .....16
- What role can parents play in making school officials accountable for educating their children? .....17
- In what ways could we monitor progress on achieving a truly inclusive education system in New Brunswick? ...18
- One final question: are you optimistic that things will really change for the better because of your Report? .....18

## Further Reading in the Full MacKay Report on Inclusive Education

.....inside back cover



**Inclusion** is not just about students with disabilities or “exceptionalities.” It is an attitude and an approach that encourages all students to belong. It is an approach that nurtures the self-esteem of all students; it is about taking account of diversity in all its forms, and promoting genuine equality of opportunity for all students in New Brunswick. I cannot overemphasize that effective inclusion is for all students and not just one particular group or category.

*A. Wayne MacKay*



# About the MacKay Report on Inclusive Education

## What is the MacKay Report on Inclusion and how did it happen?

**Professor MacKay:** My Report was compiled after many months of research and consultation with New Brunswickers who have an investment in their education system: teachers; parents; Department of Education officials; students; professional associations; labor union members; and other government departments that work closely with the Department of Education. Over the course of about nine months in 2004-2005, more than seven hundred individuals were consulted in thirty-five separate sessions. There were also one hundred twenty-six written submissions made to me as well.

Consultations were held in cities, rural areas, and in Aboriginal communities, and were done in both official languages. Individuals or groups who could not be part of the formal consultation sessions were consulted in writing. The ninety-five recommendations (250 if you count sub-headings) contained in this Report are well-grounded in the oral and written views and perspectives of New Brunswickers.

The main focus of my Report is inclusion, and I attempted to be inclusive in the preparation of the Report as well as in the review process. Inclusion is not just about students with disabilities or “exceptionalities.” It is an attitude and an approach that encourages all students to belong. It is an approach that nurtures the self-esteem of all students; it is about taking account of diversity in all its forms and promoting genuine equality of opportunity for all students in New Brunswick. I cannot over emphasize that effective inclusion is for all students and not just one particular group or category.

## Why did the previous Government ask you to do this Report and why has the current one adopted it?

**Professor MacKay:** Both the previous Government of Bernard Lord and the current Government of Premier Shawn Graham deserve credit for their commitment to improving the education system for New Brunswick students through my review and other measures. They recognized that there were problems in the education system and that changes had to be made.

*Simply doing what has been done before will not be enough.*

During the consultation phase of this review, parents, teachers and students have all warned that the system desperately needs enhancement, as students of all academic levels are not being well served. Simply doing what has been done before will not be enough. While it would be an over-statement to say that the New Brunswick education system is in a state of crisis, it would be fair to conclude that it is under considerable stress and at an important turning point. The status quo is not an option. New Brunswick has been a leader in the concept and philosophy of inclusion, but must move to the next stage of becoming a leader and innovator in implementation and service delivery. Enhancing the inclusive education system could draw immigrants into the province. “Would-be” immigrants to New Brunswick would be attracted to a system that truly takes account of differences in an effective and positive way.

Are these problems with the education system unique to New Brunswick or do others have them too?

*The challenges of responding to the growing diversity of students and meeting their needs are not unique to New Brunswick.*

**Professor MacKay:** The challenges of responding to the growing diversity of students and meeting their needs are not unique to New Brunswick. Similar problems have been explored across Canada and throughout the world.

The review of literature and best practices on inclusion provided a solid foundation for my review. Some of the dominant themes that

emerged both from the literature and the consultations were:

- The desirability of inclusion
- The need for flexibility
- The importance of educational teams
- The need for diverse and well-trained team members
- The lack of agreement on vital terminology
- The importance of challenging all students to reach their potential.

An analysis of other inclusion studies conducted across Canada revealed that all provinces are struggling with similar challenges with respect to inclusion and meeting the needs of students. In analyzing these studies I concluded that there are no simple answers and that each province has unique aspects.

The title of your Report is *Connecting Care and Challenge: Tapping Our Human Potential*. What does that mean?

**Professor MacKay:** Some people think that inclusive education and academic excellence are opposing forces and that inclusion necessarily means diluting standards. My Report argues that this need not be the case. A significant number of the recommendations in this Report are dedicated to looking at alternative methods of educational service delivery, with the goal of continuing to care for and nurture students while challenging them to achieve high standards. I believe that care and challenge can and *must* go together. This philosophy has been put into practice in Finland, which is recognized as a world leader in educational performance.

Where should I go if I want to get into the details of your Report?

**Professor MacKay:** The full Report: *Inclusive Education: A Review of Programming and Services in New Brunswick*, including Appendices and an Author's Summary, is available on the internet at [www.gnb.ca/0000/index-e.asp](http://www.gnb.ca/0000/index-e.asp). A hard copy of the Report can be obtained from the New Brunswick Department of Education at (506) 453-3678 (8:15 am to 5:00 pm) or by writing to the Department of Education, Place 2000, PO Box 6000 Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1.





# Inclusive Education and Reasonable Expectations

## What exactly is inclusive education?

**Professor MacKay:** Inclusive education is about educating all students in a way that allows them to reach their full potential as valuable human beings while contributing to and enhancing their communities. It includes but is not just about students with disabilities, but rather all students—boys, girls, Aboriginals, francophones, anglophones, new Canadians, high achievers, the disenfranchised, students with mental or physical limits, religious or cultural groups, people of differing sexual orientation and those considered at risk.

It is a child-centered philosophy and approach that recognizes that every child has something positive to contribute to society and can reach his or

*Inclusive education is an approach and not a place.*

her full potential if given appropriate opportunities and supports. It is also about breaking down walls between schools and the communities that they serve.

Inclusive education is “an approach and not a place”; an approach that promotes the accommodation of all children into the learning experience in a way that maximizes their potential and fosters their self-esteem and sense of belonging to the school community and the larger society. It is about recognizing and celebrating the diversity of learners and providing an opportunity for them to be the best that they can be.

## Why is inclusive education the best approach for New Brunswick?

**Professor MacKay:** I believe that inclusive education is the best approach anywhere, but that is particularly the case in New Brunswick. There are many reasons for this:

- It is the best way to unlock the human potential of all students and capitalize on their diversity. This is particularly important in a thinly populated province like New Brunswick.
- It is the education system that best accommodates Aboriginal students and immigrants to New Brunswick—the two growing population groups in a generally declining population.
- New Brunswick has been a pioneer in inclusive education and in bringing francophones and anglophones together in a positive model of a bilingual province. Its successes must be taken to the next level to put the province on the world education map.
- Inclusive schools are safer schools. Students are made to feel as though they belong rather than feeling alienated. Inclusion is the best antidote to violence in schools.
- Inclusive education is the model that best achieves the goals of equality for all, as articulated in the Charter of Rights, the human rights code and international commitments.

You seem to be asking a lot of our schools. What can we reasonably expect?

**Professor MacKay:** That question was raised in nearly all the consultation sessions. I often put the question back to the group who asked. The answers were quite different depending upon whether they were students, parents, teachers, administrators or advocacy groups. My general answer to you is that we can expect schools to provide an appropriate level of education to equip students for the world of tomorrow. The definition of what we mean by an appropriate “education” is more complex than defining what inclusion means. A reasonable level of education includes the following components:

- it provides as many young people as possible with broad and transferable literacy, numeracy, and technology skills;
- it promotes competence, skill development, achievement, knowledge, creativity and critical thinking among all students;
- it prepares young people for citizenship and for participation in their communities;
- it promotes independence and self-reliance among students;
- it encourages and supports all students to reach their potential;
- it promotes social skills and positive interactions between people;
- it fosters an attitude of lifelong learning among students and the community;
- it promotes the values of equality and diversity within the Canadian democratic society, including the development of positive relationships of mutual respect between all members of the school community; and
- it promotes flexibility and openness to change in a rapidly evolving world.

That is a pretty long list of expectations. Can we afford to do all these things in our schools in a relatively small province like New Brunswick?

**Professor MacKay:** To do it well will certainly involve more investment of human and financial resources than at present, but it is an investment that will pay rich dividends. Maximizing the full potential of each of its citizens is important in a small province like New Brunswick.

The Liberal Government’s new education plan *When Kids Come First* and its proposed spending is a step in the right direction, but many more are needed to reach the destination.

It is a question of whether you pay now or pay later. If money is not invested in the full and inclusive education of the province’s children, a price will be paid because of an increase in the number of people on social assistance roles or entangled in the justice system. Fewer people will be supporting the provincial treasury with their tax dollars.

It is also important to recognize that education has a social as well as an academic component in preparing students for the future. Of course, there are limits upon how much schools can do, and Education is only one of the government departments that must play a role. Indeed, it is not just up to the government: parents and the larger community must play their roles as well. To use the cliché—it takes a community to raise a child. As I state in my Report, the school should again become the center of the community.

Whether one views it from an economic, social, cultural or civic point of view, the education of the young is critically important in our society.

*Supreme Court Justice LaForest in Jones v. The Queen [1986] 2 S.C.R. 284*

## Who are the 'exceptional' students that the Education Act addresses?

**Professor MacKay:** There are many problems with the term "exceptional" student as it is currently defined in New Brunswick's education law. It is tied to disabilities, and in particular to educational delays. It does not include problems that do not produce delays. It also fails to include gifted children, as the term exceptional does in Ontario.

An even bigger problem is that the label "exceptional" divides students into two categories —exceptional and the rest of the students. There is no good label for the "rest," as "normal," "non-exceptional," "regular" and "mainstream" all have problems. The term "exceptional students" has out-lived its usefulness and I recommend that the term be deleted in favour of the broader term "students in need of intervention," which can apply to any student and is thus more inclusive. Inclusion should be for all students.

**Inclusive education:** Inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that permits individuals to feel accepted, valued and secure. An inclusive community evolves constantly to respond to the needs of its members. An inclusive community concerns itself with improving the well-being of each member. Inclusion goes farther than the idea of physical location, it is a value system based on beliefs that promote participation, belonging and interaction.

*Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, Follow-up to the Manitoba Special Education Review Proposals for a Policy, Accountability and Funding Framework (September 2001)*

## Does that mean that the schools would not have to include disabled students?

**Professor MacKay:** No. Students with disabilities would be one category of "students in need of intervention," but not the only one. Furthermore, the New Brunswick human rights laws and the Charter of Rights require that there be no discrimination based upon disability. My recommended amendment would broaden the category and support a definition of inclusion that goes beyond disability. I also recommend that this broader definition of inclusion be added immediately to New Brunswick's *Education Act*. This would make inclusion a matter of statutory commitment, and not just a policy that can be easily changed.



# The Challenge of Diverse Class Composition

Some of my teacher friends tell me that there are so many disruptive children in classrooms today that they have become glorified babysitters and many children get little time, attention or education. Is that true?

*The diversity of class composition is not going to change, and the real question is how to manage this diverse class composition in a way that serves the educational interests of all students.*

**Professor MacKay:** There certainly are some challenging classrooms in which the teacher and teacher assistants struggle to respond to both learning problems and behavioral outbursts— some of which are violent. This is a concern not just for teachers but also for parents and all concerned about the education of children. The diversity of class composition is not going to change, and the real question is how to manage this diverse class composition in a way that serves the educational interests of all students.

In my Report I make a number of recommendations aimed at producing a safer, less frustrating and better learning environment in these diverse classrooms.

- reducing class sizes— especially in classes with challenging composition;
- providing adequate supports to the classroom teacher in terms of:
  - resource teachers
  - outside professionals

- teacher assistants
- student attendants
- behavior intervention workers
- increasing the number and improving the training of resource teachers;
- exploring universal service delivery that takes account of student diversity
  - classroom design
  - modified curricula (developed at the Department level);
- better training and role definition for all members of the learning team (teacher assistant, student attendant, intervention worker etc.);
- improved training, strategies and resources for behavior management in the classroom;
- exploring the negative impact of French immersion on class composition in core English classes; and
- developing structured and accountable temporary 'pull out' of disruptive students.

In responding to the challenges of the inclusive classroom, flexibility and not dogma is crucial. One size does not fit all and creative solutions must be found to make New Brunswick classrooms a good learning environment for all.

# The Legal Imperative of Equality

Are we required by law to bring all children into our schools regardless of their abilities and backgrounds?

**Professor MacKay:** The law states that all New Brunswick students have a right to an appropriate education and that educational services be provided on a basis of equality for all students. These principles are enshrined in the education laws, the human rights code and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The laws do not go so far as to mandate inclusion in the regular classroom for all students. They do require a clear justification for the exclusion of a student, and the provision of some alternate form of education. There are rare cases where including a student in the regular class would be unreasonable or would cause undue hardship on the school system.

The school is an arena for the exchange of ideas and must, therefore, be premised upon principles of tolerance and impartiality so that all persons within the school environment feel equally free to participate. As the Board of Inquiry stated, a school board has a duty to maintain a positive school environment for all persons served by it.

*Supreme Court Justice LaForest in Attis v. New Brunswick No. 15 Board of Education [1996] 1 S.C.R. 825 (the Malcolm Ross case)*

Are you telling me that the judges and lawyers are telling the school boards and teachers how to do their jobs?

**Professor MacKay:** No. Judges are generally respectful of the knowledge and expertise of teachers and defer to them on the details of education. What the law does do is provide a framework for making the difficult decisions about providing the best education at the least cost and in a non-discriminatory fashion.

These are some of the legal considerations which emerged during my background research for the Report.

- Systemic as well as individual changes must be considered.
- When courts rule on services to be provided to ensure equality, it is up to Government to organize itself to provide the services. (Passing responsibility from one department to another is not acceptable).
- Schools should provide an environment free of bias, prejudice and intolerance where rights are respected and inclusion is modeled. Differences must be reasonably accommodated.
- Equality is context-specific, and there is no specific formula for applying it.

Law does not provide the answers to the difficult issues that arise in schools but it can serve as a lighthouse of equality and thus guide educators through the fog of complex educational decisions.

# The Duty of Reasonable Accommodation

You mentioned the need for reasonable accommodation and to me that would mean housing. But I guess it means more than that in schools. What does it mean?

**Professor MacKay:** The duty to accommodate is a concept used in the field of human rights and in simple terms it means that we must find ways to give people access to services like education, without discriminating against them.

Let me use the example of a student in a wheelchair. If a school does not have a ramp or an elevator, the student may have to be carried upstairs by attendants or other students. This accommodation requires the student to adjust to the existing school structure in a way that is not very dignified and, in fact, is demeaning. A more reasonable accommodation would be for the school to install a ramp or an elevator, which would serve this student in a more dignified way and also provide access for all future students in wheelchairs.

Another more extreme example of a lack of accommodation happened when Aboriginal students were required to cut their hair and not speak their native language at Residential Schools. Rather than forcing the students to change who they were, the discriminatory rules should have been discarded and the richness of Aboriginal heritage should have been incorporated into the learning. All students benefit from a positive approach to diversity.

It is not like we want to exclude people but sometimes we just cannot afford to include everyone. Who decides what accommodations are reasonable and what taxpayers can afford to pay?

**Professor MacKay:** You are correct: most people do not intend to discriminate but if the effect is negative it is still discrimination with or without intent. There are of course limits on what services can be provided by society and that is why everyone (including the person making the claim) must be reasonable about what can be expected in terms of full inclusion.

At the first level, it is school boards, superintendents and principals who must decide what accommodations are reasonable and which ones would cause “undue hardship” in terms of costs and other factors. Ultimately these decisions can be reviewed by human rights commissions and courts. In my Report, I suggested the following factors as relevant to deciding what is “reasonable” in the circumstances.

- The cost of the accommodation. Serious thought about the feasibility of a given accommodation or alternatives must be demonstrated.
- The health of any members of the school community or larger community;
- The safety of any member of the school community or larger community. Both the magnitude of the risk and the identity of those who would bear it are relevant;

- Interchangeability of work force and facilities;
- The size of the operation (in this case school district), which may influence the assessment of whether a given financial cost is undue;
- The ease with which the work-force or facilities can be adapted to the circumstances;
- Significant disruption to a collective agreement;
- The reasonable conduct of other parties such as the union and the person seeking accommodation; and
- The practicality and reasonableness of other less exclusionary options.

Of course, the impact on the class as a whole of including a particular student must be considered. As with all Charter rights, equality is subject to reasonable limits in a free and democratic society. The welfare of all students may be such a limit.



8.

Accommodation is more than symbolic gestures of 'grudging concessions;' it means 'ending exclusion, encouraging and nourishing the identity of the other, and celebrating the gifts of difference.'

*Chief Justice McLachlin of the Supreme Court of Canada -  
LaFontaine-Baldwin Lecture (March, 2003)*

*The diversity that  
students bring to schools  
should be celebrated and  
not grudgingly tolerated.*

# Truly Inclusive Schools are Safer and Less Violent

Everywhere you look these days there are examples of violence in our schools and it is not just in the United States, but also much closer to home. Are we trying to do too much in our schools by bringing people into our schools who should not really be there?

**Professor MacKay:** One of the interesting conclusions of my review is that students with disabilities were neither the major perpetrators nor the major victims of school violence and disruption. This is likely also the case with other groups of students, such as Aboriginal students. Problems of student violence and disruption are spread across the full range of student

*Problems of student violence and disruption are spread across the full range of student abilities, backgrounds, and increasingly, genders.*

abilities, backgrounds and increasingly, genders. While boys are still the major players in respect to violence and disruption, girls are starting to catch up.

The root causes of student disruption and inappropriate acting out behavior is a sense of alienation and a feeling of not belonging. This problem is accentuated by the failure of the schools to meet these alienated stu-

dents' educational and emotional needs. It is this kind of situation, in its extreme form, which leads to tragedies such as the ones at Columbine High School and the Virginia Technological Institute.

Inclusion, properly understood and properly resourced, can reduce the alienation of these students and produce a setting where a diverse range of students can contribute, learn and belong. It can also produce a student

and staff population which is more tolerant and accepting of all forms of differences. There appears to be more tolerance for differences in New Brunswick schools because of its inclusive practices.

New Brunswick is on the right track with the Positive Learning Environment Policy but much more has to be done to make the province's schools both safer and more inclusive. Behavior intervention workers, vocational options, flexible curricula and teaching methods, and better training in behavior management are some of my suggestions for taking New Brunswick to the next level.

**Belonging:** Such an achingly simple word. It conjures up some of our deepest yearnings, and for some of us, perhaps our most painful memories. Equality claims begin and end with a desire for belonging; for community. Ideas of equality lie at the heart of the Canadian promise of community.

*Bill Pentney, 'Equality Values and the Canadian Promise of Community'  
(1996) 35 C.H.R.R. No. 6 C/6-C15.*



# Human Resources and the People Focus

What needs to be done to improve the education of New Brunswick's children?

**Professor MacKay:** There are many things that must happen to produce a better and more inclusive education for all students in the province. In my Report I make 95 recommendations —some of which have a significant price tag and others which involve restructuring existing financial and human resources.

A good place to start is with the people who deliver education —New Brunswick's human resources. You need the right people in clearly defined

*A good place to start is with the people who deliver education—New Brunswick's human resources.*

roles performing jobs for which they are properly trained. Few things are more important than the education of our children, so we must ensure that highly qualified and motivated people are hired, valued and retained at all levels of the system.

Surprisingly, many people in the system (teacher assistants are one example) do not have clearly defined roles, so many pages of my Report are devoted to clarifying the knowledge, skills and attitudes required by the people in each position. The Government, the unions, the universities and the broader community all have roles in clearly defining what we expect from the people entrusted with our children.

You mentioned training for teachers and others within the school system. Aren't these people properly trained?

**Professor MacKay:** There is a high degree of training and commitment among those in the New Brunswick school system. However, many people in the system expressed frustration with the limitations of their training and professional development, both before and during their jobs. The Department of Education, the unions and the universities must collaborate to provide better professional development for all segments of the school system. Training in operating as an effective part of the educational team and strategies for responding to diversity both need to be enhanced.

Will it cost a lot of money to make the kind of changes that you are describing?

**Professor MacKay:** There will be costs for making these changes, although some advances can come from redeploying existing resources. Additional human resources are required: more teachers; resource teachers; behavior intervention workers; and professionals; for example. But there is also an urgent need to improve the situation for the existing personnel. Failure to do so will continue the high levels of frustration that exist in New Brunswick's education system and that will lead to even higher rates of burn-out and job turnover. The costs of doing nothing will far exceed the costs of taking action to attract and retain the best people possible, to educate New Brunswick's human resources of tomorrow.

# The Service Delivery Model

Even with the right people operating the system there seems to be problems with how we provide education to our students. Are there problems with the current model of delivering education in the province and what do you suggest as solutions?

**Professor MacKay:** Four major areas of weakness with New Brunswick's service delivery model were revealed through my review, and particularly in the consultation process:

- inadequate funding of the education system;
- insufficient support services for students who need assistance (e.g., psychology, social work, speech language pathology, audiology);
- lack of coordination of mandates and services among departments (service integration); and
- lack of consensus about what roles the Education Department, districts and schools should have, and some inconsistency in exercising their roles.

My recommendations suggest a number of ways to address these weaknesses and build on the many strengths of the New Brunswick system of service delivery. On the critical question of funding I recommend:

- continuing to fund public education and student services primarily based on a census model (number of students in the district) with some limited and targeted funding based on the category of disability;
- examining funding allocations to ensure equitable funding for rural

areas, and examining equalization among the two linguistic sectors; and

- committing more resources to the implementation of inclusive education in a reasonable, progressive and incremental way.

On the critical issue of support services outside the education system, I make recommendations to enhance the quality and availability of these services and reduce wait times:

- Cabinet should strike an interdepartmental committee to determine the need for outside professional services for students. Wait times should be analyzed. Some preliminary professional-to-student ratios are proposed.
- The government should allocate financial resources to attract, retain and increase the numbers of outside professional service providers within the province (such as audiologists, speech pathologists and nurses) and they must work towards better ratios of key service providers to students.
- Multi-disciplinary teams should be created in each district that would be responsible for coordinating supports when the delivery of services to a student involves more than one department.

Integrated service delivery is a crucial aspect of delivering quality education to an increasingly diverse student body. There is a need to break down the traditional silos so that departments are better able to work together to meet the many needs of students in our schools.

While the desirability of integrated service delivery is clear, making it happen is difficult and must be directed from the top. Accordingly, I recom-

mend that the Premier create an Interdepartmental Steering Committee on Integrated Service Delivery composed of Ministers of Education (chair), Training and Education Development, Justice, Public Safety, Family and Community Services, Health, and Aboriginal Affairs, to design a model for service delivery.

The Government has already responded in part by setting up a committee involving Education, Health and Family and Community Services. Of course, implementing this integration is the real key.

Finally, on the question of comparative roles within the education bureaucracy I advocate:

- clearly articulating and enforcing the Department's role through consultation and policy;
- defining a role for District Education Councils that is clear and meaningful; and
- leaving enough discretion at the school level to allow resources to be applied in a way that best meets local needs.

There are also specific recommendations aimed at addressing particular groups such as students with autism, with learning disabilities, with needs for enrichment, and Aboriginal students.



# Leadership and Accountability

It sounds like many things need to happen to make the education system better. Who is going to take the lead on this change?

**Professor MacKay:** You are correct that strong leadership is the key to moving beyond words to concrete actions. This leadership must start at the top and be reinforced at all levels of the school system. As such, many of my recommendations are addressed to the Premier, his Cabinet and the Department of Education. However, other players in the system will also have roles: there are recommendations for action by District Education Councils, superintendents, principals and teachers, to name only a few.

*Leadership must start at the top and be reinforced at all levels of the school system.*

Both the consultations and my research suggest that the principal of the school is the critical person in making inclusion work at the practical classroom level. Parents and students can also play an important leadership role and help to break down the walls between the schools and the larger community.



Politicians and other leaders can talk a good show but how can we make them accountable for really taking action to make our schools better?

**Professor MacKay:** The question of accountability is always important in the delivery of Government services. As with leadership, accountability must start at the top and apply throughout the system. To make this point, I recommend that the Department of Education report annually to the Premier on progress in implementing the recommendations from my Report. I also recommend that both the Premier and the Minister of Education make a similar annual report to the Legislature's Education Committee. I have also linked my recommendations to particular timelines, to focus the process of change. Some of my recommendations on accountability include the following:

- Amendments to the *Education Act* (or regulations) should require elements of inclusive education to be incorporated into school improvement plans, district education plans, school and district performance reports, and the provincial education plan. Provincial policy should be developed to provide guidance.
- School reviews should be conducted in both linguistic sectors and should include monitoring of provincial priorities in respect to inclusive education.
- Data in support of indicators of inclusion should be collected and used to determine priorities in professional development and resource allocation.

- Performance appraisals of all school personnel should be in relation to clear job descriptions and should include skills, attitudes and knowledge in respect to inclusive education.
- Student evaluation should be appropriate to an inclusive education system, as should the documentation of achievement on the provincial diploma.
- The Positive Learning Environment Policy should be expanded based on broad consultation to address violence and bullying.

I think that it is possible to have an accountable education system, without it degenerating into too much “red tape” and spending so much time measuring that there is little time for real education.



10.

## What role can parents play in making school officials accountable for educating their children?

**Professor MacKay:** Parents play a very important role in advancing their children’s education. They have the right to be involved in their children’s learning process and to add their insights about their own children. Parents are also expected to be reasonable members of the school community and to work with teachers and others to make schools better places for all children. Parents also have a role, both as individuals and as members of advocacy groups, to make school officials accountable for the important task of education.

*Parents play a very important role in advancing their children’s education.*

If parents do not agree with how their children are being handled in schools, there are many avenues within the school structure to raise their concerns. If they can not settle differences at the school level I recommend a process of mediation, review and appeal, by which people outside the school bureaucracy can assess the parents’ claims. The recommendations on this new process are quite detailed and designed to provide both parents and school officials a fair opportunity to be heard by a neutral decision-maker. It is my hope that this will provide a more effective and cost-sensitive way to challenge school decisions than lodging complaints with human rights commissions and courts.

## In what ways could we monitor progress on achieving a truly inclusive education system in New Brunswick?

**Professor MacKay:** This is a question that I asked every group that I met during the consultations. They suggested the following indicators:

- Parent, student and personnel happiness and satisfaction;
- Student demeanor and relationships with one another;
- Drop out rates, retention rates, suspension rates, rates of students not included in regular classes;
- Post school employment, opportunity, and outcome;
- Measures of competency, autonomy and independence of students;
- Levels of inter-departmental cooperation;
- Student achievement of academic and other goals;
- Sense of belonging;
- Reduced wait lists and greater availability of support services; and
- Levels of support for preventive and proactive approaches.

Like many things in life, inclusion is really a journey that will never be fully completed. However, there are both quantitative and qualitative markers that can guide progress on the road to better and more inclusive schools.

## One final question: are you optimistic that things will really change for the better because of your Report?

**Professor MacKay:** In spite of the many challenges, I am optimistic that things will improve and that New Brunswick's education system will become more truly inclusive. This change will not be just because of my Report, though I hope it will have been a catalyst for change and a vehicle

*In spite of the many challenges, I am optimistic that things will improve and New Brunswick's education system will become more truly inclusive.*

for giving voice to the concerns of New Brunswick citizens about the education system and their hopes for a better future. The tone of my Report is hopeful, despite the many problems identified in it. The fact that the Government has adopted the Report and is actively pursuing its implementation is a further basis for optimism. I am confident that the

Government will build on their successes with inclusive education to date, and confront the challenges that must be overcome to take it to the next level. The children of New Brunswick deserve no less.



## Further Reading in the Full MacKay Report on Inclusive Education

(New Brunswick Department of Education website at [www.gnb.ca/0000/index-e.asp](http://www.gnb.ca/0000/index-e.asp) Click on “publications” and then click on “Report on Inclusion.”)

For an exploration of the general themes of the full Inclusion Report (relevant to all topics in the Inclusion Booklet) read the following pages from the Report:

- Preface: High Expectations and Many Challenges 12 – 17
- Introduction: Child Centered Schools and School Centered Communities 188 –194
- Conclusion: Actions Speak Louder Than Words 342 - 346
- Author’s Summary: Connecting Care And Challenge: Tapping Our Human Potential (MacKay) A condensed 65 page summary of the full Inclusion Report, also available on the above website.

### 1. About the MacKay Report on Inclusive Education

	Recommendations	Analysis	Appendices
Connecting care and challenge		12–17	
Background research			A
Best practices		52 – 67	E
Other provinces		68 – 87	G and H
The New Brunswick context		88 – 106	K and L
Consultations		107 – 149	M
Funding model	327 – 341 (funding model)	148 – 149	J and S

### 2. Inclusive Education and Reasonable Expectations

	Recommendations	Analysis	Appendices
Reasonable accommodation	217 – 220 (accommodation / hardship)	25 – 36	F
Defining Inclusion	196 – 205 (statutory preamble & definition)	114 – 120	F
“Exceptional students”	206 – 217 (exceptional / disabled students)	120 – 122	F

### 3. The Challenge of Diverse Class Composition

	Recommendations	Analysis	Appendices
Class composition	202 – 203 (class composition)	12 – 17	
The challenges of service delivery and professional training and development	221 – 293 (service delivery)	123 – 144	I, M and Q

### 4. The Legal Imperative of Equality

	Recommendations	Analysis	Appendices
Legal considerations	196 – 201 (statutory preamble & definition) 215 – 220 (disability & accommodation)	25 – 36 116 – 120	B and P B and P

### 5. The Duty of Reasonable Accommodation

	Recommendations	Analysis	Appendices
	217 – 220 (accommodation / hardship)	25 – 36	F

### 6. Inclusive Schools are Safer and Less Violent

	Recommendations	Analysis	Appendices
	248 – 249 (behavior support workers) 287 – 293 (discipline) 317 – 326 (mediation & review)	36 – 51 135 – 137	C, D and F C, D and F C, D and F

### 7. Human Resources and the People Focus

	Recommendations	Analysis	Appendices
	221 – 249 (human resources)	123 – 132 188 - 195	I, L and Q

### 8. The Service Delivery Model

	Recommendations	Analysis	Appendices
	221 – 249 (human resources) 250 – 258 (integrated service delivery) 259 – 262 (early intervention) 263 – 286 (general service delivery) 294 – 306 (structural roles)	123 – 144	M M and R M M M

### 9. Leadership & Accountability

	Recommendations	Analysis	Appendices
	294 – 316 (accountability framework) 342 – 346 (actions speak louder than words)	117 – 119 144 – 149	N/A



# Inclusion!

*What is **Inclusion** anyway?*

*Questions and Answers about the MacKay Report on Inclusion*

