

EDUCATION:
THEN, NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

March 28 – 29, 2006

PROCEEDINGS REPORT

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Report prepared by: Flo Paul

Education: Then, Now and in the Future

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Introduction:

On March 28-29, 2006, the Inclusion and Well Being Initiative and the Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living (NLACL) hosted a provincial workshop on inclusive education.

The purpose of the workshop was to bring together educators, administrators, advocates and others to:

- Provide an overview of the history of education for persons with developmental disabilities.
- Share information about what is happening today provincially, nationally and internationally with respect to inclusive education.
- Describe effective strategies that can be used or are being used to enhance the education of diverse groups of students in regular schools.
- Assist in the design of a process for the development of a common vision and understanding of where we want to be in terms of inclusive education.

DAY 1

The facilitator, Terence Hickey, opened the event by providing an overview of the purpose and intent, and explaining that the agenda, as presented, was open to change. A major snowstorm had hit the island and we were still awaiting the arrival of a number of presenters from within the province and Ontario. Introductions were made.

The agenda is attached in **Appendix A**.

The list of participants is attached in **Appendix B**.

Ray McIsaac, President of the NLACL, referenced the gains made in education during the past number of years, while acknowledging that it was segmented and grassroots. NLACL promoted inclusive education at a provincial level, and progress was made school by school, and community by community, depending on the expectation and advocacy voice of parents. We need a holistic approach to include in education, transition, post-secondary and beyond. We need to capture personal stories, best practices. There is a lot of knowledge within the province. We do not need to reinvent the wheel. We need strategies, and collaboration at the provincial level to grow and nurture the process.

Overview of the Community Inclusion Initiative:

Flo Paul

The Community Inclusion Initiative, established in 1997 and funded through the Disabled Persons Program, is a national partnership initiative of the Canadian Association for Community Living, Services Canada, and the provincial and territorial associations.

The objective of this initiative is to build community capacity to include and value all citizens, including those with developmental disabilities.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the Inclusion and Well Being Initiative is designed, developed, and implemented by a provincial Advisory Committee with representation from advocacy, community and government. The initiative has supported the development of cross-sector partnerships at the community and regional levels for more than one hundred community outreach projects.

Several of the Community Outreach projects have sponsored workshops and information sessions specific to early childhood learning, secondary and post-secondary education, transitional planning from school to work/community, and lifelong learning.

“Sharing the Learning’s Report” provides a listing of the community projects done during the past seven years, and is available on line:

www.communityinclusion.ca

Last year, based on information gathered throughout the initiative, the focus shifted to systemic policies and practices within the education systems. A report of the activities undertaken specific to education during the past year was included in the workshop kit, and is available on line.

Overheads used for the presentation are attached in **Appendix C**.

International Perspective: Dan Goodyear, College of the North Atlantic

Dan’s presentation, entitled “Advancing Inclusionary Practices in Post-Secondary Education” provided an overview of a four-year international initiative which promotes self-advocacy and enables students with diverse learning needs to travel and speak directly to inclusive education. The overall goal of the project was to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in post-secondary education by examining models of inclusive post-secondary education and promoting attitudinal awareness in both institutions and community.

Overheads used for the presentation are attached in **Appendix D**

National Perspective: Ray McIsaac

Ray noted the increased focus on inclusive education and highlighted several activities occurring at the Atlantic and National levels specific to the inclusion of students with diverse needs.

- “Nation Summit on Inclusive Education” sponsored by the CACL in 2004. The aim of the summit was to consider barriers that students with disabilities face to full inclusion, and to see if partnerships could be forged to move the agenda forward. Report available on line: www.cacl.ca
- “Building Inclusive Schools: A Search for Solutions” hosted by the Canadian Teachers Federation. A major purpose of the conference was to broaden the definition and discussion of inclusion, and to examine and

develop solutions and strategies to ensure children and youth are not excluded. www.ctf-fce.ca

- “Competing for Tomorrow” a national stakeholder summit on postsecondary education and skills. This event was sponsored by the Council of the Federation and hosted by the Premiers of Ontario and Quebec. The summit was designed to facilitate an open dialogue amongst stakeholders to identify the challenges and opportunities. Representatives from our province included the Premier, Minister of Education, students, youth, postsecondary institutions, business, aboriginal people, immigration, and under-represented groups. The Discussion Guide is available at: www.competingfortomorrow.ca
- An Atlantic Regional Network on education between provincial governments. The Deputy Ministers have assumed responsibility.
- A national website on inclusive education: www.education.ca
- July 4-7, 2006: Summer Leadership Academy in Prince Edward Island. Participants will spend four days examining effective practices for inclusion.
- If identified need/interest, we could do a Summer Leadership in our province.

Ontario School Culture Initiative

Representatives from Ontario were unable to get to the province due to poor weather conditions. The Ontario Initiative is a proactive process of engagement with schools to develop inclusive school cultures. Questionnaires, followed by focus group meetings with students, parents, educators, administrators and others involved in the school environment will identify the strengths and needs. Action plans will be developed. The process also includes a train the trainer module. A presentation made by Laurie Thompson- Special Projects Manager for Ontario’s Community Inclusion Project during a past inclusion initiative is attached in **Appendix E**.

Laurie has offered to come to the province, free of charge, at the request of any school. Her telephone number: 416-447-4348 ext.239.

Current philosophy and practice - provincial:

Ray Mclsaac

Ray spoke about current practices and the need to find ways to capture and share information and best practices, the different definitions of inclusive education, and the benefits of having clearly defined policies, at all levels, on inclusive education. The NLACL is currently engaged in a process to develop a policy on inclusive education. Meetings, with parents and educators, will be held across the province to gather input on the policy.

Current philosophy and practice - local:

Susan Daniels

Stephenville Primary has a high number of students with varying levels of special needs and provides a welcoming environment for all students. A team approach is used. Parents and volunteers play a major role. They recognize the need for a positive, caring attitude and acknowledge that “there is not one way to teach, reach or live with all students. It is an individual journey and each student needs individual goals.”

Presentation attached in **Appendix F.**

History of Education:

Flo Paul

Historically people with developmental disabilities have been excluded from society, and hence from the benefits of being part of community. Schooling for persons with developmental disabilities in this province started fifty years ago with classes set up in separate buildings, and funded through volunteer fund raising efforts. It was 1971 before the Department of Education assumed responsibility for the education of persons with disabilities. **Appendix G.**

Marg Pike, a parent from Labrador City, whose daughter attended and graduated from an inclusive school environment, shared the milestones of her daughter’s school life. Kelly enjoyed the benefits of being valued for her contributions and receiving the support of her peers. **Appendix H.**

Summary Roundtable Dialogue:

Flip chart recordings **Appendix I**

1. Has this exercise so far been useful to you?
 - This is a good initial step to ‘plant the seeds.’ The discussion is about a paradigm shift, and this means we need to have open, honest discussions.
 - A strong sense of history is important. It provides a personal ‘face’ to the issue and places the progress in a meaningful way.
 - The process of partnership development/networking provides the ‘how to’ coordinate the initiative across the stakeholders.
 - Events like this allow teachers from rural, remote communities to come together and network with a more diverse group of resource people

2. What do you feel should be a priority?
 - Systems rise to the level of expectations that you set for them. In terms of developing policy, the consultations must not only be guided by those affected, it must also educate people about the history so that input is informed. Changes need to be institutionalized in policy.

- We need 'provincial' leadership to drive the overall agenda and ensure the participation of all players.
- We need to focus and work in collaboration with partners to identify the gaps/deliverables and develop a strategic plan for the process.
- The advocacy function is especially important in the absence of government policy.
- Regional meetings with regular teacher involvement would expose individuals to the history, personal stories and best practice.
- Lack of expectations. Often people do not look at postsecondary as an option for people with developmental disabilities. When they do, they often limit the choices or don't consult with the individual.
- Managing the transition between secondary/post-secondary to make the process more seamless. Communications need to be improved between the department and postsecondary.
- Lack of continuous training and in-service on the ISSP results in the tool becoming something other than what it was originally intended.
- Use local school resources to help plan the transition at various stages of the education process.
- Teacher training: "Inclusive Education" and practical experience should be a course requirement for all teachers. Also, regular in-service.
- Mindset in many schools is that the special education teacher is responsible for the student with needs. Recruiting special education teachers appears to be an emerging problem. Special Education teachers are becoming overwhelmed and many are interested in change.
- Resource in rural, remote schools are non-existent, ie. speech therapist, educational psychologists

The day concluded with the knowledge that persistent poor weather conditions would keep the presenters from Ontario out of the province, and the activities for the following day would be revised.

DAY 2

Flo welcomed participants back, and because others had joined us, introductions were made.

1. What policies support the education of diverse groups of students in regular schools and classrooms? (Open Forum) Flip chart recordings **Appendix J**

- It would be useful to educators and parents to have a policy to draw from. The current Special education policy has been in circulation since 1997. An updated version is being worked on but it's a slow process.
- The policies of the Department and the Boards are available on line.

- Policies alone will not cause the changes needed. Practice doesn't always follow policy. Values and attitudes are the key. Both policy and values are crucial spheres for change.
- We need to use the 'language of inclusion'
- There are good examples of inclusion happening in schools. We need to research and collect data on best practices and policies.
- The 'Inclusionary Vision and Values' developed by the Labrador School Board is a good example of supportive policies.
- At Stephenville Primary there appears to be a 'policy' in place
- The revised "Pathways" document, and "Safe and Caring Schools" captures diversity within the classroom
- Council of Atlantic Provinces Teacher (CAPTO) has a policy on inclusion re: resourcing (attached **Appendix K**)
- Literacy programs are inclusive. Funding is available for non-profits in the field of literacy.
- A diverse range of needs requires a diverse range of programs.
- Classroom size impacts on ability to respond

2. Have we arrived where we want to be in terms of inclusive education in the province? (Roundtable) Flip chart recordings **Appendix L**

- General consensus that the level of inclusion has increased significantly, particularly regarding the philosophy, language and legislation, but we haven't arrived yet.
- We constantly need to apply an inclusion lens and assess 'inclusionary' practices.
- Belief systems must continue to be challenged. Continue to move towards all children belonging in the regular classroom. A firm belief/commitment to inclusion
- Collaboration among departments & organizations is important.
- Regular teachers need to be better prepared and this has to be addressed at the university level.
- Each school has their own unique inclusive practices. Different levels of service throughout the province remains a barrier.
- Teachers need to take "ownership" of children in the classroom
- NL & NS are the only two provinces with modified college programs.
- Great examples to draw from within our province

3. If not, what do you think would be the best (most effective) strategies for getting us there? (Small groups)
(Group Notes & Flip chart recordings **Appendix M**)

- Do not see the disability first, see the child.
- Apply an inclusion lens.

- Resources not assigned to individual students but to setting. Shift focus so that changes in the classroom are investments for all. Plan for change and recognize that many will be reluctant. Fully prepare various groups for the pending change.
- Important to arrive at a common understanding of “inclusive education.” Need consistent and common language and a unified voice. Need to bring it to the administration level. Administrators are key to promoting inclusion at the school level.
- Department of Education must solidify what inclusive practices are. Ensure policies reference inclusion as a statement – not to be left to interpretation. Policies guide attitudes – useful for recruitment strategies.
- Need to look at the big picture: provincial leadership and more inter-agency collaboration. Working together will provide a stronger advocacy. Consistency would happen.
- Professional Development: in-service, inclusive orientation, philosophy and attitude; provide strategies for inclusion.
- MUN – Department of Education: There needs to be more emphasis on inclusion in teacher training programs – prerequisite of graduation. Student interns should work more closely with special Education teachers in inclusive environments.
- Parents meeting regularly with classroom teacher. Educate & inform teachers. Inclusion comes most easily where parents are engaged.
- Public Advocacy. Public Awareness of the benefits of inclusion.
- Itinerant teachers for Inclusion really positive to promote practice.
- Name the gap between potential and actual experiences
- Work with kids to become more proactive around inclusion. Let kids in the school take it on as a mission. It becomes their mandate. Have former students who have experienced disabilities to be a voice. Hear from students without disabilities on how they were/are impacted by learning alongside individuals with disabilities. “It’s up to Us” – a video about high school students to make their schools more inclusive.
- Vital to bring inclusive models to the forefront – opportunities for learning. Profile schools with best practices
- Effective transition beyond school
- Review of Pathways – step in the right direction
- Dispel myths: special needs children may diminish learning environment for others
- Talk about inclusion from the beginning and extend to include all segments of the community. Community environment must be inclusive and thus no giant leap when child enters school

March 28-29, 2006
Agenda (Revised)

Day 1: History, Philosophy, Vision

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 9:00 – 9:15 | Welcome and Introductions |
| 9:15 – 9:45 | Overview of the Community Inclusion Initiative
Local Success Stories |
| 9:45 – 10:00 | Refreshment Break |
| 10:00 – 10:45 | History of Education (Parent/Advocate perspective) |
| 10:45 – 11:45 | Current philosophy and practice (local, provincial) |
| 11:45 - 12:00 | National Perspective |
| 12:00 – 1:00 | Lunch |
| 1:00 – 2:00 | National Perspective |
| 2:00 – 2:45 | International Perspective |
| 2:45 – 3:00 | Refreshment Break |
| 3:00 – 4:20 | Group Discussion |
| 4:20 – 4:30 | Conclusion |

Day 2: Strategies

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------|
| 9:00 – 9:10 | Welcome back |
| 9:10 – 10:00 | Group Discussion |
| 10:00 – 10:15 | Refreshment Break |
| 10:15 – 11:15 | Roundtable |
| 11:15 – 11:45 | Small Group Discussion |
| 11:45 - 12:00 | Feedback & Wrap up |

Participants List:

Ray Mclsaac	NLACL
Kathy Mclsaac	Parent
Haylee Mclsaac	Advocate
Karen Westcott	People First Newfoundland and Labrador
Sandra Taylor	Department of Education
Paula Gillis	Western School District
Evelyn Lundrigan	Department of Education
Thomas Kendell	Central School Board
Wendy Martin	Labrador School District
Cindy Christopher	Department of Education
Susan Daniels	Western School District
Ken O'Brien	Department Human Resources, Labour and Employment
Dan Goodyear	College of the North Atlantic
Michele Neary	Neary & Associates
Boyd Lee	Department of Education
Una Tucker	Department Health and Community Services
Lori Clarke	Eastern School District
Stefanie Tuff	Newfoundland Teachers' Association
Darla Seaward	Labrador School District
Sandra Gillam	Parent
Faron Sheppard	Labrador School District
Glenda Riteff	Eastern School District
Darren Pike	Eastern School District
Sophia Slaney	Eastern School District
Marg Pike	Parent
Terry Hickey	Hickey & Associates
Melanie Thomas	NLACL
Darlene Nash	NLACL
Flo Paul	NLACL

Appendix E (Taken from PAR Report 2004-2005)

Inclusive School Culture: an overview of a provincial initiative in Ontario (Laurie Thompson)

An Inclusive School Culture - Indicators of Success describes a vision of what an inclusive school culture could look like in an elementary or secondary school. It outlines the key indicators that must be in place to have a successful inclusive culture and the factors that contribute to them. For example, to have an inclusive school culture there needs to be a collaborative approach in which everyone participates in finding solutions, the school is linked to the broader community, parents are embraced as essential partners, the school takes responsibility for transition and ongoing and constructive dialogue takes place.

The purpose of an inclusive School Culture is to help promote, create and nurture inclusive schools in which all stakeholders - students, administrators, educators, support staff and parents feel they belong and can effectively participate. The resource is intended to help all those who feel excluded because of learning styles, ability, race, culture, socio-economic status, sexuality or gender.

An Inclusive School Culture focuses on what could exist if there were no funding, policy and attitudinal constraints. Therefore it is intended to stretch our thinking and give those who want to build more inclusive school cultures something to aim for. Every school will be achieving some of the indicators.

Overview of the Steps in the Process

Get Organized

- Clarify the Purpose
- Articulate the Driving Principles or Values
- Determine who will participate
- Identify and Recruit Facilitators
- Design the Process and Develop a Work Plan

Complete the Questionnaire

The purpose of the Questionnaire is to gather information about the attitudes and practices within the school toward inclusion and to stimulate discussion and learning about inclusion.

Five Different Questionnaires

Broad Stakeholder Representation

Facilitated Process

Generate an Inclusive School Culture Profile

Tallies

Comments

Profile Summary

Review the Profile

Includes all Stakeholders

Framework for Discussion

Review the discussion framework

Review Profile Results

Identify Specific Areas for Improvement

Decide Priorities

Identify Next Steps

Identify Goals

Manageable and Specific

Drawn from Results

Measurable

Buy In

Develop an Action Plan

Outcomes of the Inclusive School Culture Approach

- Proactive Approach
- Identifies Strengths
- Identifies Evidence but worth building on or reviewing
- Identifies Challenges
- Brings Stakeholders Together
- Heightens Awareness
- Generates New Thinking
- Leads to Action (Embedded in School Improvement Plans)

Appendix I

EDUCATION: Then, Now and in the Future

Flip Chart Recordings Day 1

- Good to hear various perspectives
- “How to coordinate the initiative across the stakeholders, build networks
- Gap between Post-secondary and the department in terms of communication
- Managing the transition between secondary/post secondary to make the process more seamless (CAN/Education)
- Develop the necessary tool
- Umbrella group/framework. partnerships for inclusive education are necessarily larger than students, parents, school and department
- Use local school resources to help plan the transition at various stages of the education process
- This is a good initial step to ‘plant seeds’ The discussion is about a paradigm shift – this means we need discussion-honest, critical and positive
- We need ‘provincial’ leadership to drive the overall agenda and ensure the participation of players
- Strategic plan/operating plan for the process
- Utilize our resources – not recreate the wheel
- Good check on progress
- Provides a personal ‘face’ to the issue and places the history of progress in a meaningful way
- Regular teachers need ?? on-going basis
- Regional meetings with regular teacher involvement would expose individuals to history, personal stories and best practices
- Use our existing knowledge and resources to create the service tools
- Teacher training requirements do not have a mandatory training requirement in ‘Inclusive Education to graduate
- Recruiting special education teachers appears to be an emerging problem. S.E. teachers are becoming overwhelmed and many are interested in change
- Bachelor of Education (??REQ’s??) need advocacy
- Not enough tools to get children ready for life
- You often take things for granted – history makes you understand how much work was done before
- Lack of continuous training and in-service on the ISSP results in the tool becoming something other than what it was originally intended. Training usually starts of with a bang and dwindles as resources decline

- Twenty years ago, we had to change the perception that if you wanted support for your child you had to fund it. Parents do not have to fight as hard. Inclusive education is a right
- Personal stories and anecdotes put things in context and shapes the experience
- Collaboration, partnership, focus, identifying gaps/deliverables
- In terms of developing the policy, the consultations must not only be guided by those affected, it must also educate people about the history so that input is informed
- Time for planning around students is a need/priority
- Often people do not look at post-secondary as an option for people with intellectual challenges
- When people look at individuals with intellectual disabilities and consider post-secondary education, they often limit the choices or do not consult with the person affected
- Sharing of experiences is very important. A strong sense of history is important because those lessons can help you when new challenges arise
- Systems rise to the level of expectations that you set for them
- Evaluation of pathways program (??-survey special education teachers?)
- Mindset in many schools is that the special education teacher is responsible for the student with needs. Resources in rural, remote schools are non-existent, ie. Speech therapist, educational psychologists
- Events like this allow teachers from rural, remote communities to come together and network with a more diverse group of resource people
- Lack of ownership around issues faced by and affecting students

Flip Chart Day 2

1. What policies support the education of diverse groups of students in regular schools and classrooms? (Open Forum)

- Special education policy (1997) document in circulation.
- Newer version being worked on. Slow process-very legal, heavy document
- Useful to parents (and all) to have a 'policy' to draw from
- At Stephenville Primary there appears to be a 'policy' that is in place. The question of 'choice' remains
- How do we ensure we capture these best practices-policies?
- Values and attitudes are key, they aren't legislated
- Classroom size impacts ability to respond
- Using the 'language of inclusion'
- Research and data collection to explore best practices
- Revised pathways document captures diversity within the classroom
- Possible for school boards to adopt/advance supportive policies , Inclusionary Vision and Values (Labrador School Board)
- Both policy and values are crucial spheres for change
- Safe and Caring Schools (draft document)
- Established policies available online (Boards & Department)
- Policy awareness different outside the Avalon
- Council of Atlantic Provinces Teacher (CAPTO) has a policy on inclusion re: resourcing
- Funding opportunities available for non-profits in the field of literacy
- A diverse range of needs requires a diverse range of programs

CAPTO Policy on Inclusion

- 1) CAPTO supports the inclusion of exceptional pupils into regular classroom settings to the extent that is considered practicable having due regard for the educational needs of all pupils. Therefore, settings other than the regular classroom are appropriate for specific purposes.
- 2) In making a determination as to the placement of exceptional pupils, decisions should be guided by information collected in consultation with the parents of a pupil and with the professional staff of the school and other appropriate agencies.
- 3) Teachers working with exceptional pupils must receive the support services they deem necessary to provide a meaningful educational experience for the pupil.
- 4) Courses in exceptionality must be part of pre-service programs, and all teachers must have access to in-service sessions in exceptionality.
- 5) Sufficient time must be allocated to allow regular classroom teachers, resource teachers and administrators to work on Special Education Plans (SEPs), Individual Program Plans (IPPs), Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or Individualized Support Service Plans (ISSPs) and to hold meetings with parents.
- 6) The responsibility for the educational program of exceptional pupils is shared between the parents, all members of the school team and any other resources called upon to achieve the goals set out in the Special Education Plan (SER), Individual Program Plan (IPP), Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Individualized Support Service Plan (ISSP).
- 7) Funding should be long-term, adequate to provide needed resources and based upon actual costs rather than artificial formulae.
- 8) Class size and composition must be considered in determining placement of exceptional students.

May 6, 2003
CAPTO AGM 2003

2. Have we arrived where we want to be in terms of Inclusive Education in the province?

(Roundtable)

- Level of inclusion has increased significantly. Parents report satisfaction and agree that we've come very far –but there's room for improvement
- Some level of service, inclusion. More have come on board
- The transition from K -1 remains a challenge. Difficulties in higher grades
- Great progress made re: philosophy. However expectations continue to exceed resources of homeroom teachers. Resources very broadly defined. Collaboration among departments & organizations is important
- Regular teachers need more training
- Change is ongoing and becoming increasingly individualized (ie. ISSP)
- Philosophy: "What is best for this particular child?"
- Continue to move towards all children belonging in the regular classroom. A firm belief/commitment to inclusion
- We haven't arrived, but we've come a very long way (1962) re: language and legislation
- Great examples to draw from within our province
- Different levels of service throughout the province remains a barrier
- Definitely moving forward
- Focus on identifying strengths and needs of individual child
- Each school has their own unique inclusive practices
- Teachers need to take "ownership" of children in the classroom
- Belief systems must continue to be challenged
- Inclusive education had an increased momentum
- NL & NS are the only two provinces with modified college programs
- Regular teachers need to be better prepared. Possible to address at the university level?
- Where do we want to be? 100%-80%
- Must be aware that inclusion has potential to exclude as well
- Important to balance inclusion with meeting the needs of the child
- Resources are best if used to enhance the child's education and learning experience
- Constantly need to apply inclusion lens and assess 'inclusionary' practices
- Open discussions are a great achievement
- Integration into the labour market remains an area for future work
- Many myths and stereotypes remain
- Education/training/work are areas for future work
- Expectations have clearly changed
- Inclusion is a right – we haven't yet arrived

Appendix M Education: Then, Now and in the Future

Report Back-Flip Chart Recordings:

3. If not, what do you think would be the best (most effective) strategies for getting us there? (Small group)

- Parents meeting regularly with classroom teacher. Educate & inform teachers
- Continue with itinerant teachers
- Professional Development: Provide strategies for inclusion
- Interagency collaboration
- Consistent and common language
- Department of Education must solidify what inclusive practices are
- MUN – Department of Education
- Public Advocacy
- Policy Development Focuses
- Get kids involved – “It’s up to us”
- More emphasis on inclusion in teacher training programs – perquisite of graduation BED
- Student interns work more closely with special Education teachers & inclusive environments
- Teacher in-service
- Policies guide attitudes – useful for recruitment strategies
- Inclusion comes most easily where parents are engaged
- Review of Pathways – step in the right direction
- Interagency cooperation re: ISSP
- One size does not fit all
- Must devise inclusive and meaningful learning environments
- Important to arrive at a common understanding of “inclusive education”
- Administrators are key in promoting inclusion at the school level
- Constantly ask: Is this inclusion/exclusion?
- Work within current processes
- Ensure that policies clearly reference and reflect inclusion
- Vital to bring inclusive models to the forefront – opportunities for learning
- Dispel myths: special needs children may diminish learning environment for others
- Talk about inclusion from the beginning and extend to include all segments of the community
- Shift away from dependency model and truly promote independence
- Shift focus so that changes in the classroom are investments for all
- Plan for change and recognize that many will be reluctant
- More effective transitions

Group Notes Collected:

Group 1

- inclusive orientation, philosophy and attitude
- see inclusive models working effectively for individual students
- hear from persons without disabilities how they were/are impacted by learning alongside individuals with disabilities

- dispel myths especially with individuals with cognitive disabilities
- profile schools with best practices
- name the gap between potential and actual experiences
- ISSP to begin at birth or as soon as possible after needs are identified
- Community environment must be inclusive and thus no giant leap when child enters school
- Child centered plans where child is seen as complete individual
- Access must be seen as more than physical
- Do not see the disability first, see the child
- Do not follow the medical model
- Full day attendance
- Disable the dependency model which we created by trying to get individuals successfully included in society
- Resources not assigned to individual students but to setting
- Change: people want to keep what they have and cannot see anything different
- Fully prepare various groups for the pending change
- Effective transition beyond school

Group 2

- teachers may be resistant initially but through working with them
- meet with classroom teachers to break down the barriers-at challenging needs teachers meeting & with teachers re: pathway
- Itinerant teachers for Inclusion really positive to promote practice. Department is supportive. What direction?
- Working with staff (in-service & professional development) re: strategies to work with students with special needs
- Need to look at the big picture: provincial leadership-more inter-agency collaboration. Working together will be a stronger advocacy. Consistency would happen. Develop an understanding of inclusive education. Need to clearly articulate & have a unified voice
- The Department of Education needs to be more proactive in terms of solidifying inclusive education
- Teacher education-preparation, particularly at MUN.
- Public Campaigning & forums such as these
- Policy development
- Transitioning Program for children with special needs
- Working with kids to become more proactive around inclusion. Let kids in the school take it on as a mission. It becomes their mandate. Having former students who have experienced disabilities to be a voice
- "It's up to Us" – a video about high school students to make their schools more inclusive
- More practical courses, re: Senior Education in particular

Group 3

- Public Awareness of the benefits of inclusion
- Common understanding around the definition – bring it to the administration level
- Planning activities from child/youth's perspective

- Balancing inclusion with meeting needs – when taken out, plan to go in
- Question practices to make them inclusive – question what is traditional
- Working within processes – ISSP (Student Support Service Teams)
- Ensuring policies reference inclusion as a statement – not to be left to interpretation

Group 4

- Teacher training
 - ⇒ university level
 - ⇒ should be mandatory
 - ⇒ learning disabilities, behavioural concerns
 - ⇒ exposure to inclusionary practices/special education during internship
 - ⇒ M.Ed. level should also include this
 - ⇒ In-service for teachers and administrators
 - ⇒ Important at training level for both to change attitudes/value systems
 - ⇒ Recruiting issue/hiring
 - policy
 - Should be looked for in interviews ➤ policy
 - District policy guides this ➤ policy
- Parents need more exposure in schools, realistic
 - ⇒ more/better communication between parents & schools
 - ⇒ volunteers
- Review of PW's: more efficiency; less paperwork & meetings
- Interagency cooperation:
 - ⇒ balance need of individuals to needs of system (public system)
 - ⇒ not one size fits all or is black or white
- Class composition:
 - ⇒ need clearer direction, re: extreme behavioural problems