

Department of Education

***Best Practices for
Inclusion***

**Student Services Branch (Anglophone)
July, 1994**

New  Brunswick

Department of Education
Student Services Branch (Anglophone)
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PREFACE

Best practices for exceptional students emerged from specific beliefs and principles that guide instruction in New Brunswick. The best practices identified in this document provide a basis for assessing the quality of district, school, classroom and individual programs and services and set forth a context to promote continuous growth and improvement.

Best practices in our schools cannot be achieved without continuous dialogue and the full support of the total community, including students, parents, teachers, business, government departments and other organizations. We are indeed fortunate in New Brunswick to have the cooperation and interest of so many in addressing the educational needs of exceptional students.

Special recognition is extended to the New Brunswick School District's Student Services Administrators, along with Mr. Rod Campbell of the New Brunswick Centre for Educational Administration and Dr. Darlene Perner from the New Brunswick Department of Education for their contributions toward the development of the document.



G. C. KEILTY
Deputy Minister

July 1994

BEST PRACTICES FOR INCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

In 1986, the Province of New Brunswick introduced legislation to improve educational programs for exceptional students. The legislation was noteworthy in that it provided access to public education to all students, stressed individual needs-based programming to all exceptional students and emphasized the placement of exceptional students into regular classrooms. By doing so, it stressed equity for all children as basic to public education. This legislation was based on a set of inter-related beliefs and principles, which ultimately guided the daily behaviour of educators implementing programs and providing services for exceptional students.

During the 1991-92 school year the Student Services Branch of the Department of Education initiated an integration review process. This began with consultation that was implemented province-wide. School districts compiled information on their policies, programs and practices towards integration. This data was summarized and shared with the participating districts.

This information formed the basis for further discussion on how to define a standard of practice to meet the needs of exceptional students in integrated settings.

In the fall of 1993 representatives from the school districts came together to begin identifying success indicators for inclusion. As a result of the consultation process, the following document, *Best Practices for Inclusion* was developed.

BELIEFS AND PRINCIPLES

1. All children can learn.
2. All children attend age-appropriate regular classrooms in their local schools.
3. All children receive appropriate educational programs.
4. All children receive a curriculum relevant to their needs.
5. All children participate in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
6. All children benefit from cooperation and collaboration among home, school and community.

BEST PRACTICES

1. School Learning Environment

- Teachers hold high expectations for all students.
- Teachers provide to students opportunities to participate actively in classroom learning activities.
- Teachers provide all students with appropriate learning opportunities.
- Teachers expect all students to behave with respect for the learning of others.
- Teachers provide safe and orderly classrooms.
- Schools place children in age-appropriate regular classrooms.
- Schools are inviting, pleasant and clean places, easily accessible to all students.
- Schools provide a positive inclusive climate through policies, programs and practices that are equitable for students.

2. Collaborative Planning

- School districts routinely use clear processes for planning and monitoring programs and services, and include students, parents, teachers, administrators and community partners in these processes.
- School districts hold regular public consultations to promote community involvement and support.
- School districts consult and collaborate with schools to ensure that programs and support services are based on teacher and student needs and distributed equitably.
- Schools have support teams which meet regularly to assess and prioritize needs, and allocate appropriate resources.
- Schools have clear processes to ensure collaboration among methods and resource teachers, guidance counsellors, other school resource personnel, teachers, parents and students on issues related to program, instruction and service issues.
- Schools use various models of peer collaboration to ensure mutual assistance, professional support and problem solving.

3. Administration

- School district administrators work in partnership with school boards and the community to ensure that equitable, inclusionary policies govern the programs and services.
- School district administrators hold high expectations for educational personnel and promote innovative, inclusionary practices.
- School administrators develop support teams and work collaboratively as members of these teams.
- School administrators are advocates for all students.
- School administrators hold high expectations for staff and students.
- School administrators promote and model collaborative and inclusive processes.
- School administrators celebrate innovative teaching practices and student accomplishments.

4. Social Responsibility

- Schools promote students' participation in community volunteer organizations, student government and decision-making on school and community issues.
- Schools ensure that learning opportunities are provided which help students learn about, appreciate and celebrate differences among people.
- Schools ensure that opportunities are provided for students to develop social skills of sharing, cooperating, communicating and resolving conflicts constructively.
- Schools ensure that opportunities are provided for students to participate fully in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities which will enhance their overall development.
- Schools promote social responsibility among students by providing meaningful experiences in a variety of settings.

5. Curriculum Planning and Implementation

- Teachers engage students and parents in planning and implementing the delivery of curriculum with attention to the cognitive, social, emotional and physical growth of exceptional students.
- Teachers accommodate for individual strengths, needs and differences within program planning, implementation and monitoring (evaluating) processes.
- Teachers use age appropriate activities, materials and settings.

6. Support Programs and Services

- Schools share ideas, strategies and resources with various groups to promote the planned curriculum.
- Support programs for teachers and students are determined through collaborative processes and are based primarily at the school level.
- School districts have a support team to assist schools and teachers for exceptional programs.
- Methods and resource teachers, who are knowledgeable about exceptional children, competent and experienced, with strong interpersonal skills, provide primarily collaborative consultative support to classroom teachers about programs, strategies and alternatives in meeting student needs.
- Guidance counsellors promote and facilitate programs and services to meet the needs of exceptional children.
- School districts and schools ensure through collaboration that external support services meet the specific needs of exceptional students.
- School districts provide programs and services to all students who are at risk of dropping out of school.

7. Classroom Practices

- Classroom teachers use a variety of instructional strategies and assessment techniques to accommodate various learning preferences.
- Classroom teachers use a variety of inclusionary teaching practices to ensure that exceptional students are involved in the life of the classroom.
- Classroom teachers ensure student learning is assessed regularly and offer frequent feedback as part of an ongoing evaluation process.

8. Planning for Transition

- Schools facilitate the transition of exceptional children prior to their entry into the public school system by consulting with parents, Department of Health and Community Services and other community agencies.
- Teachers, administrators, parents and students work together to ensure the transition from class to class or from one school to another is effectively and sensitively handled in the best interest of the exceptional students.
- Schools provide a systematic transition for exceptional students entering high school and work closely with post-secondary learning instructors, prospective employers and community groups to ensure high school leaving holds new opportunities for exceptional students.
- Schools provide a variety of work experiences for exceptional pupils to facilitate the transition to employment.

9. Partnerships: School, Family and Community

- Schools provide opportunities for family members to participate in school-based teams, which plan programs and services, offer opportunities for input into decisions and implementation procedures and ensure equity for exceptional students.
- Schools communicate effectively and regularly with students, parents, volunteers, support agency personnel, district office staff, trustees and community members.

10. Innovation: System and Staff Growth

- School districts have a plan for the ongoing improvement of programs and services for exceptional children, including a staff development plan for district and school-based personnel.
- School districts promote and support innovative practices to ensure the ongoing development of programs and services for exceptional children.
- Schools promote and support innovations in instructional practices and services and celebrate successful strategies.
- Teachers seek opportunities to learn more about using inclusive practices in teaching exceptional children.
- Support personnel seek opportunities to advance their personal qualifications.

11. Accountability

- School districts are accountable to the Department of Education, parents and the public for the effective delivery of programs and services which improve learning outcomes for exceptional children.
- School districts have a plan to assess and report on progress towards best practices that span a three to five year period.
- Schools review progress toward best practices regularly in programs and services, student performance with respect to I.E.P.'s or other learning outcomes, follow-up plans for transition of exceptional students to another class or different levels of schooling, and progress of former students to another level of schooling.
- Schools prepare and disseminate to parents, district office staff and the community appropriate information on progress toward best practices on a regular basis.
- Schools engage parents, students and community members periodically (3-5 years) in a process to determine whether new needs have emerged, whether priorities or emphasis needs to be altered and whether equity is pursued.