Focusing on Students

The ISSP & Pathways Commission Report

Newfoundland Labrador

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Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
Department of Education

2007-06-20

Ms. Joan Burke, M.H.A.
Minister of Education
Department of Education
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL
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Dear Minister Burke:

As you are aware, the ISSP/Pathways Commission was announced by your office on August 17, 2006. The Commission was established shortly thereafter and the review process has been ongoing since that date. We are now pleased to provide this final report of our findings and recommendations. We trust that it is in good order.

The Commission considers it a pleasure to have had this opportunity to meet with so many parents and educators from across Newfoundland and Labrador. We trust that this work will result in enhanced learning opportunities for the children of our province.

Respectfully submitted,

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Commissioner

Bill Somerton
Vice-Commissioner

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The Report of the ISSP & Pathways Commission

June 2007

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Preface

The relationship between parent and teacher is central in fostering healthy child development and in establishing optimal learning environments. Parents entrust their child to the care of teachers on a daily basis, and teachers embrace the responsibilities implicit in this trust. Both share perspectives and work collaboratively to make wise decisions and to provide effective care, while staying attuned to the child's changing needs. Nowhere is this relationship between parents and teachers more crucial than with that of children who have unique learning needs. This shared knowledge, this mutual trust and inherent respect, become the ballast in the rewarding, yet often challenging, process of accommodating the child's needs. Only when a synergy between the teacher and the parent exists, can the child's development be optimized. It is when fractures surface in this relationship that the child's development is compromised.

Educators recognize their professional role in providing programs and supports to meet the individual needs of all students. Through a collaborative relationship with parents, a team approach establishes a process that may involve more than one government department and/or agency. In the province of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL), *The Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth* is the vehicle employed in the delivery of services, as articulated through the development of an *Individual Support Services Plan (ISSP)*. Support services are then delivered to students via the model known as *Pathways to Programming and Graduation*. Both the ISSP and Pathways models are relatively new, having

been developed and implemented within the last ten years, and their effectiveness in education has never been formally reviewed.

In response to growing concerns from parents and teachers regarding the ISSP and Pathways models, the Minister of Education, the Honourable Joan Burke, acted. Growing increasingly concerned for the needs of children amidst this debate, the Minister announced, on August 17, 2006, a formal review – an ISSP and Pathways Commission that "…will consider the challenges of special education programming using the current model, workload and volume of paper work, the role of parents, managers and teachers, and will seek to streamline the process to ensure it is efficient, while continuing to provide a high level of service to students."

It is important to realize, therefore, that this Commission did not set out to review the provision of special education in this province. While its mandate was to examine the educational component (Pathways) of the ISSP, it saw its task primarily as examining how the needs of the provinces more vulnerable students were being met within these models.

The overwhelming message gleaned from the Commission hearings was that the ISSP and Pathways models resembled a good idea gone awry, a sound concept which has lost its focus. As a result, parents feel disempowered and lost, while teachers are overwhelmed and frustrated. Subsequently, the relationship between parent and teacher is often strained, and the needs of children are being compromised.

In striving to give voice to the many parents and educators who advocated passionately on behalf of their children's needs, this report represents the collective concerns of those engaged in the ISSP and Pathways models. The recommendations presented herein stem from that shared perspective and emanate from the knowledge that both parents and teachers possess. In the process of hearing the debate on the effectiveness of both the ISSP and Pathways models, the Commission was reminded that the relationship that exists between parents and teachers is characterized by an innate commitment towards "focusing on students". It is the wish of this Commission that such a commitment will characterize educational discourse in the years ahead.

Acknowledgements

The Commission would like to thank the parents and teachers who spoke with such passion and great candour on their experiences with these models. The Commission recognized and was impressed by the commitment that parents and teachers have made for effectively identifying and responding to the needs of students.

The Commission also extends appreciation to the members of the Advisory Committee who matched this passionate commitment to enhancing the provision of support services, and who guided the Commissioners in striving for excellence.

The Commission offers personal thanks to the staff, hired and assigned, who spent long hours organizing the inquiries, gathering and recording data, analyzing results and contributing to this report. Of particular note are Kerry Pope, Cecilia Hickey-Converse, Carolann Pollett, Stephan Barnes and Mark Crocker. A thank you, as well, to Dr. Bert Tulk, who assisted with early interpretation of this data and the writing of the initial draft.

Finally, the Commission wishes to thank our families - - for their untold support, continuous encouragement and their patient understanding.

1.0 Background

1.1 Executive Summary

The ISSP and Pathways models remain the subject of controversy a full decade after their implementation. While progress has been made in advancing our society, our schools and our classrooms along the road to inclusion, nonetheless lessons remain to be learned. Against the backdrop of reviewing the special education experience of the past ten years, this Commission was given the task of identifying challenges faced by the models and putting forth recommendations to address such challenges. (See Appendix A).

It is important to realize, however, that even a cursory glance at the literature on the provision of services for children with unique needs yields a clear message: the history of special education in our province is a reflection of emergent global trends, and the current struggles facing education are indeed global struggles (Philpott, 2002). In fact, the province enjoys a history of services that has been characterized by commitment and dedication, with strong home-school alliances and systems of care that have garnered national recognition (Philpott & Dibbon, 2007).

The Commission sought to gather information on both this evolution of care for children requiring special education, and the current ISSP and Pathways models. Extensive public consultations and submissions, surveys and cross-jurisdictional analyses, and a commissioned review of the literature have yielded rich data. Notwithstanding the fact that education, like any system, has endured its share of growing pains, the messages and lessons discerned by the Commission were enlightening and direction-setting.

These recommendations evolved directly out of the data collected and are voiced in an effort to identify and respond to the issues that surfaced as the study unfolded. Through constant comparison with the Commission's Terms of Reference, a conscious effort was made to present recommendations whose acceptance and implementation would improve the delivery of services for children with unique needs.

The Commission presents eight essential findings and outlines a series of recommendations to begin the process of addressing them. These main findings include:

- The Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth was found to be problematic in several areas, notably: unrealistic demands on personnel; excessive meetings and documentation; unnecessary procedures; and a pronounced lack of commitment from other government agencies, specifically Justice, Health and Community Services, as well as Human Resources, Labour and Employment.

- There is significant diversity in levels of knowledge about ISSPs and Pathways among all participants. This diversity stems directly from a pronounced lack of training for both teachers and parents in either approach. The Commission further notes inconsistent training and different interpretations of both models.

- There exists what the Commission would call, a "crisis of knowledge and leadership" in the area of special education. The vast majority of classroom teachers still have no training in the area of accommodating exceptionalities, while a significant number of special education teachers have not completed

minimal qualifications, yet hold permanent contracts. This absence of knowledge extends as well to those charged with leadership: guidance counsellors and educational psychologists have little or no training in exceptionalities and/or differentiating instruction.

- There is a critical need for meaningful and substantive participation by parents in the education of their children. Parents report feeling powerless and marginalized in the current models.

- While there is consensus that both the ISSP and Pathways models are pedagogically sound, their implementation and interpretation have lost focus of the model's intention.

- Special education continues to be managed by a centralized model of power and decision-making while stakeholders are calling for pragmatic supports at the classroom level. Interventions and resources need to be directed to where the students actually are.

- There are no existing systemic mechanisms to permit effective data-gathering and monitoring of programs and services for children.

- Several "low incidence" issues, such as Francophone schools, alternate educational settings, curriculum development, gifted education, and, at- risk students (particularly aboriginal children), warrant immediate attention.

It is important to note that although the Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth represents an interdepartmental protocol, this Commission's recommendations have been directed to the Minister of Education. The Commission recognizes that this interdepartmental relationship will require that the Department

of Education pursue certain recommendations in conjunction with the Departments of Justice, Health and Community Services, and Human Resources, Labour and Employment.

Many of the Commission's recommendations will have positive results, whether implemented independently or as a package; however, the greatest impact will be achieved when taken holistically, given that many are inextricably linked to each other and to the recommendations of the *Teacher Allocation Commission*. Viewed from this interdependent perspective, this Commission is confident that the acceptance and implementation of these recommendations will be the precursor of an effective and efficient model of program delivery for the most challenging students in our school system.

1.2 Terms of Reference

The Commission's Terms of Reference were to:

1. Survey and consult with special education teachers and other support services personnel, classroom teachers and administrators to identify the challenges of special education programming using the ISSP process and Pathways to Programming and Graduation model.

2. Undertake consultations with school district officials, NLTA, parents and the Department of Education. The following questions will guide the above consultations:
   - How many students have ISSPs?
   - Which students should have an ISSP? What is the practice in this regard? Are these being implemented for students who do not require them?

- What is the role of the manager of the ISSP? What are the associated workload issues for teachers? Is the role of the manager shared among all partners?
- How does the role of the manager of the ISSP compare with other case management positions? Does the ISSP process follow standards for case management?
- What are the paperwork requirements of the ISSP and Pathways that are causing stress?
- Which of the provincial forms are cumbersome and time-consuming?
- Are there additional forms required by schools and/or districts?
- Can any of the provincial forms be streamlined/removed without compromising students' programming? If so, how?
- Are other agencies committed to the model and the ISSP process? Are they full partners?
- Are there workload issues for staff of other agencies?
- Does this affect teacher workload?
- Are all of the expectations placed on schools within the mandate of education? Are the resources of other agencies adequate to support student and family needs?

3. Research the professional literature and other jurisdictions to identify different mechanisms that enable integrated service planning, special education program development and accountability.

4. Recommend options that will streamline the administrative requirements of program planning and implementation while enabling quality special education programming in inclusive environments, and support clear communication and well-documented records of student progress.

1.3 Advisory Committee

An advisory committee was established to guide the work of the Commission and additionally to provide background information, different perspectives, and professional advice. Comprised of experts, practitioners and other representatives from the field of special education and its key stakeholders, this group proved invaluable to the Commission and helped steer both the inquiry and the development of this final report.

From the outset, the Minister recognized that a study of this magnitude would benefit from a "sounding board", knowledgeable individuals or groups from whom information and advice may be sought. With this rationale, letters of invitation were sent to key stakeholder groups requesting representatives from their organizations to this advisory committee:

- Federation of School Councils
- Department of Education
- Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers Association (NLTA)
- Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards Association (NLSBA)
- Faculty of Education, Memorial University
- Provincial Integrated Services Management Team
- Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Directors of Education (NLADE)

The Terms of Reference for the advisory committee were:

- To attend meetings of the advisory committee as requested by the Commission;

- To advise, consult, and inform the Commission on operational matters and activities, particularly those of the studies framework, consultation processes and general methodology; and
- To assist the commission as requested.

The advisory committee conducted several full-day seminars, in addition to countless individual meetings and consultations. It became evident from the start that this group saw its role as ensuring excellence and thoroughness of the Commission's inquiry. While the members often asked difficult and challenging questions, their commitment to enhancing service for students, complemented that of the Commission, allowing for a shared desire to ensure that the needs of students would remain paramount in their work.

1.4 Guiding Principles

To ensure openness and transparency, and to provide consistent direction to the multitude of tasks necessary in this endeavour, the ISSP and Pathways Commission deemed it appropriate to develop a set of essential, overarching principles. Although supported by the literature and other input, the core elements of these guiding principles grew out of an interactive forum, led by the advisory committee, held on 26 October 2006. With input of invited representatives from their respective disciplines, the advisory committee met to review the terms of reference for the Commission, and to develop this set of principles intended to guide the Commission's work. (A list of participants can be found in Appendix B).

Accordingly, the following were adopted by the advisory committee to serve as a reminder of the central values underlying the work of the Commission:

Principle 1: All children have the right to an appropriate education.

Inclusion can be defined as providing specially designed instruction and supports for students with special needs in the context of the regular school environment. It is based on the philosophy that in a pluralistic society, differences are embraced and schools are reflective of this core social value. All children belong. All children have the right to an education with their age-appropriate peers. As classrooms become more and more diverse, the quality of instruction is the key to achievement of success for all students.

Special education is not a place nor is it a separate curriculum. It is specialized planning and instruction for students with specialized needs. It does not imply placement not does it preclude one. It prioritizes a collaborative process of decision-making in which a collegial relationship between parents and teachers guides the development of effective programs. Expertise is the shared perspective of parents and teachers.

Principle 2: Trust and respect must be paramount in the process.

Inclusion is founded on collaboration and shared confidence in each other's commitment to the child. Schools have a professional responsibility to prioritize the development of this relationship and establish an environment where an "ethic of care" (Noddings, 1992) is evident.

Principle 3: Resources must meet the identified needs of students.

Effective programs require training and resources – at the classroom level. The goal of leaders and those charged with policy development is to identify ways to optimize the knowledge and resources for classrooms.

Principle 4: **The Commission's data collection and reporting process must be thorough**.

The area of special education generally, and of inclusive education particularly, has been the subject of extensive research across many jurisdictions. In recognition of both the constancy of change within the field and the often-unique circumstances within education in our province, the Commission subscribed to the need for its data collection and reporting to be thorough. Accordingly, extensive consultations (through focus groups, surveys and submissions) were augmented by reviews of the literature, and cross-jurisdictional studies.

Principle 5: **The original intent and design of both the Pathways and ISSP models will be analyzed vis-à-vis current practice.**

The necessity of models such as Pathways and the ISSP as organizing frameworks for the delivery of educational and inter-agency services is recognized. However, the Commission is charged to examine the realities of current implementation of these models, within the context of their original intent and design.

1.5 Methodology/Framework of the Study

An approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods was used for this study. Quantitative information was collected using an intensive telephone survey of teachers that yielded a 74.3% return rate. Qualitative data was collected through district visits, open submissions, scheduled focus groups, and interviews with key informants. This multiplicity of data gathering, cross analysis with a

review of relevant literature and a cross-jurisdictional comparison permitted triangulation of the data.

District visits and focus groups

With advanced preparation and the collective wisdom of the advisory committee, the Commission embarked on an extensive series of visits to school districts. Between October 14, 2006 and November 22, 2006, focus group forums were held across the province, in numerous communities within all school districts. The goal was to meet with as many educators and parents as possible and to create open and frank dialogue. Sessions with educators were organized by district offices, following guidelines provided by the Commission. Independent facilitators (Glenn Kirby and Jim Marsden) were used during each focus group. Parent participation was encouraged by Denise Pike, President of the Federation of School Councils, in cooperation with community schools in each area. Translators were provided for all interviews with Francophone personnel. (See Appendix C)

Surveys

The utility of a survey of educator's perceptions was recognized from the outset as a critical source of information. The specific questions for the survey were generated from issues raised in the focus groups and submissions received by the Commission. The survey was then vetted through the advisory committee.

1594 teachers were randomly selected to participate in a telephone interview, between January and February 2007. The telephone interview was the medium chosen for several reasons: it is an effective method to "…reach a large number of people in a short time-frame, obtain a broader sample and facilitate(s) additional probing by interviewers" (Portland Research Group).

An exceptionally high rate of return (74.3%) afforded solid analysis and high generalizability. (See Appendix D)

Submissions

Considerable interest in this study was indicated by the volume of submissions generated. Following an open call for submissions in the local media and on the Commission web site, a total of 78 submissions was received from a variety of groups, institutions and agencies across the province. Written submissions and those presented in-person provided insights and detailed concerns from several vantage points. The Commission accepted all submissions, even those that were received well beyond the initially published deadline. (See Appendix E)

Key informant interviews

At times the Commission required specific, in-depth information on particular issues and sought contact with a number of highly knowledgeable persons. These key informants from across the province and country enlightened the Commission on diverse matters, ranging from teacher certification, to Francophone education, to aspects of special education. (See Appendix F)

Pan-Canadian review

To help contextualize, within a Canadian framework, the framework emerging from the data, the Commission conducted a series of cross-jurisdictional comparisons to ascertain contemporary practice. These comparisons focused on a variety of areas, from policy and procedure to service delivery and funding mechanisms. Of particular interest and utility to

the present study were the research findings related to integrated service planning, Francophone issues, the role of student assistants vis-à-vis teacher assistants, and standards of teacher qualifications for positions within special education. (See Key Informants - Appendix F)

Review of the literature

In accordance with the terms of reference and to add to a contextualization of our provincial model and practice, the Commission engaged Memorial University Professor Dr. David Philpott (with Dr. David Dibbon) to conduct a review of relevant literature. *A review of the literature on Newfoundland and Labrador's model of Student Support Services: A global perspective on local practice* (Philpott & Dibbon, 2007) is referenced extensively in this report (See Appendix G). The paper puts forth a theoretical framework for NL's model of Student Support Services, described as a "diagnostic and prescriptive service model, despite efforts in recent years to use the language of inclusion". An historical review of special education is used as a context for examining the provincial model, culminating in a consideration of emergent themes such as:

- Individualized planning meetings are often intimidating environments for parents who are increasingly disempowered in their participation.
- Teachers tend to support inclusion in theory, but call for additional resources and training to deliver it effectively.
- The evolution of special education in NL parallels global trends. Similarly, the current struggles facing special education in NL are equally reflective of global trends.
- The number of students who are being diagnosed as disabled is increasing, despite a population base that is in rapid decline.

- The current model focuses on deficits, completely ignoring the needs of intellectually gifted students.
- The ISSP model has global support in a paradigm shift towards interagency case planning.
- Likewise, the Pathways model is a complicated articulation of the cascade model, common to special education practice since the early 1960's.
- A number of studies, reports, and published papers have documented growing concern for the effectiveness of NL's model and its impact on families and teachers.

In summary, the authors purport there is a "…clear breakdown between what policy outlines, how systems interpret it and what services are actually delivered to children/families on a daily basis … the province has drifted off course". The paper suggests:

- "In order to move from diagnosing differences to embracing the needs of all students in our classrooms, leadership will have to move back into the hands of teachers".
- There is an "urgent … need to articulate what exactly the province means by inclusive education".
- Teachers must receive training in "specific instructional strategies that will help students with disabilities".
- Attention must be focused on "…prevention and early intervention and promote coordination in the delivery of client-centered services".
- The "power differentials that currently marginalize families and place educators in adversarial roles with parents" must be explored.

2.0 Historical Context

2.1 Special Education

The evolution of education from segregated programs towards the current paradigm of inclusion is a “fascinating and complex story that has been affected by social, psychological and educational events” (Philpott & Dibbon, 2007). In the province of NL, “formal educational placement within the school building began in highly segregated classrooms known as Opportunity Classes, operated by well-intentioned, though often untrained, workers” (Philpott & Dibbon, 2007). By 1970, this practice was being called into question and demands began for “integration, the right to free public education, and teaching based on an exceptional child’s learning needs rather than on the category of exceptionality” (Roberts & Lazure, 1970, 15).

Legislative changes and court challenges in the United States in the 1970’s and 1980’s amidst the growing civil and human rights debates, resulted in the desegregation of American schools. A parallel argument for greater accessibility for students with disabilities led to the establishment of American public law which assured the right of all children to publicly funded education. In Canada, the passage of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982 further articulated and guaranteed individual rights, within an increasingly pluralistic and inclusive society.

While mainstreaming and integration were keywords in the 1980’s and 1990’s, inclusion and inclusive education called for recognition of the inherent worth of all students and a meaningful participation of all. The shift towards inclusive education has affected not only program planning for students with disabilities, but also the

design and structure of curriculum. Today, *Essential Graduation Learnings*, the prescribed curriculum framework in NL, reflects:

> …a focus on inclusion, where supports and services were mandated to assist students in accordance with their individual ability levels, to achieve the approved regional curriculum. The curriculum that special education teachers were delivering to students of very diverse ability levels had to reflect the goals and objectives of the regular curriculum, and the regular classroom was seen as the preferred place in which this was to be done. The curriculum guides outlined many ways to teach a concept and equally diverse ways to measure acquisition of the curriculum content (Philpott & Dibbon, 2007).

Inclusion and meaningful participation of persons with disabilities is a fact of life in 21st century Canadian society generally, not just a feature of our education system. Polls and research studies indicate "Canadians support inclusion, but individuals who must fulfill these expectations, whether they are employers or teachers, report that they need guidance and support" (Hutchinson, 2007, xxiii). And herein lies the challenge for parents and educators: amidst shifting social values, evolving paradigms of service provision and changing policies, how to provide the optimal set of conditions, resources and supports to ensure that education is characterized by a practice that remains focused on students.

2.2 The Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth

Central to the process of planning for children with unique needs was the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), first developed in the 1980's as a means of ensuring accountability and effectiveness in programming within education. Like shifting perspectives on disability, the IEP has since evolved into a growing preference for collaborative, interagency approaches to case management (Philpott

& Dibbon, 2007). This was reflected in NL with the 1996 adoption of the *Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth* (Government of NL, 1996) which presented the *Individual Support Services Plan (ISSP)* as one of its core organizing components. It should be noted that, while the two documents are closely related, they are not synonymous.

The Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth originated in the Classroom Issues Committee, established in October 1994 and comprised of representatives from the Departments of Education, Health, Social Services, and Justice; the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers Association (NLTA); and the Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards Association (NLSBA). Its mandate was to examine issues relating to integration of children with special needs, disruptive behaviour in the classroom, gender equity, and the quality of work life for teachers.

In June 1995, the Classroom Issues Committee presented its report to government. Recognizing the need for increased interagency cooperation, collaboration, and communication in the delivery of services to children and youth between the Departments of Education, Health, Social Services, and Justice, one of this committee's chief recommendations included the adoption of the Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth. Accordingly, between October 1995 and June 1996, preparations ensued for the implementation of the model. An interdepartmental coordinator and interdepartmental committee were established, as were working committees to action the recommendations. Following completion of six regional consultations held throughout the province, the model was piloted.

On January 15, 1997, the Ministers of Education, Health, Social Services and Justice signed a document entitled *Inter-Ministerial Protocols for the Provision of Support*

Services to Children and Youth. As an interdepartmental policy document, these Ministerial Protocols were designed to support the implementation of the Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth. A review of these protocols clearly indicates that the model was intended to apply "to each child/youth with special needs where he/she requires two or more services from two or more government-funded agencies". (The *Inter-Ministerial Protocols for the Provision of Support Services to Children and Youth* is reproduced in its entirety as Appendix H).

The following list outlines some of the key components of the Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth:

- The introduction of Child Youth Profiles;
- A common consent form for sharing information among appropriate government departments;
- A significant role for parents and youth at all points in the process;
- The introduction of Individual Support Service Plans (ISSPs); and
- The creation of a Provincial Integrated Services Management Team and six Regional Integrated Services Management Teams.

Each of the regional teams is comprised of representatives from the Departments of Education, Health and Community Services, Justice, Human Resources, Labour and Employment and consumer representatives. The six regional integrated services management teams are tasked with the responsibility of ensuring the effective operation of the Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth within its region.

As indicated earlier, a review of the *Inter-Ministerial Protocols for the Provision of Support Services to Children and Youth,* signed in January 1997 clearly indicates that the model, (and the requirement to complete ISSPs and Child Youth Profiles), was intended to *apply* "to each child/youth with special needs where he/she requires two or more services from two or more government funded agencies". However, in a document dated November 1997 entitled *Guidelines to be Followed to Facilitate the Implementation of the Individual Support Services Planning Process*, significant changes from the initial protocols were introduced. These latter guidelines now required that an ISSP and a Child Youth Profile be completed for "any child or youth at risk or any child or youth with special needs who receives a service". For reasons unclear to the Commission, this major departure from the protocols was never approved at the ministerial level. An interagency model was now being applied to children who were not necessarily accessing interagency services or, for that matter, had needs requiring services from any other agency. (The *Guidelines to be Followed to Facilitate the Implementation of the Individual Support Services Planning Process* is contained in Appendix I).

2.3 ISSPs

As stated in the previous section, a key element of the Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth is the Individual Support Services Plan (ISSP). As an interagency program planning document, its intent is to ensure coordination in the delivery of supports and services by providing a forum which brings together children/youth, parents and professionals from the Departments of Education, Health and Community Services, Human Resources, Labour and Employment and Justice.

When a child/youth is identified as having a need or being at-risk, the individual support services planning process is initiated. This process involves screening and identification, assessment, ongoing monitoring and evaluation and, if necessary, the formation of an ISSP team. Under the direction of the ISSP manager, the ISSP team is responsible for completion of the ISSP document as well as for its implementation and ongoing monitoring.

Once completed, the ISSP document should include the following:

- a list of ISSP team members;
- individual team members' contributions in relation to the student's strengths and needs;
- an agreed statement of the student's strengths and needs;
- the annual goals for the student, agreed upon by the team, including designation of specific responsibilities;
- the required services and who will deliver them;
- comments and signatures of team members;
- a copy of the informed consent for the sharing of information;
- a completed Child Youth Profile.

(ISSP forms can be viewed at: www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/dept/isspforms.htm)

2.4 Pathways

The initial development of an individualized planning process envisioned the delivery of services along a *cascade model*, first developed in 1962 by Reynolds (Philpott & Dibbon, 2007). A pyramid was used to reflect the continuum of needs, in decreasing numbers, as articulate in the following description:

> Using this cascade, or pyramid, approach educators viewed the regular classroom as forming the base of the pyramid, where most children had their needs met without specialized planning. Moving up the pyramid, other students, in decreasing numbers, would have their needs met in the regular classroom with some supports. Further up this pyramid, in lower numbers still, would be students who came out of the regular classroom at intervals to have their needs addressed in an alternate environment. Finally, at the very top of the pyramid was the recognition that a few students, because of highly specialized needs, required a separate classroom and curriculum. This resulted in students with very mild disabilities being accommodated in the regular classroom, while students with more significant or more intrusive needs received programming in placements that were more segregated. For example, students with severe cognitive delays were having their needs met in separate classrooms while students with mild or moderate cognitive delay were in part-time regular and part-time separate classrooms (Philpott & Dibbon, 2007).

In NL, this cascade model was articulated in the 1986 Special Education Policy and won a prestigious award for its excellence in meeting the needs of senior high school students. The model was extended to become the preferred delivery model for all students in the 1998 release of *Pathways to Programming and Graduation: A Handbook for Teachers and Administrators* (Government of NL, 1997). That document outlined five programming options for students as follows:

- Pathway One: The provincially prescribed curriculum without support;

- Pathway Two: The provincially prescribed curriculum with student specific strategies and supports (accommodations and adaptations);
- Pathway Three: A modified or adapted curriculum, based on the student's individual needs;
- Pathway Four: A mixture of core curriculum and individually designed curriculum to meet the student's individual needs; and
- Pathway Five: A completely alternate curriculum to meet the challenging needs of the student.

Students can avail of more than one Pathway at a time and progress towards Pathway One is encouraged. While this Pathways model is clearly a reflection of the cascade approach that is solidly defended in the literature, Philpott & Dibbon (2007) note that what is more unique to NL is the heavy documentation process and diagnostic assessment required to access the system. They reference this as a rigid adherence to a deficit model of support where children have to be diagnosed as "different" in order to qualify for supports designed to provide equal opportunity.

2.5 Child Youth Profiles

One of the motivating factors in developing the *Model for Coordination of Services to Children and Youth* was to identify the needs of children in the province and to streamline the provision of services. A need was therefore identified to establish a provincial database on these children. In the *Handbook for Profiling the Needs of Children/Youth (draft)* (Government of NL, 2002), it is stated that, "profiling is an essential component of the Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and

Youth". Guidelines required that Child Youth Profiles be completed for those children and youth (ages 0-21) who meet the following criteria:

- those children and youth identified 'at risk' by a professional or parent;
- those children and youth receiving one or more support services from either the Department of Education, Health and Community Services, Human Resources, Labour and Employment and Justice; and
- those children and youth who have an ISSP.

Once completed, Child Youth Profiles (Appendix J) are forwarded to the respective Regional Integrated Services Management Team where the information is entered into a database by the regional Parent and Child Health Coordinator. The information from the Child Profiles is collated on a regional basis and the information contained therein is intended to be used to identify the needs of children and youth.

3.0 Key Findings and Recommendations

3.1 Introduction

As indicated earlier, in focus group consultations throughout the province, the Commission heard educators and parents endorse the merits of the ISSP as a planning tool in the delivery of services to students. Likewise, Pathways received a similar endorsement. The participation of key stakeholders in information sharing and decision-making, combined with the goal of having students maximize their abilities and degree of independence, are considered to be major assets of both the ISSP and Pathways. However, all stakeholders agreed that the reality of current practice has drifted from what is either articulated in current policy and/or envisioned in the original development.

3.2 Interagency Implementation

The exact magnitude of this "policy drift" (Philpott & Dibbon, 2007) became abundantly clear to the Commission early in its work. However, this drift was not specific to education but applied to other government departments. In focus groups throughout the province, the Commission heard parents and educators question the commitment of the Departments of Health and Community Services, Justice and Human Resources, Labour and Employment (hereafter referred to as the 'partner' departments) to the ISSP process. The Commission heard that the ISSP, initially designed as an interdepartmental planning document, had evolved into a strictly educational document.

To explore this finding, the Commission attempted to gather data in relation to what it considered to be measurable key performance indicators. Accordingly, the Commission formally requested submissions from both the Provincial Integrated Services Management Team and the six Regional Integrated Services Management Teams. Specifically, the Commission asked for data indicating the number of students profiled in the database, the number of those receiving ISSPs, and the professionals who were serving as ISSP managers.

The Commission was alarmed to discover that the accuracy of such information was not sufficient to indicate practice. Only four of the six teams could provide enough information to be used in analysis. Nonetheless, Table 1 provides the available data.

Table 1:
Child Youth Profiles: completion rates
for the period 2001-2006

Department	Total completed	Percentage completed
Education	18 195	94.5%
Health and Community Services	1066	5.5%
Human Resources, Labour & Employment	0	0%
Justice	1	0.005%
Total Child Youth Profiles	19 262	100%

Source: St. John's, Eastern, Central and Western Regional Integrated Services Management Teams- February 2007.

The Commission notes that the Labrador Regional Team reported a total of 468 Child Youth Profiles completed for the period; however, these totals were not included in Table 1 since the specific department completing the profile was not identified.

The Commission does note that data from the St. John's Regional Integrated Team is particularly revealing. In spite of being the major population centre for the province, as well as housing a major concentration of professionals and service providers, the completion rates across all 'partner' departments as shown in Table 2 were disturbing.

Table 2:
Child Youth Profiles: Completion rates for the St. John's Regional Integrated Services Team for the period 2001-2006

Department	Total completed	Percentage completed
Education	3 907	99%
Health and Community Services Human Resources, Labour & Employment Justice	40	1%
Total Child Youth Profiles	3 947	100%

Source: St. John's Regional Integrated Services Management Team- February 2007.

The overwhelming theme that emerges from the data contained in both these tables supports the perception that the ISSP has become almost exclusively an educational document and a clear question of the commitment of other

departments arises. While current guidelines require that Child Youth Profiles be completed by each department involved in child and youth service, such is clearly not being done. Though one would anticipate high completion rates for the Department of Education, the completion rates for each of the other 'partner' departments are problematic. Though well beyond the scope of this Commission to address, the Commission heard that these low completion rates are reflective of resource, workload and training issues particular to the partner departments.

In addition to the low completion rates, which significantly impact and nullify the validity of the profiling process, and undermine the role of the regional teams, information received from the Provincial and Regional Integrated Service Management Teams also indicates further problems with the Child Youth Profiles. The Commission heard that the data collected in the Profiles is viewed by the Regional Teams as being too subjective and of little benefit. Furthermore, the Commission was advised that some of the Regional Teams view the data as being unreliable and have, therefore, simply decided not to use it. Other concerns about the profiling process center upon the fact that a single department (Health and Community Services) has sole responsibility for data entry as there is no provincial maintenance and analysis of the database, and therefore the database is no longer reflective of the revised provincial health boards and school board boundaries.

It appears to the Commission that the model's management and accountability processes are either absent or otherwise deficient. Concern is further underscored by educators who reported significant time being consumed with profiling the needs of students.

It is the finding of the Commission that the Child Youth Profiles are a dismal failure and that a remedy will require a thorough interdepartmental review.

Therefore, the Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 1

the Department of Education exempt teachers from the requirement to complete the Child Youth Profiles until all systemic issues are addressed.

The Commission was informed that Health and Community Services were active in developing ISSPs at the pre-school level; however, there were no available statistics to support this claim. In fact, it conflicts with consistent reports from primary school administrators who claim that, despite recent improvements, there are still too many children entering Kindergarten without ISSPs.

It was also reported in the Provincial Team submission that the Department of Justice had completed a recent review of intake data at the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Centre, a secure custody facility for young offenders. A review of 102 admissions over a 12-month period indicated that only 31 (30.4%) of young offenders were admitted with ISSPs.

Young offenders sentenced to secure custody represent a particularly vulnerable group who, prior to placement in a secured facility, have typically received intensive supports from a variety of agencies and government departments. This represents a significant gap in the application of the model within Health and Community Services. The Commission cannot comprehend how so many of our province's more visibly "at risk" students are being missed by this model.

It is stated in the *Guidelines to be Followed to Facilitate the Implementation of the Individual Support Services Planning Process* that "the ISSP process will replace all existing departmental planning processes directed at services to children and youth". Though this has occurred within the Department of Education, it is the Commission's finding that such is not the case within the 'partner' departments, each of which is mandated to provide programs and services to children and youth from birth to age 21. Clearly, since the models inception, the roles and responsibilities of each partner department (and indeed the names and divisions of the departments themselves) have evolved. Nonetheless, the Commission notes the irony that this study stemmed from concern for implementation of the ISSP model within education yet its first finding is that ISSPs are embraced more favourably in education than in any other provincial government department.

Though it was not within the Commission's scope to conduct a review of the Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth, the Commission does find that an interdepartmental review of the systemic issues impacting upon the model is overdue. The Commission notes that in 2003, Don Gallant and Associates completed a study into the model for the Provincial Integrated Services Management Team entitled, *A Formative Evaluation of the Individual Support Services Planning Process*. The Commission is unable to comment on this report as it has yet to be released. The Commission saw no evidence that such a study had any impact on the implementation of the model.

Therefore, the Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 2

an interdepartmental review be conducted of the Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth.

3.3 Educational Record-keeping

This initial finding of poor record-keeping and questioned interdepartmental commitment to the model, led the Commission to request information pertaining to the exact number of students within education who had an ISSP. The Commission made requests to both the individual school districts and to the Department of Education. Again, the Commission discovered significant concern for record-keeping and the thoroughness and accuracy of database information. In fact, the Commission was dismayed to discover that, despite all the controversy over special education, neither the Department of Education nor the school districts, maintain statistics in relation to the number of students with ISSPs or the number of students receiving Pathway supports. Surprisingly, despite cumbersome documentation requested of teachers, those charged with managing special education can not identify who it is they are indeed managing.

Current technology provides practically unlimited capability for the storage, retrieval, and analysis of massive quantities of data. Private and public sectors use such technology to ascertain trends, make projections, and evaluate progress. Ready access to such information is critical to organizational and strategic planning, in order to monitor success and adjust action plans. If the education system is to maximize effectiveness and efficiency, modern technological advances must be utilized.

It appears that, at present, the Annual General Return (AGR) continues to be the only source of information regarding the number of students receiving special education supports and services; however, this is of limited value as it captures little information. For example, the numbers of students who are receiving Pathway supports is not currently collected nor are the numbers of students on ISSPs.

Furthermore, statistics on the number of students who are waitlisted for assessments by specialists (Speech Language Pathologist, Guidance Counsellor, Psychologist) are likewise not being gathered. The Commission feels that such is inexcusable.

Therefore, the Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 3

the Department of Education create a provincial database that will inform and guide program planning for students requiring support services.

3.4 Students Receiving Supports

Such poor record-keeping and the inability of the Child Youth Profiles or the district offices to provide information as to which students are receiving supports, resulted in the Commissions having to conduct its own search. Each school was requested to review manually the files of those students who were receiving supports and services vis-à-vis an ISSP. Results were then forwarded to the respective school districts where the data was compiled on a district-wide basis. Table 3 presents a synopsis of this information.

Table 3:
Provincial distribution of students with ISSPs
September 2006 - December 2006

	Total Completed
Students with ISSPs consisting of educational support ONLY- (Services provided by the Dept of Education ONLY)	9 663
Students with ISSPs involving services provided by the Dept of Education and one or more of the following departments: Health and Community Services, Justice and Human Resources Labour and Employment	4 495
Total number of students with ISSPs	14 158
Students receiving Pathways support without an ISSP	657

Source: Eastern, Conseil Scolaire, Nova Central, Western and Labrador School districts.

Based on the current provincial school population of 74 301, approximately 19% of students have ISSPs. As well as those students with ISSPs, an analysis of the data further indicates that there are an additional 657 students receiving Pathway supports but with no ISSPs. This identifies approximately 20% of the student population as receiving individualized supports. The Commission notes that gifted students, who typically constitute 3-5% of the student population, are not included in this model. Subsequently, the data supports the argument by Philpott & Dibbon, (2007) that nearly one quarter of the province's students are eligible for services, a number that has been steadily increasing in recent years.

Table 3 clearly illustrates, furthermore, that within the Department of Education a two-tiered ISSP has emerged: 31.7% is interagency (which in this Commission's opinion truly represents the spirit and intent of the model), and a second tier of

68.3% involves sole service delivery from within the Department of Education only. Again, it is clear to the Commission that ISSPs have become an educational model used whether other agencies are involved or not.

The Commission heard from educators that the workload requirements associated with ISSPs and Pathways were stressful and burdensome, resulting in constraining teacher time and limiting the amount of instructional hours with students. These issues and concerns emerged in the consultations phases and were subsequently corroborated in the teacher survey.

Table 4: Quality of time with students

Response	Increased demand in completing required paperwork is interfering with the quality of time teachers spend with students.
Strongly Agree	59.4%
Somewhat Agree	20.9%
Somewhat Disagree	9.0%
Strongly Disagree	4.1%
Not Applicable	6.6%

Note: Survey results represent combined responses reported by educators across school districts.

Table 4 illustrates that 80.3% of teachers strongly or somewhat strongly agree that the energy currently expended to maintain the documentation under the current model negatively impacts on quality of time with students.

Given earlier findings on the accuracy of either the Child and Youth Profiles or the information at district offices, the Commission wonders how much of this time is indeed futile.

The survey further examined the amount of time required by teachers outside instructional time allocated to planning for the ISSP and Pathways model. Table 5 presents this breakdown for the typical week.

Table 5: Percentage response to survey question:
In an average week of teaching, how many hours do you spend <u>outside</u> the instructional day on ISSP and Pathway planning and programming?

Timeframe	Classroom Teachers	Special Education Teachers
None	15.4%	1.2%
1- 3 hours	56.2%	30.7%
4-8 hours	20.7%	42.8%
9-15 hours	4.4%	20.5%
16 or more hours	0.7%	4.2%
Not applicable	2.6%	0.6%

Note: Percentage results in each category represent combined responses across all school districts.

This data was afforded greater texture when, during the presentations and interviews, educators voiced concern for the time demands implied in the following aspects of the model:

- the documentation associated with students receiving only educational support on Pathway Two;
- the documentation required when applying to the Department of Education for categorical teaching units, including the accompanying re-documentation process;
- the timing, volume, frequency and duration of ISSP meetings;
- the role of the ISSP manager;
- the frustrations associated with modifying courses, designing alternate courses and developing alternate curriculum; and,
- the documentation and requirements associated with Functional Behaviour Analysis and Behaviour Management Plans.

While many of these concerns will be addressed in later sections of this report, the Commission questions the necessity of documenting an interagency approach where interagency services are not required for the vast majority of these students. Table 3 identified the fact that 68.3% of the provinces ISSPs are for students who only access educational services. The Commission heard concern from parents and educators that most students require minimal support along Pathway Two, yet the process of accessing this support is time consuming and frustrating. This concern was explored in the data collected from the schools and is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Provincial distribution of students receiving Pathway supports for the period September 2006 - December 2006

Breakdown	Total
Students with ISSPs receiving Pathway supports	14 158
Students with ISSPs receiving Pathway Two supports ONLY	6892
Students without an ISSP receiving Pathway supports	657

Source: Eastern, Conseil Scolaire, Nova Central, Western and Labrador School districts.

The data identifies that nearly half (48.7%) of the students with ISSPs in education receive Pathway Two supports in the regular classroom developed by the classroom teacher. Unlike students who are receiving more intensive supports, this group of students is enrolled in the provincially prescribed curriculum with on-going, student-specific accommodations and adaptations to help them meet the outcomes of the prescribed curriculum. The Commission was informed that these supports are often characterized by the following:

- oral testing and scribing for testing and evaluation;
- preferential seating arrangement, lighting, individual work/study areas and other adjustments to the learning environment;
- provision of textbooks in alternate formats, e.g. taped, Braille, large print;
- adaptations due to medical reasons, (medication, inhalers, toileting, etc.);

- use of spell checker, calculators, tape recorders, computer assisted technology and other learning tools and devices; and,
- use of specific teaching and learning strategies.

The pan-Canadian review of services in other jurisdictions identifies a trend towards simplifying the documentation requirements for such minimal types of supports. In New Brunswick, for instance, there are three types of Special Education Plans: one for accommodations; one for modified programs; and one for individualized programs. The documentation requirements for both the modified and individualized programs are practically identical to our ISSP.

The Commission heard consistently that the needs of students receiving Pathway Two supports ONLY (and for whom there is no interagency involvement) can be met with the introduction of a simplified documentation process and without an ISSP. Indeed, this finding is confirmed by evidence of the 657 students illustrated in Table 6 currently receiving Pathway supports without an ISSP. The Commission heard repeatedly that an increasing number of teachers and parents were choosing to by-pass the ISSP and documentation process for Pathway Two supports, conserving their energies for helping the student rather than filling out forms.

The only exception to this was in accessing supports for public exams. The Commission heard that a narrow set of accommodations was available for these exams, and that ISSPs had to be changed to reflect these accommodations. The Commission heard that students needed to be reassessed, and that parents had to "battle the Department of Education" to allow the accommodations that were successful in moving the child *through* the system be continued so as to move them

out of the system. One area of particular concern that surfaced throughout the Commission hearings was the use of technology for exams. While students have been trained on word processing programs and have become very independent and often proficient writers with such technology, such support is not allowed during the actual writing of public exams. The Commission questions this practice, and imagines that accommodations that foster lifelong independence are preferred.

While the Commission recognizes the legitimacy of documentation and the use of an interagency approach to planning (particularly for students with more substantive needs and certainly those with interagency involvement) it recognizes the frustration of parents and teachers.

Subsequently, the Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 4

the Department of Education give schools and parents the option of developing an ISSP if only Pathway Two supports are required.

Recommendation 5

the Department of Education introduce a simplified documentation process for students who require Pathway Two supports only.

Recommendation 6

meetings with parents whose children are receiving Pathway Two supports only occur within the context of parent-teacher interviews or at a frequency consistent with the needs of the student.

Recommendation 7

the Department of Education review the Public Exam Adaptations/Accommodations policy

3.5 ISSP Meetings

While concern for the documentation process for students receiving supports was consistent across district hearings, and was substantiated by the data, equal concern surfaced for the actual ISSP meetings. The *Guidelines to be Followed to Facilitate the Implementation of the Individual Support Services Planning Process* outlines the requirements and expectations in relation to ISSPs. On the issue of ISSP team meetings, these Guidelines specifically state the following:

- The team shall meet at least twice annually and may meet more often if warranted by the needs of the child.
- The composition of the team is determined by the nature and complexity of the child's needs. Whenever possible the number of team members is to be kept at a minimum.
- Service providers in attendance at team meetings should be those most directly involved in the delivery of services to children and/or youth.

- Where there is more than one professional from an agency serving the child, each agency may designate a single representative as a team member.

Despite these guidelines, the Commission consistently heard that such is not the practice. Teachers report considerable stress in having to attend countless meetings that are of little help to them. Parents, on the other hand, voice struggles with actually getting the meeting scheduled and then being rushed through the agenda with few teachers in attendance. They also described these meetings as being very intimidating in that they often feel like they have to "face a team" of professionals, alone and isolated in their role. While teachers report that they have to "fit in" the meetings despite numerous other commitments, parents suggest that often they feel the only reason they have to go is to sign the forms. Certainly both agree that the meetings do not reflect a collegial and collaborative process of decision-making. The Commission again questions the necessity of this. Given that approximately 14 158 students currently have ISSPs and that guidelines require two meetings a year, there will be *at least* 28 316 ISSP meetings scheduled this year.

Table 7 offers an indication of the number of participants attending meetings and the teacher time required in this process.

Table 7: ISSP meetings

Duration	Duration of a typical ISSP meeting.
30 minutes or less	15.8%
31-60 Minutes	61.3%
61-90 Minutes	20.0%
91-120 Minutes	2.6%
More than 120 minutes	0.3%
Participants	**Average number of people attending ISSP meetings.**
1-5	54.6%
6-10	44.7%
11-15	0.6%
16 or more	0.1%

Note: Percentage results represent combined responses from all educators across school districts.

The Commission notes that, despite having been repeatedly told by educators of the significant time required in the ISSP process, the information obtained from the survey of educators does not really substantiate that. Table 5 reported that 71.6% of classroom teachers spend less than three hours per week on ISSP and Pathways programming. Table 7 quotes educators as reporting that 77.1% of ISSP meetings are a maximum of one hour. The Commission cannot explain this discrepancy.

Adding to this frustration is recognition of the time required for the role of ISSP manager. Critical to the planning process, the ISSP manager assumes sole responsibility for scheduling and facilitating meetings, managing documentation, and ensuring that the ISSP is written and signed. Given the propensity for ISSPs to be almost exclusively an educational document (as previously identified in this report) the frequency of educators serving in this capacity is not surprising.

Table 8 presents this data, clearly identifying the fact that special education teachers and guidance counsellors assume greater responsibility than any other educators. The fact of this overwhelming proportion of ISSP managers' being teachers underscores previous concern for the commitment of outside agencies to the ISSP process.

Table 8: Percentage response to survey question:
Are you an ISSP manager?

Response	Classroom Teachers	Special Education Teachers	Guidance Counsellors	Administrators
Yes	18.0%	86.1%	71.7%	24.0%
No	82.%	13.9%	28.3%	76.0%

Note: Percentage results in each category represent combined responses across all school districts.

The Commission also heard that the demands associated with the ISSP process, more specifically with being the ISSP manager, were motivating special education teachers to move to regular classroom positions. While the Commission cannot comment on whether this is a growing trend, Table 9 identifies that it is not overly significant. Moreover, the Commission recognizes the benefits of having special

education teachers in regular classroom positions, in that they are intensely trained in differentiating instruction.

Table 9: Career plans of special education teachers

Response	Are you looking to find another teaching position outside the field of special education?
Yes	27.7%
No	72.3%

Note: Survey results represent combined responses reported by special education teachers across all school districts.

The Commission heard too that ISSPs are not particularly effective in ensuring communication among the stakeholders. Parents state that each new school year they have to begin a process of meeting with each teacher to inform them of their child's needs. Even when ISSP meetings are deemed necessary, it is often well into the school year before such can be arranged, given the number of other requisite meetings that educators have to schedule. Even then, parents report having to remind teachers constantly of the agreed-on accommodations, especially as related to exams. Teachers acknowledge the legitimacy of this perception, adding that there is much to remember and so many accommodations to implement for so many students, that they are overwhelmed. Table 10 supports this, noting that 25.7% of teachers agree that it is often the parents who inform them of the child's needs.

Table 10: Communications regarding Pathway supports

Response	Survey Question: Sometimes it is a parent who makes me aware that their child is receiving Pathway supports.
Strongly Agree	8.4%
Somewhat Agree	17.3%
Somewhat Disagree	17.6%
Strongly Disagree	52.5%
Not Applicable	4.2%

Note: Results represent percentage responses reported by Classroom Teachers from all five school districts.

3.6 Special Education "Department Head"

This breakdown in communication and the resulting frustration among all stakeholders is of particular concern. The Commission acknowledges the emergence of "student support teams" at each school which are typically comprised of special education teachers, guidance counsellors, and administrators. This team functions as a "Department" within the school, and plans, delivers and evaluates special education programming provided by the school.

The high volume of documentation in student support services has been noted on numerous occasions. The preparation, review, submission, and re-documentation of applications for categorical support require coordination. A multitude of other

duties consumes the time of special education teachers. Tracking student records, scheduling accommodations, chairing meetings, providing relevant information about student needs and exceptionalities for Annual General Reports, requesting accommodations/exemptions from criterion-referenced testing and public examinations, organizing classroom assistants, developing alternate curriculum, facilitating professional development, etc., are critically important, but time consuming. One individual is needed to assume a leadership role. Communication would be enhanced if one person assumed responsibility for prioritizing it.

The Commission feels that many of the above-noted concerns can be significantly eased with the assigning of such a leader in this team. While the Commission will discuss the training and qualifications of current leaders in special education in a future section, it recognizes that the data from this inquiry supports the argument presented by Philpott and Dibbon (2007): leadership has to move back into the hands of teachers.

Subsequently, The Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 8

the Department of Education create a department head position in special education at each school level.

Recommendation 9

the department head in special education have at least a bachelor's degree in Special Education.

Recommendation 10

the department head in special education be assigned time during the school day to complete duties and responsibilities incumbent in this role and be compensated to the equivalent of other designated department heads.

3.7 Applying for Specialized Support

Particular concern was raised for the categorical model, in which students with severe needs can be documented to receive low-ratio teaching service. While educators felt that it fractured the role of special education teacher and divided one profession into two (whether specialized training/knowledge existed or not), all agreed that the cumbersome documentation process for categorical service was "hardly worth it". The Commission received submissions describing a system driven by complex regulations, excessive paperwork and ever-increasing administrative demands.

The approval timeframe for categorical teaching units has been a longstanding subject of criticism. Approvals of categorical teaching units for students requiring Criteria C (Moderate/Global/Severe/ Profound Cognitive Delay) are generally approved for a five-year period. However, approvals for categorical teaching units for students requiring Criteria D (Severe Physical Disability), Criteria E (Severe Emotional or Behavioural Difficulty/Disorder), Criteria F (Severe Learning Disability) and Criteria G (Severe Health/Neurological) are generally for a one or two year period.

The fact of short approval periods for Criteria D - G implies that teachers have to begin the re-documentation process within a relatively brief time-span to ensure

continuity of service. In fact, more often than not, this documentation process was seen as never-ending. Notwithstanding the need for periodic progress reports, parents, teachers and administrators alike question why the Department of Education requires this repetitive process, particularly in relation to students with profound disabilities. Educators were particularly critical of the amount of time that psychologists made available to this task. It was generally felt that such energies could be better used providing counselling and assessment services at the school level.

Of equal concern was the approval process for these applications for categorical service. Once developed, applications are forwarded to the Department of Education for approval. All stakeholders noted the irony in a system of decision-making where those who know the child the least, have the final decision over their programming.

(The Commission will comment on the appeals process further in the report.)

Therefore, the Commission recommends that

Recommendation 11

the Department of Education establish a working committee to review the model of categorical support.

Furthermore, pending the results of that review process, the Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 12

the Department of Education move the decision-making for the approval of applications for categorical support to the districts.

Recommendation 13

the Department of Education approve categorical support for students with profound needs for the duration of their academic careers.

Recommendation 14

the Department of Education extend the approval period for criteria D-G students to a minimum of three years.

3.8 Alternate courses

Special education teachers also report that tremendous amounts of time and energy are being expended in the development of alternate courses and curriculum for those students requiring Pathway Four and Five supports. Notwithstanding the fact that such developments are designed to meet the needs of individual students, shared access to alternate courses and curriculum is deemed to be advantageous. The World Wide Web in general, and the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI) in particular, have contributed to teachers' increased use of the Internet as a source of information and support.

Special education teachers voiced concern for their lack of training in developing alternate curriculum at the school level while provincial curriculum is developed by experts at the department level. (The Commission will speak to qualifications and training in section 3.18).

The issue of availability of time for developing alternate curriculum was also raised, with special education teachers claiming that their quality of life is impaired by the

many hours of work performed outside the school day in an effort to develop alternate curriculum (See table 7). Teachers feel that their labours are inefficient, since they are "reinventing the wheel" with each alternate course they create. Given current technologies, there is consensus that significant potential exists for teachers to share and benefit from online access to alternate courses and curriculum.

The materials and supplies required to develop and deliver this specialized curriculum precipitated an added dilemma. While the Department of Education provides resources for the prescribed curriculum, the individual school is responsible for purchasing specialized materials and curriculum.

High interest-low vocabulary resources, for example, are often necessary for the delivery of appropriate programming for special needs students, yet there is no funding allocation for the purchase of such materials.

Therefore, the Commission recommends that

Recommendation 15

the Department of Education develop an online resource site of alternate courses and alternate curriculum, including suggested resources.

Recommendation 16

The Department of Education provide specific funding to schools for purchasing/developing specialized materials and alternate curriculum.

3.9 Behavioural analysis and support plans

The Commission repeatedly heard reports from teachers and administrators about the time constraints associated with Functional Behaviour Analysis and Behaviour Management Plans. In fact, these initiatives were often the source of much criticism and debate as they are generally viewed as being extremely time-consuming. The survey of educators reported that 75.2% identified the amount of time consumed in completing Functional Behaviour Analysis and develop behavioural management plans is excessive (See Table 11). Teachers felt that neither initiative contributes much to providing urgent supports for students with behavioural needs. Given earlier identification of the pronounced scarcity of ISSPs for students demonstrating visible behavioural needs entering the justice system, the Commission wonders about the effectiveness of these models.

Table 11: Functional Behaviour Analysis

Response	The amount of time completing Functional Behaviour Analysis and developing Behaviour Management Plans is excessive.
Strongly Agree	51.3%
Somewhat Agree	23.9%
Somewhat Disagree	5.2%
Strongly Disagree	2.5%
Not Applicable	17.1%

Note: Teacher Survey results represent percentage responses reported by all educators from all school districts.

Therefore, the Commission recommends that

Recommendation 17

the Department of Education conduct a review of both the Functional Behaviour Analysis and the Behaviour Management Plan.

Furthermore, pending the results of that review process, the Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 18

the Department simplify the required documentation for the Functional Behaviour Analysis and the Behaviour Management Plan.

3.10 Assessments

3.10.1 Introduction

Educational assessments are an integral component of the current model and are intended to provide valuable information directly impacting instructional design and educational practice. The design, approval, and delivery of the most appropriate services and resources based on needs of individual students should be enhanced with in-depth assessments. At present, numerous professionals are engaged in this process, including speech language pathologists, educational psychologists, guidance counsellors and special education teachers. The Commission, however, heard from educators and parents alike that current efforts were not yielding timely assessments.

Even a cursory glance at the literature supports the principle that early identification facilitates early intervention, preventing many secondary characteristics from manifesting. The Commission is significantly troubled by the recurring message that, often, primary schools are refusing to assess children, arguing that primary school children are "too young". Such dismissal of the early identification principle is in direct contradiction to the abundance of literature on this matter. The Commission supports the finding that this practice results in a "wait to fail" approach.

3.10.2 Waitlists

Timeliness in completing assessments by educational personnel at both the school and district levels, as well as those completed by outside agencies/departments, was identified as a major issue across the province by educators and parents alike. Difficulties in recruiting and retaining specialists and insufficient allocations of same were cited as factors having a far-reaching negative impact on timely completion of assessments.

Focus groups report that assessment waitlists are so lengthy that many parents avail of private professionals to ensure that their children are assessed within an appropriately early time-frame. In fact, the Commission recognizes the rapid growth of a privatized system of special education, where parents who have the resources go to private agencies/practitioners for services ranging from tutoring, counselling, program development, advocacy, speech therapy and assessments. The Commission also heard that some school and district personnel maintain private practices wherein they charge parents for the services they are publicly paid to provide. Parents acknowledge frustration with a message that the child has to wait for a specific service in the school setting, but that many professionals are available after school to provide this service for fee. The Commission is concerned

that in a publicly-funded education system a means-based level of specialized service seems to be looming.

Despite the abundance of concerns for waitlists for assessments, the Commission was surprised to learn that neither the Department of Education nor the respective school districts maintain a waitlist for service. Subsequently, the Commission could not examine the exact magnitude of this concern. It did, however, include survey questions in an effort to quantify the scope of the concern it heard in focus groups, presentations and interviews. Table 12 presents these findings.

Table 12: Waitlists

Response	On average, how long are you waiting for student support services at the district level to complete assessments?
Within 1 month	13.7%
Within 2-3 months	28.3%
Within 4-6 months	22.6%
Within 7-12 months	9.9%
More than 1 year	11.8%
Not applicable	13.7%

Note: Survey results represent combined responses reported by special education teachers and guidance counsellors across all school districts.

This specific data, while limited in scope, and questionable in accuracy (as no lists are actually maintained) does support the notion that students have to wait for

assessments. It indicates that 44.3% of students could wait until the next school year to be assessed if the referral is made partway through a school year. Again, it surprises the Commission that accurate information on assessment is not available.

The Commission heard that assessments are also conducted by agencies other than education and efforts were made to examine the waitlists for those services. Since no firm data existed for this, the Commission had to include a question in the survey of educators. While the accuracy is again questionable, Table 13 indicates findings similar to those of Table 12.

Depending on the time of the referral, approximately 75.5% of students could be delayed to the next school year to be assessed.

Table 13: Waitlists - outside agencies

Response	On average, how long are you waiting for agencies outside the Department of Education to complete assessments?
Within 1 month	12%
Within 2-3 months	12.5%
Within 4-6 months	23%
Within 7-12 months	27%
More than 1 year	25.5%

Note: Survey results represent combined responses reported by special education teachers and guidance counsellors across all school districts.

The Commission can appreciate why parents with resources choose to access private services; it is nonetheless concerned with this practice. In order to monitor, evaluate and respond adequately to the degree to which programs and services are delivered within a reasonable timeframe, accurate information must be compiled and maintained.

The Department of Education produces an annual *Education Statistics* publication, which includes extensive data on district profiles, schools, student achievement, student support information, and other areas which permit systemic analyses. The Commission feels that such a vehicle would hold utility if it contained accurate information on current waitlists for services. Parents have a right to be fully informed and educators have a responsibility to be transparent in their provision of services. In fact, the Commission cannot understand how services can be effectively provided if information on need is not thorough.

Subsequently, the Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 19

the Department of Education, in consultation with the districts, conduct a thorough review and analysis of students currently waitlisted for assessment.

Recommendation 20

the Department of Education develop clear guidelines to promote early assessment and identification.

Recommendation 21

the Department of Education establish provincial standards for timely completion of assessments and that procedures be established to monitor it.

Recommendation 22

the Department of Education, in cooperation with the districts, conduct a thorough review and analysis of students currently waitlisted for assessments in departments external to the Department of Education.

Recommendation 23

the Department of Education forward the findings of the above-noted review to the applicable agency or department, particularly those findings that are impacting program delivery to students.

Recommendation 24

the Department of Education, in consultation with school districts, develop and maintain an electronic database of all students waitlisted for assessments.

Recommendation 25

the Department of Education include information in relation to assessments, waitlists, ISSPs and Pathways in the yearly Education Statistics publication.

3.10.3 Testing materials

The debate on assessments further alerted the Commission to additional concerns regarding the availability of testing materials. Interestingly, this concern was shared by both educators, and parents (who appear increasingly well-informed on assessment standards and practices). At present, the individual school and district office are responsible for purchasing all test instruments and consumable protocols. They are each expected to maintain test libraries of current versions of the most commonly used instruments, and at least to have access to more in-depth instruments. The Commission was told that such is not the practice, and that schools and district offices are attempting to conduct assessments with limited resources. Oftentimes they use outdated instruments, photocopy protocols or make decisions on children's needs based on limited assessment information. Moreover, the Commission heard that direct requests for support in this area are routinely ignored. It concerns the Commission to hear that such unauthorized practice is occurring. The Commission, moreover, raises alarm over the accuracy of these assessments, especially in the context of an escalating number of students being labelled with disabilities in a population that is decreasing.

The Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 26

the Department of Education provide sufficient funds to individual schools and district offices to purchase appropriate testing materials.

Recommendation 27

the Department of Education establish guidelines for comprehensive and ethical assessment practices.

While it was not the role of the Commission to review special education, it is abundantly clear that most of the concern regarding assessment stems from the existing model's diagnostic and prescriptive view on student needs. In a model which is more inclusive and which actively empowers classroom teachers with the knowledge and skills to identify and respond to the emerging needs of students, the need to test and label students as "disabled" would be significantly reduced. A proactive approach to accommodating difference is encouraged.

3.11 "At-risk" students

It is within this context of concern for a system that diagnoses difference before supports are developed that the Commission heard concern for students who are clearly "at-risk" but who don't qualify for supports under the existing model. Parents and teachers alike traditionally referred to these as "remedial students". Concern was identified for these students who literally have to wait to fail, or become labelled as "disabled", before they can qualify for help. The Commission notes that the original guidelines for ISSPs specifically outlined that at-risk students be included in the model (See Appendix I). The Commission also recognizes a wealth of literature on "at risk students" (Eg. Levin, 2004) which clearly calls for early identification and intervention, regardless of label, in a proactive approach to prevent drop-out or failure. Tomlinson and McTighe (2006) also acknowledge the needs of this population of students:

> Teachers find it increasingly difficult to ignore the diversity of learners who populate their classrooms. Culture, race, language, economics, gender, motivation to achieve, disability, advanced ability, personal interests, learning preferences, and presence or absence of an adult support system are just some of the factors that students bring to school with them in almost stunning variety (P. 1).

The *Ministerial Panel on Educational Delivery in the Classroom* (2000) also recognized the need of at-risk students, and asserted that "There will always be some students who will need extra support and it is incumbent upon schools and school districts to respond to that need". While the Commission strongly agrees that this response should be a dominant feature of education, it heard little to indicate that such is the case. In contrast, it consistently heard a need for additional resources to respond to those students who do not have an identified exceptionality but, for a variety of reasons, are not competent with the curriculum.

The Commission notes particular concern for the unique needs of the province's aboriginal students, long recognized as being inherently at-risk. It reviewed a recent study entitled *An Educational Profile of the Learning Needs of Innu Youth* (Philpott, et al., 2004) as well as heard concern from aboriginal communities and educators working with aboriginal students. The Commission recognizes that this group creates unique challenges to the Labrador school district which services coastal Labrador. Despite initiatives by these groups to move towards self-management of education, the Commission feels that they should be prioritized within the at-risk population.

The Commission therefore recommends that:

Recommendation 28

the Department of Education outline procedures to address the needs of all at-risk students.

A pan-Canadian review revealed that remediation remains the responsibility of the classroom teacher in all jurisdictions. The ability of teachers to meet this challenge effectively is affected by a number of factors, including class size, resources and teaching strategies. Research suggests "that smaller class size can help to improve the quality of the classroom experience for both the teacher and the student" (Dibbon, 2004, P. 21). The Teacher Allocation Review Commission's thrust supports reductions in class size. The effectiveness of teachers in meeting the needs of diverse learners will be enhanced through the provision of appropriate teaching resources and strategies. Specifically, the data supports the argument by Philpott and Dibbon (2007) that teachers need to be trained in differentiating instruction so as to accommodate effectively the needs of all students in today's diverse learning environments. Such would be the hallmark of a more inclusive school system.

Subsequently, the Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 29

the Department of Education develop a clear articulation of "inclusive education".

Recommendation 30

the Department of Education make a commitment to training all teachers on differentiating instruction.

Recommendation 31

the Department of Education, in collaboration with school districts, develop a teacher handbook on meeting the needs of diverse learners.

3.12 Exceptionally Able learners

According to the Department of Education (Government of NL, 1997):

> Students with an exceptional ability demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate: an exceptional ability to learn; well above-average cognitive ability (specific abilities or overall general cognitive ability); and/or high levels of task commitment (perseverance, endurance, determination, dedication and practice); and/or exceptional characteristics, talents and aptitudes in non-academic areas (e.g., exceptional creativity, leadership, psychomotor ability or other talents which society may consider important)

These students have been included in special education from the initial stages for a reason – - without individualized supports they will not reach their potential. "Without an appropriate education, there will be lost academic growth, lost creative potential, and sometimes lost enthusiasm for educational success and eventual professional achievement" (Davis and Rimms, 1994, 1). These students are at significant risk for underachievement and drop-out and, "up to 20% of high school dropouts may be gifted" (Davis and Rimms, 1985, reported by the Government of NS, n.d).

Submissions and focus groups were consistent in affirming that programs and services for exceptionally able learners have become an increasingly neglected area, despite estimates that 3-5% of the general population is gifted (Sattler, 2001). Table 14 supports this, illustrating that 72.2% of educators feel that the existing model is not meeting the needs of these students.

Table 14: Exceptionally Able Learners

Response	The needs of gifted children are being met in my school
Strongly Agree	4.6%
Somewhat Agree	18.3%
Somewhat Disagree	23.0%
Strongly Disagree	49.2%
Not Applicable	4.9%

Note: Teacher Survey results represent percentage responses reported by all educators from all school districts.

While the current model allows service under the category "exceptional ability to learn", this category of students has not been included for the past three years in the Education Statistics report published by the Department of Education. Not reporting this information, even though it is requested in the AGR, supports a growing theme that the current model focuses on weaknesses and ignores strengths. Moreover, the Commission notes that it is the individual districts who assign special education teachers and develop programs to identify gifted students and deliver services to them. Given the provincial emphasis on entrepreneurship, economic development, and leadership, it is disconcerting to find that one of our most valuable resources is being ignored.

Therefore, the Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 32

the Department of Education identify the needs of exceptionally able learners within the school population.

In the past number of years, as districts were reorganized and district office staffs were streamlined, enrichment teachers were among the first to be cut. Today, only the Western School District has retained an itinerant teacher for enrichment. The Commission is concerned that enrichment teachers (who would provide direct support to these students and classroom teachers) have disappeared in the current model. While NL has neglected exceptionally able learners, other provinces are putting more resources into meeting the needs of these students.

The Commission's pan-Canadian comparison reveals that many different programs and teaching strategies are used across Canada to address the needs of exceptionally able learners (also referred to as gifted learners, gifted and talented, children with gifts, and students with gifts and talents).

The BC Ministry of Education, for example, has developed *Gifted Education - A Resource Guide for Teachers*, which outlines services for gifted learners. The Department also has available a second document which was developed by a Gifted/LD advocacy group, addressing the complex needs of students who have the dual exceptionality of learning disability and giftedness.

In Alberta, the responsibility for exceptionally able learners is also assigned to individual districts. However, the Ministry has published a series of resources titled, *Programming for Students with Special Needs* one of which specifically outlines supports for teachers and another which outlines support for parents of gifted children (Alberta Learning, 2006).

Nova Scotia articulates its approach to gifted students as:

> School-wide enrichment identifies, develops and supports the gifts and talents of all students through a broad range of opportunities and experiences. As a result of enrichment opportunities and experiences some students will be identified as requiring additional program options in response to their demonstrated gifts and talents. (Government of NS, nd.)

The Commission heard that some educators view Advanced Placement courses at high school and the French Immersion program as being enrichment programs. The Commission strongly disagrees with this perception, although it does recognize that both programs are inherently more enriching.

The Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 33

the Department of Education and the individual school districts make a commitment to develop appropriate programming and resources to meet the needs of exceptionally able learners.

Given the myriad responsibilities assigned to current staff at the Department of Education, the Commission supports the contention that a position dedicated to the area of exceptionally able learners (gifted education) would hold promise for the elevation of this overlooked aspect of education. Furthermore, the prospects for success could be enhanced through collaboration between the Program Development and Student Support Services Divisions of the Department of Education.

The Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 34

the Department of Education appoint a consultant for Gifted Education as a joint appointment to Program Development and Student Support Services.

The Commission recognizes many opportunities for both vertical and horizontal enrichment activities to be incorporated within the regular classroom, under a model of differentiated instruction. The degree to which this is likely to occur, however, will be affected by the availability of appropriate resources. As long as prescribed textbooks remain a core resource for instruction, they should contain enrichment components.

The Commission therefore recommends that:

Recommendation 35

the Department of Education's future publishing contracts include the provision of enrichment sections in textbooks, in CD/DVD and print formats.

3.13 Curriculum issues

The provincial curriculum has undergone substantive changes since the 1980's. The 1992 Royal Commission and its attendant reports and recommendations stressed a more rigorous program of studies. This was reflected in subsequent curriculum development in conjunction with the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation. *Adjusting the Course* (Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, 1994) called for higher standards, improved curriculum and increased accountability, which led to

increased emphasis on mathematics and the sciences. As a result, courses in basic literacy and numeracy, as well as vocational programs, being accessed by students with special needs were removed from the program of studies.

The Canning Report (Canning, 1996) raised concern for this, especially at the high school level. It called for vocational training, a greater focus on literacy and numeracy, and a re-balancing of curriculum to reflect the diverse needs of students. The Canning Report recognized that earlier changes directed at higher academic standards cast adrift a large number of students who, while not particularly academically inclined, could have experienced success in a hands-on program. It is thought that many of these students have entered the category of at-risk students because their present needs are not being adequately addressed by the current curriculum.

Many students do not see the relationship between courses required for graduation and life beyond the classroom. There appear to be few effective linkages between high schools and post-secondary institutions, apprenticeship programs and/or the world of employment. It is imperative that the curriculum be linked to the personal career development needs of the student.

The Commission was told repeatedly that the prescribed curriculum at the intermediate and senior high school levels continues to fail to meet the diverse needs of our students. Table 14 presents data to quantify these concerns discerning, that 81.7% of educators express concern for curriculum as it pertains to the needs of students with diverse needs.

Table 14: Curriculum issues

Response	The Grade 7-12 curriculum does not have appropriate courses for students who are not strong academically.
Strongly Agree	71.4%
Somewhat Agree	10.3%
Somewhat Disagree	1.5%
Strongly Disagree	1.4%
Not Applicable	15.3%

Note: Teacher Survey results represent percentage responses reported by all educators from all school districts.

The Commission therefore recommends that:

Recommendation 36

the Department of Education conduct a review of the current intermediate and senior high curriculum in an effort to offer a wider variety of courses to meet the needs of all students.

The commission continually heard that this lack of appropriate curriculum has caused frustrations for many students. Often this has led to students being placed on Pathway Three or Four courses, many of which are delivered in segregated settings. This practice not only affects the self-concept of these students but it also often removes the option of high school graduation and post-secondary participation.

The Commission's pan-Canadian review identifies the fact that other jurisdictions have curriculum and well-established programs which provide an opportunity for students to gain post-secondary apprenticeship training while still attending high school. Students receive high school credits in structured courses for experiential learning on job sites, some of which can be credited at the post-secondary level. Such a focus in the skilled trades and employability skills contributes to the students' self-esteem, improves school attendance, and forges a stronger link with post-secondary training opportunities. Given this province's recognition of a shortage of skilled trade persons and available workers in service industries, this emphasis on skills training is an approach that would be welcomed.

The Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 37

the Department of Education design and implement curriculum and programs to improve employability skills, which will help to prepare students to be productive, contributing members of society.

Another area of concern in curriculum pertains to French Immersion, and the provision of special education within that program. Parents voiced frustration that students who are enrolled in French Immersion cannot access special education services because the program is seen as being available only to students without exceptionalities. They are faced with the decision to leave their children in French Immersion and ignore their needs, or to privatize supports, or to move them back into English, where they will face the many behavioural issues that are seen as characterizing this stream. The Commission was told that there are no French-speaking special education teachers and that French Immersion is a parental way to stream their children. This streaming of ability and behaviour became an added

concern for the Intensive French and Late French Immersion programs (particularly in the Eastern District). Parents and educators alike voiced additional concern that parents struggle with the decision to place their children in these programs in fear that, despite their ability, the children will be left in the English stream and consequently exposed to the social problems just as they are approaching adolescence. While these issues concern the Commission, this characterization of the English stream is alarming.

Subsequently, the Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 38

the Department of Education, in consultation with the districts, review the provision of support services to students in French Immersion programs.

3.14 Francophone schools

This concern for the absence of French-speaking special education teachers was underscored at the Francophone schools. The Conseil Scolaire Francophone Provincial (CSFP), also called the Francophone School District, was created with the amendment of the Schools' Act of 1997. Serving just over 200 students, the CSFP operates five small schools, two in Labrador, two on the island's west coast, and one in St. John's.

The Commission heard particular challenges in training Francophone teachers in special education, in part because of an exceptionally high staff turnover during the past five years. This concern is acerbated with training modules in English, despite

French being the dominant language of these teachers. Even in circumstances where French teachers speak good English,

> … the complexity of the terminology involved in this specialized area can severely limit the Francophone's ability to fully grasp some of the issues being discussed on special education documentation. This represents a significant challenge, not only for in-service programs, but also for utilization of Department of Education material.
>
> (P. Smith, Assistant Director of Education, CSFP)

Currently, all information on ISSPs and Pathways is available in English only, while the official language of instruction in CSFP schools is French. Our survey of other provinces' modus operandi vis-à-vis Francophone education shows that materials and programs are made available in both official languages.

The results of the Commission's hearings and surveys among this specific population of teachers and parents raised concerns that were both similar to those from the broader informants, as well others unique to the needs of the francophone students. Subsequently, the Commission recognizes the complexities of addressing concerns for this population of students, parents and educators.

The Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 39

the Department of Education deliver all training and in-service to Francophone schools in French.

Recommendation 40

the Department of Education supply all information and documentation regarding student support services to Francophone schools in French.

3.15 Alternate Settings

The Department of Education's policy for alternate educational settings affirms a commitment to the core values of inclusive education practices. At the same time, it acknowledges that the needs of students with severe emotional and behavioural challenges may require, for an interim period, an alternate learning environment where the achievement of positive behavioural skills is supported.

As was the case for exceptionally able learners, any model of support services is not complete without recognition and provision of programs for students who, for a host of reasons (social, psychological, legal, personal), are not succeeding in the regular classroom environment. The Ministerial Panel on Educational Delivery in the Classroom (Government of NL, 2000) made two recommendations in support of alternate educational programs and settings "for youth at risk and those who have difficulty in a traditional academic setting" (P. 34).

Recent research notes that, while total inclusion is the ideal, many education districts also "provide alternatives to the regular classroom when the choice clearly does not meet the student's need" (Hutchinson, 2007, P. 13-14). The *Guidelines for New Brunswick Alternative Educational Programs and Services* (Government of NB, 2002):

> …acknowledges that a small number of the student population may require educational programs and services in an alternative setting for periods of time during the students' school careers. Students who are at high risk for school failure, dropping out, and/or societal failure sometimes require intensive programs and services that are not feasible or are unable to be provided in traditional classrooms or school settings (P. 1).

Manitoba Education has a similar approach: when a student's Individual Education Program determines that a student's needs "cannot be met in a regular classroom even with supports and services, alternatives to programming in the regular classroom are considered [with placement options including] a special learning environment that may not be in their neighbourhood school" (Government of MB, 2006). Specialized settings are also placement options in British Columbia, Alberta, and the Northwest Territories.

The Commission has heard that the variety, complexity and severity of behaviours being exhibited by a statistically small, but demanding, number of students have increased significantly in the past decade. Likewise, the Commission also heard that students with mental health issues are also being increasingly challenged to cope, not to mention succeed, in the regular classroom environment. Teachers made it abundantly clear that they are often at a loss to know how to help these students and that current supports such as the Functional Behavioural Support Plans offer little in the way of pragmatic help. Parents and educators told the Commission that these students, while not themselves succeeding, are also disrupting instruction for other students.

The Commission heard from focus groups that it's difficult to get diagnosed and extremely difficult to obtain Criteria E (Severe Emotional/Behavioural Needs) support to establish and maintain stable programs and services for these students. The number of Criteria E units has decreased significantly over the past few years, but there seems to be a difference of opinion as to why. This report has already commented on both the effectiveness of the categorical model, and the utility of Functional Behavioural Analysis. The data presented to the Commission would support that neither is effective in meeting the needs of this population of students.

School districts in NL have likewise recognized this discrepancy and have attempted to design and deliver programs to meet these needs. However, the availability of resources for these programs was voiced as a concern. The Commission heard that while the Department of Education has a policy providing for alternate educational settings, it does not provide the resources necessary to operate these programs. The Commission also heard that such settings serve a very important role yet, there are no clear links with either the neighbourhood school or the regular curriculum. Oftentimes, placement in such settings means a complete divergence from the regular program and the end of an academic program of studies. The Commission was told that neighbourhood schools often view the transfer of one of their students into such a facility as the end of their involvement. The Commission feels that alternate programs be seen as being "respite" in nature, where students are taught the skills necessary to cope more effectively in the regular school environment. The Commission also envisions that a plan be developed, prior to placement in the alternate setting, which will keep the student linked with the regular curriculum and facilitate smooth transition back into the environment of the neighbourhood school.

Subsequently, the Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 41

the Department of Education review the programs currently offered in alternate settings to ensure effective linkages with the neighbourhood school and regular curriculum.

Recommendation 42

the Department of Education provide appropriate resources and personnel to staff alternate educational settings.

3.16 Support for Parents

The Commission was charged with hearing the concerns of families as much as educators, and presentations from parents were characterized by much frustration and high emotion. The Commission became aware that these parents were eager to speak of their experiences with the ISSP and Pathway models, though they varied greatly in their level of awareness. At times, parents voiced frustration with a system whose limitations and weakness were painfully transparent, yet often went unacknowledged by educators. At other times, parents spoke of a pronounced lack of awareness and misinformation surrounding the models, and told of their struggles to discover what was happening with their child. At times, parents displayed an awareness of their child's exceptionalities, intricate details of assessment and a perception of programs and interventions used elsewhere. At other times, they described "knowing something was wrong for years" yet fighting to get someone to listen to them. In fact, "fighting" was a word often used by these parents who articulately described a system that often placed them in an adversarial role with educators. While some parents exuded self-confidence and engaged the education system forcefully, many others reported feeling intimidated by the ISSP process.

The Commission was particularly concerned about the number of parents who reported pressure to sign documentation and give consent for services that they often didn't fully understand. In fact, many parents reported that often they felt that the purpose of meetings was to get them "to sign the forms". The Commission notes that just as teachers are obligated to obtain consent of parents it is incumbent on those teachers to ensure that this consent is informed. Parent approval can only be accepted by educators if the parents fully understand the nature and implications of the intervention and it is given without duress. Too often the Commission heard that consent is anything but informed in the current model.

The Commission feels that many of the recommendations contained herein, particularly those pertaining to the creation of a Department Head in special education, the establishment of an effective appeals process, and prioritizing early identification (as well as subsequent ones for training for parents) will optimize support for parents. Nonetheless, the Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 43

the Department of Education, in consultation with school districts, develop policies to ensure that all consent has been fully informed and that educators understand their role in obtaining such consent.

Some parents expressed considerable frustration with trying to access training on the ISSP model, while others were surprised to hear that training was available or that they could serve as their child's ISSP manager. Many parents do not fully understand the consequences of placing their children on Pathway Three, Four or Five, even though this placement can significantly limit post-secondary options available after their graduation. According to the information received from the Regional Integrated Services Management Teams (who are responsible for training in different regions of the province), very few parents have received ISSP training during the past five years. Table 15 presents a disturbing picture of these numbers.

Table 15:
Numbers of parents who received
ISSP training for the period 2000- 2006

Regional Team	Total completed
Labrador Regional Team	29
Western Regional Team	56
Eastern Regional Team	29
Central Regional Team	20

Source: Eastern, Central, Labrador and Western Regional Integrated Services Management Teams- February 2007. No information was received from the Northern Regional Team.

These numbers actually represent participants other than professionals employed by one of the partner government agencies. Subsequently, the number includes, but is not limited to, parents. Information from the St. John's Regional Team only includes participants trained since 2005, as no records were kept prior to that. It shocks the Commission that while Table 3 identified 14 815 students receiving support in the province, Table 15 reports that the best indicator of the maximum number of parents trained is 134. The Commission has to report that at least 99.1% of the parents of children accessing service do not have access to the required training.

The Commission does note that the Department of Education has a brochure titled *Pathways to Programming and Graduation – A Brochure for Parents* which few parents in our focus groups were familiar with or even aware of its existence.

The Commission feels that such fragmented and often limited knowledge among parents can have severe implications. The Commission does note that the

responsibility for training in the Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth (and, subsequently ISSPs) rests with the provincial and regional integrated service management teams. Accordingly, the following two recommendations should be pursued through these teams.

It therefore recommends that:

Recommendation 44

the Department of Education make representation to the chairs of the Regional Integrated Service Management Teams and to the chair of the Provincial Integrated Service Management Team to provide ISSP training for parents.

Recommendation 45

ISSP training sessions for parents be publicized using local media, government websites, school websites and newsletters.

While these recommendations will strengthen available training on the ISSP model, the Commission heard that specific focus needs to be placed on Pathways training for parents. As this is exclusively an educational program, the Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 46

the Department of Education, in consultation with school districts, develop, for parents, a standardized Pathways training package, with a clear implementation plan.

The Commission's pan-Canadian review of support for parents in other jurisdictions clearly indicated a trend towards actively encouraging greater participation of

parents. Jurisdictions are increasingly recognizing the contributions that parents can make to the delivery of educational services. The province of Ontario, for example, has recently developed a parent involvement policy which states:

> positive results from partnerships with parents can include improved school achievement, reduced absenteeism, better behaviour, and restored confidence among parents in their child's schooling" (Ontario Education, 2005).

Similarly, the Nova Scotia asserts that:

> Parents/guardians possess a wealth of knowledge and experience about the special needs of their children. As the primary advocate for their children, they have an obligation to take an active role in sharing this knowledge with the school. Their involvement in the program planning process can be invaluable in meeting individual needs (Government of NS, 2006a. P. 56).

As a result, other jurisdictions are developing handbooks and on-line resources specifically targeting parents and actively promoting their involvement. Sample titles include: *A Handbook for Parents of Children with Special Needs* (Alberta Learning, 2004); *Special Needs Handbook – Navigating the System (*Quebec Ministere de L'Education, 2006); *Working Together: A Handbook for Parents of Children with Special Needs* (Government of MB, 2004); and *The Program Planning Process: A Guide for Parents – Supporting Student Success (*Government of NS, 2006b).

These publications offer information and strategies for parents who want to be involved in their children's education. They explore such topics as types of exceptionalities, school supports, techniques for helping the child, support groups, transition planning, and consequences of program models, as well as related

websites. The Commission notes that parents in this province are requesting similar information. It therefore recommends that:

Recommendation 47

the Department of Education, in collaboration with key stakeholders, develop a handbook (also available in audio format) and web-site for parents of children with special needs.

The Commission did hear of positive examples of parents sharing information and providing mutual support and encouragement. In such cases, these parents were clearly more informed and empowered. They displayed a desire to work collaboratively with schools in order to strengthen the programs available for their children, and the children of their lesser-informed peers.

Subsequently, the Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 48

the school districts, in consultation with the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils, encourage the development of a parent support network for parents of children with exceptionalities.

3.17 Appeals Process

Differences of opinion and interpretation are neither uncommon nor unexpected in any human services system, and notably so in education. What constitutes an appropriate level and type of supports and resources for individual situations often results in conflicts and disagreements, especially so when vulnerable children and emotionally upset families are involved. Uncertainties surrounding the allocation and deployment of such resources are exacerbated by the perception that "the system" is aligned against the individual.

It appears a little known fact that the NL Schools Act (1997) specifies a graduated procedure to allow an individual (parent/student) to appeal any decision up to and including the school board (See Appendix K). The Commission notes that the current Schools Act is remarkably vague on appeals for parents and that little information is available on the format of such appeals. In fact, the Commission heard significant concern from both educators and parents as to the current processes being used.

Parents note that oftentimes their concerns go unheard and that if they push hard and long enough, school district personnel will intervene, defending the decision by the school. Parents are often left with little choice but to let the issue go, or to take their concerns outside the system into the media or, where resources warrant, to lawyers or the Human Rights system. This perception was supported by presentations made by the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate. The 2005-06 *Annual Report* of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate stated that 15% of the referrals received by that office pertained to the provision of education supports. Furthermore, the Office reports that this is a growing number, and that it is increasingly concerned for the process of appeals, or lack thereof, that parents have available to them inside the education system.

Concern for the absence of an effective appeals process in education was underscored by the process of decision-making regarding the categorical model. Educators and parents voiced significant frustration with the irony of having to appeal a decision *by* the Director of Student Support Services *to* the Director of Student Support Services. Likewise, decisions made *by* district office personnel have to be appealed *to* district office personnel. The Commission is bemused by this dilemma: how can professionals rationalize having parents launch an appeal to the very people who made the decision under appeal?

Subsequently, the Commission therefore recommends that:

Recommendation 49

the Department of Education develop an effective appeals process for families which reflects the principles of due process.

Recommendation 50

the district office avail of independent expertise in mediation and conflict resolution to offer parents objective and effective avenues to resolve concerns in a timely fashion.

Recommendation 51

the Department of Education and the districts clearly outline and publicize the appeals process for parents.

3.18 Professional Qualifications

3.18.1 Introduction

Diversity is an apt descriptor of today's classroom, servicing as it does, learners having a wide variety of needs and abilities. Hutchinson (2007) articulates this well by stating that "inclusive education is an issue within the context of Canadian society, not just within the context of Canadian schools…In Canada, if we choose to teach, we are choosing to teach in inclusive settings" (p.xxv). While many factors influence the quality of teaching and learning that occur in today's classrooms, the qualifications of educators remain paramount.

A Department of Education paper, written in advance of the implementation of the ISSP and Pathways models, raises the question of the necessity of all teachers to be thoroughly trained in order to respond to the diversity of issues they will be facing in contemporary classrooms.

> A full continuum of supports needs to exist in each school to match the continuum of student need and resources to be deployed to ensure this. There needs to exist whole school planning for support services. Students with exceptionalities cannot be seen as solely the responsibility of the special education teacher, the guidance counsellor or the student assistant, but rather the responsibility of the school staff as a whole (Department of Education, n.d. P. 12).

The Commission, consequently, explored whether these concerns have been adequately addressed in the current model, through both pre-service training and ongoing post-service initiatives. It began this task by examining the role of teacher assistants.

3.18.2 Teacher Assistants

Currently in NL, the Department of Education employs student assistants, whose primary responsibility is to assist with the personal care needs of a limited number of students with exceptionalities in a limited number of areas (such as portering/lifting, personal hygiene, and mobility). While the Commission heard that these needs require individualized assistance, most informants (parents and educators alike) called for an expanded role - - to that of a *teacher* assistant. This expanded role would see these paraprofessionals work with the teacher to meet the needs of a greater range of students and an expanded variety of needs.

Support for a reclassification as teacher assistants is not new. *The Ministerial Panel on Educational Delivery in the Classroom* (Government of NL, 2000) reported that "there is a strong view that in many cases, learning would be better enabled if classroom teachers had the support of teacher assistants instead of student assistants" (P. 23). Indeed, the Panel recommended "school-based teacher assistants with educational training and qualifications who can serve a range of educational and individual needs" (P. 26). Support for this enhanced role continues; a recent Department of Education publication noted, "many parents expressed a view that the student assistants should have an academic function" (Department of Education, 2007).

Table 16 explores the current support for reclassifying student assistants as teacher assistants. It identifies the fact that 95.7% of educators feel that such services would better help them meet the needs of students with exceptionalities.

Table 16: Teacher assistants

Response	Schools would benefit from having trained and qualified teacher assistants to help deliver programs and services for special needs students.
Strongly Agree	82.6%
Somewhat Agree	13.1%
Somewhat Disagree	1.7%
Strongly Disagree	1.1%
Not Applicable	1.5%

Note: Survey results represent combined responses reported by all educators across all school districts.

Parents were particularly vocal on this issue of student assistant versus teacher assistants, citing significant frustration with the complicated process of accessing such service, as well as the perceived limited skills among those providing the service. While efforts were made to assuage this frustration by assigning assistants in March, parents reiterate that it remains a rare and limited service, even if their child is approved. They are also critical of the perception that any improvement in the child's functioning may threaten the service that they fought so hard to get. Again, a deficit model that focuses on weakness was criticized.

The role of teacher assistant was also explored in the Commission's pan-Canadian review. It revealed that NL is the only province which does not employ teacher assistants, who, under the supervision and guidance of teachers, assist them in meeting the educational and academic needs of those students with exceptionalities. Indeed, other jurisdictions note the valuable role that teacher

assistants (job titles vary among provinces) provide in meeting the academic, physical and behavioural needs of students who require special assistance and supports.

While the Commission is cautious in creating another professional designation within schools, it does recognize significant support, local and global, for a broader mandate than that currently provided by student assistants. The Commission suggests the development of careful reviews and planning, including pilots, of such initiatives. Subsequently, the Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 52

the Department of Education establish a committee to redefine and expand the role of student assistants into that of teacher assistants.

Recommendation 53

the Department of Education pilot this expanded role of teacher assistant.

The Commission's caution around establishing the role of teacher assistants stems, in part, from concern it heard regarding the training those persons receive. At present, the qualifications of student assistants include graduation from high school, supplemented by experience in the area of personal care. The pan-Canadian review of teacher assistants identified the fact that current training in NL for student assistants is not sufficient to meet an expanded role. For example, each of the other Atlantic Provinces requires that teacher assistants successfully complete not only a high school diploma, but also a recognized diploma or certificate program at the post-secondary level.

Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island each offer post-secondary training for prospective teaching assistants at its community colleges. In 1974, the Human Services Program (a two-year program) was established at Holland College in Prince Edward Island to meet the needs for trained workers in the field of exceptionalities. Graduates of this program possess a broad knowledge base and skills in the area of human services in general, and in the area of exceptionalities in particular. Graduates likewise are in demand, and contribute to the enhancement of services both provincially and nationally. As well, the New Brunswick Community College provides a Human Services Program (typically a one year program) designed to produce graduates who can function as "front-line" workers in the delivery of developmental programs and supports in a variety of settings. Students receive a thorough orientation in the field of human services, as well as academic instruction in a variety of topics including human development, communications, psychology, family support and program planning. Finally, the Nova Scotia Community College offers a 70-week Human Services Program, one of which makes available a concentration in providing educational support.

Notwithstanding the above, the Commission notes that Nova Scotia also employs teaching assistants without post-secondary training and that differences in the salary scales exist between teaching assistants with post secondary training and those without. The implementation of teacher assistants in the NL school system would obviously require careful planning and much collaboration from all stakeholders.

Therefore, the Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 54

the Department of Education, in consultation with key stakeholders, design and offer a diploma and/or certificate program to meet the training needs of teacher assistants.

Furthermore, while recognizing the invaluable service provided to students by personnel currently working as student assistants, it is anticipated that many of these employees will aspire to become teacher assistants.

Therefore, the Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 55

the Department of Education provide existing student assistants with reasonable opportunity to obtain the necessary academic requirements to qualify as teacher assistants.

Recommendation 56

the responsibility for allocation of teacher assistants be assigned to the respective school districts.

3.18.3 Classroom Teachers

As stated in the introduction of this section, the significance of the classroom teacher in establishing effective learning environments cannot be underestimated. The literature is rich with studies identifying the attitude and knowledge of the classroom teacher as dominant factors in establishing effective classrooms. Lane et al, (2006) stress that "it is essential for general and special educators alike to acquire strategies to more effectively manage behaviours exhibited by typically

developing, at-risk, and identified students" (P. 440). Philpott & Dibbon (2007) cite a global shift towards directing energies and resources so as to empower the classroom teachers in adapting "their instruction and evaluation to meet the needs of diverse students". In that light, the Commission explored the attitudes and comfort level of this component of educators.

The commission was disturbed to hear that some teachers report a perception that the responsibility for teaching students receiving Pathways support belongs to special education teachers. Despite reporting comfort with their ability to meet the needs of a child, an alarming 60.4% (Table 17) of classroom teachers surveyed felt that these children should be taught by someone else. This perception is an affront to a philosophy of education which advocates inclusion and has to be challenged directly. The Commission views this limited vision as stemming from a deficit-based model of support, where someone other than the classroom teacher needs to identify, prescribe and deliver care. It is unconscionable to argue that the needs of children can be compartmentalized to different professionals and that educators should move backwards to revisit a segregated model of support. It harkens back to previously stated concern for leadership in Student Support Services.

Table 17: Attitudes of classroom teachers

Response	I have the ability to teach students receiving Pathway supports but really it is the special education teacher who should have this responsibility.
Strongly Agree	24.6%
Somewhat Agree	35.8%
Somewhat Disagree	24.0%
Strongly Disagree	12.1%
Not Applicable	3.4%

Note: Teacher Survey results represent percentage responses reported by classroom teachers from all school districts.

The commission heard significant concern from parents as to the limited academic background of the classroom teacher in special education. Some parents report having to provide information to the teachers on the specific needs of their child. To this end, the Commission inquired as to the training that classroom teachers have actually undergone. Table 18 presents strong validation of parents' perceptions of teachers' knowledge base in special education. An amazing 49.8% of current classroom teachers have absolutely no training in the area, while a further 37.6% have what would be considered minimal training.

Table 18: Academic background of classroom teachers in special education

	What is your academic background in special education?
Undergraduate Special Education Degree	7.3%
Graduate Special Education Degree	1.4%
Graduate Degree with special education courses	1.3%
1-5 special education courses	37.6%
6 or more special education courses	2.6%
No special education courses	49.8%

Note: Teacher Survey results represent percentage responses reported by classroom teachers from all school districts.

This concern is underscored by the realization that classroom teachers are integral members of the ISSP teams and are solely responsible for developing and delivering Pathway Two supports. Even though they single-handedly lead the initial identification and referral process designed to promote early intervention, these realities are not reflected in the training programs at Memorial University, where the vast majority of NL teachers receive their initial training. Furthermore, specific pre-service training in learner diversity is not required for teacher certification with the Department of Education. The Commission was disconcerted to discover that Memorial University's undergraduate education degree programs do not require any

courses in exceptionalities or methodologies for teaching diverse learners. Subsequent exposure to ISSPs and Pathways is often limited to any elective courses classroom teachers may have studied.

The Commission therefore recommends that:

Recommendation 57

Memorial University amend the requirements for the undergraduate education degree programs to include a minimum of two courses in exceptionalities: one course in the nature and characteristics of the exceptional learner, and one course in inclusive strategies for contemporary classrooms.

Recommendation 58

the Department of Education amend teacher certification requirements for all new teachers to include a minimum of two courses in exceptionalities: one course in the nature and characteristics of the exceptional learner and one course in inclusive strategies for contemporary classrooms.

3.18.4 Special Education Teachers

Concern for the qualifications of teachers was not limited only to classroom teachers, but extended to special education teachers as well. The Commission heard long-standing concern from educators and parents that many currently employed special education teachers did not undergo minimal training for the position. According to the Department of Education Special Education Policy 29.1, all special education teachers are required to have a degree in special education, *or*

equivalent certification (italics added). This requirement is consistent with that of other jurisdictions in North America. In the United States, as example, under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004) special education teachers must be "highly qualified", meaning that:

> the teacher has obtained full State certification as a special education teacher (including certification obtained through alternative routes to certification), or passed the State special education teacher licensing examination, and holds a license to teach in the State as a special education teacher.

Although policies and practices vary across North American jurisdictions, the importance attached to encouraging special education teachers to acquire enhanced qualifications (often a degree in special education) is clearly reflected in the policies of other Canadian provinces. Saskatchewan and Ontario both require a special education degree, and in cases where a qualified special education teacher is not available, a teacher may be placed in a special education position in a term contract. This term-contracted teacher is then given a specified period in which to earn the required credentials, and is not given permanent status without special education qualifications. In Manitoba, one must have a valid teaching certificate, two years teaching experience and 30 credit hours of approved university course in special education to be certified as a special education teacher. New Brunswick and Nova Scotia demand that all special education teachers hired without proper qualifications complete their upgrading in the form of professional development and/or relevant course work.

Concern for lack of training among NL special education teachers is not new. In 1996, the Canning Report was distressed to find that only 50% of special education teachers in NL were qualified in the field. Yet, more than a decade later, we find that this number has changed only marginally to 60% of our full –time special education teachers now equipped with special education degrees.

Table 19: Academic qualifications-
Full-time special education teaching units

Academic Qualification	Eastern District	Nova Central District	Western District	Labrador District	Provincial Total
Total full-time special education teaching units	383	132	134	33	682
With Special Education degree	260 (67.9%)	75 (56.8%)	63 (47.0%)	11 (33.3%)	409 (60.0%)
Without Special Education degree	123 (32.1%)	57 (43.2%)	71 (53.0%)	22 (66.7%)	273 (40.0%)

Source: Department of Education April 30, 2007

Note: Full-time special education teaching units represent a combination of both categorical and non-categorical teaching units.

Table 19 also shows that there is diversity in training across the province. The Labrador district, for instance, has 66.7% of its full-time special education teachers without required training. While the high number of untrained special education teachers is, in itself disturbing, concern becomes heightened when we consider that many special education positions are actually part-time units. Schools can designate a position as being part special education. The Commission identified that these positions range from less than 20% of a teacher's day ascribed to special education to more than 80% as special education. It is therefore, difficult to analyse, identify or group these positions. Nonetheless, Table 20 does provide some indication of the training of these "part" units.

Table 20: Academic Qualifications:
Part-time special education teaching units

	Quarter position	Half-time position	Three-quarter time positions
Total part-time special education teaching units	30	156	58
Without Special Education degree	97.6%	65.3%	78%

Source: Department of Education April 30, 2007

The Commission heard that schools were increasingly assigning these "part" special education positions to other part-time teaching units in an effort to create full-time positions. For example, the Commission was told that if a school had a part-time counsellor or administrator, that person would be assigned a "part" special education position so as to create a full-time unit with flexibility in his/her schedule. Moreover, this practice is being condoned by district office personnel. The Commission feels that special education is just that, a specialized profession, and that the children of this province deserve competency among those providing care.

In investigating reasons for this lack of special education training, the Commission explored Memorial University's existing Special Education degree program. It acknowledges that Memorial's degree is the most course-intensive Special Education degree in Canada, and that graduates are quickly hired by other regions. Each spring, a large recruitment fair is held in which school districts from other provinces attempt to recruit Memorial's new graduates. The program allows eight of the required 12 courses to be completed in web-format, and students can transfer a course from their first degree. Consequently, any special education teacher would

only have to visit the St. John's campus to complete three courses, which are offered during an intensive six week summer institute.

Despite this flexibility, the Commission heard that the many students registered in the Bachelor of Special Education program do not actually complete the degree. The Commission heard that "getting accepted into Special Education" was a fast route to gaining initial employment in the school system; once so hired, many teachers try to move into regular classroom positions. However, the Commission has already identified data that contradicts this myth. Table 9 identified that 72.3% of special education teachers report a desire to stay in their current position. The Commission acknowledges that other factors must contribute to this apathy towards training. Chief among these factors would be the simple fact that once hired and tenured, untrained special education teachers are protected by their contact and simply do not have to worry about additional training.

At present, there is no mechanism in place to monitor whether new (or existing) special education teachers ever complete the degree. The Commission heard from district offices that situations exist in which they are unable to attract trained special education teachers, and that they have to hire people who report "working on the degree". They are unaware whether these new employees ever continue in their training.

The high proportion of special education teachers who do not have appropriate qualifications, or who have not upgraded their qualifications, is remarkable. This concern is underscored by the realization that so many of their courses are now available via distance learning on the web. Notwithstanding improved accessibility and costs, efforts to date have not invigorated the ranks of special education teachers. Moreover, the Commission cannot imagine any other profession where such a cavalier approach is condoned. The Commission suggests a concerted effort,

led by the NLTA, to seek improvements in qualifications of teachers in special education positions.

Subsequently, the Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 59

Teacher Certification require all special education teachers have a special education degree.

Recommendation 60

school boards be required to have Ministerial approval before they can hire unqualified special education teachers.

Recommendation 61

the Department of Education, in collaboration with the NLTA and the school districts, develop a policy that stipulates new teachers hired in special education positions without the proper qualifications be required to complete a special education degree within four years.

Recommendation 62

permanent contracts not be granted new special education teachers until qualifications are completed. At the end of four years, the contract will be terminated if conditions are not met.

Recommendation 63

school districts be required to conduct an annual review of the status of training of special education teachers hired initially without proper qualifications.

While implementing these recommendations will help address the issue of new teachers, being hired without the training, additional steps must be made to encourage current teachers employed in special education to complete their degree programs. The Commission acknowledges that these people are under union contracts. Again, the Commission looks to the NLTA, within a concept of professional commitment to students, to provide leadership with this issue. The children of this province deserve nothing less.

Subsequently, the Commission further recommends that

Recommendation 64

the Department of Education, the NLTA and school districts explore ways to encourage existing unqualified personnel to obtain a special education degree.

3.18.5 Guidance Counsellors and Psychologists

Finally, the Commission heard concern for the training and qualifications of the province's guidance counsellors and psychologists, both of whom tend to lead special education. This report has already commented on concerns specific to assessment, and suitable recommendations have been outlined. The Commission now turns its attention to the broader duties of the system's counsellors and psychologists.

According to Special Education Policy 29.4, guidance counsellors are required to have a graduate degree with a major in:

- guidance and counselling; or
- educational psychology; or
- an equivalent course of study at the graduate level.

At present, guidance counsellors are not compelled to complete any courses in assessment or exceptionalities in fulfilling their graduate degree requirements. Most guidance counsellors have taken, at most, one elective course in assessment, which is usually required by school districts for employment. Likewise, many of these guidance counsellors may not have completed undergraduate courses in exceptionalities (other than one prerequisite course for applying to the graduate program) since that wasn't a requirement of their education degree. Despite this, the Commission was consistently informed that the duties of counsellors are being consumed by special education programming, including assessment. In fact, Table 21 outlines that 82.4% of educators agree that the role of guidance counsellor has devolved to that of an "assessor".

Table 21: Role of guidance counsellors

Response	Survey Question- The role of the guidance counsellor has changed from that of a counsellor to that of an assessor.
Strongly Agree	49.3%
Somewhat Agree	33.1%
Somewhat Disagree	5.3%
Strongly Disagree	3.0%
Not Applicable	9.3%

Note: Survey results represent responses reported by all educators across all school districts.

In this light, and combined with previous findings that 71.7% of guidance counsellors (see Table 9) report being the ISSP manager, the Commission is concerned that this role has departed from both the original duties of guidance counsellors and from their actual training. The Commission must note that little energy or time is left to provide either guidance or counselling in our schools. Oftentimes, these staff members are seen as leaders of special education at the school level. Section 3.6 of the Commission's report will directly challenge that perception by redirecting leadership of special education at the school level back into the hands of teachers. While the Commission recognizes that guidance counsellors serve an important role in special education, it is concerned that this aspect of their job is distracting from the duties prescribed by guidance and counselling.

Subsequently, the Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 65

the Department of Education review the role of guidance counsellors.

Recommendation 66

the Department of Education require guidance counsellors to have a minimum of two graduate courses in assessment and two graduate courses in exceptionalities.

A similar situation exists with psychologists, who are situated at district offices. According to Special Education Policy 29.5, educational psychologists must have a graduate degree in:

- educational psychology or equivalent; and

- meet the requirements stipulated in the Act to provide for the Registration of Psychologists (which requires two assessment courses).

Psychologists possess no required courses in inclusive education, curriculum development or differentiated instruction, and often have little teaching experience. While they are well trained in assessment, the Commission has concern that this is not a dominant component of their current duties. In fact, the Commission heard concern for the actual duties of psychologists and their lack of training in special education. Most people described the psychologist as being the staff member who handles the documentation and record–keeping at the district level, both of which clearly hold limited significance or utility in providing services to students. Given previous concerns for limited guidance and counselling services, the Commission feels that the expertise of psychologists can be more effectively channelled at the school level. The Commission noted the irony that psychologists tend to consult on the one area that they have little training in: adapting instruction and accommodating learning needs. Table 22 reflects the opinion of teachers on the perceived helpfulness of these positions, 55.8% of teachers seeing this role as not being particularly helpful.

Table 22: Educational psychologists

Response	Educational psychologists assist me in my role as a teacher in meeting the needs of special needs students.
Strongly Agree	8.2%
Somewhat Agree	27.8%
Somewhat Disagree	23%
Strongly Disagree	32.8%
Not Applicable	8.3%

Note: Teacher Survey results represent percentage responses reported by classroom teachers and special education teachers from all school districts.

It is interesting to note that these numbers stand in almost complete juxtaposition to a parallel question regarding the helpfulness of guidance counsellors. While only 36% of educators see psychologists (situated at district offices) as being helpful, Table 23 reports that 67% of educators see guidance counsellors (situated in each school) as being helpful. This discrepancy did not surprise the Commission, who heard repeatedly from educators and parents, that knowledge and supports have to be available at the school level.

Table 23: Guidance counsellors

Response	Guidance counsellors assist me in my role as a teacher in meeting the needs of special needs students.
Strongly Agree	25%
Somewhat Agree	42%
Somewhat Disagree	15%
Strongly Disagree	13%
Not Applicable	5%

Note: Teacher Survey results represent percentage responses reported by classroom teachers and special education teachers from all school districts.

The Commission's concern is heightened when it considers that guidance counsellors and psychologists tend to dominate leadership positions in special education at both district and provincial levels. Concerns expressed through submissions, key informant interviews, and focus groups question whether the qualifications required for these critical roles are commensurate with many of their necessary duties. The Commission questions whether psychologists with no training in inclusive education, curriculum development, or differentiated instruction and with little or no teaching experience, are best suited for their current role in special education.

The Commission was told of issues that have arisen, within the education system, out of the use of the title “psychologist”. The Board of Examiners in Psychology controls the title of “psychologist” and stipulates whom the Department of Education can hire. Subsequently, district offices expressed frustration with knowingly having to hire candidates into psychologist positions even though they had little to no background in education. Moreover, many districts reported having to render these positions vacant, or to request permission that they be reclassified because a “registered psychologist” was not available. While the Commission recognizes that there is a role for psychologists in education, it heard significant reasons to observe that it is clearly not the role they are now providing.

Therefore, the Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 67

the Department of Education review the roles and qualifications of psychologists in the educational system.

Recommendation 68

the Department of Education require all people hired in leadership positions for special education have a minimum of a Bachelor of Special Education degree.

Recommendation 69

the Department of Education, the NLTA and the school districts establish a working group to address the absence of training among persons who hold current positions in leadership for special education.

3.19 Professional Development

Given that this pronounced absence of pre-service training in special education has created what the Commission would call “a crisis of knowledge and leadership”, the need for post-service training must be emphasized. This call for enhanced professional development does not stem just from the findings of the Commission but were clearly named by educators themselves.

Research has invariably shown that professional development can be an effective contributor to the teaching-learning process. Although there was a significant effort to incorporate a program of professional development in the initial period of implementation of the Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth, such initiatives have not been continued, and are viewed as ineffective. Many teachers report no training or in-service in either the ISSP or Pathways models, and there is widespread misunderstanding of individual roles and responsibilities associated with the models. Notwithstanding the numbers of educators who received training during implementation or the fact of attrition in the teaching force in general and in special education in particular, there is yet a great need to address inadequacies in teacher professional development.

Table 24 explores the need for training, indicating that approximately 45.76% of classroom teachers, administrators, counsellors and special education teachers report not having training in ISSPs, and 47.26% report no training in relation to Pathways. The Commission, quite frankly, finds inexcusable the widespread acknowledgement of lack of pre-service training in special education, as well as the pronounced lack of training among leaders in special education. While cognizant of the considerable investment of time and resources needed to be expended in remedying this situation, it is nonetheless imperative that action be taken.

Table 24: Professional development - ISSPs and Pathways

Survey respondents reporting NO professional development in relation to ISSPs				
Eastern District	Nova Central District	Western District	Labrador District	Conseil Scolaire
36.6%	35.8%	34.5%	49.2%	72.7%
Survey respondents reporting NO professional development in relation to Pathways				
Eastern District	Nova Central District	Western District	Labrador District	Conseil Scolaire
40.7%	31.9%	35.9%	41.4%	86.4%

Note: Individual district results represent responses as reported by all educators.

The need for effective professional development, however, is broader than that implied in the ISSP and Pathway model, but extends to the entire field of exceptionalities. Table 25 quantifies such, and lends support to early recommendations for stronger pre-service qualifications of classroom and regular classroom teachers.

Table 25: Teachers-identified in-service needs

I need more information on exceptionalities.		
Response	Classroom Teachers	Special Education Teachers
Strongly Agree	53.1%	28.9%
Somewhat Agree	34.2%	44.0%
Somewhat Disagree	8.0%	15.1%
Strongly Disagree	3.3%	10.2%
Not Applicable	1.3%	1.8%
I need training in accommodating diverse learners.		
Response	Classroom Teachers	Special Education Teachers
Strongly Agree	65.1%	72.3%
Somewhat Agree	25.0%	22.3%
Somewhat Disagree	4.8%	4.2%
Strongly Disagree	3.3%	0.6%
Not Applicable	1.8%	0.6%

Note: Percentage results in each category represent combined responses from all educators across all school districts.

Overwhelmingly, teachers are calling for training in how to understand and accommodate the diverse learning needs of students. This call for training in effective teaching underscores earlier comments on the need for psychologists and leaders to be well-trained in the area of special education.

The Commission heard that an annual professional development day for all educators, including district staff, is needed to sharpen awareness and to enhance knowledge relating to inclusive education. Areas such as assistive technologies, differentiated instruction, effective teaching practices, exceptionalities, modifying courses, developing alternate curriculum, accommodating diverse learners in the classroom, and collaborative problem-solving approaches are all vital elements to be included.

As was earlier identified in the realm of record-keeping and special education teacher certifications, the Commission heard that there is likewise no available data on the training levels of teachers. When asked to provide data regarding the numbers of teachers trained on both the ISSP and Pathways models within the last five years, neither the Department of Education nor the districts were able to provide this information, despite their staff members being often the ones conducting such training. Again, the Commission raises questions about current leadership in special education. The Commission imagines that the design of an appropriate and needs-based plan for an ongoing program of professional development depends upon the maintenance of such information.

The Commission, therefore, recommends that:

Recommendation 70

the Department of Education, in cooperation with the school districts, conduct a review of the training of all personnel in the ISSP and Pathways models.

Recommendation 71

the Department of Education, in consultation with the districts, develop a standardized provincial training program in the Pathways model.

The Commission acknowledges that the provincial and regional Integrated Services Management Teams have responsibility for arranging and delivering training programs associated with the Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth to personnel employed with all partnering agencies. Similarly, it is imperative that a comprehensive plan be designed and delivered to enrich knowledge about the Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth.

Recommendation 72

the Department of Education make representations to the Chair of the appropriate Regional Integrated Services Management Team and to the Chair of the Provincial Integrated Services Management Team regarding training needs related to the Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth (ISSP) and that a plan be developed to address these needs.

Moreover, the Commission recommends that:

Recommendation 73

the Department of Education establish provincial standards and guidelines requiring that all educators and appropriate district staff (existing and newly-hired) receive a minimum one-day in-service on the Pathways and ISSP models.

Recommendation 74

regular "refresher training", at a minimum of every five years, be provided educators, and that records of this training be maintained.

Given the current state of teacher professional development in the area of special education, the Department of Education must give high priority to an ongoing plan to build capacity among its educators by increasing their knowledge base and that of other service providers working with students of diverse learning needs. Such initiatives would improve educational practices across the province and improve education for all students.

The Commission, therefore, recommends that:

Recommendation 75

the Department of Education, in consultation with the school districts, develop an ongoing professional development plan for accommodating diverse learners in the classroom.

4.0 Conclusion

This report began with the recognition of the significant relationship between parents and teachers, especially when students have unique and often challenging needs. It seems fitting, then, that an appropriate point of closure is the validation of that shared perspective which both parents and educators voiced to this Commission. Both groups raised almost identical concerns, and reported frustration and confusion with the ISSP and Pathways models. Both stated that current practice is not effective in responding to the needs of their children, and lacks focus on individual students. Given the strength of this shared viewpoint, the Commission regards as unfortunate the growing strain in the relationship between educators and parents.

These shared observations, interestingly, are echoed in similar themes dominating the global literature on the evolution of services to vulnerable students. Education increasingly recognizes that holding to an antiquated approach to special education that diagnoses difference before prescribing supports is no longer acceptable. What emerges from both the literature and the findings of this Commission is a call for a shift towards empowering the classroom teacher with resources, knowledge, and skills with which to differentiate instruction and create what will be acknowledged as “inclusive environments”. Clearly, this struggle is not unique to NL but rather reflect the complexities of stretching towards better ways of knowing the intricate and changing needs of children and finding more efficacious ways of responding to them.

While the findings of this Commission tend to situate NL’s endeavours within this broader context, the Commission nonetheless wishes neither to trivialize the concerns that it heard nor to mollify its call for change. Simply put, the Commission is concerned that too many students are receiving ineffective programs, and that

too many parents and educators alike are desperately trying to find a more effective approach. Policy and practice must change if the needs of students are to remain central to the focus of education. That change has to begin now.

This province has enjoyed national prominence for its approaches to supporting students with exceptional needs; now, however, is not the time to rest on our laurels, but rather a time to display leadership. The Commission expects this leadership to be characterized by a sense of collaboration and mutual respect, ensuring that the needs of each child are central to educational practice and discourse. Just as the problems were not created by any one group, the solutions will not be found by any one group.

The Commission, therefore, looks to the Department of Education to display leadership in ultimately defining what is meant by inclusive education, and in creating policy and practice that focus on supporting children rather than documenting their needs. The Commission envisions a model of support that prioritizes early identification and intervention, has a curriculum framework that reflects the principles of universal design, and is staffed by teachers who are skilled at differentiating instruction. An improved model will be one that strengthens collaboration between home and school, one in which services are streamlined and simplified.

The Commission similarly looks to the NLTA to display leadership in encouraging members to augment their professional qualifications and shift their perspectives to create informed learning environments characterized by a "pedagogic thoughtfulness towards working with families" (van Manen,1984. P.65). Teachers need to be persuaded both to complete minimal requirements and to pursue appropriate professional development. They must assume their role as catalyst for

change in creating inclusive communities. The needs of children cannot be compartmentalized or in anyway relegated to other service providers.

The Commission further looks to the Faculty of Education at Memorial University for leadership in its strengthening pre-service training, adequately preparing new teachers to respond to the realities of today's classrooms. The radically shifting demographic base of this province demands the provision of pre-service programs prominently featuring specific courses in exceptionalities, differentiating instruction, teaching strategies for the multi-grade environment, and cultural and linguistic diversity.

Finally, individual school districts will have to display leadership in promoting what Danforth (1999) calls a greater democracy in education, by de-mystifying the role of professionals and focusing on the pragmatics of what students actually need. The classroom environment must be the site where energy and resources are to be directed if a healthy relationship between home and school is to be the priority.

Despite the challenges implicit in this report, the Commission finds much that is hopeful: the passion that is demonstrated for children; the commitment that typifies many of our stakeholders; the global effort to resolve these struggles; the respect that NL enjoys for its history of support services; and the courage of a Minister of Education who wanted these issues examined and named. It is only by taking issues into the light that they can be fully examined and understood. It is only by examining and understanding issues that change can begin. There may well be truth in the adage, "Experience is a hard teacher. She gives the test first and the lessons afterwards". The people of this province historically tend to learn well from experience, and have displayed resilience in accepting the wisdom of lessons learned. The Commission views this commitment as foreshadowing future growth

and continued reason for NL to remain proud of its history of excellence in education.

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Appendix A:
List of Recommendations

Recommendation 1

the Department of Education exempt teachers from the requirement to complete the Child Youth Profiles until all systemic issues are addressed.

Recommendation 2

an interdepartmental review be conducted of the Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth.

Recommendation 3

the Department of Education create a provincial database that will inform and guide program planning for students requiring support services.

Recommendation 4

the Department of Education give schools and parents the option of developing an ISSP if only Pathway Two supports are required.

Recommendation 5

the Department of Education introduce a simplified documentation process for students who require Pathway Two supports only.

Recommendation 6

meetings with parents whose children are receiving Pathway Two supports only occur within the context of parent-teacher interviews or at a frequency consistent with the needs of the student.

Recommendation 7

the Department of Education review the Public Exam Adaptations/Accommodations policy.

Recommendation 8

the Department of Education create a department head position in special education at each school level.

Recommendation 9

the department head in special education have at least a bachelor's degree in Special Education.

Recommendation 10

the department head in special education be assigned time during the school day to complete duties and responsibilities incumbent in this role and be compensated to the equivalent of other designated department heads.

Recommendation 11

the Department of Education establish a working committee to review the model of categorical support.

Recommendation 12

the Department of Education move the decision-making for the approval of applications for categorical support to the districts.

Recommendation 13

the Department of Education approve categorical support for students with profound needs for the duration of their academic careers.

Recommendation 14

the Department of Education extend the approval period for criteria D-G students to a minimum of three years.

Recommendation 15

the Department of Education develop an online resource site of alternate courses and alternate curriculum, including suggested resources.

Recommendation 16

The Department of Education provide specific funding to schools for purchasing/developing specialized materials and alternate curriculum.

Recommendation 17

the Department of Education conduct a review of both the Functional Behaviour Analysis and the Behaviour Management Plan.

Recommendation 18

the Department simplify the required documentation for the Functional Behaviour Analysis and the Behaviour Management Plan.

Recommendation 19

the Department of Education, in consultation with the districts, conduct a thorough review and analysis of students currently waitlisted for assessment.

Recommendation 20

the Department of Education develop clear guidelines to promote early assessment and identification.

Recommendation 21

the Department of Education establish provincial standards for timely completion of assessments and that procedures be established to monitor it.

Recommendation 22

the Department of Education, in cooperation with the districts, conduct a thorough review and analysis of students currently waitlisted for assessments in departments external to the Department of Education.

Recommendation 23

the Department of Education forward the findings of the above-noted review to the applicable agency or department, particularly those findings that are impacting program delivery to students.

Recommendation 24

the Department of Education, in consultation with school districts, develop and maintain an electronic database of all students waitlisted for assessments.

Recommendation 25

the Department of Education include information in relation to assessments, waitlists, ISSPs and Pathways in the yearly Education Statistics publication.

Recommendation 26

the Department of Education provide sufficient funds to individual schools and district offices to purchase appropriate testing materials.

Recommendation 27

the Department of Education establish guidelines for comprehensive and ethical assessment practices.

Recommendation 28

the Department of Education outline procedures to address the needs of all at-risk students.

Recommendation 29

the Department of Education develop a clear articulation of "inclusive education".

Recommendation 30

the Department of Education make a commitment to training all teachers on differentiating instruction.

Recommendation 31

the Department of Education, in collaboration with school districts, develop a teacher handbook on meeting the needs of diverse learners.

Recommendation 32

the Department of Education identify the needs of exceptionally able learners within the school population.

Recommendation 33

the Department of Education and the individual school districts make a commitment to develop appropriate programming and resources to meet the needs of exceptionally able learners**.**

Recommendation 34

the Department of Education appoint a consultant for Gifted Education as a joint appointment to Program Development and Student Support Services.

Recommendation 35

the Department of Education's future publishing contracts include the provision of enrichment sections in textbooks, in CD/DVD and print formats.

Recommendation 36

the Department of Education conduct a review of the current intermediate and senior high curriculum in an effort to offer a wider variety of courses to meet the needs of all students.

Recommendation 37

the Department of Education design and implement curriculum and programs to improve employability skills, which will help to prepare students to be productive, contributing members of society.

Recommendation 38

The Department of Education, in consultation with the districts, review the provision of support services to students in French Immersion programs.

Recommendation 39

the Department of Education deliver all training and in-service to Francophone schools in French.

Recommendation 40

the Department of Education supply all information and documentation regarding student support services to Francophone schools in French.

Recommendation 41

the Department of Education review the programs currently offered in alternate settings to ensure effective linkages with the neighbourhood school and regular curriculum.

Recommendation 42

the Department of Education provide appropriate resources and personnel to staff alternate educational settings.

Recommendation 43

the Department of Education, in consultation with school districts, develop policies to ensure that all consent has been fully informed and that educators understand their role in obtaining such consent.

Recommendation 44

the Department of Education make representation to the chairs of the Regional Integrated Service Management Teams and to the chair of the Provincial Integrated Service Management Team to provide ISSP training for parents.

Recommendation 45

ISSP training sessions for parents be publicized using local media, government websites, school websites and newsletters.

Recommendation 46

the Department of Education, in consultation with school districts, develop, for parents, a standardized Pathways training package, with a clear implementation plan.

Recommendation 47

the Department of Education, in collaboration with key stakeholders, develop a handbook (also available in audio format) and web-site for parents of children with special needs.

Recommendation 48

the school districts, in consultation with the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils, encourage the development of a parent support network for parents of children with exceptionalities.

Recommendation 49

the Department of Education develop an effective appeals process for families which reflects the principles of due process.

Recommendation 50

the district office avail of independent expertise in mediation and conflict resolution to offer parents objective and effective avenues to resolve concerns in a timely fashion.

Recommendation 51

the Department of Education and the districts clearly outline and publicize the appeals process for parents.

Recommendation 52

the Department of Education establish a committee to redefine and expand the role of student assistants into that of teacher assistants.

Recommendation 53

the Department of Education pilot this expanded role of teacher assistant.

Recommendation 54

the Department of Education, in consultation with key stakeholders, design and offer a diploma and/or certificate program to meet the training needs of teacher assistants.

Recommendation 55

the Department of Education provide existing student assistants with reasonable opportunity to obtain the necessary academic requirements to qualify as teacher assistants.

Recommendation 56

the responsibility for allocation of teacher assistants be assigned to the respective school districts.

Recommendation 57

Memorial University amend the requirements for the undergraduate education degree programs to include a minimum of two courses in exceptionalities: one course in the nature and characteristics of the exceptional learner, and one course in inclusive strategies for contemporary classrooms.

Recommendation 58

the Department of Education amend teacher certification requirements for all new teachers to include a minimum of two courses in exceptionalities: one course in the nature and characteristics of the exceptional learner and one course in inclusive strategies for contemporary classrooms.

Recommendation 59

Teacher Certification require all special education teachers have a special education degree.

Recommendation 60

school boards be required to have Ministerial approval before they can hire unqualified special education teachers.

Recommendation 61

the Department of Education, in collaboration with the NLTA and the school districts, develop a policy that stipulates new teachers hired in special education positions without the proper qualifications be required to complete a special education degree within four years.

Recommendation 62

permanent contracts not be granted new special education teachers until qualifications are completed. At the end of four years, the contract will be terminated if conditions are not met.

Recommendation 63

school districts be required to conduct an annual review of the status of training of special education teachers hired initially without proper qualifications.

Recommendation 64

the Department of Education, the NLTA and school districts explore ways to encourage existing unqualified personnel to obtain a special education degree.

Recommendation 65

the Department of Education review the role of guidance counsellors.

Recommendation 66

the Department of Education require guidance counsellors to have a minimum of two graduate courses in assessment and two graduate courses in exceptionalities.

Recommendation 67

the Department of Education review the roles and qualifications of psychologists in the educational system.

Recommendation 68

the Department of Education require all people hired in leadership positions for special education have a minimum of a Bachelor of Special Education degree.

Recommendation 69

the Department of Education, the NLTA and the school districts establish a working group to address the absence of training among persons who hold current positions in leadership for special education.

Recommendation 70

the Department of Education, in cooperation with the school districts, conduct a review of the training of all personnel in the ISSP and Pathways models.

Recommendation 71

the Department of Education, in consultation with the districts, develop a standardized provincial training program in the Pathways model.

Recommendation 72

the Department of Education make representations to the Chair of the appropriate Regional Integrated Services Management Team and to the Chair of the Provincial Integrated Services Management Team regarding training

needs related to the Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth (ISSP) and that a plan be developed to address these needs.

Recommendation 73

the Department of Education establish provincial standards and guidelines requiring that all educators and appropriate district staff (existing and newly-hired) receive a minimum one-day in-service on the Pathways and ISSP models.

Recommendation 74

regular "refresher training", at a minimum of every five years, be provided educators, and that records of this training be maintained.

Recommendation 75

the Department of Education, in consultation with the school districts, develop an ongoing professional development plan for accommodating diverse learners in the classroom.

Appendix B:
ISSP & Pathways Interactive Forum

INCO Centre, MUN, Room 1004
Thursday, October 26, 2006
Facilitator: Dr. D. Dibbon

List of Participants

ISSP & Pathways Commission

Ms. Bernice Langdon
Commissioner

Mr. Bill Somerton
Vice-Commissioner

Ms. Wanda Mazerolle
Research Analyst

Mr. Wayne Hallett
Commission Resource

Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils

Ms. Denise Pike
President

Ms. Hazel Hickey
Executive Director

Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers Association

Mr. Lloyd Hobbs,
Assistant Executive Director
Benefits & Economic Services

Ms. Beverley Park
Administrative Officer
Professional Development

Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador

Dr. David Philpott
Associate Professor
Faculty of Education

Dr. Edith Furey
Assistant Professor
Faculty of Education

Department of Education

Ms. Anne Humphries
Consultant
Special Education/Educational Psychology

Ms. Susan Tate Bieger
Consultant
Special Education

Newfoundland and Labrador
Association of Directors of Education

Dr. Barbara Palmer
Senior Education Officer
Nova Central School District

Ms. Paulette Colbourne
Teacher
Botwood Collegiate

Newfoundland and Labrador
School Boards' Association

Ms. Mary Devereaux
Senior Education Officer
Student Support Services
Eastern School District

Mr. Milton Peach
Chairperson
Eastern School Board

Provincial Integrated Services
Management Team

Ms. Una Tucker
Disabilities Consultant
Health & Community Services

Ms. Linda Gilkinson
Social Worker
Department of Justice

Appendix C:
Schedule of Focus Group Consultations

Visit to Western District

October 17, 2006

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
Western District Office Boardroom
Corner Brook, NL
Consultation with administrators

1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Western District Office Boardroom
Corner Brook, NL
Consultation with educators

6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Western District Office Boardroom
Corner Brook, NL
Consultation with parents

October 18, 2006

6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Stephenville Regional Office
Stephenville, NL
Consultation with parents

October 19, 2006

9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Stephenville Regional Office
Stephenville, NL
Consultation with Student Support Services personnel

1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Stephenville Regional Office
Stephenville, NL
Consultation with educators

October 27, 2006

11:30 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.
Grenfell Interpretation Center
St. Anthony, NL
Consultation with educators

1:30 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.
Grenfell Interpretation Center
St. Anthony, NL
Consultation with parents

3:30 p.m. - 5:15 p.m.
Grenfell Interpretation Center
St. Anthony, NL
Consultation with administrators

Visit to Labrador District

November 06, 2006

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Regional Office Boardroom
Labrador City, NL
Consultation with educators

7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Regional Office Boardroom
Labrador City, NL
Consultation with parents

November 07, 2006

8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
Regional Office Boardroom
Labrador City, NL
Consultation with administrators

2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
District Office Boardroom
Happy Valley- Goose Bay, NL
Consultation with Student Support Services personnel

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
District Office Boardroom
Happy Valley- Goose Bay, NL
Consultation with parents

November 08, 2006

9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
District Office Boardroom
Happy Valley- Goose Bay, NL
Consultation with administrators

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
District Office Boardroom
Happy Valley- Goose Bay, NL
Consultation with educators

November 09, 2006

11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Jens Haven Memorial
Nain, NL
Consultation with administrators

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Jens Haven Memorial
Nain, NL
Consultation with parents

3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Jens Haven Memorial
Nain, NL
Consultation with educators

Visit to Nova Central District

October 30, 2006

10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Indian River Academy
Springdale, NL
Consultation with educators

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Indian River Academy
Springdale, NL
Consultation with parents

October 31, 2006

9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Regional Office Boardroom
Grand Falls-Windsor, NL
Consultation with administrators

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Regional Office Boardroom
Grand Falls-Windsor, NL
Consultation with educators

3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Regional Office Boardroom
Grand Falls-Windsor, NL
Consultation with parents

7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Regional Office Boardroom
Grand Falls-Windsor, NL
Consultation with parents

November 18, 2006

10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Bay D'Espoir Academy
Milltown, NL
Consultation with educators

1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Bay D'Espoir Academy
Milltown, NL
Consultation with parents

November 02, 2006

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
District Office Boardroom
Gander, NL
Consultation with Student Support Services personnel

11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
District Office Boardroom
Gander, NL
Consultation with educators

2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
District Office Boardroom
Gander, NL
Consultation with parents

Visit to Eastern District

November 14, 2006

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m.
Regional Office Boardroom
Spaniard's Bay, NL
Consultation with educators

11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Regional Office Boardroom
Spaniard's Bay, NL
Consultation with Student Support Services personnel

2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Regional Office Boardroom
Spaniard's Bay, NL
Consultation with administrators

5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Regional Office Boardroom
Spaniard's Bay, NL
Consultation with parents

November 15, 2006

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Vista Conference Center
Clarenville, NL
Consultation with educators

12:00 noon- 2:00 p.m.
Vista Conference Center
Clarenville, NL
Consultation with administrators

5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Vista Conference Center
Clarenville, NL
Consultation with parents

November 16, 2006

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Regional Office Boardroom
Marystown, NL
Consultation with educators

11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
Regional Office Boardroom
Marystown, NL
Consultation with Student Support Services personnel

5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Regional Office Boardroom
Marystown, NL
Consultation with parents

Visit to Eastern District (con't)

November 20, 2006

11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Mount Pearl Senior High School
Mount Pearl, NL
Consultation with administrators

2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
District School
St. John's, NL
Consultation with District school staff

6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Mount Pearl Senior High School
Mount Pearl, NL
Consultation with parents

November 21, 2006

8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
District School
St. John's, NL
Consultation with educators

11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
District School
St. John's, NL
Consultation with Student Support Services personnel

1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
District School
St. John's, *NL*
Consultation with educators

6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
District School
St. John's, NL
Consultation with parents

November 22, 2006

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Mount Pearl Senior High School
Mount Pearl, NL
Consultation with educators

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Mount Pearl Senior High School
Mount Pearl, NL
Consultation with educators

Visit to Conseil Scolaire Francophone District

October 17, 2006

12:45 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.
Ecole Ste-Anne
La Grand'Terre, NL
Consultation with parents

3:15 p.m. - 5:15 p.m.
Ecole Ste-Anne
La Grand'Terre, NL
Consultation with educators

October 20, 2006

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Centre scolaire et communautaire des Grands Vents
St. John's, NL
Consultation with District personnel

Other Focus Group Consultations

November 23, 2006

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Center
Whitbourne, NL
Consultation with facility staff, including school administrator, social workers, nursing staff and youth care staff.

November 24, 2006

9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Newfoundland and Labrador School for the Deaf
St. John's, NL
Consultation with school staff

December 08, 2006

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Department of Education
St. John's, NL
Consultation with Program Consultants

APPENDIX D:
ISSP & Pathways Survey

The Sample

In December 2006, there were 5440 full-time and part-time Classroom/Subject Teachers, Administrators, Guidance Counsellors and Special Education Teachers working in Newfoundland and Labrador eligible to complete the ISSP & Pathways survey.

Mark Crocker, Statistician with the Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency, stratified the sample and calculated the margins of error. The high rate of return, 1184/1594 or 74.3% attests to the importance of the issue to educators as well as enhancing the quality of the data.

Since estimates were required for each of the four largest school districts (Labrador, Western, Nova Central and Eastern) the sample for the survey was stratified by district. Stratified sampling was chosen to ensure adequate sample sizes for each school district. A simple random sample (SRS) of educators was then taken from each school district.

A census of the Conseil Scolaire Francophone, the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Center and the Newfoundland and Labrador School for the Deaf was required due to the low number of educators in each of these districts. For reporting purposes, results from the Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Center and the Newfoundland and Labrador School for the Deaf have been combined under the heading of 'Other'.

Table 1 illustrates the sample sizes calculated for each district and/or site.

Table 1: The Stratified Sample

School District	Number Per District	Number Sampled	Number Responded	% Responded
Labrador	316	249	191	76.7%
Western	1082	406	290	71.8%
Nova Central	1049	403	307	76.0%
Eastern	2943	486	361	77.3%
Conseil Scolaire Francophone	27	27	22	81.5%
Other	23	23	13	56.5%
Provincial	**5440**	**1594**	**1184**	**74.3%**

These sample sizes were chosen to ensure that the margin of error for each district was approximately +/-5% at a 95% confidence level and to allow for approximately 30% non-response. In order to satisfy the requirement of a margin of error of +/-5% at a 95% confidence level for each school district, the sample size varies with the number of educators in each district. For small populations, a substantially larger proportion of the population must be surveyed in order to achieve the required margin of error. Final results ranged from a response rate of 71.8% in Western District to 81.5% in the Conseil Scolaire Francophone.

Data Collection

Upon compilation of the stratified sample, a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system was used to administer the surveys in English. The survey was conducted between January 13, 2007 and February 17, 2007.

Furthermore, to ensure the suitability of the instrument, the survey was field tested in three schools (Holy Trinity Elementary, Brother Rice Junior High and Prince of Wales Collegiate).

Interviewers were employed to call and survey all classroom teachers, administrators, guidance counsellors and special education teachers included in the sample. The interviewers were trained university students, many of whom had worked on previous surveys. The survey was also translated into French and a French-speaking interviewer was hired to call and survey all potential respondents employed within the Francophone district. The interviewers were instructed to make up to five attempts to contact those sampled for the survey at the telephone numbers provided.

Numerous attempts were made to locate missing and incorrect telephone numbers. This included contacting principals throughout the province and requesting the telephone listing of all employees. Entire staff listings were requested in order to ensure the anonymity of the individuals being surveyed. At the end of the survey process all telephone lists were shredded. Further attempts to locate missing or incorrect telephone numbers involved querying names online using the Canada 411 website.

Table 2 provides a detailed look at the status of telephone calls and the response rate achieved.

Table 2: Response Rate

Status	Frequency	Percent
Completed	1184	74.3%
Wrong Number	122	7.7%
Busy	6	0.4%
No Answer	50	3.1%
Answering Machine	61	3.8%
Hard Appointment	3	0.2%
Soft Appointment	16	1.0%
Call Again	8	0.5%
Household Refusal	10	0.6%
Respondent Refusal	112	7.0%
Respondent unavailable during survey period	22	1.4%
Total	**1594**	**100%**

Table 3 illustrates the demographics for the 1184 survey respondents.

Table 3: Survey Respondent Demographics

Demographic	Total	Percentage
Gender		
Male	369	31%
Female	815	69%
Location		
Rural	636	54%
Urban	548	46%
Age categories		
<25	35	3.0%
25-29	118	10.0%
30- 34	126	10.6%
35- 39	221	18.7%
40- 44	255	21.5%
45- 49	220	18.6%
> 50	209	17.7%
Teaching Experience (years)		
<1	58	4.9%
1- 4.9	159	13.4%
5- 9.9	184	15.5%
10- 14.9	200	16.9%
15- 15.9	42	3.6%
16- 19.9	178	15.0%
20- 24.9	182	15.4%
25- 29.9	163	13.8%
>30	18	1.5%
School Size		
1-99	143	12.1%
100-199	216	18.2%
200-299	190	16.1%
300-399	223	18.8%
400-499	167	14.1%
500-599	112	9.5%
>600	133	11.2%

Data Analysis

At the completion of the survey period, the raw data was downloaded from the CATI system and imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Once the file was downloaded, the file on the CATI system was deleted. The downloaded file was then stripped of all identifying individual information such as names, phone numbers and school information.

The **margin of error** is a statistic expressing the estimated amount of random sampling error in a survey's results. The larger the margin of error, the less confidence one should have that the results are close to the "true" population percentages; that is, the percentages for the whole population. Results for the ISSP/Pathways Commission survey are accurate to within +/- 2.5% at the 95% confidence level. That means that if the survey was repeated 100 times, then the "true" population percentage would lie within the interval of +/- 2.5%, 95% of the time. For example, if 50% of educators answered 'Yes' to a particular question, then we can expect that the percentage of the entire population of educators that would answer 'Yes' to the same question, would be somewhere in the range of 47.5% to 52.5%. Since the margin of error for guidance counsellors per district is very high (ranging from +/- 17.0% to +/- 32.7%), we cannot report information for guidance counselors across districts.

A more detailed look at the estimated margin of error is listed in Table 4 for further examination.

Table 4: Estimated Margin of Error by District and Occupation

District	Occupation	Total Respondents	Estimated Margin of Error
Labrador	Classroom Teachers	152	+/- 5.3%
	Classroom Teachers & Special Education Teachers	170	+/- 4.7%
	All occupations combined	191	+/- 4.7%
Western	Classroom Teacher	206	+/- 5.8%
	Classroom Teachers & Special Education Teachers	250	+/- 5.2%
	All occupations combined	290	+/- 4.9%
Nova Central	Classroom Teacher	201	+/- 5.9%
	Classroom Teachers & Special Education Teachers	245	+/- 5.3%
	All occupations combined	307	+/- 4.7%
Eastern	Classroom Teacher	265	+/- 5.6%
	Classroom Teachers & Special Education Teachers	322	+/- 5.1%
	All occupations combined	361	+/- 4.8%
All Districts	Classroom Teacher	851	+/- 3.0%
	Classroom Teachers & Special Education Teachers	1017	+/- 2.8%
	Special Education Teachers	166	+/- 6.9%
	Special Education Teachers & Guidance Counsellors	212	+/- 6.2%
	All occupations combined	1184	+/- 2.5%

Note: All occupations refers to the combined total of Classroom Teachers, Administrators, Guidance Counsellors and Special Education Teachers.

TEACHER SURVEY
Section 1
(To be completed by all Respondents)

1. (a) What is your primary role in the school system?
(Select only one)

- ☐ Classroom/Subject Teacher
- ☐ Administrator
- ☐ Guidance
- ☐ Special Education

1. (b) Please indicate the grade level where your primary responsibility occurs. (Check more than 1 if appropriate)

- ☐ K-3
- ☐ 4-6
- ☐ 7-9
- ☐ Level 1-3

Note: Classroom/Subject Teacher Go to Question 3 (b)
Administrator Go to Question 3 (b)
Guidance Go to Question 2 (b)
Special Education Go to Question 2 (a) & 2 (b)

2. (a) Do you have assigned time, within the instructional day, for assessment purposes?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

2. (b) Are you trained to complete assessments?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

3. (a) Are you looking to find another teaching position outside the area of special education?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

3. (b) Are current working conditions such that you are ACTIVELY planning to leave the teaching profession?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

4. (a) What is your academic background in the field of Special Education.

- ☐ Undergraduate Special Education Degree
  (Go to Question 4d)
- ☐ Graduate Special Education Degree
  (Go to Question 4d)
- ☐ Graduate Degree including special education courses
  (Go to Question 4b)
- ☐ 1-5 Special Education courses
  (Go to Question 4b)
- ☐ 6 or more Special Education courses
  (Go to Question 4b)
- ☐ No special education courses
  (Go to Question 4b)

4. (b) Are you presently taking special education courses?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

4. (c) Are you currently enrolled in a Special Education degree program?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

4. (d) When did you complete your last Special Education course?

- ☐ Within the last 12 months
- ☐ 1-2 years ago
- ☐ 3-5 years ago
- ☐ 6 or more years ago

5. (a) Please indicate the number of professional development days you have received on ISSPs- Do not include training in Pathways.

- ☐ None (If 'None' Go to Question 6a)
- ☐ 1/2 day
- ☐ 1 day
- ☐ 2 days
- ☐ 3 days
- ☐ 4 or more days

5. (b) When did you receive this professional development?

- ☐ Within the last 12 months
- ☐ 1-2 years ago
- ☐ 3-5 years ago
- ☐ 6-9 years ago
- ☐ 10 or more years ago

6. (a) Please indicate the number of professional development days you have received on Pathways- Do not include ISSP training.

- ☐ None (If 'None', Go to question 7a)
- ☐ 1/2 day
- ☐ 1 day
- ☐ 2 days
- ☐ 3 days
- ☐ 4 or more days

6. (b) When did you receive this professional development?

- ☐ Within the last 12 months
- ☐ 1-2 years ago
- ☐ 3-5 years ago
- ☐ 6-9 years ago
- ☐ 10 or more years ago

7. (a) Please indicate the number of professional development days you have received to help you develop strategies for teaching students with special needs.

- ☐ None (If answered 'None', Go to question 8a)
- ☐ 1/2 day
- ☐ 1 day
- ☐ 2 days
- ☐ 3 days
- ☐ 4 or more days

7. (b) When did you receive this professional development?

- ☐ Within the last 12 months
- ☐ 1-2 years ago
- ☐ 3-5 years ago
- ☐ 6-9 years ago
- ☐ 10 or more years ago

8. (a) Please indicate the number of ISSP meetings you have attended for the period September 2006- December 2006.

- ☐ None (If answered 'None', Go to question 9)
- ☐ 1 -10 meetings
- ☐ 11-20 meetings
- ☐ 21-30 meetings
- ☐ 31-40 meetings
- ☐ 41- 50 meetings
- ☐ 51 or more meetings

8. (b) Please indicate the duration of a typical ISSP meeting.

- ☐ 30 minutes or less
- ☐ 31 to 60 minutes
- ☐ 61 to 90 minutes
- ☐ 91 to 120 minutes
- ☐ More than 120 minutes

8. (c) Please indicate the average number of people who attended these meetings.

- ☐ 1-5
- ☐ 6-10
- ☐ 11-15
- ☐ 16 or more

9. In an average week of teaching how many hours are assigned to you, <u>within</u> the instructional day, for ISSP and Pathway planning and programming?

- ☐ None
- ☐ 1-3 hours
- ☐ 4-8 hours
- ☐ 9-15 hours
- ☐ Not applicable

10. In an average week of teaching how many hours do you spend, <u>outside</u> of the instructional day, on ISSP and Pathway planning and programming?

- ☐ None
- ☐ 1-3 hours
- ☐ 4-8 hours
- ☐ 9-15 hours
- ☐ 16 or more hours
- ☐ Not applicable

11. (a) Are you an ISSP Manager?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No <u>(If No, Go to question 12)</u>

11. (b) How many ISSPs are you currently managing?

---------- (Please specify amount)

12. Who takes responsibility to ensure that decisions made at ISSP meetings are implemented? (You may choose more than 1 if appropriate)

- ☐ School Administrator
- ☐ Special Education Teacher
- ☐ Classroom/Subject teacher
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Unknown
- ☐ Guidance Counsellor
- ☐ ISSP Manager
- ☐ Parent
- ☐ Special Services Team

13. Are Special Education teachers teaching the regular curriculum to students who ARE NOT receiving Pathway supports?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I do not know

Section 2

(To be completed by Special Education Teachers and Guidance Counsellors; Administrators and Classroom/Subject Teachers proceed to Section 3)

14. On average, how long do you wait for Student Support Services personnel at the District Office to complete assessments?

- ☐ Within 1 month
- ☐ Within 2 -3 months
- ☐ Within 4-6 months
- ☐ Within 7-12 months
- ☐ More than 1 year
- ☐ Not Applicable

15. On average, how long does it take YOU to complete assessments?

- ☐ Within 1 month
- ☐ Within 2 -3 months
- ☐ Within 4-6 months
- ☐ Within 7-12 months
- ☐ More than 1 year
- ☐ I do not complete assessments; I'm not trained
- ☐ I do not complete assessments; I'm trained

16. On average, how long are you waiting for <u>outside agencies</u> (Janeway, Children's Rehabilitation…) to complete assessments?

- ☐ Within 1 month
- ☐ Within 2 -3 months
- ☐ Within 4-6 months
- ☐ Within 7-12 months
- ☐ More than 1 year

17. How many students, at your school, are currently on a waitlist to be assessed?

☐ None	☐ 1-20	☐ 21 -40
☐ 41- 60	☐ 61-80	☐ More than 80

18. Are assessments helpful in developing programs for students?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes

Section 3

(To be completed by all Respondents)

In the following questions you will be asked the extent to which you AGREE or DISAGREE with a number of comments about teaching, ISSPs and Pathways and its impact on you as a teacher. Please answer each question as it pertains to your experience. Choose the most appropriate response.

1 = strongly agree
2 = somewhat agree
3 = somewhat disagree
4 = strongly disagree
5 = Not applicable

19. All students receiving Pathway supports should have an ISSP.	1 2 3 4 5
20. Students with no identified exceptionality but who have medical issues should be on an ISSP.	1 2 3 4 5

21. The volume of paperwork associated with the application for categorical support is excessive and cumbersome.	1	2	3	4	5
22. The increased demands of completing required paperwork is interfering with the quality of time that I spend with my students.	1	2	3	4	5
23. The deadlines associated with the redocumentation process for categorical support occurs too early in the school year.	1	2	3	4	5
24. The amount of time completing Functional Behaviour Analysis and developing behavioural management plans is excessive.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Some of the duties associated with the documentation, paperwork and scheduling aspects of the ISSP/Pathway process could be performed by clerical personnel.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Attending ISSP meetings is an efficient and effective use of my time.	1	2	3	4	5
27. ISSP meetings are having a negative effect on extra-curricular activities in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
28. ISSP meetings are having a negative effect on tutorials in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I feel stressed with meeting the needs of all students in my class.	1	2	3	4	5
30. The needs of gifted children are currently being met in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
31. The needs of students requiring Pathway 3 supports (modified courses) are being met within the regular classroom setting.	1	2	3	4	5
32. Additional teacher units are required to meet the remedial needs of students.	1	2	3	4	5

33. Some students are “falling through the cracks” because the 7-12 curriculum does not have appropriate courses for students who are not strong academically.	1	2	3	4	5
34. It is increasingly difficult to meet the demands for scribing and/or oral testing.	1	2	3	4	5
35. I am satisfied with the support I receive from the school district in implementing ISSPs and Pathways.	1	2	3	4	5
36. I am satisfied with the support I receive from the Department of Education in implementing ISSPs and Pathways.	1	2	3	4	5
37. I am satisfied with my workload as it relates to ISSPs and Pathways.	1	2	3	4	5
38. The majority of my ISSPs involve services to students receiving Pathway supports ONLY with no other outside agency involvement such as Health and Community Services or Justice.	1	2	3	4	5
39. Class size should take into consideration the number of students receiving Pathway supports.	1	2	3	4	5
40. Schools would benefit from having trained and qualified teacher assistants (in addition to student assistants) to help deliver the programs and services for special needs students.	1	2	3	4	5
41. Early intervention at the primary/elementary grade levels in literacy and numeracy would benefit all students.	1	2	3	4	5
42. The role of the guidance counsellor has changed from a counsellor to that of an assessor.	1	2	3	4	5

(For Administrators & Guidance Counsellors the survey is now complete)

Section 4

(To be completed by Classroom/Subject Teachers and Special Education Teachers)

43. Finding teaching resources for students receiving Pathway supports is frustrating.	1 2 3 4 5
44. I am interested in receiving additional training in accommodating diverse learners.	1 2 3 4 5
45. I am able to recognize different learning needs and change my teaching style to accommodate these differences.	1 2 3 4 5
46. I need more training in how to modify courses for students receiving Pathway 3 supports.	1 2 3 4 5
47. I need more time within the instructional day for modifying courses for students receiving Pathway 3 supports.	1 2 3 4 5
48. I need more information about exceptionalities	1 2 3 4 5
49. I need strategies for teaching students with exceptionalities.	1 2 3 4 5
50. I have access to assistive technologies to support special needs students.	1 2 3 4 5
51. Our school makes use of technology for sharing teaching resource materials and exchanging ideas.	1 2 3 4 5
52. Educational Psychologists assist me in my role as a teacher in meeting the needs of special needs students.	1 2 3 4 5
53. Guidance Counsellors assist me in my role as a teacher in meeting the needs of special needs students.	1 2 3 4 5

54. Speech Language Pathologists assist me in my role as a teacher in meeting the needs of special needs students.	1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5

Section 5
(To be completed by Special Education Teachers; Classroom/Subject Teachers go to Section 6)

55. I need more <u>training</u> in order to be able to develop alternate courses and alternate curricula.	1 2 3 4 5
56. I need more <u>time</u> within my instructional day to develop alternate courses and curricula.	1 2 3 4 5

(Special Education Teachers the survey is now complete)

Section 6
(To be completed by Classroom/Subject Teachers)

57. I have reasonable class size(s) affording me time to meet the educational needs of all students in my class(s).	1 2 3 4 5
58. I have the ability to teach students receiving Pathway supports but there are too many in my class(s) for me to be effective.	1 2 3 4 5
59. I have the ability to teach students receiving Pathways supports but really it is the special education teacher who should have this responsibility.	1 2 3 4 5
60. Working with high numbers of students with special needs affects my ability to teach students requiring no supports.	1 2 3 4 5

61. Sometimes it is a parent who makes me aware that their child is receiving Pathways supports or accommodations.

1 2 3 4 5

(For Classroom/Subject Teachers the survey is now complete)

APPENDIX E:
List of Submissions

Anderson, E.
Principal,
Davis Elementary

Arruda, Joe
President, Newfoundland & Labrador Association of Directors of Education

Barrett, Myrtle
President, Canadian Hard of Hearing Association Newfoundland and Labrador

Benoit, Joe
Principal, Ecole Ste-Anne

Beresford, Karen
Parent

Brown, Jim
Parent

Brown, Michelle
Lead Project Officer
On Behalf of Random North Development Association, Heritage Collegiate and Anthony Padden Elementary

Budgell, Alvina,
Pashkoski, Patty
Jenkins, Garry
J.R. Smallwood Middle School

Carpenter, Sandra
Parent & Child Health Coordinator, Central Regional Integrated Services Management Team

Clarke, Daniel
Grandparent

Clarke, Nancy
Parent

Critchely Stuart
Principal, Appalachia High School

Collins, Keith
Guidance Counsellor, Exploits Valley High School

Davis, James
Teacher

Dawe, Ron
Educator

Devereaux, Gerri-Lynn
Guidance Counsellor, Villa Nova Junior High School

Dunphy, Edith
Teacher, Holy Trinity Elementary

Eddison, Annette
Parent

Elliott, Dr. Ross
Director, Western School District

Fagan, William
Educator

Fleet, Cindy
Director, Nova Central School District

Foley, Kevin
President, Newfoundland & Labrador Teachers Association

Francis, Doug
Principal, Elwood Elementary

Green, Lynn
President, Learning Disabilities Association of Newfoundland & Labrador

Hannaford, Janet
Teacher

Haughey, Christine
Parent

Hipditch, Michael
Teacher, Frank Roberts Junior High

Howse, Janine
Retired Special Education Teacher

Hum, Sandy
Parent

Hynes, Sandra
Teacher, King Academy

Ivany, Lynette
Assistant Principal, Holy Family Elementary School, Special Services Team

Ivory, Patricia
Teacher, Holy Heart of Mary

Jacque, Ruth
Teacher

Kean-Dobbin, Claudine
Parent & Child Health Coordinator, Labrador Regional Integrated Services Management Team

King, Dr. Darin
Director, Eastern School District

LaCosta, Harry
Principal, J.R. Smallwood Middle School

Lake, Dena
Parent

Lane, Kevin
Retired Coordinator, Student Services Labrador School District

Langdon, Trent
Bishop, David
Newfoundland and Labrador Counsellors' and Psychologists Association

Legge, Marian
Parent

Link, Jean
Teacher, New World Island Academy

Luther, Donna
Chair, Western Regional Integrated Management Team

MacIntosh, Joan
Special Education Teacher

Matthews, Robert
Principal, Templeton Academy

McIsaac, Ray
President, Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living

Neville, Darlene
Pottle, Roxanne
Office of the Youth and Child Advocate

Neville, Rose
Noseworthy, Ramona
Administrators, A.P. Low Primary

Norman, Tony
Pittman, Lorraine
Gander Academy

O'Keefe, Valerie
Parent

Peddle, Paul
Deaf & Hearing Impaired Itinerant Eastern School District

Penashue, Kanani
Education Director, Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation

Philips, John
Aboriginal Education Program Department of Education

Pike, Denise
President, Newfoundland & Labrador Federation of School Councils

Powell, Wanita
Principal, St. Anthony Elementary

Quigley, Sandra
Teacher

Ralph, Gordon
Educator

Ralph, Jocelyn
Teacher, St. Paul's Junior High

Reade, John
Vice-Principal (retired), Newfoundland School for the Deaf

Reid- White, Betty
Chair, Eastern Regional Integrated Services Management Team

Ryan, Michelle
Co-Chair, St. John's Regional Integrated Services Management Team

Scurlock, Jennifer
Teacher, Holy Heart High School

Sharpe, Todd
Teacher

Simmons, Janet
President, Newfoundland & Labrador Council of Educators of the Deaf

Slaney, Sophia
Representing a group of Itinerant Teachers
Eastern School District

Staff
Lumsden School Complex

Staff
MacDonald Drive Junior High School

Staff
Botwood School System

Student Services Team
Leary's Brook Junior High

Sullivan, Darlene
Principal, Woodland Primary

Taylor, Jennifer
Special Education Teacher
Mary Simms All-Grade

Tucker, Michael and Paula
Parents

Wall, Nellie
Principal, Millcrest Academy

Wells, Shawn
Guidance Counsellor

White, Len
Principal, Gonzaga High School

Williams, Frank
Jane Collins Academy
Staff submission

Vandervelde, Donna
Parent

Vey, Dr. Bruce
Director, Labrador School District

Vivian-Book, Lynn
Assistant Deputy Minister, Health and Community Services and Chair of the Provincial Integrated Services Management Team

APPENDIX F:
Key Informants

Anthony, Joanne	*Teacher, Bishop Abraham* *St. John's, NL*
Balas Donna	*Regional Superintendent* *Children's Services* *Saskatchewan Learning* *Swift Current, Saskatchewan*
Barron, John	*Technology Education/Career Education* *Program Development Specialist* *Department of Education, St. John's, NL*
Bartlett, Amy Katharine	*Registrar* *Nunavut Educators' Certification Service* *Department of Education* *Arviat, Nunavut*
Bennett, Dr. Sheila	*Faculty of Education, Brock University* *St. Catherine's, Ontario*
Benoit, Joseph A.	*Principal, Ecole Ste- Anne* *La Grand'Terre, NL*
Bishop, Dave	*Vice President,* *Newfoundland & Labrador Counselors &* *Psychologists Association* *St. John's, NL*
Carpenter, Sandra	*Parent & Child Health Coordinator,* *Central Regional Integrated Services* *Management Team* *Gander, NL*
Clarke, Lori	*Special Education Teacher,* *Prince of Wales Collegiate* *St. John's, NL*

Coady, Denise	*Religious Education Program Development Specialist, Department of Education, St. John's, NL*
Converse, Cecilia	*Planning & Research Analyst, Department of Education, St. John's, NL*
Cormier, Mark	*Principal, Ecole Notre-Dame-du-Cap Cap Saint-Georges, NL*
Crocker, Mark	*Statistician, Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency Mount Pearl, NL*
Crockwill, Angela	*Executive Director, Community Youth Network St. John's, NL*
Crosbie, Dr. Vicki	*Developmental Pediatrician, Janeway Hospital St. John's, NL*
Devereaux, Mary	*Senior Education Officer, Student Support Services, Eastern School District, St. John's, NL*
Dibbon, Dr. Dave	*Assistant Dean, Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland St. John's, NL*
Doucet, Lisa	*Coordinator of Student Services Tri-County Regional School Board Yarmouth, NS*
Elliott, Dr. Ross	*Director, Western School District Corner Brook, NL*
Fagueret, Christian	*former Director, Conseil Scolaire Francophone St. John's, NL*

Ferguson, Tammy	*Senior Program Manager* *Special Education Unit* *Saskatchewan Learning* *Regina, Saskatchewan*
Ferris, Mary	*Learning Specialist* *Students with Exceptionalities* *Educational Services Division* *NB Department of Education* *Fredericton, NB*
Fitzpatrick, Beverly	*Test Development Specialist,* *Department of Education* *St. John's, NL*
Fleet, Cindy	*Director, Nova Central School District* *Gander, NL*
Foley, Kevin	*President, Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers Association* *St. John's, NL*
Gallant, Don	*Conducted 2003 review of Model for Coordination for Services to Children and Youth*
Gaudet, Karen	*Student Support Specialist* *Student Services Division* *Government of Prince Edward Island* *Charlottetown, PEI*
Gerard, Robert E.	*Director, Student Services* *NB Department of Education* *Fredericton, NB*
Giffen-Johnson, Cindy	*Coordinator of Student Services,* *Annapolis Valley Regional School Board,* *Berwick, NS*
Gillis, Paula	*Program Specialist,* *Student Support Services,* *Western School District, Stephenville, NL*

Glover, Don	*Special Education Consultant* *Department of Education* *Student Services, NS*
Gorham, Jody	*Student Services and Guidance* *School District 18* *Fredericton, NB*
Gouthro, Elizabeth M.	*Director, Student Services Support* *Calgary Board of Education* *Calgary, Alberta*
Greene-Fraize, Noreen	*Vice- Commissioner,* *Teacher Allocation Commission* *St. John's, NL*
Hancock, Ed	*Executive Director, Newfoundland and* *Labrador Teachers Association* *St. John's, NL*
Harrington, Jack	*Program Specialist,* *Student Support Services* *Eastern School District* *Spaniard's Bay, NL*
Hennebury, John	*Facilitator, Student Transition to* *Educational/Employment Program* *(STEP), Gonzaga High Schoo* *St. John's, NL*
Hobbs, Lloyd	*Assistant Executive Director,* *Benefits & Economic Services,* *Newfoundland & Labrador Teachers* *Association, St. John's, NL*
Hollett, Wayne	*Retired Teacher* *Milltown, NL*
Howse, Debbie	*Special Education Teacher, Brother Rice* *St. John's, NL*

Humphries, Anne	*Division of Student Support Services* *Department of Education, St. John's, NL*
Kean-Dobbin, Claudine	*Parent & Child Health Coordinator,* *Labrador Regional Integrated Services Management Team*
Keeping, George	*Regional Education Officer,* *Western School District* *Corner Brook, NL*
Kelleher-Flight, Brenda	*former Director of Student Support Services, Department of Education* *St. John's, NL*
King, Dr. Darin	*Director, Eastern School District* *St. John's, NL*
Kufudi, Elaine	*Guidance Counselor,* *Newtown Elementary* *Mount Pearl, NL*
Langor, Rick	*Manager of Resident Programs,* *Newfoundland and Labrador Youth Centre (Member of Provincial Integrated Services Management Team)* *Whitbourne, NL*
Leblanc, Sandra	*Administrative Assistant* *Student Services* *Tri-County Regional School Board* *Yarmouth, NS*
Lee, Boyd	*Provincial Coordinator,* *Model for Coordination of Services to Children & Youth* *St. John's, NL*
Lundrigan, Evelyn	*Director of Student Support Services,* *Department of Education* *St. John's, NL*

Luther, Donna	*Chair of Western Regional Integrated Services Management Team* *Corner Brook, NL*
MacDonald, Reginald	*Principal,* *Newfoundland School for the Deaf* *St. John's, NL*
Martin, David	*Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Consultant, Student Support Services,* *Department of Education* *St. John's, NL*
Martin, Jeannie	*Department of Human Resources, Labour & Employment (Member of Provincial Integrated Services Management team)* *St. John's, NL*
Matthews, Derrick	*Program Specialist* *Labrador School Board* *Happy Valley- Goose Bay, NL*
May, Beverly	*Regional Education Officer* *Western School District* *Lower Cove, NL*
McCormack, Charles	*Assistant Director of Programs,* *Nova Central School District* *Gander, NL*
McLean, Joyce	*Registrar, Teacher Certification* *Education, Culture and Employment* *Government of the NWT* *Yellowknife, NWT*
Meggs, Peter	*Special Education Coordinator* *Department of Education, PEI*
Neville, Darlene	*Child & Youth Advocate* *St. John's, NL*

Palmer, Dr. Barbara	*Senior Education Officer,* *Student Support Services,* *Nova Central School District* *Gander, NL*
Parsons, Robert	*Registrar, Teacher Certification and Records, Department of Education* *St. John's, NL*
Phillips, Dr. John	*Aboriginal Education Program Specialist, Department of Education* *St. John's, NL*
Philpott, Dr. David	*Associate Professor,* *Faculty of Education* *Memorial University of Newfoundland* *St. John's, NL*
Pigeon, Constance	*Student Support Services Coordinator,* *Conseil Scolaire Francophone* *St. John's, NL*
Pike, Darrin	*Assistant Director of Programs,* *Eastern School District* *St. John's, NL*
Pike, Denise	*President, Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils* *St. John's, NL*
Pike, Terry	*Enrichment Itinerant,* *Western School District* *Corner Brook, NL*
Pineau, Debbie	*Registrar and International Education Coordinator* *Department of Education* *Charlottetown, PEI*
Pittman, Brenda	*Regional Education Officer,* *Western School District* *Stephenville, NL*

Pollett, Carolann	*School Council Liaison,* *Department of Education* *St. John's, NL*
Pope, Kerry	*Manager of Research,* *Department of Education* *St. John's, NL*
Power, Ann	*Director of Special Services,* *Department of Education, Nova Scotia*
Prior, Wade	*Program Specialist,* *Student Support Services Program* *Eastern School District, Marystown, NL*
Purdy, Gerry	*Coordinator Employment & Labour Relations* *Tri County Regional School Board* *Yarmouth, NS*
Reid-White, Betty	*Chair, Eastern Regional Integrated Services Management Team*
Rideout, Scott	*Specialist,* *Programs & Policy Development,* *Department of Education* *St. John's, NL*
Rose, Marion	*Principal, Janeway School* *St. John's, NL*
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APPENDIX G:
Literature Review

A review of the literature on Newfoundland and Labrador's model of Student Support Services: A global perspective on local practice

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Abstract

This paper will offer a theoretical framework to the model of Student Support Services delivered in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. The province follows an interagency approach in the delivery of a diagnostic and prescriptive service model, despite efforts in recent years to use the language of inclusion. In exploring the development of this model, we begin with a brief review of the history of special services, both from a global and a local paradigm perspective. While the history of special education is a "fascinating and complex story" (Kauffman, 1981 p.4) which has been affected by social, psychological and educational events, we will attempt to discuss it along separate themes so as to afford a stronger analysis. Central to this, will be an historical context for a paradigm of disability services, including legislative support of special education and the emergence of both a cascade model of service delivery and individualized planning. This leads to an examination of the effects that the School Reform movement has had on special education and how it directly contributed to the emergence of inclusive education. With this background established, we conduct an examination of the local model, including a number of studies which have provided a critical analysis of its effectiveness. This paper concludes with suggested directions of inquiry based on the themes that this paper identifies. What surfaces is not only a framework for critiquing the current model but the articulation of the development of a service system that echoes global trends as well as continued global struggles. The realization that the challenges facing classrooms in Newfoundland and Labrador are shared by educators on a global scale might well offer comfort as we begin to chart the course for a renewed and effective model of caring for all students.

Evolution of special education

A review of current service in special education must begin with an examination of the social, political and cultural contexts from which it has evolved. Vachou (1997) writes that "such an analysis is particularly urgent during an era of radical transformation, when industrial and economic preoccupations occupy the centre ground of educational politics" (p.4). As the province begins its review of current delivery models (in particular the social and financial costs of such services) this historical context is particularly relevant. Philpott (2003) writes that "Education in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador has a rich and colorful history, shaped and influenced by its ties with Britain, America and its eventual union with Canada. As a colony of England, much of its early educational system was reflective of British standards and religious pedagogy" (p.1). Given the province's rural profile and isolated status, its dependence on primary industry, it is no surprise that the evolution of educational services was affected by the province's financial limitations and high levels of illiteracy. The eventual confederation with Canada in 1949 brought about what Rowe (1976) referred to as "…an economic and psychological revolution that would create the cultural flowering which has transformed the face of Newfoundland…" (p.12). Nonetheless, education in the years following confederation continued to reflect its origin, anchored in a church-run system which segregated students by denomination, gender and economic status. One dramatic example of this parochial mindset is that at one point in the capital city, four schools were operated by the Roman Catholic system within a one mile radius: one for males who could afford school fees, one for males who couldn't and two others similarly structured for girls. Other religious denominations likewise operated schools in the same neighborhood under similar segregations. Such a system would remain relatively intact for nearly fifty years before it devolved, through an amendment of the Canadian Constitution (Philpott & Nesbit, 2002), into of a more inclusive and cost effective model.

The evolution of public education in Newfoundland and Labrador would be facilitated by the establishment of Memorial University, which helped open the province to global influences (Rowe, 1976). Central to this was the establishment of teacher training programs that helped raise educational standards in the province. The university recruited professors from outside the province who brought with them global paradigms of education, including a new view of the perspective of disability services. Following the Second World War, society had become increasingly aware of human rights, and by the 1950's the education of students with physical and mental disabilities was a hotly debated topic (Smith, Polloway, Patton & Dowdy, 1998). This debate found receptive ears within a society that was already embroiled in civil and the rights of women. In the U.S., the 1954 landmark court case of *Brown vs. the Board of Education*, which led to the desegregation of schools, initiated the argument "that fighting for the rights of the minority with disabilities parallels fighting for rights of racial minorities" (Friend, Bursuck, & Hutchinson 1989, p.9). Driedger (1989) refers to a civil liberties argument for "disability" as "the last civil rights movement" where parents began the lobby for the education of all children, regardless of mental or physical ability, within their neighborhood schools. The debate, however, was more significant than mere educational placement options: reflected the evolving paradigm of disability services, shifting from a medical model that focused on deficits to a more affirmative perspective that valued difference (Johnstone, 2001).

At the same time, this evolving paradigm of disability service was reflected in Canada with a federal study on services for children with disability. *One Million Children*, the final report of The Commission of Emotional and Learning Disorders in Children (Roberts & Lazure, 1970), called for a radical shift in education, social, and medical service delivery for disabled students, and helped validate the growing debate of the rights of these children. Three essential educational concepts grew

out of this report that would go on to contribute to future discourse of service delivery models:

> 1. Every child has the right to the education required to realize his or her full potential;
>
> 2. The financing of education for all students is the responsibility of the educational authorities; and
>
> 3. Students with exceptional learning needs should remain integrated with other students as long as possible (Andrews & Lupart, 2000. p.35).

Shortly thereafter, an examination of the services for these children in Atlantic Canada was conducted. The 1973 the *Kendall Report* made a number of far-reaching recommendations including "the consolidation and co-ordination of educational services for handicapped children in the four Atlantic provinces and increasing emphasis on education and training for such children within the framework of the family and the local school environment" (cited in Rowe, 1976. p.172). As a result, Memorial University initiated a diploma program in special education that was eventually extended to a full degree status in 1979 (Philpott, 2003a). Special education in Newfoundland and Labrador thereby began its slow and controversial trek through what Smith et al. (1998) refer to as its four phases of segregation, integration, inclusion and empowerment.

Legislative defense

While the *One Million Children* report and the *Kendall Report* would have a dramatic influence on future models of education in Canada, it was the United States who first enshrined in law the educational rights of disabled students.

In both Canada and the United States full responsibility is given to the regions (provinces and states) for passing and implementing educational legislation, however it was the U.S. that passed federal funding laws in 1975 to help ensure the education of all students. American Public Law 94, "The Education for All Children Act", would call for a free and appropriate education for all children in the least restrictive, non-discriminatory environment by using a cascade of delivery models with written individual plans to meet their needs (Salend, 2001). Following its inception in 1975, this American law would be revised four times before reaching its current version now known as IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Act, 1997). Canadian provinces would eventually follow suit with provincial legislation that ensured similar programs and delivery models (Weber, 1994).

The only children with disabilities who were receiving services up to the mid-1970's in Newfoundland and Labrador were blind and deaf students who, under government funding, were attending residential schools in Nova Scotia (Philpott, 2003a). Prior to this, any service for these children were viewed as charity, such as the work initiated in 1954 by Newfoundland and Labrador philanthropist, Vera Perlin, who established a class in her church's basement for "handicapped children". Her work quickly led to the establishment of "The Association for the Help of the Retarded Child", two years before the Canadian Association for Community Living was formed. Weber (1994) commenting on the history of parental organizations, identified that,

> Political activism by parents and other advocacy groups on behalf of students with special needs, had - and continues to have - a powerful effect on the provincial governments...At the same time, it became an accepted, indeed encouraged, practice among professional educators, especially by the nineteen nineties, to involve parents far more extensively in day by day educational decision-making (p.10).

In the early 1970's, this parental activism resulted in the Newfoundland and Labrador government's giving local school boards the option to enroll children with disabilities *if* they so wished (Encyclopedia of NF. V.5). This permitted schools to accept students with disabilities if schools had the will, resources and space. What emerged were highly segregated classrooms in the school building known as Opportunity Classes operated by well intentioned, though often untrained, workers. Placement that resulted from this optional clause continued until 1979 when the Minister of Education amended the Schools Act by changing the word *if* to *shall* and by so doing, established mandatory education of children with disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador schools (Philpott, 2003a).

This establishing of *Equal Opportunities Legislation* (Rothstein, 2000) as an argument for educational rights of children with exceptionalities echoed, in itself, a global trend seen in countries as diverse as Britain, Africa, and Greece, and was supported by the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1979 (Philpott, 2003a). The process, however, also initiated two concepts that have remained central to special education: the individualized plan and the cascade model.

The Individualized Plan

An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) was envisioned as the framework for management approaches to disability services in the school setting.

Originating from the 1975 American legislation as an accounting procedure to ensure that funding mechanisms were properly implemented and that allocated teachers were working with the appropriate students, the IEP grew to be the model of documenting and accommodating a student's individualized needs (Smith, 1990). Special education teachers designed these plans, which detailed the

exceptionality of each student, his/her short-term and long-term goals, and the environment in which service would be delivered (Heward, 2000; Winzer, 2002). Legislated provisions stipulated informed consent and parental involvement in the development of this individualized plan, under the construct of collaborative decision making and parental empowerment (Brown, 1998; Rothstein, 2000). This parental involvement was reflected in Newfoundland and Labrador's initial special education policy of 1986 (Philpott & Nesbit, 2002).

The IEP, however, like the broader field of special education, would become affected by the evolving perspectives of disability services, in particular a shift towards inter-agency case planning. The growth of a larger societal trend towards empowerment of the client (Maclean & Marlett, 1995) underscored the inherent risks in large macro system approaches to client care, and favored the establishment of a more client-centered approach with greater sensitivity to the individual's wishes (Perlmutter & Trist, 1986). This paradigm shift from the traditional clinical approach of management to one with more social concern (Welch, 1973) was reflected in what Greenleaf (1977) called a "bottom-up model of servant leadership". Greenleaf advocated for a new approach to replace the traditional bureaucracy of the "top-down bureaucratic" process. Ungerleider (2003) spoke to this need for a student-centered model of education, where the need of the child supersedes the diagnostic criteria of policy. Stroul (1995) added to this with a call for the increased use of multi-agency teams in this planning process which prevents duplication of services, maximizes communication, and optimizes client empowerment. She states:

> In order to best meet the needs of children and their families, integrated, multi-agency networks are needed to blend the services provided by mental health, education, child welfare, health, juvenile justice, substance abuse, and other agencies. These components must be interwoven into a coherent system

> with provisions for joint planning, service development, problem solving, funding, and evaluation of services (p.8).

This change in approach would eventually be reflected in Newfoundland and Labrador's schools with a shift away from the traditional IEP to the adoption of an interagency approach to planning, later to become known as the Individualized Support Services Plan (ISSP) as generated from the *Model for Coordination of Services to Children and Youth with Special Needs in Newfoundland and Labrador* (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1996). That document outlined:

> The individual support services planning process is a method used to identify the child's strengths and needs and to prepare an integrated approach to meet those needs. It is meant to be a collaborative process involving the child, the parents and service providers including school personnel, personnel from the Department of Health, Social Services, Justice and other relevant agencies working together to identify appropriate goals for the child and the approaches to achieve those goals. The strengths, needs and goals which are defined by this process are recorded, and this record is called an Individual Support Services Plan (p.5).

While initially envisioned for students who were accessing two or more service agencies, this ISSP would replace the IEP for all special education students, and introduce Newfoundland and Labrador educators to a new approach to documenting and planning for the needs of students. In the following few years this new ISSP would become synonymous with special education in Newfoundland and Labrador's schools and the required documentation would become a hotly debated issue (Dibbon, 2004). Nonetheless, the initial process of program development, begun under the rationale of legitimizing special education resources and teachers, would continue to dominate the field.

The Cascade Model

The placement of students with disabilities along a continuum of educational settings (ranging from the regular classroom to a specialized facility) is a practice long established and anchored in legislation (Weber, 1994; Heward, 2000; Rothstein, 2000). This "cascade model" was first proposed by Reynolds (1962) as a means to outline the options of service delivery to individuals with disabilities in health care settings. It followed a pyramid model in which there was a continuum of placement options with the majority of individuals receiving care in their home settings and, depending on need, a minority would require services in a specialized facility. The model implied a preference towards the individual's home environment but articulated that, depending on need, more segregated settings may be required. This cascade model was quickly adapted for use by educators in program planning for children with disabilities, following the American Public Law 94's preference for *least restrictive environment*, and continues to be the preferred model in Canadian schools (Jordan, 2007).

Educators viewed this cascade, or pyramid, approach with the regular classroom forming the base of the pyramid, the level where most children had their needs met without specialized planning. Moving up the pyramid, in decreasing numbers, other students would have their needs met in the regular classroom with some supports. Further up this pyramid, in lower numbers still, would be students who came out of the regular classroom at intervals to have their needs met in an alternate environment. Finally, at the very top of the pyramid was the recognition that a few students, because of highly specialized needs, required a separate classroom and curriculum. This resulted in students with very mild disabilities being accommodated in the regular classroom, while students with more significant or more intrusive needs received programming in placements that were more segregated. The needs of students with severe cognitive delays, for example, were

attended to in separate classrooms while students with mild or moderate cognitive delay were in part-time regular and part-time separate classrooms.

While the IEP and the cascade model resulted in schools planning for students with disabilities, parents were challenging the quality of service that was being offered. Initial school placement for the majority of these children was often limited to placement options higher on this cascade which afforded minimal contact with age appropriate peers and a completely separate curriculum (Smith et al., 1998). In Canada, the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms solidified the argument that discrimination based on physical or mental disability violated an individual's rights, and fueled the debate over the interpretation of which placement on this cascade model was "least restrictive". The courts were often asked to weigh in on this debate. Crockett & Kauffman (1998), in summarizing the legal interpretation of least restrictive environment, reported:

> In law, the argument for least restrictive environment has never been an immutable rule of placement, but a rebuttable presumption favoring inclusion of children in regular classes and allowing segregation in certain instances…courts have given an equivocating answer to whether placement of a child with a disability in a regular classroom is, indeed, the least restrictive environment. The ambiguous answer, in each case, is this: It depends (p.75).

One Canadian court case that received wide-spread attention was *Eaton vs. Brant County Board of Education* (1997). In ruling on what was the least restrictive environment, the Supreme Court of Canada in their decision made the following observations:

> The Tribunal set out to decide which placement was superior, balance the child's various educational interests (taking into account her special needs), and concluded that the best possible placement [for Emily] was in the special class. It also

> alluded to the requirement of ongoing assessment of the child's best interests so that any changes in her needs could be reflected in the placement. A decision reached after such an approach could not be considered a burden or a disadvantage imposed on a child. For a child who is young or unable to communicate his or her needs or wishes, equality rights are being exercised on that child's behalf, usually by his or her parents. Moreover, the requirements for respecting these rights in this setting are decided by adults who have authority over this child. The decision-making body, therefore, must further ensure that its determination of the appropriate accommodation for an exceptional child be from a subjective, child-centered perspective, one which attempts to make equality meaningful from the child's point of view as opposed to that of the adults in his or her life. As a means of achieving this aim, it must also determine that the form of accommodation chosen is in the child's best interests. A decision-making body must determine whether the integrated setting can be adapted to meet the special needs of an exceptional child. Where this is not possible, that is, where aspects of the integrated setting which cannot reasonably be changed, interfere with meeting the child's special need, the principle of accommodation will require a special education placement outside of this setting (at p.244-245).

These legal interpretations would prove essential both in holding to a philosophy of specialized programs for specialized need and in validating the perspective of parents/educators who did not see the regular class as the only placement option. At the same time, it supported the challenge to segregated settings which was already well under way and becoming known as *The Regular Education Initiative.* Groups such as The *Canadian Association for Community Living* were lobbying hard against the cascade model, while other groups such as the *International Council for Exceptional Children* and *The Learning Disability Association of Canada* advocated for a continuum of placement options, based upon individual needs and the best interest of the child (Smith et al., 1998). Ungerleider (2003) comments on this divisiveness: "Attaching funding to students with particular characteristics has also created an atmosphere where the parents of special-needs students are pitted

against the parents of the rest of the student population. What parent does not feel their son or daughter is not "special" and deserving of additional attention in some way" (p.139).

In Newfoundland and Labrador, this cascade model was also reflected in the 1986 special education policy manual (Philpott & Nesbit, 2002) and would serve as the framework for a policy entitled *"Senior High Pathways"* that outlined a service delivery model for students at the high school level. It proposed five programming pathways, similar to the pyramid structure in Reynolds' initial model, which a student could follow towards high school completion:

> **Pathway One**: The regular curriculum without support;
>
> **Pathway Two**: The regular curriculum with instructional and evaluational accommodations to meet the exceptional needs of the individual student;
>
> **Pathway Three**: A modified or adapted curriculum, based on the student's individual needs;
>
> **Pathway Four**: A mixture of core curriculum and individually designed curriculum to meet the needs of the individual student; and
>
> **Pathway Five**: A completely alternate curriculum to meet the challenging needs of the student.

This model was well-received and won the A. David Treherne Special Education Policies Award for the Canadian Council for Exceptional Children for excellence in program development (Philpott & Nesbit, 2002). As with the evolution of the *Individualized Education Plan*, this 1986 *Pathways* model would also undergo a significant revamping and expansion into what is now known as *Pathways to Programming and Graduation: A Handbook for Teachers and Administrators*

(Department of Education, 1998). While subtle changes have occurred, the model remains in place in all of Newfoundland and Labrador's schools, and parallels both Reynolds' initial articulation in 1962 and the province's own 1986 model. It does, however, hold to a medical view of learner diversity with a focus on comprehensive assessments that categorize students along a number of "disabilities", prior to service delivery. The Department would articulate its own diagnostic criteria for students to qualify for services under each of these categories, whether such criteria were reflective of medical standards or not. The Department, for example, would outline "Emotional/Behavioral Disorder" as a condition even though no label exists in the paediatric literature. Likewise, the Department would also sub-divide this and many other categories such as "Learning Disabilities" and "Physical Disability" as being mild or severe (with the later receiving low-ratio teaching support) even though no distinction is made in the literature.

School reform movement

While the evolution of services for students with disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador was reflective of global themes, including a cascade of services model as articulated in a written individualized plan, it would soon be affected by a push to alter education radically. By the late 1980's, the rights of all students to a free and appropriate education were well entrenched in the legislation, and policy was clear as to how to develop individualized programs delivered along a cascade of placement options. Teachers were being well trained via an intensive course program in special education and, while few would have referred to it as a perfect system, there was a consensus that programming opportunities for exceptional students were significantly more established in 1990 than had been the case just one decade before. However, "even the most visionary of educators would not have been able to predict, from the vantage point of 1990, the shape that the province's educational system would have in the year 2000. Most, however, could sense a

rising wind of change that would sweep across the province in the next decade and create a radically different system of education" (Philpott & Nesbit, 2002. p.159).

The release of *A Nation at Risk* (The National Commission on Educational Excellence, 1983) resulted in the school reform movement that has since dominated the educational agenda (Lipsky & Gartner, 1997). The reform movement heralded sweeping changes in the structure and delivery of education in three main areas:

1. Higher standards, enhanced curriculum and a focus on educational outcomes.

2. A shift towards site-based management with less decision-making at the School Board level and more active involvement of parents.

3. An examination of special education so as to have one blended curriculum instead of two, parallel programs.

The impact of this movement on special education would be immediate and dramatic, both in its effect on curriculum changes and on the criticisms of traditional special educational programs that would quickly ensue. In Newfoundland and Labrador this debate was immediate. The release of "Our Children – Our Future", the report of the *Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, and Secondary Education* (Author, 1992) called for site-based management and increased local involvement in decision-making through the establishment of school councils. The report received wide support and became the basis for a major educational restructuring plan by the Department of Education. *Adjusting the Course* (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1993) detailed the government's initial proposal for significantly reshaping the province's secondary school system. Like many school reform

documents across the country, it called for higher standards, improved curriculum and increased accountability for performance and decision-making.

The reform movement in Newfoundland and Labrador was driven by four major forces: (1) declining enrollment and shifting demographics; (2) streamlining of services to prevent duplication; (3) financial restraints faced by the Provincial Treasury; and (4) a call for increased standards of competency among graduates (Philpott & Nesbit 2002). Within the next few years over 27 school boards would be reduced to five, a new curriculum framework would be introduced, and much debate in special education would arise. In fact, this debate was recommended in *Adjusting the Course* (1993), which called for a comprehensive review of special education as a whole. *"Special Matters: The Report of the Review of Special Education"* (Canning, 1996) dispatched a scathing critique of special education and made 220 recommendations for change.

While economic reform and management restructuring had become a reality, curriculum reform would not be abandoned. In 1995, the province became a partner in the Atlantic Provinces Educational Foundation (APEF) a joint curriculum framework implemented among the four Canadian Atlantic Provinces. Central to this curriculum was a focus on outcomes in which assessment and raised standards were interwoven within the revised program. A set of *Essential Graduation Learnings* served as the foundation of the curriculum to guide the work of all educators, including special education teachers. It reflected a focus on inclusion, where supports and services were mandated to assist students in accordance with their individual ability levels in achieving the approved regional curriculum. The curriculum that special education teachers were delivering to students of very diverse ability levels had to reflect the goals and objectives of the regular curriculum, and the regular classroom was seen as the preferred place for this to be

done. The curriculum guides outlined many ways to teach a concept and equally diverse ways to measure acquisition of the curriculum content.

This shift towards recognizing multiple ways to teach/assess the curriculum that was increasingly accommodating of learner diversity was well supported in the literature. Tomlinson (1999 & 2000), for example, referenced it as a approach which has since become known as *Differentiated Instruction,* quickly gaining favor in American schools. This approach outlined strategies to empower classroom teachers in adapting their instruction and evaluation to meet the needs of diverse students, oftentimes without having to access special education support. Moreover, *Universal Design* (Orkwis & Mclane, 1998; Blamires, 1999; Jackson & Harper, 2002) would emerge as an approach to ensure that the initial design of the curriculum allowed for greater accommodation of diverse learners. Both of these concepts negate the need for individualized plans or special education placement for students on Pathway 2 in Newfoundland and Labrador. Despite this solid current existence of a curriculum that reflects differing ability levels (curriculum developed via a concept that has since become known as *Universal Design)* with ample opportunity to *Differentiate Instruction*, students with special needs continued to require interagency plans and comprehensive assessments to access any accommodation seen as being outside traditional teaching approaches (Philpott & Nesbit, 2002).

Criticisms of Special Education

Within ten years, the province of Newfoundland and Labrador had moved through a rapid and profound restructuring of its educational system (based on the school reform principle of site-based management), a shift towards interagency case planning (to promote empowerment of parents and reduce duplication of service), an articulation of a new interpretation of the cascade model, and the creation of a new curriculum framework (reflecting the global shift towards differentiating

instruction). However, swirling around such tangible changes in policy and approach was a different view of special education: inclusion. As outlined in the history of special education, inclusion did not appear at any one point in this history but rather evolved from factors such as differing interpretations of least restrictive environments, mounting criticism of special education practices and a society that was becoming increasingly supportive of diversity issues. In fact, the call for a blended curriculum that arose from the school reform movement echoed the criticisms that had been mounting for years.

Hockenbury, Kauffman and Hallahan (2000), attempt to organize this criticism into seven emergent themes, saying that special education:

> 1. has become a place [placement option] that should become a service;
>
> 2. is now a separate system but should be an integrated system;
>
> 3. identifies and stigmatizes students but should be offered without labels;
>
> 4. has no particularly effective methods and could be replaced by good general education;
>
> 5. returns few students to general education but should return most;
>
> 6. has changed incrementally but should be radically reformed;
>
> 7. is needed now but should not be needed if general education is reformed (p.4).

Fuchs and Fuchs (1995) add to this list by questioning the research base upon which special education practices are built. They call for more research into special

education and bridging "the divide between research and practice" (p.526). However Skrtic (1995), in a deconstruction of special education's practices, questions whether additional research into a diagnostic/prescriptive approach to students' needs is warranted and wonders whether a radically different view of diversity is needed. He argues that special education is anchored in "a theory of human pathology and organizational rationality". The model, he posits, is based on a behavioral approach to diagnosing difference in order to rationalize a hierarchical system of fixed knowledge in which the student is a passive recipient of scientific interventions. Skrtic raises concern for the resulting marginalization and disempowerment of the student and his/her family. His criticisms are shared by Danforth (1999) who raises particular concern for special education's reliance on a medical language to describe student need. Danforth cites Rorty (1991) in discussing the use of language in the professionalization of special education and how it can be used to rationalize interventions, practice, or lack thereof. Both Danforth and Rorty refer to this as the *validation trap* where only professionals have access to this language and therefore parental involvement is limited. They call for removing this language barrier and creating a focus on promoting democracy in educational practices. In encouraging a move towards greater equality in education, Danforth recommends four essential steps:

1. Switch from a focus on "equal opportunities", to one of social justice that provides opportunities for dignity enhancing and empowerment.

2. Demystify the power of the professional in the decision-making process.

3. Focus on nitty-gritty details of what actually works.

4. Acknowledge the complexities of the struggle.

The works of Skrtic, Danforth and Rorty echo Foucault's (1977) discussion on the social construct of disability, where "via observation and normalising judgments and examinations" (p.195) subjects are individualized and thereby stigmatized as *dis-abled*. Foucault argues that the process of focusing on students' deficits, through a process of assessment, creates a diagnostic/prescriptive model that rationalizes stigmatization and discrimination. Allan (1996), in reflecting on Foucault's work, argues that the medical nature of special education focuses on the deficits of the child and thereby supports a pattern of difference. The resultant power and knowledge that professionals gather contribute to the marginalization of the students and their families.

The Emergence of Inclusion

Such criticism of a medical view of service delivery in contemporary schools, coupled with the school reform movement, advanced the presentation of inclusive education as a viable alternative to special education. While it can be argued that the entire history of special education has been one long road towards inclusion (Smith et al., 1998) the criticisms of special education would secure its place as the preferred perspective of learner diversity.

Crockett and Kauffman (1998), in reflecting on the debate surrounding inclusion is that it is a broad construct with many different definitions and interpretations. Bloom, Perlmutter, and Burrell (1999) attempt to define it as "a philosophy that brings students, families, educators, and community members together to create schools and other social institutions based on acceptance, belonging, and community" (cited in Salend, 2001, p.5). Clark, Dyson, Millward and Robson (1999) advocate for yet a broader view of inclusion that is linked with diversity in our global community. O'Brien and O'Brien (1996) support this by mirroring the school reform movement's call for inclusion as a "cultural force for school renewal" (p.31)

where the benefits will extend to all students, their teachers and the community at large. Banks et al. (2005) comment that "the ideas of *culturally responsive classrooms* and *inclusive classrooms* are not entirely the same, but they are similar. Specifically, both terms suggest that schools and teachers need to develop classrooms that are supportive of children and accepting of difference. Within both of these conceptions, children's strengths are emphasized and differences are considered a positive part of a learning environment because they allow children to share and experience diverse perspectives. In the past, children with exceptional needs were largely taught in isolated special education classrooms, and special education was associated primarily with a deficit orientation" (p.255). Sergiovanni (1994) references this cultural shift as community-building with a valuing of diversity that reflects the social fabric of our communities. Noddings (1992) argues that it is not merely about an evolving view of disability, but stresses that schools have a responsibility to promote an "ethic of caring" in our communities by way of positive classroom experiences for all children.

Touraine (1981) comments that these arguments are "the expression of the collective will... or even as appeals to modernity or to the liberation of new forces in a world of traditions, prejudices and privileges" (cited in Cooper, 1999. p.29). In recent years, writers such as Gale (2000) and Slee (2001) have built upon this notion of inclusion as an issue of liberation, and present an argument for social justice. Gale posits that all aspects of social justice have relevance to inclusive education including distributive justice (individual freedom and distribution of goods and services) and retributive justice (the process of attainment of goods and services within a social order). It is, however, the third aspect of social justice, recognitive justice (the inherent value and worth of all citizens), which he feels bears the most relevance. He argues that in order for a society to be just, three conditions are required:

1. fostering respect for different social groups

2. opportunities for group's self-development and self-expression, and;

3. the participation of groups in making decisions that directly affect them (p.260).

Gale stresses that recognitive social justice approaches do more than permit participation in decision-making but add value to "the process that takes account of the interests of all participants or those that serve the interests of dominant groups" (p.264).

This emergence of inclusive schools within a context of increasingly inclusive communities would challenge educators in both interpreting placement options and supporting students in achieving optimal achievement with regular curriculum. Banks et al. (2005) outline that "most educators understand that learning differences exist along a vast continuum, that human beings typically develop compensatory strengths (often formidable ones) to allow them to expand their learning even though they may have some areas of difficulty, and that strategic instruction can make a large difference in what students achieve. Many believe, moreover, that viewing disability as a type of insurmountable deficit is a socially constructed notion that is detrimental to children and should be challenged" (p.255). Hutchinson (2007) in exploring the Canadian context for this perspective writes:

> "Change in exceptional education is everywhere. Most provinces and territories have adopted one of the following terms: *inclusive education*, *inclusive schools*, *inclusive schooling*, or *regular classroom first*. Although the predominant approach in Canada is inclusive education, no jurisdiction uses the expression *full inclusion*. All provide alternatives to the

regular classroom when the choice clearly does not meet the student's need." (p.13-14)

Critical Analysis of this evolution

While the evolution of special services in Newfoundland and Labrador paralleled the global shift in thinking towards legislated rights, cascade of services, interagency planning, inclusive education and family empowerment, it would equally reflect the mounting criticisms. Ware (2000), commenting on the effectiveness of legislative rights, states that "…practice may align with the original intent of the law, but it can be argued that the spirit of the law remains elusive and unrealized" (p.45). This break between intent and reality surfaces in countries as diverse as Ireland, France, and America (Philpott, 2003a). Fulcher (1989), in exploring this breakdown cites the work of MacDonald (1981) who outlines that there are really three types of policy: what is written, what is stated and what is actually done.

The research on parental involvement in individualized planning meetings is remarkably clear in raising concern. Vaughn et al. (1988) found that parents assume a passive and minimal role in the meetings. This finding was consistent with an earlier study by Goldstein, Strickland, Turnbull and Curry (1980) in which it was observed that individualized planning meetings tend to be short (36 minutes on average) with parents contributing less than 25% of the discourse. In a later study, Able-Boone (1993) found it was usually the child's mother who attended the IEP meeting. Harry, Allen and McLaughlin (1995) conducted a three-year observational study and identified what they referred to as a token role for parents. They found that parental participation declined over time and their involvement was usually limited to securing signatures for consent purposes. Turnbull and Turnbull (2001) state, "Too frequently, professionals interact with families in a way that connotes expert power and many parents believe that they can contribute little to educational decision making" (cited in Turnbull et al., 2002, p. 96). Yanok and

Derubertis (1989), in a comparative study of regular and special education parental involvement in education, found that legislative provisions had done little to ensure the increased involvement of special education parents.

Turnbull and Turnbull (2001) identify four categories of impediments to parental participation: psychological, attitudinal, cultural/ideological, and logistical. Quiroz, Greenfield and Altchech (1999) add three other categories: communication, menu-driven approaches and "teacher-knows-best mind sets". Rock (2000) states that the "barriers to parental involvement are complex, numerous, and varied" (p.32) and calls for increased sensitivity to these factors by teachers, and for specific strategies to address these issues effectively.

Even within an interagency planning model, concerns continue for the marginalization of parents and families. Nash (1990), commenting on parents' involvement in interagency meetings, found that team members "tend to communicate in ways that reinforce power and status differentials … and that … such power differentials are likely to exist on early intervention teams if family members are perceived as lacking power and influence" (p.322).

Raffaele and Knoff (1999) build on this notion of power differentials, especially for parents who are economically or socially disadvantaged. They suggest that schools need to be proactive in addressing this, thereby facilitating true participation. Case (2000) polled parents of special education children and found that the "parent-professional relationship remains one of disparity, with the professional persisting in the expert role" (p.287). Case also concluded that with interagency planning teams this problem was exacerbated by a lack of information sharing and a fragmentation of services. Tiegerman-Farber and Radziewicz (1998) add to this by stating, "If collaboration requires parent partnership, then schools are going to have to educate parents to function as equal partners" (p.184). They pose the issue of equality for

parents in the planning process for their special needs child, citing that the reality of parental involvement differs from the theory. They write: “parents are not viewed as teachers of their children and are not accepted as advocates…. In fact, the very design of schools in terms of hours of instruction presents barriers for working parents [and that] most of the social problems experienced in schools can be traced back to the schism between parents and teachers (p.161).

Inclusive education has not been without its criticism, however, both in quality of service for children and teacher readiness to implement practices (Salend, 2001; Scrubbs & Mastropieri, 1996; Zigmond & Baker, 1995). While teachers tend to agree with the philosophy of inclusion, they call for additional resources, extra preparatory/collaboration time, and additional training (Semmel et al., 1991; O’Shea & O’Shea, 1998; Lupart et al., 1996; Salend, 1999; Edmunds, 2000; Maich, 2002; Dibbon, 2004).

This concern among teachers for their ability to implement inclusive education would rise in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador where the delivery of the Pathways model and the development of ISSP’s eventually became so controversial (Dibbon, 2004) that Government would announce a review of the approaches in the spring of 2006.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Context

Since the introduction of both the ISSP and Pathways model, much has been written about their effectiveness. There have been several studies and three Government commissioned reports commenting on the delivery of special education in the province. These studies give a local voice in the literature on special education practices and discourse which often echoes the concerns that have already been identified in the global literature. The provincial Department of

Education releases annual indictors of students participating in special education programs. A review of both sources of information can offer insights into the model's effectiveness.

Enrolment Indicators

Table 1 (attached at the end of this document) provides an overview of student enrolment in the province, namely the numbers of students enrolled in special education and the number of teachers assigned to meet their needs. Data is presented for the past ten years beginning in the 1995-1996 school year. The province implemented the Pathways model in the fall of 1998, while ISSP's were first introduced in 1996.

What surface in this table is a steady decline in the province's school aged population over these years – reflecting a 30.5% drop in enrollment. While the numbers of students in special education also dropped, the percentage of students who required supports grew by 4.2%. In 1995-1996, for example, 11.84% of the province's students were identified as requiring special education. That percentage has steadily grown to where 16.08% of the 2005-2006 school aged population require services. If current trends continue, nearly one quarter of the province's children could be enrolled in special education within ten years. In a province with such a dramatic and steady decline in students, it is disconcerting to see a steady increase in number of students with disabilities. Similarly, the number of special education teachers has also increased by 11.8% in the past ten years. This reflects Government's acknowledgment that it spends more resources on special education per capita than any other province does (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2003) yet the province continues to have among the lowest level of literacy in the country (International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey, 2005).

Tables 2 & 3 (see end of this document) offer a closer look at the enrolment in special education since the Pathways model was implemented. Table 2 examines enrolment in non-categorical (mild delays) special education, as defined by the department. Several interesting points are illustrated. First, there is a dramatic rise in the number of students who are seen as having speech/language delays/disorders. Since 1998-1999 this number has grown by 91.3%. A grade-level examination of this phenomenon (though not presented here) will show that this diagnosis spikes around Grades 3-4, the point at which the "Developmental Delay (0-8 years)" category ends, and children need to be identified with some other condition to continue qualifying for service.

Another interesting observation is that there are no students in the province identified as exceptional ability. In fact, the students who were recognized in this category disappeared from the model in 2002-2003 school year. Dibbon (2004) voiced this: "Teachers were concerned that often times students on Pathways Two and Three 'learn to be helpless', that the average and above average students are held back academically and there is no time for enrichment activities for the gifted and higher academic students" (p.26). This underscores concern for the province's trend of escalating enrollment in special education. If Sattler (2001) is correct in assuming that 3-5% of the population is gifted, then the 16.08% rate of current enrollment in special education climbs significantly and alarmingly. Suddenly, the projection of one quarter of the province's children potentially requiring special education seems more imminent than predicted previous.

Table 3 (see end of document) examines those students identified with severe disabilities on the new Pathways model. It shows dramatic increases in three areas: learning disabilities, health/ neurological, and emotional/behavioral. At the same time, there has been a 72.4% decline in the students with severe physical disabilities and a 39.1% decline in students with severe cognitive delay.

Overall, this data raises concern that an increasing percentage of students being diagnosed with exceptionalities in a population that is declining dramatically. Additional distress arises when we see anomalies like the trend towards severe disabilities and the absolute disappearance of “strengths”. The question surfaces whether this model has created a culture of pathology, where weaknesses are identified and strengths are ignored. More critical would be the system’s absence of early identification and intervention. Banks et al (2005) state that early identification and intervention would reduce the number of special-needs students and the severity of the difficulties they encounter. They argue that student success would be improved if information was more readily shared, and services coordinated when students begin school. The criticisms of special education, nonetheless, especially Skrytic’s (1995) comments regarding the theories of human pathology and organizational rationality, are echoed in these provincial statistics.

Provincial Studies

While there has been no in-depth evaluation of the Pathways model in Newfoundland and Labrador, there have been several studies conducted that have examined the perceptions and experiences of parents, teachers and students who participate in this model. More importantly, when these studies are combined, the themes that materialize could potentially serve as a guide to informing future practice and policy.

Young (2004) conducted a study of the experiences of Newfoundland and Labrador students returning to school after onset of psychiatric illness. She interviewed a number of students and found that “communication and collaboration was limited or non-existent in their back to school transition. Consequently, respondents struggled academically and emotionally.” (Young, 2004, p.77). These students felt that teachers were not trained and that there was no interagency planning or sharing of

knowledge as to their needs. Subsequently, echoing the words of a highly articulate group of students, Young concludes:

> What emerges is a clear call for drastic changes so that students with psychiatric disorders have options for obtaining a high school education in a sage and positive environment. The existing system, even with its well-articulated interagency approach to supporting students with diverse needs is failing. The policy and practice are as far apart, for these students, as could possibly be. While knowledge and services are clearly needed, sensitivity to the needs of students is paramount. (p.92)

This concern for the degree of effectiveness of the current system is reiterated in two studies that examine the perspective of parents. Moody (2003) explores the experiences of parents with children who have learning disabilities, and finds a similar breakdown in communication. “Professionals, while concentrating on specific problems, seemed to be working in isolation and lacked a team approach to sharing with each other their focus, the objectives/goals for a particular problem, and progress made” (Moody, 2003, p.78). These parents raised concern for a breakdown at every level, from initial identification of the problem to accessing agreed on supports. Moody reports that the parents’ resulting awareness of the system’s failure to meet the needs of their child results in the emergence of a private system of support where these families have to hire private practitioners to provide the service that the education system is mandated to deliver. “Mothers…therefore felt it was their responsibility to get the information from outside support professionals … so as … to present at school meetings when looking for resources that could improve a child’s learning environment” (Moody, 2003, p.79). Moody concludes that these families encounter untold stress, in both advocating for the needs of their child and the financial burdens encountered in accessing private services.

This development of a private system of special education was also reported in a separate study by Philpott (2004). In examining the experiences of parents with children who have obsessive compulsive disorder, Philpott reports findings similar to those of Moody: a breakdown in communication, significant family stress, conflict between home and school, and the emergence of a privatized system of support. In a scathing critique of the province's interagency approach, Philpott summarizes parents' experiences:

> Parents' growing disillusionment is heightened by the promises inherent in the language that reflects a political paradigm of shared decision-making, role parity and care provision. They frame this politicization of care as a sincere recognition of the legitimacy and severity of their child's needs. Parents are disappointed, yet they must continue to play the game. They become cynical about the language of a policy that articulates something radically different than they experience. They interpret the process as one that articulates procedures to *care for* children yet fails to ensure that the child, or the family, feel *cared about*. While the language of the policy frames a model that is built upon care, parents seldom see caring displayed in their child's daily school experiences or in how they are treated. The process is seen as politicizing an image of care that covers an absence of it (p.28).

While the experiences of parents mirror those of students, four separate studies on the experiences of teachers underscore the need for radical change. Walters (1999) and Edmunds (2000) both explored teachers' perceptions of their readiness to implement current models. What arises is concern for resources, training and time for collaboration, planning and meeting. While there is general agreement in the philosophy of models, concern surfaces for the ability to deliver what the model espouses. Maich (2002) offers an in-depth study into teachers' perceptions of collaboration, as articulated in provincial policies. Maich concludes that classroom teachers recognize this break between the language of a policy and their actual ability to deliver it in their practice. Maich writes: "As a result of barriers created by

a lack of practical supports in the schools … they did not practice collaboration in ways typically recommended in the literature, or even to the extent that they desired" (p.3).

A recent study by Younghusband (2005), exploring teacher stress in the province, offers further validation of this breakdown, and affirms that teachers share the stress that families report. She also reports the breakdown between what the policy says, how it is articulated and the system's ability to deliver it. She concludes:

> In the current study, Pathways was identified as a major concern by teachers because of the need to modify the curriculum in different ways to accommodate the diverse needs of students. Frustration and accountability fears were high regarding this problem as teachers talked of struggling to meet their students' needs. Feelings of inadequacy and reduced self-confidence were understandable. "Impossible" was a frequently used adjective to describe the delivery of Pathways as the teachers tried to live up to demands placed upon them in this regard.

Concern was also raised in a provincial review of classroom services. *Supporting Learning: The Ministerial Panel on Educational Delivery in the Classroom* (Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, 2000a) noted that a recurrent theme throughout the Panel's consultations was "a focus on educational delivery for students with special needs, most often referred to as special education (p.26)." Special education, they claimed, "dominated many Panel meetings and discussions in that the delivery of special education services, under the emerging "Pathways" model, involves not only the special education teacher but also the regular classroom teacher and a range of other professionals within and outside the education, health and justice systems" (p.26). The Panel noted the level of attention special education has received in recent years, yet they were "perplexed by the degree of confusion and turmoil that still surrounds this area centering

around teacher deployment, student assistants, Pathways and integration" (p.26). They called for stability in the entire area of special education, particularly in the way student support services are deployed, fundamental changes in the student assistant model, creative ways which would effectively and efficiently use present resources, clarification around who should qualify for what services, and addressing the issues of "remedial" students. Of the Panels 86 recommendations, 9 were specific to special education.

Four years later, however, Dibbon (2004) found that little had changed. In his review of teacher workloads in the province, Dibbon noted that since the Pathways framework was introduced to the provincial school system in the mid-1990's, teachers have been expressing their concerns about the way the program has been implemented and the implications that it brings for teacher workload. He writes that in the minds of many of these teachers the policy is having an indirect and negative impact on students. There was also serious concern expressed about the amount of time and effort involved in the ISSP and related documentation processes. From a workload perspective, the main concerns focused on the excessive amounts of paper work and documentation, many hours of evening and weekend work preparing ability-level resource materials and, for some, many after-school meetings. There was also concern expressed that "due to a lack of sufficient resources at the school, district and department levels, it often takes far too long to carry out assessments and referrals that are required… (p.26)." Many other teachers had issues surrounding the composition of their class(es) and they were adamant that the composition of the class must be taken into consideration when students are being assigned, particularly students who are on Pathways 2, 3, or 4.

Surprisingly, the findings of these studies reproduce the criticisms that emerge in the global literature on special education. It appears to be well known that traditional models often result in family disempowerment, breakdowns in service

and resulting frustration among all stakeholders, yet the province continues to hold to a diagnostic prescriptive model of support. Within a rapidly evolving social paradigm of inclusiveness, the province continues to to diagnosis difference, focusing upon weaknesses in a highly medical view of diversity. What has resulted is a culture of pathology, where an increasing percentage of students are being diagnosed with disabilities and resources are being allocated despite being clearly ineffective. Ironically, the resultant concern is shared between students, teachers and parents who unanimously say that what the policy states is not what happens in the province's classrooms.

As teachers compete for the necessary resources to do their job, there is an indication that the collegial model may be weakening. Dibbon (2004) presented evidence that teachers are beginning to blame each other for the high workload associated with the current Pathways model. For example, some classroom teachers see the special needs teacher as having an easy time with just one or two students at a time, and conversely some special needs and special education teachers feel they are isolated from the rest of the staff and are carrying the brunt of the load of coordinating the special needs program. All are asking for help.

Summary

Newfoundland and Labrador's current model of Student Support Services has evolved from global trends in the provision of services to exceptional children. The current *Pathways* model echoes the *Cascade of Services* approach first developed in 1962 and now used in schools around the world as a means to recognize individual needs and to streamline delivery of services. The province's *ISSP* reflects the individualized planning and documentation process developed as legislation began to mandate educational placement and specialized services. It has evolved with changing paradigms of case planning, to reflect an interagency model of

collaborative decision-making striving towards empowerment of the child and family. This evolution reflects the global movement from segregation to integration and onwards towards inclusive approaches.

The challenges that the province now faces are equally reflective of global struggles. In fact, even a cursory glance at the literature reveals similar global criticisms of policy and practice. Chief among those is the clear breakdown between what policy outlines, how systems interpret it and what actually services are delivered to children/families on a daily basis. An examination of numerous studies on local practice reflects this breakdown in delivery and calls for change so as to limit the frustration of all stakeholders, as well as the blatant disempowerment of families. Newfoundland and Labrador's current model originally set out to do that, but somehow it has resulted in stress and confusion, as articulated by students, parents and teachers. Somewhere, between the initial development and subsequent evolution of policies that were anchored in knowledge, the province has drifted off course.

Not surprisingly, this *policy drift* is also supported by the literature. Wincott, (2006) in examining how policy diverges with implementation, comments:

> Policy drift should not be seen as an alternative to notions of policy *inertia* - it is tempting to suggest that it is society that drifts away from the policy *status quo*. Strictly speaking it is social realities that change more than the policies themselves (although the latter may also alter – either insufficiently to keep up with social changes or even be subject to degradation). Policy drift may be best understood as a form of *mission drift* where social policies lose their normative moorings (p.25).

The process of establishing a contemporary mooring for learner diversity in Newfoundland and Labrador should be guided by this literature. Its themes clearly

negate blame and validate the struggles that the province is currently facing as typical in the evolution of policy and service. Certainly, it affords an opportunity to balance future initiatives with current knowledge so as to address the breakdown in services, and to create a model that will result in the empowerment that the literature calls for. Essential to this is a need to explore the power differentials that now marginalize families and place educators in adversarial roles with parents. Perhaps a point of departure for this process will be examination of how the province continues to hold to a medical model of disability that has resulted in a hierarchy of "expert knowledge". Central to this will have to be a frank discussion on why special education in this province tends to be managed by psychologists at the district level, and guidance counsellors at the school level, neither of whom has training in the area of adapting instruction (Philpott, 2003b). In order to move from diagnosing difference to embracing the needs of all students in our classrooms, leadership will have to move back into the hands of teachers. Equally urgent is a need to define what exactly the province means by *inclusive education*. In the absence of a clear articulation of inclusive education (globally or locally) misinterpretation dominates the delivery of services. Nowhere is this more evident than in Newfoundland and Labrador, where the current curriculum is reflective of the principles of *Universal Design*, with ample opportunities for *Differentiating Instruction*. The system, however, remains choked with a focus on assessment of differences and documentation of needs that seldom result in individualized support. Banks et al. (2005) argue that developing an inclusive practice goes beyond understanding special education policy and identifying specific instructional strategies that will help students with disabilities. Teachers must also know how to develop a supportive classroom community in which all students feel safe both with the teacher and with each other. Provincial reflections of this knowledge exists with the recent "safe and caring" schools initiatives that reflect a true valuing of diversity along the principles of social justice. It is ironic, in fact, that within this climate

there exists a continuing need for students to be diagnosed as being different so as to qualify for supports that are designed to give them equal opportunity.

While re-establishing such a mooring "…may seem a Herculean task, it is politically more optimistic than the pessimism of structural approaches which in education have not offered policy makers a viable agenda. The politics of negotiations, discourse and their associated strategies derive from the view that policy is made at all levels and responsibility for the decisions made in one arena should be located with the social actors who make them" (Fulcher, 1989, p.16).

Table 1: Enrolment and Teacher Allocation

Academic Year	Enrolment	Special Education Students	% Change	Special Education Teachers
1995-1996	110,456	13,075	11.84	819
1996-1997	106,205	12,486	11.76	994
1997-1998	101,608	12,039	11.85	943
1998-1999	97,401	13,341	13.70	976
1999-2000	93,957	13,099	13.94	1006
2000-2001	90,167	12,747	14.14	1009
2001-2002	86,898	12,838	14.77	1000
2002-2003	84,268	13,034	15.47	970
2003-2004	81,458	12,369	15.18	950
2004-2005	79,439	11,986	15.09	938
2005-2006	76,763	12,342	16.08	916
Change Over 10 Years	-30.5%	-5.6%	+4.2%	+11.8

Source: Department of Education

Table 2: Non-categorical Allocations

Exceptionality	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	% Change
Mild Visual Impairment	36	44	33	37	47	50	53	35	-2.8
Speech and/or Language Delay/Disorder	1159	1392	1838	1876	1831	1797	2103	2217	+91.3
Mild/Moderate Physical Disability	100	165	102	151	90	92	121	142	+42.0
Mild/Moderate Learning Disability	2968	2705	2667	2557	2758	2702	2812	2800	-5.7
Mild/Moderate Health/ Neurological Related Disorder	243	183	216	279	279	312	331	363	+49.4
Mild Hearing Impairment	71	109	93	116	119	125	103	120	+69.0
Exceptional Ability	1400	1112	1024	1070	1034	758	-	-	-100
Mild/Moderate Emotional/ Behavioural	537	567	650	662	784	753	744	697	+29.8
Developmental Delay (0-8 years)	774	965	1088	1099	1164	1157	1266	1339	+73.0
Mild/Moderate Cognitive Delay	2424	2353	2154	2198	2095	1947	1887	1864	-23.1
Unknown	2478	2309	1766	1706	1752	1389	1297	1684	-32.0
Other	-	-	-	-	-	113	163	-	-
Total	12190	11904	11631	11751	11953	11195	10880	11261	-7.2

Source: Department of Education

Table 3: Categorical Allocations

Exceptionality	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	% Change
Moderate/Severe Hearing Impairment (Criteria A)	68	91	67	49	60	55	65	56	-17.6
Moderate/Severe Visual Impairment (Criteria B)	32	37	27	24	27	67	21	26	-18.8
Moderate Global/Severe/Profound Cognitive Delay (Criteria C)	778	736	710	638	614	583	536	474	-39.1
Severe Physical Disability (Criteria D)	123	98	86	94	61	46	39	34	-72.4
Severe Emotional/Behavioral Difficulty/Disorder (Criteria E)	49	82	82	75	89	96	115	83	+34.0
Severe Learning Disability (Criteria F)	64	91	71	106	112	184	188	250	+290.6
Severe Health/Neurological Related Disorder (Criteria G)	37	60	73	101	118	143	142	158	+327.0
Total	1151	1195	1116	1087	1081	1174	1106	1081	-6.1

Source: Department of Education

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APPENDIX H:
Inter-Ministerial Protocols for the Provision of Support Services to Children and Youth

Background

The Classroom Issues Committee report made several recommendations regarding support services to schools. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, on receipt of the report, endorsed the recommendations in June 1995.

The Departments of Education, Health, Justice and Social Services have outlined the purpose, premises and their specific commitments to the provision of services to children and youth with special needs in the Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth with Special Needs. The following protocols are designed to support the implementation of this Model.

To achieve this goal these protocols apply to each child/youth with special needs where she/he requires two or more services from two or more government funded agencies.

Purpose

The purpose of this protocol paper is to:

1. establish a framework which describes the delivery of support services to children/youth;
2. ensure a comprehensive coordinated approach to reduce duplication through an integrated service management approach;

3. establish an agreed-upon comprehensive range of services and required support levels acknowledging geography and available resources;
4. increase the accessibility of appropriate services locally, and increase the responsibility of local communities for the provision of such services;
5. obtain agreement on the areas of responsibility of each Department in the provision of each support service;
6. proceed cooperatively to identify the services to be provided and jointly put forward issues for consideration by appropriate committees within Government;
7. allow for the effective practice of all providers and to build on existing mechanisms for service delivery in each department;
8. sustain continuity of service to meet individual needs; and
9. facilitate efficient use of existing limited resources.

Basic Premises

1. Support services to children/youth will be organized in a way which supports and facilitates growth and development.
2. Delivery of services is contingent on available resources and the availability of qualified personnel.
3. Levels of service within available resources will be established for each support area. Where it is deemed necessary for school boards to contract services, they shall use the appropriate Department's established program and professional standards, criteria and guidelines.

4. Services should be organized to make the most effective use of available resources in meeting the needs of children and youth.

5. (a) Protocols should ensure that available resources are appropriately allocated to the relevant support services to meet the needs of children and youth.

   (b) Each service will be delivered within the overall mandate of the responsible Department and at an agreed level which is within the capacity of Departments or their agents to deliver at the local level.

   (c) Each Department is responsible for establishing and monitoring standards and guidelines for the delivery of services within its mandate.

   (d) A provincial coordinating committee will be put in place to complete an annual joint review of the need for services and each Department's capacity to provide them within the Model for the Coordination of Services.

6. Each Department will endeavor to identify, for each relevant service area, the resources currently existing within its budget for the provision of support services to children and youth with special needs. Budget proposal shall be reviewed jointly by the Deputies prior to submission.

7. The four Departments shall endeavor to designate funds designed to support children and youth in school settings, and specify their capacity to provide services.

8. The staff of the Departments involved in each sub-protocol will jointly develop procedures and time lines for review and evaluation of the effectiveness of the protocol agreement.

Government Commitment

The Departments of Education, Social Services, Health and Justice have developed protocols consistent with the mandate and responsibility of each Department which describe processes for the coordination of and delivery of services to children and youth with special needs.

The Departments will encourage their representatives at the local/community, regional and provincial level to work cooperatively in the delivery of support services to children and youth with special needs.

To that end the four Departments agree to facilitate the process required to:

- Implement the Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth with Special Needs.
- Utilize a common consent form for the release and sharing of information.
- Implement a common policy regarding the sharing of information relevant to the individual support services planning process.
- Include the participation of parent(s)/guardian(s) in the support services planning process.
- Include the participation of the child/youth in the support services planning process unless compelling reasons exits.
- Implement and utilize a common Individual Support Services Plan, format and process.
- Require local and district personnel to participate in support services planning teams as an expectation of work responsibilities.
- Support the participation of personnel in the training and in-service efforts needed to implement the Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth with Special Needs.

- Support ongoing professional development to enhance professional practice in the delivery of services to children/youth with special needs.
- Develop and utilize a joint standard contract to utilize when entering agreements with external agencies that are jointly funded by the signing Departments.
- Ensure the development and implementation of policies and procedures for the collection of data in accordance with the Model for Profiling Needs of Children and Youth.
- Commit to the assignment of a staff member with decision making authority to the Regional Integrated Management Team.
- Establish, contribute equally and manage a special needs equipment budget jointly between the Departments of Education, Health and Social Services.
- Ensure that when facilities are designed they meet the unique needs of children/youth with special needs.
- Accommodate confidential work/interview space(s) for visiting professionals in existing and new facilities.
- Collaborate with regional boards and local service providers to ensure that policies, procedures and practice reflect the critical components of the Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth with Special Needs.

Approved and agreed to this day the 15th of January, 1997 by the Minister of Education, Minister of Health, Minister of Justice and Minister of Social Services

APPENDIX I:
Guidelines to be Followed to Facilitate the Implementation of the Individual Support Services Planning Process

NOVEMBER 1997

The Departments of Education, Health, Human Resources and Employment and Justice adopted the Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth in 1995. Subsequently, the Ministers' signed an interdepartmental protocol endorsing the components of the Model setting departmental directions for a common child specific planning process known as the Individual Support Services Planning Process (ISSP). The Guidelines to facilitate implementation of the Interdepartmental Services Planning Process will apply to all employees of the Departments of Education, Justice, Health and Human Resources and Employment and to all individual providing professional services under contract to any of these Departments during the individual support services planning process. The Guidelines will also bind all boards and agencies established by, and subject to the jurisdiction of, any of the four Departments.

The following statements outline the key components of the ISSP process which are to be implemented by each department and its respective agencies ensuring implementation of this element of the Model.

1. The ISSP process is a collaborative, integrated approach to planning and delivery of services to child/youth at risk or in need.

2. The ISSP is a process with a preventative approach, designed to promote early intervention to respond to children at-risk and children and youth with special needs.

3. Children at risk include those who have an identified congenital or acquired handicap or health challenge; infants and preschool children in families with interaction and/or social problems; children at risk of developmental delay in the adaptive, social, motor, cognitive or language areas; and/or circumstances which indicate that one or more of the following risk factors are present:

- inadequate pre-natal care,
- lifestyle - either parent or child,
- lack of stimulation,
- poor parental support,
- academic failure,
- truancy and other school problems,
- low literacy, low level of education,
- lone parent, teen parent headed household,
- known genetic risks,
- atypical development,
- birth trauma/birth defects,
- identified disability,
- known health conditions,
- childhood trauma,
- child abuse/neglect,
- conflict with the law,
- learning difficulties.

4. The process will apply to children 0-21 and may apply at the pre-birth stage where circumstances warrant.

5. The ISSP process will replace all existing departmental planning processes directed at services to children and youths (e.g. General Service Plans, Care Plans, Case Plans, Program Plans).

6. The ISSP is a working plan which identifies strengths, needs, child-specific goals, context-specific interventions, accountability and time frames for completion of objectives.

7. The precise elements of the ISSP are contained in the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth in Newfoundland and Labrador Individual Support Services Plans (September 1997).

8. Stages in the process of planning for children and youth shall include: screening and identification; assessment and exploration of strategies; establishment of an Individual Support Services Planning Team; team meeting; development and implementation of the Individual Support Services Plan; monitoring and review of the plan.

9. The Individual Support Services Planning Team shall be composed of the child, parent/guardian, service provider(s) and other relevant parties as determined by the needs of the child. There may be exceptions to the general rule of participation in the following circumstances:

The Child may be excluded from the Team or from an Individual Team meeting where:

a. the child chooses not to participate,

b. child's level of development indicates that he/she is unable to constructively participate in the process,

c. the child has demonstrated in a prior meeting(s) that he/she is unable to constructively participate in the process from a behavioural perspective, or

d. the information to be shared between the team members and the parent/guardian is considered harmful to the well-being of the child or to the family-child relationship.

Parent/guardian may be excluded from the Team or from a Team meeting where:

a. the parent/guardian voluntarily chooses not to become involved, or

b. where the participation of the parent/guardian is considered detrimental to the welfare of the child or harmful to the parent/child relationship.

Service Providers may be excluded from the Team or from a Team meeting where:

a. they are not actively involved in the provision of services to the child, or

b. where a single service provider has been designated as the representative of multiple service providers from a single agency.

Non-governmental personnel shall be excluded from individual Team meetings where the information may only be shared among government personnel in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Interdepartmental Protocol on Information Sharing.

Any individual may be excluded from the Team or from a Team meeting where: the child/youth or parent/guardian does not provide consent for the sharing of information to such persons.

10. The composition of the team is determined by the nature and complexity of the child's needs. Whenever possible the number of team members is to be kept to a minimum. Service providers in attendance at Team meetings should be those most directly involved in the delivery of services to children and/or youth. Where there is more than one professional from an agency serving the child, each agency may designate a single representative as a team member or spokesperson.

11. An ISSP Team will be established when a child/youth at risk or with special needs receives a service. The Team membership will expand as other service providers become involved.

12. The Team shall be headed by an Individual Support Services Manager who may be the parent/guardian, child, service provider or relevant other. The selection of the Individual Support Services Manager is made by the Team, based upon the individual's:

a. understanding of and commitment to the role,
b. ability to facilitate a collaborative and team approach,
c. ability to maintain contact with those involved in the case,
d. projected ability to remain as a Team leader for the duration of the Team's activities,
e. ability to support the involvement of ALL members equally,
f. knowledge of related services and supports.

13. The ISSP Manager will be responsible for:

a. scheduling meetings,

b. determining membership of the team,

c. ensuring the profile is completed and sent to the Regional Child Services Coordinator,

d. facilitating the ISSP meetings,

e. ensuring the ISSP is written and signed during meeting,

f. ensuring the issues and concerns regarding the ISSP process are constructively communicated to the Regional Integrated Services Management Team,

g. setting the date of the next meeting,

h. utilizing a problem solving approach during the planning process,

i. accepting written reports from members who cannot be present and tabling them at the team meeting,

j. maintaining the child's ISSP file when such is active.

14. The child's needs will be profiled in accordance with the process outlined in the document Coordination of Services to Children and Youth In Newfoundland and Labrador: Profiling the Needs of Children and Youth, with particular attention to the following categories of need:

- academic learning difficulties,
- attendance problems,
- behavioral difficulties,
- cognitive delay,
- developmental delay (0-8),
- environmental needs,
- gifted,
- hearing impaired,
- health difficulties,
- learning difficulties,

- mental health needs,
- physical difficulties,
- speech/language difficulties,
- victimization,
- visual difficulties,
- any other factors which may put child "at risk".

15. Information will be shared in accordance with the Protocol on Information Sharing (1997), as agreed to by the Departments of Education, Health, Justice and Human Resources and Employment.

16. The Team shall develop an Individual Support Services Plan which must be agreed to and signed by all members. The Plan will contain a record of the team membership, a consensus of the child's strengths and needs, prioritized goals, responsibility for implementation, the environment/context in which implementation will occur, date of review, service needs, and service options.

17. The Team shall meet at least twice annually and may meet more often if warranted by the needs of the child.

18. The ISSP may be continued, extended or discontinued by the Team during the review of the Plan. Where the Plan is discontinued and the Team dissolved, the ISSP Manager shall include a letter of explanation in the child's file.

19. Records shall be maintained in accordance with the procedures outlined in the documents Coordination of Services to Children and Youth in Newfoundland and Labrador: Individual Support Services Plan (September 1997) and Information Sharing Protocol (1997).

http://www.mcscy.nl.ca/guidelinesissp.html (Accessed 4 April 2007)

Appendix J:
Child Youth Profiles

Model for the Coordination of Services to Children and Youth CHILD/YOUTH PROFILE				
Name of child:		**Completed by (full name):**		
Date of Birth (Y/M/D): Age:		**Telephone #: Ext:**		
☐ **Male**	☐ **Female**	**ISSM (if different from above):**		
MCP #:	**Other #:**	**Date of Profile (Y/M/D):**		
Status:		**Responsibility:**		**ISSP:**
☐ Family (natural or extended)		☐ Parent/Guardian		☐ Yes
☐ Youth services agreement		☐ Self		☐ No
☐ Independent		☐ Professional (specify):		
☐ Child in care/custody				
☐ Open Custody				
☐ Secure custody		**Grade:**	**Early childhood program/school:**	
Region:				
Community of residence:		☐ Accelerated	**Program Status:**	
Street address:		☐ Repeated	☐ Full-time attendance	☐ Home Schooled
School district:			☐ Part-time attendance	☐ Not attending

Primary Area(s) of Need (check all applicable)			
Area(s) of Need	**Transient**	**Area(s) of Need**	**Transient**
☐ Academic Learning Difficulty	☐	☐ Hearing	☐
☐ Accessibility	☐	☐ Health	☐
☐ Addictions	☐	☐ Learning Disability	☐
☐ Attendance	☐	☐ Mental Health	☐
☐ Behaviour	☐	☐ Physical	☐
☐ Career Development	☐	☐ Prevention	☐
☐ Cognitive Delay	☐	☐ Protection/Safety	☐
☐ Communication	☐	☐ Residential	☐
☐ Cultural/Ethnic	☐	☐ Sensory Processing	☐
☐ Developmental Delay (Age 0-8)	☐	☐ Visual	☐
☐ Environmental	☐	☐ Other (please specify)	☐
☐ Gifted	☐		

Category	Need (check all applicable)	Equip	Degree of need			Status of Need				In Region	
			Low	Mod	High	Met	Some Times Met	In Process	Not Met	Yes	No
Physical	a. Assistance to move on/off transportation										
	b. Assistance to move between rooms										
	c. Supervision										
	d. Lifting/transferring										
	e. Positioning										
	f. Fine motor coordination										
	g. Gross motor coordination										
	h. Other (please specify):										
Behaviour	a. To stay on task										
	b. Sensory avoidance/sensory seeking										
	c. Ensure socially acceptable behaviour										
	d. Absence from school/program										
	e. Out of Control										
	f. Has injured self/others										
	g. Other (please specify)										
Compensatory Skills	a. Social Skills										
	b. Orientation &/or mobility										
	c. Safety										
	d. Activities of daily living										
	e. Perceptual skills										
	f. Organizational skills										
	g. Communication										
	h. Other (please specify)										

Category	Need (check all applicable)	Equip	Degree of need			Status of Need				In Region	
			Low	Mod	High	Met	Some Times Met	In Process	Not Met	Yes	No
Well Being	a. Nutrition										
	b. Developmental (0 – 8)										
	c. Personal/emotional										
	d. Spiritual										
	e. Leisure/recreation										
	f. Medical condition										
	g. Child protection and safety										
	h. Conflict with law										
	i. Addictions										
	j. Other (please specify)										
Personal Care	a. Feeding assisted										
	b Personal Hygiene										
	c Medications										
	d Toileting										
	e. Catherization										
	f. Oxygen (adm)										
	g. Suctioning										
	h. Ventilator therapy										
	i. Other (please specify)										
Program Material	a. Audio										
	b. Braille										
	c. Disk/Cd										
	d. Large print										
	e. Tactual										
	f. Visual										
	g. Other (please specify)										
Speech/ Language/ Audiology	a. Articulation										
	b. Fluency										
	c. Language										
	d. Voice										
	e. Non-verbal										
	f. Audiological profile										
	g. Augmentative/alternate communication										
	h. Other (please specify)										

Category	Need (check all applicable)	Equip	Degree of need			Status of Need				In Region	
			Low	Mod	High	Met	Some Times Met	In Process	Not Met	Yes	No
Technology	a. Communicating										
	b. Hearing										
	c. Management skills										
	d. Movement										
	e. Reading										
	f. Researching										
	g. Seating										
	h. Seeing										
	i. Taking notes										
	j. Other (please specify)										
Program	a. Healthy beginnings										
	b. Early childhood										
	c. Provincial curriculum										
	d. Provincial curriculum with support										
	e. Modified courses										
	f. Alternate courses										
	g. Alternate curriculum										
	h. Adult basic education										
	i. Career planning										
	j Post-secondary										
	k. Other (please specify)										

Low
- supports provided on an “as needed basis”
- supports may be time limited
- supports may not be required in most environments
- child/youth may be independent with minimal supports

Moderate
- supports may be required in one or more environments
- supports and interventions required on an on-going consistent basis
- supports generally not time limited

High
- supports are constant and high intensity
- supports will be required across most/all environments/areas of need
- supports are not time limited

Equip – equipment

Send to: Regional Child Health Coordinator (see Profile Handbook for address)

APPENDIX K:
Schools Act 1997 (Section 22: Appeals)

AN ACT TO REVISE THE LAW RESPECTING THE OPERATION OF SCHOOLS IN THE PROVINCE

(Assented to December 19, 1997)

Appeal

22. (1) Where a decision affects a student, the parent of the student or the student, if the student is 19 years of age or older, may appeal the decision

(a) of a Board Employee employed in a school, to the Principal and his or her decision may be appealed to the Board;

(b) of the Principal, to the Board; and

(c) of a Board Employee not employed in a school, to the Board,

and the Board's decision on the appeal shall be final.

(2) An appeal under subsection (1) shall be commenced within 15 days from the date that the parent or student is informed of the decision.

(3) An appeal under this section shall be made in accordance with this Act and the by-laws of the Board.

(4) A decision made under this section that is final or that is not appealed within the appeal period is binding upon the student, school, board and other persons affected by that decision.

(5) This section shall not apply to expulsion decisions under section 37.