

# Inclusive Education in Manitoba

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A Retrospective  
SSAAM 2015



## 2006 - 2016

- An amendment to *The Public Schools Act* (Appropriate Educational programming) was proclaimed on October 28, 2006. The purpose of this change to legislation was to ensure that all students in Manitoba receive appropriate educational programming that fosters student participation in both the academic and the social life of the school.

How did we get to that amendment?

# Exclusion

## ***Prior to 1958***

- Special education is best described as exclusion and separatism. *The Public Education Act* stated:
- 237. (2) EVERY PERSON BETWEEN THE AGES OF SIX AND TWENTY-ONE SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO ATTEND SCHOOL.

However the same act provided that:

- 291 WHERE THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT A PERSON ATTENDING A SCHOOL OF THE DISTRICT IS A MENTAL DEFECTIVE WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE MENTAL DEFICIENCY ACT, IT MAY, BY RESOLUTION PROHIBIT THAT PERSON FROM ATTENDING OR ENTERING THE SCHOOL, AND THAT PERSON SHALL NOT BE ENTITLED TO ATTEND OR ENTER ANY SCHOOL OF THE DISTRICT UNTIL HE PRESENTS TO THE BOARD A CERTIFICATE FROM TWO PHYSICIANS, OR FROM THE MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT OF THE PSYCHOPATHIC WARD AS DEFINED IN THE MENTAL DISEASES ACT THAT HE IS NOT A MENTAL DEFECTIVE.\*

# 1965

- Bill 16 repealed the section of the school act excluding Mental Defectives, it stated:  
*after one year of grace, a school district was responsible to provide education services (buildings and teachers) for “mentally retarded”\* children.*

*\* terminology used at the time*

# Commissions

- The Macfarlane Commission **1956/57** was the first in Manitoba to address the issue of special needs groups. The commission brought about general changes in the province and regarding special groups it said:  
***“EXISTING SERVICES WERE TOTALLY INADEQUATE ... That school divisions should provide facilities and teachers for mentally handicapped students based on provincial grants and that a supervisor of special education be appointed for the Department of Education.”***
- **1963** Christianson Report made two important recommendations:  
***“ That Handicapped students be educated in their home community and in regular school.  
That the Department of Education and Health establish regional units of support staff that would support schools and families in the communities where the students lived.”***

# 1974

- Deputy Minister of Education, Lionel Orlikow, established the special needs working group to study the needs of all Special Education students and to make recommendations for action.
- The working group produced Bill 58 which repealed all other references to Special Education and stated:

***“Every school board shall promote or make provision for the education of all resident persons who have the right to attend school and who require special programs for their education” This Bill would consolidate and clearly define the educational responsibility of school boards for all special needs children.***

*It was never proclaimed.*

# 1980s - Enabling Environments

- Special needs funding (Level 1, 2 and 3) introduced by the department with guidelines outlining application categories and student specific applications submitted for students to the department.
- **In 1988 individual schools or school divisions responsible for the appropriate distribution of monies, and supports to the high incidence (Level I) students with special needs.**
- The practice of supporting students' education by employing Educational Assistants became more and more common in the province.
- School divisions received support to assist in the hiring of qualified (Special Education Certification) educators. Non qualified educators were given 3 years to acquire the necessary courses to meet certification requirements

## 1990s - Inclusion

- **1993** - Funding for Level III was expanded to include students who were Deaf and those with Profound Emotional/Behavioural Disorders.
- School divisions no longer required to hire teachers with Special Education Certification as resource or special education teachers.
- **1995** - An Interdepartmental Agreement provides for support to students who are medically stable due to technology. An Interdepartmental Protocol was developed for students with Extreme Emotional Behavioural Disorders.
- **1995-2001 - Special Education Review and the Establishment of the Special Education Review Initiative.** A complete review of services for children and youth with special needs was completed and a response to the recommendations is under development.

# Special Education Review

- Policy
- Communication
- Educational supports
- Accountability
- Human resources
- Funding
- Intersectoral work

All of the recommendations in the Action Plan were acted on.

## 2006

- Manitoba Education conducted an external review of the Level 2/3 funding application process with stakeholders. The themes raised are summarized in the following list:
  - The application process is time-consuming.
  - The supporting information provided by school divisions in the application process is perceived as being negative/labeling.
  - Awaiting funding approval is stressful for parents and staff.
  - The public requires that the province be accountable for funding dollars.

# 2007

Changes to the application process:

- Provide maximum-year Level 2/3 funding to students with lifelong disabilities.
- Provide multi-year funding (up to four years) for students who are eligible for approval as emotionally/behaviourally disordered (EBD).
- School divisions required to submit a summary of attendance for all students receiving Level 2/3 funding.

## 2010/11

- Audit by the Auditor General's office began.
- Student Services Review and Reporting Process trial approved and three year rotation of school divisions developed – first non-pilot year begins.
- ABA Level 3 Equivalent was approved for school-age students leaving early years ABA program.
- The Seven Oaks School Division funding formula pilot for Level 2 begins.

# 2011/12

Auditor General's report published and recommendations reviewed and implemented:

- The Auditor General Review and Report conducted in 2010/11 recommended that **the province needs to monitor special needs educational programming given the increasing numbers of students funded and the increase in funding.** The report essentially indicates that monitoring for compliance in the delivery of appropriate educational programming is low.
- The Auditor General's review of school division special education files found examples where report card information was inconsistent with other information in the student files. In one case, the report card described a student as “responsible and mature, an independent learner, and a pleasure to work with” but the funding application to Education at the same time described the student as verbally and physically assaulting staff and students several times a day, and displaying dangerous behaviours towards both self and others several times a week.  
(Auditor General Report, January 2012)

**2014/15**

- Task Force struck – Recommendations to the Minister in October 2015.

# The Education of Students with Special Learning Needs has been influenced by:

- PARENTS who advocated.
- THE TIMES that dictated that civil and human rights include all citizens.
- GEOGRAPHY, TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION, TECHNOLOGY.
- ECONOMICS – financial support to encourage changes in practice.
- SOCIETY that accepted members of their community as having a right to feel safe protected and included.
- PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP that made it possible for students to have a quality education.
- POLITICAL IDEOLOGY that shaped the policy and provided leadership.

# Key Challenges

- Fundamental knowledge about the obligations that public schools have to education all students.
- Pre-service training and specialist certification.
- How funding is used.
- Motivation to change.
- Disparity amongst regions.
- Commitment to inclusion and equality, and meeting the changing and diverse needs of children in society.