



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Report on the Population

of Public School Students with Exceptionalities

Anglophone Sector
School Year 2004-2005

STUDENT SERVICES

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DIVISION

March 23, 2006

Background

The Department of Education has had a legislative mandate under the Education Act for inclusive schooling for the past 20 years. Since the introduction of *Bill 85 – An Act to Amend the Schools Act*, and the subsequent proclamation of the 1986 *Schools Act*, the public education system has moved first from to integration and then to inclusion such that all students would be educated in their neighborhood schools in regular classroom settings alongside their non-exceptional peers,. The current *Education Act*, (2001) states in Section 12:

Programs and services for exceptional pupils

12(1) Where the superintendent concerned, after consulting with qualified persons, determines that the behavioural, communicational, intellectual, perceptual or multiple exceptionalities of a person are contributing to delayed educational development such that a special education program is considered by the superintendent to be necessary for the person, that person shall be an exceptional pupil for the purposes of this Act.

12(2) The superintendent concerned shall ensure that the parent of a pupil is consulted during the process of the determination referred to in subsection (1), and in the process of developing special education programs and services for the pupil.

12(3) The superintendent concerned shall place exceptional pupils such that they receive special education programs and services in circumstances where exceptional pupils can participate with pupils who are not exceptional pupils within regular classroom settings to the extent that is considered practicable by the superintendent having due regard for the educational needs of all pupils.

12(4) Where an exceptional pupil is not able to receive a special education program or service in a school due to

(a) fragile health, hospitalization or convalescence, or

(b) a condition or need which requires a level of care that cannot be provided effectively in a school setting,

the superintendent concerned may deliver the program or service in the pupil's home or other alternative setting.

12(5) The Minister may issue policies to District Education Councils for the declaration of exceptional pupils under subsection (1) and the placement of exceptional pupils under subsection (3).

12(6) A decision made by a superintendent under subsection (1) or (3) shall be made

(a) subject to any policies or directives of the District Education Council concerned,
(b) subject to any policies issued by the Minister under subsection (5), and
(c) only with respect to pupils who are enrolled in a school in the school district or who reside in the school district for which the superintendent is appointed or reappointed.

1997, c.66, s.2; 2000, c.52, s.13.

This legislation, since its inception, has established New Brunswick's educational system as one of the most progressive in the world with respect to inclusionary practice. Throughout the past 20 years, university professors, educational administrators and teachers from various countries around the world have come to New Brunswick to visit public school classrooms and to meet with educators and district leaders to discuss how to implement and maintain inclusive school settings. OECD singled out New Brunswick in the books *Successful Services for our Children and Families at Risk*, 1996, and *Inclusive Education at Work*, 1999, for achievements in inclusionary practices.

Under the Education Act, students who are deemed to be exceptional must be provided with a special education program, defined under the legislation as:

"An education program for an exceptional pupil that is based on the results of continuous assessment and evaluation and which includes a plan containing specific objectives and recommendations for education services that meet the needs of the pupil;

This legislation, along with the Constitution Act and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Canadian Human Rights Act, and the New Brunswick Human Rights Act, all govern the ways and means that school districts provide services and programs to students who are deemed exceptional. Both the Department of Education and the school districts must make reasonable accommodations to the point of undue hardship in meeting the needs of all students and particularly those with varying degrees of disabilities.

Notwithstanding New Brunswick's reputation for a progressive educational context with respect to inclusion, New Brunswick's educational system does have a number of issues pertinent to the delivery of special educational programs and services that require continuing examination in order to improve the delivery system and to ensure that exceptional students learn and achieve to their potential. During the 2004-05 school year, A. Wayne MacKay, Professor of Law at Dalhousie University, has undertaken a review of Inclusive Supports and his report and its recommendations, released on March 15, 2006 will assist in setting new standards and benchmarks within an inclusionary framework. Among the deliverables and the many recommendations of the report include that of a recommendations for the elements of a policy statement on inclusion for the New Brunswick government. This policy statement will lay out the framework for our continuing determination and commitment to provide high quality educational programs and services to students who have exceptional learning needs.

Standards that apply to students who are not on a special education plan should equally apply to students with exceptionalities, where possible. Parents and educators must always set high expectations for exceptional students. Additionally, the only true picture of student achievement is one that reflects the achievement of all students. Thus, to

ensure that exceptional students are evaluated against common standards of achievement, the Department of Education must continue to strive to provide appropriate accommodations for the administration of school-based and external programs, services and assessments as is clear from the “*Quality Learning Agenda: Quality Schools, High Results.*”

In addition, it is clear from our experiences over the past twenty years that educators working with children with exceptionalities require the collaboration and support of others. These include parents, pre-school specialists, and many other professionals outside of the school system, including those within the health professions, such as physicians, nurses, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, mental health psychologists, social workers, and others. The Department of Education has, over the past several years, provided direction and guidance to school districts in their delivery of educational programs and services to students with exceptionalities. Early documents included:

- ⌚ *Working Guidelines on Integration (1988;*
- ⌚ *The Integration of Special Needs Pupils in New Brunswick Senior High Schools, February 1989;*
- ⌚ *Teacher Assistant Guidelines for Standards and Evaluation, May 1994;*
- ⌚ *Report of the Special Committee on Social Policy Development on the Review of School Integration, 1989;*
- ⌚ *Best Practices for Inclusion, July 199;*
- ⌚ *Cooperative Review of Services for Students with Exceptional Needs 1994.*

All provided focus for school districts in order to comply with both the letter and spirit of the law. During the intervening years, as more research emerged, knowledge has been gained about various exceptionalities. Accordingly, additional documents and resources have been developed and distributed to provide information, knowledge, and skills to educators in order to make New Brunswick’s school system as inclusive as possible. These documents include:

- *Gifted and Talent Students: A Resource Guide for Teachers, 1997;*
- *Teacher Assistant Support Protocol, July 1999;*
- *Resource for the Identification and Teaching of Students With Specific Learning Disability, November 1999;*
- *Resource for the Transition of Students with Exceptionalities from School to Work or Post Secondary and Adult Life, May 2000;*

- *Resource for Assisting Struggling Learners, September 2000;*
- *Guidelines for New Brunswick Alternative Education Programs and Services, March 2002;*
- *Guidelines and Standards-Educational Planning for Students With Exceptionalities, July 2002*
- *Teaching Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders 2005*
- *Electronic SEP 2005*
- *Boys, Girls, Learning 2005 (Draft)*
- *Supporting the SEP Process 2005 (Draft)*

The release of each of the documents listed also entailed either provincial or district in-service, and sometimes both. As well, many of the documents assisted the Department of Education in identifying specific summer institutes to help educators learn more about the areas described within the documents.

Purposes of Survey

It is important to effectively identify the programs and services that are required now and in the future, and to base decisions on data. Therefore, this second survey of exceptionalities contains data on the number of students in New Brunswick's English school system that are identified as exceptional students under the *Education Act*. It is expected that the data for future years will be available through the Electronic Special Education Plan. (E-SEP) introduced to the English school system in September 2005.

Although individual school districts continue to employ processes and procedures to identify the number of students who are exceptional and their needs, the purpose of the accounting has traditionally been for identifying the need for, and deployment of, teacher assistants. The Department of Education recognized that there are other areas that require a provincial perspective, such as the number, prevalence, incidence rates, distribution, and needs of districts related to students with exceptionalities. Accordingly, the information contained in this report provides assistance in defining the nature and extent of professional development, the development of support documents and strategies, policy decisions and in-service training that is necessary at school, district, and provincial levels. In addition, the information contained in this report may assist government in addressing the needs of students from a multi-disciplinary perspective, for example, through an integrated and coordinated services delivery model, as is recommended in the MacKay report. Certain information will inform programs and services to students with specific exceptionalities, such as specific learning disability, autism spectrum disorder, and attentional disorders. As well, information from the survey will assist in defining the knowledge, skills, and competencies that new and current teachers must acquire through both their pre-service and in-service teacher development.

Survey of Exceptionalities Methodology

Section 12 (1) of the Education Act identifies the following categories of exceptionalities:

1. 1. Behavioural
2. 2. Communicational
3. 3. Intellectual
4. 4. Perceptual
5. 5. Multiple exceptionalities

In order to be more precise in the determination of the nature of the above-mentioned exceptionalities, each of the categories were further subdivided using the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual -IV* terms of reference used by psychologists, psychiatrists and other medical practitioners, and which is a basis for this glossary of terms. All conditions required a documented diagnosis through collaboration with professionals.

Resource and methods teachers were asked to complete one form for each student who was receiving direct, indirect, or monitoring services from a methods and resource teacher. School district personnel, including School Principals, District Student Services Supervisors, Directors of Education, and Superintendents, supervised the compilation of data. The information contained in this report reflects the information provided to the Department of Education by each of the 9 English school districts.

Accuracy of Summary Data

The results of this survey, the second of a planned annual census related to the population of students served by resource teachers, do have a margin of error. The primary source of error remains that of lack of uniformity, or the subjectivity, in which individual raters, i.e. qualified personnel, applied the definitions of exceptionalities. (See Appendix A.) Individual school rater errors tend to cancel each other when data are summarized at the provincial level. The data is based upon a total of 14, 772 forms, each representing an exceptional student as defined under the Education Act, which were completed and returned by school districts. Based on the total student population at the time of 86,555, this indicates a total of 17.4 per cent of students within the anglophone school system were identified as being exceptional as per the Education Act.

General Analysis

The results of this second survey illustrate once again the wide diversity of students and the types of exceptionalities that are found within classrooms in New Brunswick's anglophone sector schools, and in particular within the English core program. Parental choice in placement of their children in either the English program or the French Immersion program continues to result in a significant number of students with exceptionalities in the English program. It can be assumed parents of exceptional children are selecting a learning environment that offers their children the greatest opportunity to succeed, in this case based on their mother tongue. Consequently, a significant percentage of services in support of exceptional students are found in the

English program. Services are intended for students regardless of the program placement; students with exceptionalities in the French Immersion program will receive services if they are identified as being exceptional.

The findings again confirm that teachers require regular and sustained professional development and in-service in understanding the nature and characteristics of the many different types of exceptionalities. In particular, teachers must be knowledgeable of the variety of methods of interventions required at early grade levels, i.e. K-2, to prevent some students from becoming students with exceptionalities due to inability to read. Differentiated instruction continues to be the most effective universal approach to meeting the needs of the diversity within the classrooms. The data also indicate a need to provide professional development in the areas associated with behaviour and intellectual conditions as well as some communication and perceptual/sensory conditions, particularly with respect to understanding conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, emotional disorder, language disorder, intellectual disorder, slow learner, learning disability and the burgeoning area of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Results of Survey

Based on September 30, 2004, English School District Population of 82, 819 Students

Number of Exceptionalities by District

District	Frequency	District Population	Percentage by District Population	Percentage by total provincial population
2	2570	16 671	17.4	3.10
6	1897	10 463	12.8	2.29
8	3516	13 477	23.8	4.25
10	938	4 521	6.3	1.13
14	1575	8 699	10.7	1.90
15	680	4 127	4.6	0.82
16	781	6 600	5.3	0.94
17	943	5 628	6.4	1.14
18	1885	12 633	12.7	2.28
District Totals	14 785			
Provincial Totals		82 819	100.0	17.85

The total percentage of students, 17.85, is consistent with the ranges (17% - 21%) of the other provinces in Atlantic Canada as well as those of other provinces across Canada. These figures are also consistent with the percentage of students who are classified as being special education students in the United States.

There is a fair degree of inter-district variability, though it is expected that larger centers with more services to offer, such as the Moncton, Saint John, Fredericton regions, will continue to have higher percentages of students with exceptionalities. As well, inconsistency of raters as well as subjectivity will account for some degree of variability, thus requiring that resource teachers be provided with continuing in-service, as well as pre-service, in understanding differences in the various exceptionalities.

Even when definitions of exceptionality are clearly defined and rigorously applied, as in other provinces and states, there continues to be geographic differences and significant differences between and among districts. The reasons for such are many and include the cultural context, socio-economic variables, educational variables, and others. Further research would have to be conducted to provide clear answers as to the variability among districts.

Number of Exceptionalities by Gender

District	Frequency	Percentage
2 Males	1 606	62.6
2 Females	961	37.4
6 Males	1 281	67.6
6 Females	615	32.4
8 Males	2 146	61.1
8 Females	1 368	38.9
10 Males	604	64.6
10 Females	331	35.7
14 Males	1 012	64.2
14 Females	563	35.7
15 Males	436	64.2
15 Females	243	35.8
16 Males	546	70.0
16 Females	234	30.0
17 Males	657	69.7
17 Females	286	30.3
18 Males	1 223	64.9
18 Females	660	35.1
Provincial Total Males	9 511	64.4
Provincial Total Females	5 261	35.6
Total Males and Females	14 772	100.0

Approximately $\frac{1}{3}^{\text{rd}}$ of New Brunswick's exceptional students are female and $\frac{2}{3}^{\text{rds}}$ of the exceptional students are male. There is remarkable consistency among the 9 districts. These figures are virtually identical on a provincial scale to those of the U.S.A where $\frac{1}{3}^{\text{rd}}$ of special needs students are female and $\frac{2}{3}^{\text{rds}}$ are male.

The trend to identify more males than females in any area of exceptionality is an international phenomenon. While there is national and provincial data to indicate that girls do better than boys in math, reading, and science, the analysis of why there are more male students who are exceptional than female is still under study. There are studies that identify maturational factors, as well as cognitive, medical, and psychological developmental reasons for the overall 2-to-1 gender gap. Other reasons that may contribute to the disparity between the genders are that boys tend to act out more, whereas girls tend to be more passive. Boys experiencing learning difficulties tend toward attentional or more obvious behavioural manifestations unlike girls who tend to be more compliant. Hence, boys tend to be identified more easily, particularly in those areas such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, or Specific Learning Disability where the exceptionality is less easily identified than a visible disability. Accordingly, there may be an over identification of males and an under identification of females. Results of the first survey provided the Department of Education with the impetus to intensively research “Boys, Girls, and Learning,” an initiative which is now being introduced to English school districts.

New Brunswick PISA results also show a general inequity between males and females; thus, it is not surprising that this is also reflected in the population of students with exceptionalities.

Students with Exceptionalities by Program

Program	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percentage
English Core	13 759	93.1	93.2
French Immersion	1 002	6.8	6.8
Total	14 761	99.8	100.0
Missing	24	.2	
Total	14 785	100.0	

Degree of Resource Teacher Support

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Direct	5 143	34.8	35.9	35.9
	Indirect	5 634	38.1	39.4	75.3
	Monitored	3 535	23.9	24.7	100.0
	Total	14 312	96.8	100.0	
Missing	System	473	3.2		
Total		14 785	100.0		

RESOURCE AND METHODS SERVICE

Direct -The student receives instruction individually or in a small group from the R & M teacher.

Indirect -The student receives accommodations, modification, or individualization of classroom programming from the classroom teacher as a result of consultation with the R & M teacher.

Monitored -The student is not receiving any accommodations, modifications, or individualization of classroom programming from the classroom teacher at this time, but the R & M teacher and the classroom teacher monitor the student's progress on a regular basis.

Regular classroom teachers are responsible for all students in their classes. Resource and Methods teachers provide a collaborative support model for teachers and students.

The number of full time equivalent Resource and Methods teachers for 2004-05 was 454 or 8.6 % of the total education staff population. This also reflects a ratio of one resource teacher for every 307 students k-12 during the 2004-05 school year.

Students with Exceptionalities Provincially by Grade Total Exceptionalities by Category

Grade	Frequency	Percentage of Total Number of Students with Exceptionalities
K	455	3.1
1	815	5.5
2	1 024	12.6
3	1152	7.8
4	1237	8.4
5	1413	9.6
6	1340	9.1
7	1314	8.9
8	1330	9.0
9	1546	10.5
10	1301	8.8
11	1066	7.2
12	772	5.2
Unaccounted		
Total	14 785	100.0

School Level	Frequency	Percentage of Total Number of Students with Exceptionalities
Elementary School (K-5)	6 096	41.2
Middle School (6-8)	3 984	26.9
High School (9-12)	4 685	31.7
Unaccounted	20	.1
Total	14 785	100.0

Total Exceptionalities by Category

	Frequency	Percentage of Students with Exceptionalities	Percentage of Total Student Population
Behavioural	4278	28.9	5.16
Communication Disorder	2 197	14.9	2.65
Intellectual Conditions	8 949	60.5	10.80
Physical Conditions	866	5.9	1.04
Perceptual/Sensory	4237	28.7	5.11

Some students, though entered only once by the school, may have one or more conditions for which they are being served by Resource Teachers and other professionals. For example, a student with a specific learning disability may also have attentional difficulties, i.e., ADD, ADHD

Exceptionalities by Behavioural Condition

Behavioural Condition	Frequency	Percentage of Students with Exceptionalities	Percentage of total population
Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder	1 739	11.8	2.09
Disruptive Behaviour Disorder	316	2.1	0.38
Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder	62	0.4	0.07
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)	69	0.5	0.08
Bipolar Disorder	49	0.3	0.06
Tourette's Syndrome	94	0.6	1.13
Emotional Disorder	192	1.3	0.23
Schizophrenia	3	0.0	0.003
Other	2 266	15.3	2.74
Total	4 790	32.40	5.78

**EXCEPTIONALITIES BY
COMMUNICATION CONDITIONS**

Communication Condition	Frequency	Percentage of Students with Communicational Exceptionalities	Percentage of total population
Autism	258	1.7	0.33
Asperger's Disorder	178	1.2	0.21
Rett's Disorder	2	0.0	0.0
Pervasive Developmental Disorder	208	1.4	0.25
Selective Mutism	28	0.2	0.03
Language Disorder	665	4.5	0.08
Other Communication Disorder	969	6.6	1.17
Total	2308	15.6	2.79

**EXCEPTIONALITIES BY
INTELLECTUAL CONDITIONS**

Intellectual Conditions	Frequency	Percentage of Resource Students with Intellectual Exceptionalities	Percentage of total population
Intellectual Disability	868	5.9	1.05
Slow Learner	2 870	19.4	3.47
Other (undiagnosed)	5 336	36.1	6.44
Totals	9 074	61.4	10.96

**EXCEPTIONALITIES BY
PHYSICAL CONDITIONS**

Physical Conditions	Frequency	Percentage of Resource Students with Intellectual Exceptionalities	Percentage of total population
Gross Motor Disability	145	1.0	0.18
Cerebral Palsy	123	0.8	0.15
Mobility Device Required	121	0.8	0.15
Medically Fragile	136	0.9	0.16
Spina Bifada	36	0.2	0.04
Other undiagnosed	509	3.4	0.61
Total	1070	7.1	1.29

**EXCEPTIONALITIES BY PERCEPTIONAL SENSORY
CONDITIONS PROVINCIALY**

Perceptual/Sensory Conditions	Frequency	Percentage of Resource Students with Perceptual/Sensory Exceptionalities	Percentage of total population
Learning Disability	1422	9.6	1.17
Central Auditory Processing Disorder	313	2.1	0.38
Other (undiagnosed)	2215	15.0	2.67
Blind or Visually Impaired	135	0.9	0.16
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	294	2.0	0.35
Total	4379	29.6	

Conclusion

New Brunswick's educational achievements related to inclusion and leadership in inclusionary practices are emulated in all provinces in Canada and in many countries around the world. Nevertheless, it is clear from qualitative and quantitative information gathered that a number of issues should be addressed to ensure that students with exceptionalities are being educated, commensurate with their abilities, to the highest expectations of all students. The MacKay Review of Inclusive Supports will largely determine the nature and scope of educational policies, programs, services, processes, and procedures that will guide inclusive education in New Brunswick.

The Department of Education extends its appreciation to all educators who have participated in this survey. In addition, the Department of Education offers support to districts as they study their data and make plans to sustain / implement programs and services that enable all students to achieve curricular outcomes to the best of their ability.

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Appendix A

Glossary of Terms

BEHAVIOURAL CONDITIONS

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder - A condition typically characterized by inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity which interfere with a child's ability to concentrate and complete schoolwork

Oppositional Defiant Disorder – Children with this disorder present as manipulative, self-focused, willful, and defiant of authority figures

Disruptive Behaviour/Conduct Disorder – A repetitive and persistent pattern of behaviour in which the basic rights of others as well as societal norms or rules are violated

Tourette's Syndrome -A neurological condition characterized by either verbal or motor "tics" which can interfere with a child's learning and social interactions

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder – A condition characterized by recurrent obsessions or compulsions that are severe enough to be time consuming or cause marked distress and is recognized as excessive and unreasonable

Schizophrenia - A complex biochemical disorder of the brain often marked by disorganization of thought, social withdrawal, lack of attention and apathy.

Bipolar Disorder - A condition characterized by unpredictable and volatile mood swings, from high energy to rages, which interfere with a child's ability to function effectively at home, at school and in social situations

Emotional Disorders – A range of problems including: depression, separation/attachment problems, problem eating-behaviours, post-traumatic stress disorder, phobias, and anxiety disorders

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) - Abnormalities associated with the mother's drinking alcohol during pregnancy. Defects range from mild to severe, including growth retardation, brain damage, intellectual disability, hyperactivity, anomalies of the face, and heart failure.

COMMUNICATION DISORDERS

Autism -A condition typically characterized by the presence of markedly abnormal or impaired development in social interaction and communication and a restricted repertoire of activity and interests.

Rett's Disorder - This condition usually shows a loss of multiple skills following a period of normal functioning after birth; e.g. speech, mobility, interests.

Asperger's Disorder -This disorder usually shows impairment in social interaction and the development of restricted, repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests, and activities with no significant delays in language, cognitive development, self-help skills, adaptive behaviour, or curiosity about the environment.

Pervasive Developmental Disorder - Not Otherwise Specified - A condition typically characterized by impairment in the development of reciprocal social interaction or verbal and nonverbal communication skills, or when stereotyped behaviour, interests and activities are present, but do not fall under other categories.

Selective Mutism -A condition typically shown by the persistent failure/refusal to speak in specific social situations.

Language Disorders -Conditions typically characterized by impairment in expressive or receptive language skills, articulation, or by the presence of stuttering.

INTELLECTUAL CONDITIONS

Intellectual disability - A condition in which the child's learning abilities are significantly impaired such that an individualized program is required

Slow learner - Children with this designation would be those who need considerable repetition and practice with the basic components of the curriculum, and thus require modification in their educational program

PERCEPTUAL/SENSORY CONDITIONS

Learning Disability -A condition typically found in persons of average to above average potential who display processing deficits in attention, visual processing, auditory processing, visual perception, language, written expression, math, organization, or memory that interfere with their ability to learn.

Central Auditory Processing Disorder - A specific type of auditory processing disorder characterized by the presence of uneven response on audiological assessments.

Deaf or Hard of Hearing -Persons with this condition must have been diagnosed as deaf or hard of hearing by a medical practitioner or audiologist.

Blind or Visually Impaired - Persons with this condition must have been diagnosed legally blind or partially sighted by a medical practitioner or optometrist.

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

Gross Motor Disability - with this disability, there is an obvious impairment in the development of motor coordination such that it interferes with academic achievement or the activities of daily living.

Medically Fragile - This would characterize students who have a severe medical condition(s) that requires constant attention, and often interferes with the child's opportunity to learn. A physician has identified this condition(s) and the student is under a doctor's care.

Cerebral Palsy - A neurological condition that requires a physician's diagnosis.

Spina Bifida -A condition that results in the congenital midline defect of the spinal column.