





## *Message from Minister Jody Carr*

*I am very pleased that we can share some of the encouraging things happening in New Brunswick schools as we implement the action plan based on the “Strengthening Inclusion, Strengthening Schools” report. It’s important for us to celebrate our success stories and to share best practices within our education system. Inside this publication you will see examples of how our education professionals are using innovation and 21st century practices to fully engage our diverse learners.*

*As Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, I am proud to work with parents and educators to build on our strengths and make our schools as effective as possible. Our government believes that each child must be supported and encouraged to reach their full potential in positive, inclusive learning environments within a stronger province. We want to support the learning of all students and create a culture of belonging and achievement in our schools.*

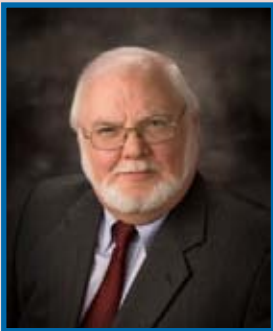
*We look forward to continuing to work with our partners and stakeholders to ensure that we will have many more stories of success in the years ahead.*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jody Carr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

*Hon. Jody Carr*

*Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development*

## *An interview with Gordon Porter and Angèle AuCoin*



**Gordon L. Porter, C.M** is a member of the Order of Canada. He worked in the New Brunswick school system for more than 30 years, was a faculty member at the University of Maine at Presque Isle and has been a consultant and speaker on inclusive education in countries in many parts of the world. He received the CEA Whitworth Award and has edited two books on inclusive education.



**Angèle AuCoin, Ph.D.**, is a professor at the University of Moncton. She has been a teacher and resource teacher and has focused her academic research on inclusive education. She is a partner in several research groups with professional colleagues in Canada as well as Spain and Switzerland. Her latest projects include a study on inclusion in high schools and a book on inclusive practices.

*Gordon Porter and Angèle AuCoin are spearheading the implementation of the recommendations in their report on inclusive education in the province entitled, Strengthening Inclusion, Strengthening Schools. The two inclusion experts conducted the year-long review in 2011 and their report was released by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) in June 2012. Minister Jody Carr launched a three-year action plan at that time and appointed Porter and AuCoin to lead it.*

### **What is the most important thing we need to do to improve inclusive practice in our schools?**

**GP:** We want to get district and school leaders to focus on the practices and approaches that will support teachers and students. We want to engage them in the process and make sure we build on the knowledge and skills already in place in New Brunswick schools.

**AA:** One of the priorities is to make sure the support staff in schools, the resource teachers, educational assistants, and others are enhancing the work of the teacher and strengthening effective teaching in every classroom.

### **How are you going about this?**

**AA:** In this first year, we are working with district staff to organize training and skill-building modules for resource teachers and school principals. We are doing that in both Francophone and Anglophone schools. We have found that people want to get engaged and want to share with each other what works and what challenges they encounter each day.

**GP:** Another strategy we are working on is to develop and clarify the roles of the various staff members who work with classroom teachers and students. This includes resource teachers, literacy teachers, guidance counselors, educational assistants and others. There is always room for flexibility in what people do, but we have to work to see that time is spent on the things that make the biggest difference in student success and that are evidence-based.

**AA:** I agree. And I also think we have the knowledge among our educational staff to do this. Teachers in New Brunswick are well trained and we find ways for them to share good practices among themselves.

**GP:** What Angèle says is backed up by a survey we did after a professional learning day held in every Anglophone school in New Brunswick in October 2012. When asked what support they valued the most, the highest rated answer was “time to collaborate and plan with colleagues.” Collaboration with parents and other professionals was next on their list. The good thing about that was that these are things we can do that are not high tech or high cost.

### **Are you optimistic you can get the job done in three years?**

**AA:** I think we can do a great deal in three years to assist teachers, principals and other educational staff to understand better how we can make inclusion work and at the same time make our schools better for all our children. That’s why we selected the title for our report. We have a lot to do, but I am confident we can make a real difference. We have the support of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the partnership with the seven school districts and their leaders.

**GP:** I’m not sure “getting the job done” is the way to say it. I’ve worked in the New Brunswick education system for many years and my observation is that few things are ever “done.” We will need to work on school improvement and student success in learning well beyond the three-year period. But we can definitely raise the bar and do better. My confidence is reinforced by the positive energy and commitment I see from the school staff and parents we have been working with.

## Any final words?

**GP:** I am pleased to see the commitment to this process from the minister and senior officials in the department, right down to the districts and individual schools. We have been working at making our schools inclusive for more than 25 years and this is an opportunity to renew and reinvigorate this important pillar in our education system. I am honored to have the chance to work on it.

**AA:** I work at the university in teacher training. I must say the values and understanding of inclusion by the young people becoming teachers in New Brunswick is quite remarkable. They know inclusion is important and they want to learn how to carry it out in their classrooms. The future will see them meet the challenges and be successful with inclusion.

## Inclusion through "spanish eyes"



**Odet Moliner Garcia**  
Professor in the Department of Education,  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,  
University Jaume I, Castellón (Spain).

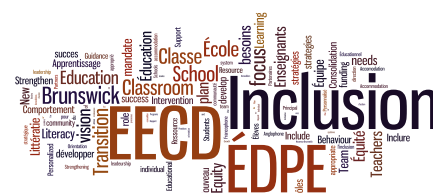
When I visited New Brunswick in 2007 with a research grant from the Valencian government, I had the great opportunity to visit schools, interview academics and teachers, meet method and resources teachers, members of community associations and families, and learn about inclusive education theories and practices.

The hospitality provided by method and resources teachers from Southern Carlton Elementary School and the Centennial Elementary School in Woodstock made my stay unforgettable. In both cases I experienced everyday practices in an inclusive school where every child is enrolled including those with serious cognitive delays. Clearly teachers can make inclusion a reality in ways not commonly seen in Europe.

I was also very impressed by the role of parents and their organizations in partnering with schools to ensure the practice of inclusion. They supported individual families, analyzed critical cases, and took action to make inclusion a reality for the child.

In June 2012, I had the opportunity to visit New Brunswick again and attended a conference in Fredericton where the state of inclusion was reviewed. Dr. Porter and Dr. Aucoin presented their report Strengthening Inclusion, Strengthening Schools and the action plan for the next three years. What impressed me the most was to hear the Minister of Education announce the government would invest significant resources and effort to implement the plan. Unfortunately, in my country, politicians are not giving priority to investing in inclusive public education.

The situation of inclusion in your province is a benchmark for us in Spain and in Europe. We see clearly from your example that the development of inclusion is possible. Even if it takes time to have people and institutions learn and develop ways to make inclusion effective, it is a good path to follow. Dear Canadian friends, teachers, parents, school principals, I thank you for working to not only improve inclusion in schools, but also to build a more just and humane society.



## EECD Staff Leaders – Anglophone sector



**Brian Kelly** is the Director of Education Support Services at the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. He previously served as a School Psychometrist and district resource team member for schools in the Woodstock area for more than 15 years. He was the Learning Specialist for Student Services in the former School District 14 prior to joining the department. Throughout his career his work has been on supporting student-centred and inclusive practice.



**Tanya Whitney** is the Project Executive for Inclusion and Intervention and is working with district and ministry leaders to implement the inclusive education action plan. She has been a teacher and school administrator at both the elementary and middle school levels in the former School District 18 and 8, as well as working in the First Nations community. Tanya has been focused on school improvement and professional growth in her recent work. In her present role she is engaging district and school leaders in efforts to improve inclusive practice.

## Director of Education Support Services – Anglophone sector



**Catherine Blaney** is the Director of Education Support Services for ASD-W. She has been a classroom teacher, resource teacher, literacy mentor and school principal. She was the Learning Specialist for Student Services in the former School District 17 prior to her current appointment.



**Brenda Mawhinney** is the new Education Support Services Director for ASD-E. Brenda has worked in a variety of roles in the district, as classroom teacher, resource teacher, former district supervisor of student services and early years and most recently as the Principal at Claude D. Taylor School.



**Kathryn McLellan** is the Director of Education Support Services for ASD-S. She has been a Learning Specialist in both the former School District 6 and School District 8, and also was a member of the Student Services staff at the Department of Education in Fredericton.



**Lynn Orser** is the Director of Education Support Services in ASD-N. She was employed as a Learning Specialist for Student Services in the former School District 16 and previously worked as a teacher, resource teacher, and district staff member in several New Brunswick communities.

## EECD Staff Leaders – Francophone sector



**Gina St-Laurent** is the Director of Services d'appui à l'Éducation in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Prior to joining the Department in 2006, she was an instructor in the area of community services at the Campbellton campus of the CCNB. She was also the provincial coordinator of learning support services for all five campuses of the CCNB. Her career path has always been related to inclusive education practices in the schools and in post-secondary institutions.



**Sophie Pitre-Boudreau** participated in a workshop at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières in which researchers and students did a Canada-wide comparative analysis of legislation and policies with respect to inclusive schools. She is now a learning specialist in inclusive education training in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, but before that, she was a vice-principal, a teacher, and a resource teacher in School District 5, L'Étoile du Nord.



**Tanya Roy** is the Inclusion Coordinator. She is currently working on implementing the action plan on inclusive education based on the report entitled *Strengthening Inclusion, Strengthening Schools*. Her job consists mainly of working with school leaders, school districts, and the Department to improve inclusive education practices. Tanya's career at School District 1 in Fredericton has seen her work as a classroom teacher for different grade levels, a resource teacher, a vice-principal, and a principal. She has mainly worked at the elementary level; however, she was employed for several years at a K-12 school, so she has a lot of experience collaborating with high school administrators.

## Director of Education Support Services – Francophone sector



**Céline Tanguay** is the Director of Education Support Services for the Francophone nord-ouest school district. She worked as a resource teacher and a teacher for many years in school districts 1 and 3. She was in charge of developing the dyslexia intervention strategy in cooperation with the Department before becoming the special education coordinator for School District 3.



**Susan Arseneault** is the Director of Education Support Services for the Francophone nord-est school district. She started her career as a resource teacher and later worked as a learning specialist responsible for special education and other areas in School District 5 for several years before taking on her current role.



**Pauline Légère** is the Director of Education Support Services for the Francophone sud school district. She was an elementary school homeroom teacher, vice-principal, and principal in school districts 1 and 11, as well as a learning specialist responsible for special education and other areas in School District 1 for several years before taking on her current role.

## Minister Jody Carr's mandate: Improvement and Inclusion



Photo: Michael Fullan, Gordon Porter, Angèle AuCoin and Hon. Jody Carr at workshop in Fredericton.

Hon. Jody Carr, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD), has emphasized the need for New Brunswick schools to improve student learning and do so in an inclusive context. "We need to increase student success in learning in our province and we need to build on the 25 year effort to make our schools inclusive so every child benefits from our efforts," said Carr.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) has called on the expertise of Michael Fullan, the retired Dean of Education at the University of Toronto to suggest strategies to make change happen for school improvement. New Brunswick experts, Gordon Porter and Angèle AuCoin have provided the stimulus for connecting school improvement to inclusive practices. Fullan, Porter and AuCoin have been part of leadership training with

educational leaders in the province in June 2011 and again in June 2012.

"I am very pleased that senior officials in the department and in our seven school districts are able to work with these three experts," Carr said. "I look forward to the positive differences we can make for our teachers and students."

## You go, Kiana!



Kiana Robichaud, age seven, attends École La Relève in Saint-Isidore. Lively, independent,

and a go-getter, she swims, skates and plays soccer. Like the other children? Yes, except that Kiana was born with a moderate to severe hearing loss in her right ear and severe to profound loss in her left ear.

How does that change her life at school? Very little. "We've always treated her like the other children. At school, it's the same," said Érika Robichaud, Kiana's mother. "We haven't tried to hide her hearing problems. She wears red hearing aids, and she's proud of them."

Early intervention probably made all the difference in Kiana's successful

inclusion. Her parents were determined, and they did everything possible to give Kiana the same chances as the other children as soon as they received the diagnosis. "She was screened at nine days old, and she got her first hearing aids when she was two months old. It was very important to us," Robichaud explained.

At four months, Kiana received the services of Odette Boudreau, a teacher of students with a sensory loss. She did exercises and played games with Kiana to stimulate her language. In fact, she worked with Kiana all through her early childhood years and while she was in kindergarten.

Now Kiana is in Grade 2. She uses a rich vocabulary and can keep up with the rest of her group. There is an FM system in her classroom that amplifies her teacher's voice. She

participates in all activities without an educational assistant.

Kiana has never been bullied or discriminated against, but she was often questioned about her hearing aids. With the help of the school's resource teacher, she gave a presentation to the two Grade 2 classes to explain the usefulness of the two intriguing pieces of plastic in her ears.

Robichaud never doubted her daughter's ability to adapt to a regular class. "I had confidence in her. She was a go-getter and had a lot of friends. I knew everything would be all right with the FM system. Her only challenge is her small ears. Otherwise, she is like the other children...better even."

## Celebrating differences and building community

*Deborah Hicks, Millidgeville North School*

In Deborah Hicks's classroom, diversity is a reason to celebrate.

"We are all part of a community," says Hicks, who teaches Grade 3 at Millidgeville North School. "We need to celebrate the differences that we bring to it and learn from those."

Hicks teaches students who come from a wide variety of cultures. On birthdays, happy birthday is sung not only in English, but also in French, Chinese, Arabic, Swedish, Dutch, Korean and sign language. She's also had a Chinese student's mother come to class to teach the students about Chinese art and culture.

Her class features not only students with different heritages, but different abilities as well. One of her students is in a wheelchair, so Hicks has designed her classroom to ensure everything is low enough for the student to be able to reach without assistance and that there is enough room for him to maneuver his chair. Even something as simple as going to recess has been made inclusive. The whole class takes the slightly longer, wheelchair-accessible route when they exit the building.

"We want that child to be a part of our class," she says. "He has to go this way, we're a community and we all go that way. Even if he's absent for the day, that is our route."

To help ensure learners at all levels are able to progress in their learning, Hicks often works with the students in small groups during class time.

"So if you come into our classroom, no one is standing out," she says. "We're all working on what it is we need to make us the strongest learners we can be."





## ***Building a culture of belonging***

### *Sir James Dunn Academy*

At Sir James Dunn Academy, in Saint Andrews, the staff takes a holistic approach in ensuring they meet the needs of students to allow them to fully participate in school life.

When a student is struggling in his or her studies, the student services team looks beyond the student's academic abilities. A staff member connects with the student, establishes a relationship, and asks about any issues he or she is experiencing in life.

"Not talking about academics, but 'How are you doing? What's going on in your life? What's causing you difficulties right now?'" says the school's principal, David O'Leary.



*David O'Leary, principal and Cathy Dunfield, vice-principal*

With a lot of local community support from outside agencies such as Kiwanis, local churches and businesses who donate resources to provide extra support to students, O'Leary says that the school has been able to buy students glasses, extra food, clothing, and other supports. By helping them with other issues, it allows the students to better focus on their academics.

"Because if their essential primary needs are not being met, they aren't going to be successful," O'Leary says.

The school is also a demonstration site for the Integrated Service Delivery Model. Housed at the school is a team of professionals from various government departments including mental-health and addictions social workers, school counsellors, and child and youth care workers. The team and the school are able to work closely together with children with multiple needs in those areas.

In the classroom, O'Leary says teachers work to keep the students engaged in their learning and ensuring everyone is making progress. Celebrating personal bests is a key element.

"We try to stress working with students, developing individualized learning plans," he says. "Especially students who have struggled in the past or who are experiencing difficulties, to set arrangements up where they're able to win early, win often, and celebrate every opportunity."

Teachers are encouraged to use project-based learning and offer choices in types of assessment, so that students can best show their strengths, while working on improving the areas where they are weaker.

The school is seeing results, with rising provincial assessment scores. In the 2012 provincial assessments, 90 percent of Grade 9 students were at or above the appropriate level in reading and 100 percent were at or above the appropriate level in writing. The individualized learning plans are also deterring some at-risk students from dropping out.

Vice-principal Cathy Dunfield says building strong connections and trust between the staff and students is a key element to building an inclusive school.

"Listen to the students, talk to the students, build a relationship with them," she says. "They're very straight shooters if they feel they can trust you."

Other initiatives the school has undertaken to ensure a safe and inviting environment for all include anti-bullying efforts, mental health awareness, and a student-led gay-straight alliance.

In all their efforts, O'Leary and his team work to build a culture of belonging in their school.

## Getting teachers involved and getting creative

Gary Gallant, Devon Middle School

Devon Middle School Principal Gary Gallant says one of the keys to success for inclusion in schools is involving classroom teachers in the process.

He speaks from experience, as a few years ago, the school's teacher survey showed that teachers didn't feel empowered in helping to make decisions about student behaviour.

"They felt a disconnect between the administration and them," he said. "We saw a real need to include teachers in the whole process."

Gallant says there has been a great improvement since then and teachers are now more involved.

Teacher involvement in decisions regarding allotment of support staff is also important. The EA allotments and assignments with the resource teachers are done in consultation with the teachers, Gallant says.

The school has built in flexibility with how its support staff members work with students. Resources teachers are assigned to grade levels and EAs are shared instead of being assigned to specific students. Gallant says this not only allows the school the freedom to be able to readjust the assignment of EAs as the needs of students change, it also promotes personal development of the students.

"What we want to do is foster the independence of the student so they're not reliant on the EA."

Gallant points to the Devon Hockey League, a lunchtime extra-mural ball hockey league, as a whole-school inclusive activity that has a place for everyone who wants to participate, regardless of their challenges.

Another area the school focuses on is the inclusion of First Nations students. With over 50 First Nations students at the school, several support staff are dedicated to meeting their unique needs. The students feel a sense of belonging at the school. Other school staff members have undergone training to learn about the challenges First Nations students face.

Perhaps one of the most visible inclusion efforts at the school is the beautiful First Nations Garden. An interdisciplinary, multi-grade school-wide project with a high level of student involvement, the First Nations Garden provides all students with a beautiful location for outdoor classes and presentations and an opportunity to learn everything from art to science.

"It has become so massive in the past two years that it's taken on a life of its own," says Gallant.

With indigenous plants and other elements rooted in First Nations culture, Gallant says the garden is a project the entire school has embraced.



## A student spreads the word to end the word

Annica Collette, Miramichi Valley High School



One high school student leader is demonstrating how students can make a big difference in making their school a positive and welcoming place for all.

Annica Collette, a Grade 11 student at Miramichi Valley High School was inspired to introduce the “Spread the Word to End the Word” campaign at her school after working as a counsellor at Camp Rotary last summer. The campaign aims to raise the consciousness of society about the dehumanizing and hurtful effects of the words “retard” and “retarded” and encourages people to pledge to stop using the “r-word.”

“It has such a negative connotation to it, because it’s used to replace words like stupid and idiot and that is definitely not something that should

be associated with people with disabilities,” she said.

Collette worked tirelessly creating posters, videos and other materials to promote the campaign. And she is seeing results, having collected over 300 pledges to date from students and staff members.

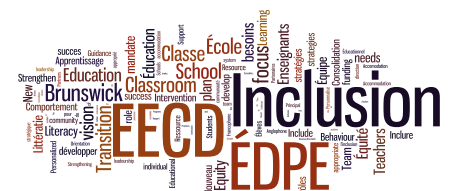
She decided to further encourage inclusion in her school by organizing a Best Buddies program, where students with intellectual disabilities are matched in a one-to-one friendship based on their interests. Twelve students are now involved in the program at Miramichi Valley High School, participating in weekly meetings and organizing lunchtime and extra-curricular activities that include all students who wish to participate.

Collette recently received a National Inclusive Education Award for her efforts to make her school more inclusive presented by the New Brunswick Association for Community Living.

On top of her efforts, she is also her school’s student council vice-president, plays rugby and works part-time. A motivated self-starter, Collette isn’t finished her work on inclusion – she now plans to organize a youth rally in support of inclusion.

She encourages other students to get involved in making their school a welcoming and respectful environment for all students.

“We need to have an attitude of inclusion and accept people for who they are.”



## Applying a lifetime of experience to inclusive education

*Julie Stone, educational consultant*



With 40 years of experience in the education system, Julie Stone has seen inclusion evolve in New Brunswick from its very inception.

She has seen a marked increase in the level of participation of students with intellectual disabilities. At one time, she says, they would learn only basic skills such as folding laundry or cooking in separate classrooms and would occasionally be invited to participate in extracurricular activities with other students. She now sees the education system working to ensure students of all types of diversity, including those with intellectual disabilities, are included as fully as possible.

"We want to see all of our students educated together as far as we can," she says.

But the biggest change Stone has noticed over those forty years is the attitude of teachers.

"They're much more positive," she says. "Now I see students being assumed to be intelligent and that they can learn, and so they are working on literacy strategies and including students in science and other interesting classes like that."

Now an educational consultant, Stone works with teachers, mostly at the high school level, to be better

prepared to teach students who have learning challenges, including those who have intellectual disabilities. She does this both through workshops with multiple teachers and working with teachers one-on-one.

In her work with individual teachers, she helps them apply inclusionary practices in the planning of one full unit of study that they use in their classroom, complete with assignments and worksheets.

"We plan that whole unit of study using differentiated instruction, universal design and other strategies that are just good teaching practice," she says.

Stone and the teacher get specific in how to apply those strategies to the classroom, which is important for the teachers who often tell Stone they get the theory of differentiated instruction, but need help in applying it to their classroom.

A common strategy Stone teaches is to shift away from lecturing for most of the period. She suggests breaking up the lessons into 20 minute blocks, with 20 minutes for lecture or teacher demonstration, 20 minutes for guided practice, and 20 minutes for independent work.

After their one-on-one planning day is complete, Stone goes to the school to observe the teacher using the unit they planned and provides feedback with recommendations for adaptations.

Most teachers give Stone permission to share the units they created with other teachers, which facilitates the sharing of knowledge and best practices among classroom teachers.

For the future, Stone hopes to see more advances in technology that will help students be able to participate even further in their learning. "I often talk about Stephen Hawking ... without the electronics that man would be sitting in a corner." Julie Stone considers him a prime example of what incredible value a person with a disability can bring to society given the right tools and support.



## ***It's better with two***

*Joanne Couturier-Caron and Valérie Boudreau, École La Croisée*



A fine pair! Joanne Couturier-Caron and Valérie Boudreau of École La Croisée in Robertville have found a solution for managing differences in the classroom: team teaching.

"We love it!" said Couturier-Caron. "While one is teaching, the other focuses on any personalized supports for particular learners. It's an excellent way of doing things!"

The two teachers and their 38 Grade 5 students share a large room. One side is reserved for teaching and giving instructions, and the other is dedicated to learning centres, workshops, enrichment, and teamwork. Although the two teachers have their specialties, integration is the order of the day.

"That way we can improve our teaching, delve further into concepts, and take the students' needs into account better," said Couturier-Caron. "One of us is always available. The students don't have to wait. They get the help they need right away."

This way of doing things promotes a quality relationship with the students. For instance, last year, they had an introverted student who was having problems in school and was quite oppositional. Since there were two of them, they could be attentive to his needs and offer him the attention he needed. By concentrating on his interests and making the most of his strengths, they gently won him over. Projects requiring his naturalist and logical-mathematical intelligence, manual work, and breaks from school work are what helped this child to thrive.

Then of course there was patience, lots of patience.

"We had time to give him a lot of attention and win his trust. We saw a transformation in him. It wouldn't have been as successful without team teaching. We wouldn't have had the time," Breaud explained.

The two teachers are adamant about the close relationship they have been able to develop with the children. They are very proud that all the students trust them both equally.

"We like team teaching so well that we'd like to continue working that way for the rest of our careers!" said Couturier-Caron.



## Students benefit from technology at the Centre d'apprentissage du Haut-Madawaska (CAHM)

The Centre d'apprentissage du Haut-Madawaska (CAHM) in Clair, is a learning centre that has made quite a reputation for itself. But how does this school, which focuses on technology in education, manage to be inclusive?

"Technology is an escape route for students having problems," said Danis Michaud, a grade 7 and 8 teacher.

Technology can help the students avoid the pitfalls of written language.

"They have a choice. They can, for instance, use pictures or podcasts or make a video," Michaud explained. And all the students at the school have a personal blog, a YouTube account, and a Twitter account.

An autistic student is able to communicate more easily by means of an iPod touch, on which he can point to images to make a request. He can also use video segments made by other students that model certain social skills. "That's how he learned how to order in the cafeteria," explained Tina Boulay-Therrien, a resource teacher.

In their concern to be like the others, some teenagers hesitate to use the tools that would help them. At CAHM, the question never arises. In grades 7 and 8, all students have access to a laptop as required. "Everyone is on an equal footing," said Michaud. There are no differences between the students. They all have access to an online dictionary and self-correction software. Some have access to software that helps them with writing if necessary. Individual electronic dictionaries are available to everyone as well.

In an effort to ease the transition between CAHM and high school, students are even encouraged to use the technological tools they have in their pockets – iPod touch and smartphones.

Technology is also a valuable tool for the teachers. Geneviève Sénéchal, a literacy teacher, uses a type of software that enables her to record excerpts of students reading, make note of the miscue analysis, and follow their progress. Claudine Dionne, the Vice-Principal and a teacher at CAHM, uses a collaborative writing site, which gives her access to her students' writing process and enables her to provide direct feedback.

It seems that technology provides the biggest payoff in motivation and perseverance. "The students, even the ones having problems, want to keep going because the finished product is always great," said Dionne.





## ***Becoming an agent of change***

*Manon Boucher, École Mgr-François-Bourgeois*



There's no doubt that Manon Boucher is a leader. After 17 years of experience, the Grade 2 teacher at École Mgr-François-Bourgeois in Shediac felt the need to recharge her batteries.

"I was truly convinced that I needed to do things differently if I wanted different results," Boucher said emphatically.

The turning point came during a master's level course on students with learning difficulties. "The discussions with Professor Angèle Aucoin and the other students really changed my outlook."

At the end of the training session, Boucher developed her professional development plan. Her primary objective was to become an agent for change regarding inclusion in her workplace.

"I don't just want to watch the parade go by, I want to be in the parade!" she exclaimed.

With the principal's help, Boucher and a dozen colleagues formed an education committee to move forward with inclusive education.

A few of the committee's concrete actions in 2012-2013 included reading and discussing the Porter-Aucoin Report, sharing strategies as a team, meeting with the district's French learning specialist, holding a presentation on reciprocal teaching and the Daily Five.

"The objective is to find out about and learn the best practices," Boucher explained.

By constantly questioning and being open to innovative ideas, this teacher puts her new knowledge into practice with her students. There is a long list: diversify her teaching, play on the students' strengths, use multiple intelligences, allow choice, and give students challenges appropriate to their abilities, among others.

Her method of working with the different educators has also changed. Now when the educational assistant comes into the classroom, Boucher insists that she circulate and be involved with the whole group.

"Before, when you entered a classroom, you would see the assistant sitting beside a student. You could tell who needed help right away.

I don't want that anymore," she emphasized.

Similarly, the literacy teacher is not to work with the same students all year long any more. From now on, teamwork is the name of the game. The two teachers identify an objective and target certain students. During the Daily Five in class, the literacy teacher works with the students who were selected. These intervention blocks may last from four to six weeks. After that they set different objectives and form new groups.

This motivated leader has not finished evolving. In clear view at the back of her office, in big letters, is written VIVE LES DIFFÉRENCES! A reminder that every person must be respected.

## A resource teacher with a passion

*Martine Paquet, École secondaire A.-J.-Savoie*

There is one word to describe Martine Paquet, a resource teacher at École secondaire A.-J.-Savoie in Saint-Quentin for 19 years: passionate. A committed teacher with a hand in many initiatives, she heads a range of projects that help students achieve success based on their strengths. Some examples include a year-end gala, shows, theatre, improvisation, work placements, budget preparation, and establishing circles of friends. For Paquet, all possible methods are used to help the students progress. But there are no miracle formulas.

"It's basically teaching from the heart. You have to be open-minded. Every student has different needs," she said. "Children come first. I really believe that! You have to accept them with all their differences and learn from them, always learn." Despite the challenges inherent in inclusive education, she remains positive. Philosophically she adds, "I try to always see the opportunities in the difficulties."

When it comes to inclusion, this dynamic resource teacher is tireless. She has had many positive and memorable experiences. One involves the story of Maxime, an autistic and dysphasic Grade 8 student who took most subjects. Paquet was able to discover his talents. He sings, draws, and plays the piano brilliantly. She put him in a position to develop his full potential. She is planning to organize an exhibition of his drawings for the public in the near future.

Yet Maxime's academic journey has not always been easy. "We thought about home schooling at one point. He was close to depression," said Josée, Maxime's mother. "Since he has been attending École A.-J.-Savoie and working with Paquet, he has been much more sociable and much happier. We can see a clear improvement in his language and comprehension. He no longer has crying jags. Even in his subjects, he's improved a lot."

Of course, as Paquet says, inclusive education is not the job of one person alone. The resource teacher coordinates different projects and ensures that students with special needs or learning disabilities are doing well. However, by working with the administration, the educational assistants, the teachers, the parents, and the community partners, she can create a stimulating environment for everyone.

It is also important to her that everyone be made aware of the differences. She has organized awareness workshops on the various learning disabilities for all students at the school.

"It's an enriching experience to be with these children, both for the teachers and the other students. They do things differently. I call them the little treasures of life!" Paquet said.

Her voice is laden with emotion as she speaks of her students. A musician in her spare time, Paquet even composed the song "Ils ne sont pas seuls" (They are Not Alone).



## *The creation of a school support team in Colombia*

We have learned many things about inclusion during our visit to New Brunswick schools. However we want to share our thoughts on three elements that changed our view about what inclusive education can be and what it takes to make it work.

The creation of a school support team: in Colombia there was a common belief among teachers that they had to be special educators in order to work with students with disabilities. But the creation of the teacher support team showed regular teachers that they are capable of generating strategies that not only benefit exceptional learners, but also benefit everybody in their classes. When a regular teacher develops strategies for students with disabilities, he/she becomes a better teacher. Also this teamwork eliminates the idea that students with disabilities must go outside the regular classes to have support. Support is for the classroom teacher not for the exceptional learner.

The concept of three different levels for planning for a student includes: adaptation; accommodation; and, individualization. Colombian teachers had a tendency to think that having one student with a disability was synonymous with individualization in every subject and in the same proportion. That would be a lot of work. After visiting teachers in New Brunswick, we know that students with disabilities don't always need that. They may have difference strengths and needs in different subject areas, and thus need different levels of support. They may receive simple accommodations. They receive adaptations in other subjects and only in one or two subjects need individualization. So now we realize that to plan for full individualization in all areas leads to exclusion and that is not our goal. We believe that students need to be learning together and that inclusion is about more than being in the same physical space.

Students need to learn together. Prior to visiting New Brunswick schools, we used to put special students into their own classes for specific academic areas (language and math) so they didn't share many classes with regular students. After our observations in New Brunswick schools, we made the decision that all students with or without disabilities are going to participate in all the classes and all the activities offered to the grade that they belong.



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