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EDUCATING ALL OUR CHILDREN



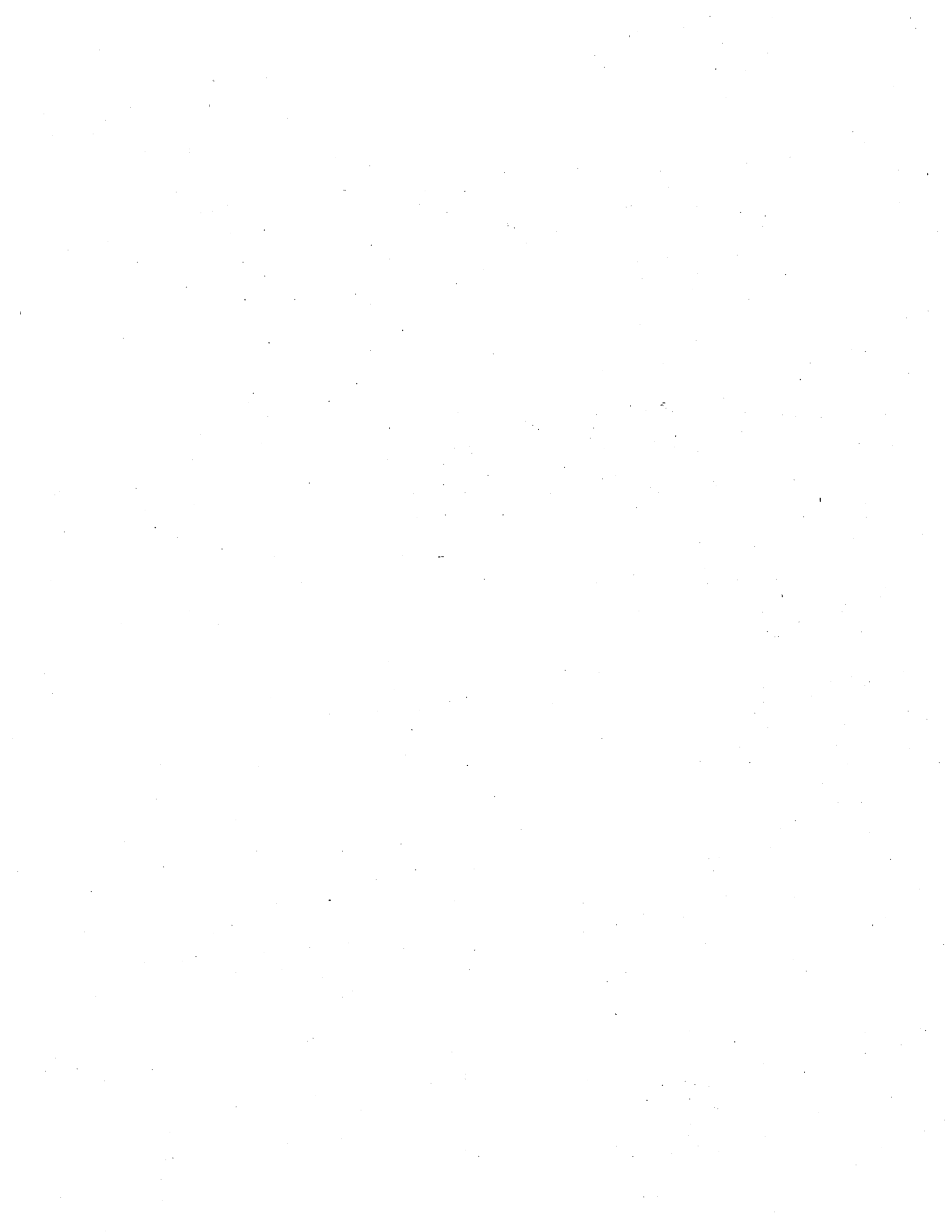
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DEPARTMENTAL
DIRECTIVE
ON
INCLUSIVE
SCHOOLING
1996

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**Educating All Our Children:
Departmental Directive on Inclusive
Schooling**

1996



During the past ten years, the vision of an education system which includes and endeavours to serve the needs of all students has evolved from initial recommendations in *Learning, Tradition and Change* (1982) to the development of *Educating All Our Children: Departmental Directive on Inclusive Schooling* (1993) to the coming into force of the new *Education Act* (1996).

The Directive recognizes the importance of allowing all children equal access to education programs in their home communities with their peers. It also recognizes the importance of school/home/community partnerships that are required to offer relevant education programs. Parents, teachers, administrators and community members all bring knowledge and skills that are needed to bring the best possible education to all students.

On July 1, 1996 the *Education Act* was enacted. Inclusive schooling is mandated in the new Act. Implementation of inclusive schooling is a process that is well underway in many schools in the NWT. It is a process that involves recognizing students' strengths and needs and, through support and best practice, providing appropriate education programming.

People in the NWT share one common goal - to build an education system where all students learn and grow to their full potential. To reach this goal we must continue to work together.



Charles Dent, Minister
Education, Culture and Employment

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The following term will be used in congruence with those used in the *Education Act*: “education body” means a District Education Authority, a Divisional Education Council or a *commission scolaire francophone de division, (organisme scolaire)* or all of them as the case may be.

Departmental Directive: Inclusive Schooling

Rationale

Children come to school with a vast potential for learning. They bring with them various life experiences and knowledge. All are capable of learning.

While children have many common needs, such as belonging, safety and security, they also have many differences including preferred learning styles, interests and abilities. Some children are gifted in the rate at which they learn and in the depth of their perceptions; some are talented at inter-personal relationships; while others communicate with ease.

For many years, when providing service and support to students with particular needs, the focus was to plan individual programs based on the students' perceived disabilities rather than recognizing and building on their strengths. In the past, over a period of years, certain children in the Northwest Territories with specialized needs were excluded from regular classroom learning environments. Some of these children were further deprived of the opportunity to attend regular schools. The perception was that their needs could only be attended to in segregated settings, often located away from the child's home community.

The changes in philosophy and practice which have occurred in education in recent years have fostered, as a regular, normal and expected practice, the inclusion into the school system of children who might previously have been excluded. This practice which recognizes and values diversity, is beneficial to all children.

In 1982, recommendations in **Learning, Tradition and Change** provided the first formal direction towards integration of all students into regular classroom settings. In 1986, **A Directive and Guidelines on Special Needs Education in the NWT** established the processes by which integration could occur.

Today, all children are viewed as unique and capable and all have a fundamental right to participate in educational programs in the regular classroom. **Our Students, Our Future: An Educational Framework (1991)** reinforces this by recognizing that, in order for each student to learn and grow, education must be based on individual strengths and needs and be relevant and meaningful for that person. Exceptions to including all students in the regular classroom ought now to be rare and must be justified by the education body.

The 1993 **Departmental Directive on Inclusive Schooling**, then, has been adopted by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment to formally endorse inclusive schooling in the NWT, that is schooling which facilitates the membership, participation and learning of all students in regular classrooms and other school activities.

In June 1995, the Legislative Assembly gave assent to Bill 25, creating the new *Education Act*. The Regulations for the *Education Act* were written in 1995-96. The **1996 Departmental Directive on Inclusive Schooling** which is based on the *Education Act* provides current, updated policy for student support services.

Departmental Directive: Inclusive Schooling

Vision

What inclusion IS:

Inclusive schooling is a **belief**

- that all children belong
- that every child can make a valued contribution

Inclusive schooling is an **understanding**

- that every child is unique
- that all children can learn and experience success
- that, with support, educators can teach all children

Inclusive schooling is a **commitment to**

- provide all children equal access to education opportunities
- respect diversity
- high standards

Inclusive schooling **teaches**

- mutual respect
- generosity
- responsibility
- independence

What inclusion is NOT:

- It does not mean having all students learn the same thing at the same time, in the same way.
- It is not simply placing students with exceptional needs into the regular classroom without essential supports and services.
- It is not an easy solution for meeting the needs of exceptional students.
- It is not the sole responsibility of the classroom teacher.
- It is not the sole responsibility of the student support assistant.

Departmental Directive: Inclusive Schooling

Purpose

Inclusive schooling is more than a method or strategy; it is a way of life that is tied directly to the belief system that values diversity.

Inclusive schooling is also a philosophical and practical educational approach, which strives to respond to individual student needs, and is intended to ensure equal access for all students to educational programs offered in regular classroom settings. Inclusive schooling is mandatory within the Northwest Territories school system.

[*Education Act*. Subsection 7(1)]

Principles

Inclusive schooling shall be based upon and be consistent with the following principles:

- a. **Inclusive schooling shall be characterized by equal access to education opportunities.**

In this context, equal access means the right of all students to participate in educational programs offered in regular classroom settings with their age peers. The range and variety of educational programs offered in regular classrooms in a community is determined by the education body.

- b. **Inclusive schooling shall be characterized by an approach to schooling which builds on student strengths and responds to student needs.**

This approach may involve diverse instructional strategies, as well as the provision of support services, such as additional support personnel, transportation, specialized equipment or specialized services, which are necessary to enable equal access. This approach may also involve the development of individual education plans.

c. Inclusive schooling shall be community-based.

Community-based refers to the provision of educational programs in the home community. The range and variety of programs is to be determined by the education body. Community-based schooling facilitates students participating in culturally relevant programs and offers the greatest support for student success.

d. Inclusive schooling shall promote the involvement of all parents/guardians in their children's education.

Decisions about individual educational programming and support services for children shall involve parents/guardians. The right of parents/guardians or students to appeal decisions involving individual education plans is recognized.

Exceptions

Students age 5 to 21 who are residents of the NWT and are residents of Canada are entitled to access an education program in a regular instructional setting. In rare instances, exceptions to this Directive may occur and must be justifiable by the education body. In every instance, where a student is placed in an alternative setting, the goal is to meet the student's needs in such a way that the student may be re-integrated into the regular classroom.

Nevertheless, even where exceptions occur, education bodies still remain responsible for ensuring that an education program is provided for these students, regardless of their circumstances.

An education body shall provide a student with the support services necessary to enable students to access an education program in a regular classroom setting, in accordance with the direction of the Minister. [*Education Act*, Subsection 7(2)]

According to Subsection 7(3) of the *Education Act*,
Exceptions may be made when;

- the Chief Medical Health Officer says the student should not be in a regular classroom setting, for the child's safety, or the safety of others;

- the parent and education body agree the student should be educated outside the community;
- the student is at a long term medical or treatment centre;
- the student is attending a senior secondary program in another community or attending a private school or home schooling program; or
- the presence of the student in a regular instructional setting would unduly interfere with the delivery of the education program to other students.

Scope

This Directive applies to all agencies of the Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment. This includes, but is not limited to, all education bodies and personnel associated therewith.

Implementation

- a. Each education body shall have adopted its own inclusive schooling policy, as outlined in the 1993 Directive. Such consistency will guarantee all students in the Northwest Territories reasonable equitable treatment.
- b. Each education body shall include, as part of its inclusive schooling policy, the appeal procedure that is outlined in the *Education Act*. [Sections 9, 39-41]
- c. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment shall provide each education body with funding to assist implementation of inclusive schooling. To ensure a cost effective approach, consistency and accountability, the funding will be provided according to the school based funding formula.

Accountability

The form and mechanisms for accountability of inclusive schooling will be consistent with those for accountability of schooling in the Northwest Territories.

This directive shall be monitored and reviewed by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment at least every 5 years calculated from the date of issuance.

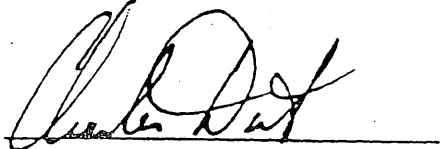
Approvals:

Review



Eric Colbourne
Acting Deputy Minister
Department of Education,
Culture and Employment

October/96



Charles Dent
Minister
Department of Education,
Culture and Employment

October/96

Process

To maximize every child's potential of becoming productive, contributing members of society and to maintain high standards, student support offers an array of services which can be individualized based on each child's needs. The process by which this goal is achieved is complex and depends for its success on a number of factors:

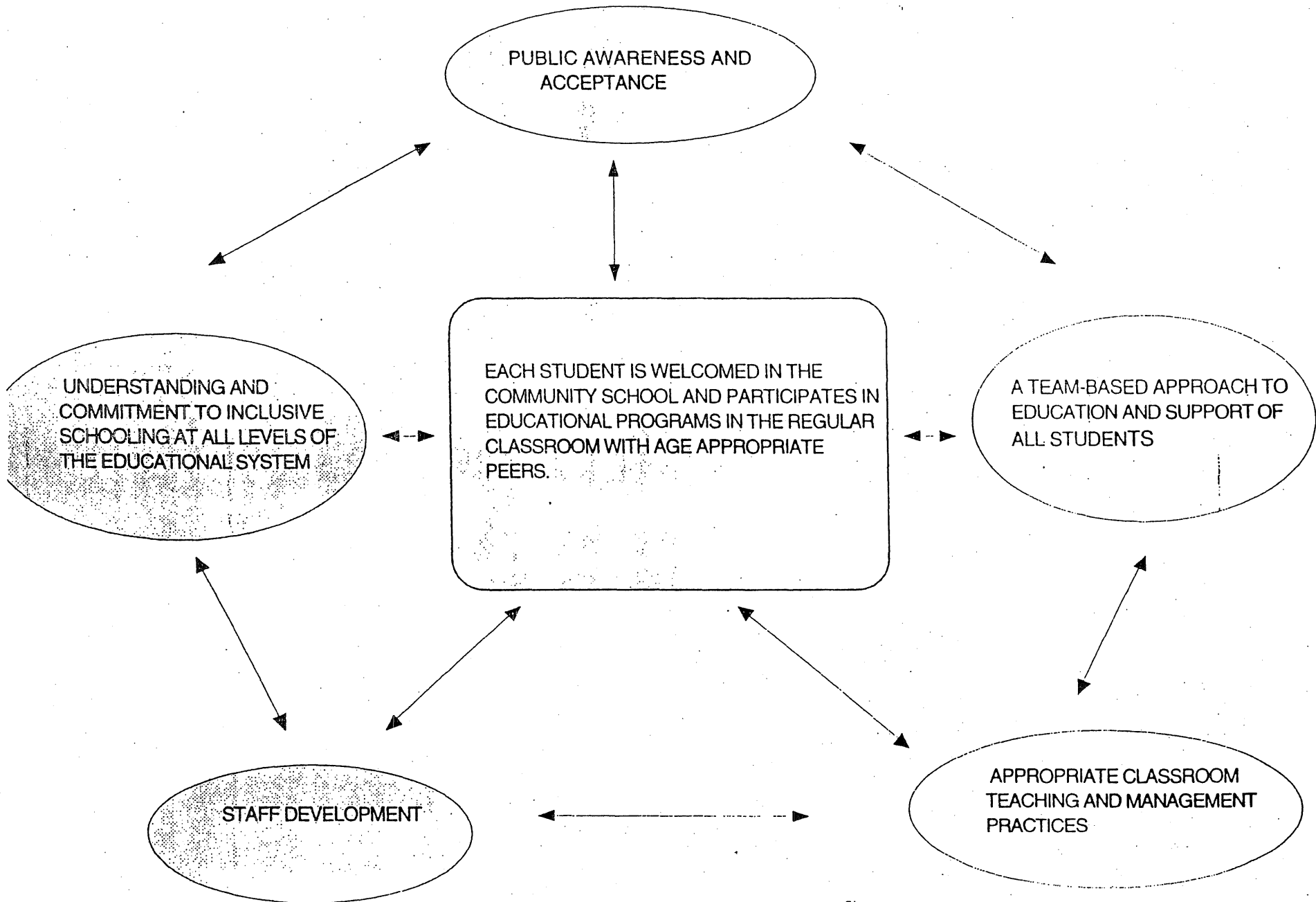
- acceptance of all students, based on a belief that all students can learn, and that there is value in diversity;
- understanding and commitment to the philosophy of inclusive schooling at all levels of the education system;
- leadership at the board and school level to bring about a collaborative culture within schools and between schools and communities where a team-based approach is used to address the needs of students;
- public awareness strategies that explain the philosophy of student support services and showcase exemplary practices;
- the ongoing involvement of parents/guardians and students in educational programming;
- where necessary, the provision and creative use of support services for teachers and students; and
- staff development in areas of perceived need.

Keys for Success

Full implementation of Inclusive Schooling requires a continuing collaborative effort among all partners in the education process. The vision is to have all NWT schools embrace exemplary practice. In such schools there is:

- instructional leadership and support provided by a Program Support Teacher to assist classroom teachers in developing appropriate programs for all students;
- ongoing training and staff development;
- activity based, small group work where students interact with each other;

- effective use of support assistants working in classrooms helping the teacher implement programs for numerous children, not just one;
- a school team which meets regularly and uses a problem-solving approach to address the program and support service needs of individual students;
- ongoing involvement of parents/guardians in decisions about their children's educational programs;
- interagency collaboration which uses a cooperative approach to support service delivery; and
- the creative use of human resources to assist and support students through peer helping, tutoring or mentoring programs.



Administrative Guidelines

Funding to Support Inclusive Schooling

Background

The success of inclusive schooling depends to a large extent on the provision of support, as necessary, in the form of resources and staff development to the classroom teacher and students. A revised funding formula approach to contributions will be implemented over a three year period from 1996-99. Funding to support inclusive schooling will be an integral part of the new formula.

Procedures

1995-96:

1. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment provides salary dollars by unit cost* for the following positions, according to the formula:
 - a. Consultant Support (Student Support/Program Support Consultants)
 - b. Support Teachers (Program Support /Methods & Resource Teachers)
 - c. Educational Assistants (Program Support/Student Support/Teacher Assistants)
- * Unit cost is calculated as the average cost of staffing such a position.
2. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment provides additional Operations and Maintenance (O & M) funding for materials and supplies, specialized equipment, staff travel and staff development related to student support services.
 3. In addition, funding may be available to support students in designated facilities operated by the Departments of Health and Social Services or Justice.

- (a) **Magnet Facilities:**
 - Funding is provided by formula for magnet facilities designated as such by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment based on the average number of students at the facility who are from outside the district's jurisdiction.

 - (b) **Young Offenders' Secure Custody Facilities:**
 - The Department of Education, Culture and Employment, in collaboration with the Department of Justice, provides funding for the delivery of educational programs to students who are in facilities for young offenders.

 - (c) **Southern Placements:**
 - Ideally the decision to place a student in a southern facility should be made jointly by all the agencies involved.
- Once the decision that this approach best meets the needs of the student has been made, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment will contribute towards the education costs for the first year. The amount to be paid to the education body in any given year will be determined by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment based on the average cost for educating one student. The education body should ensure that all students, including those in southern placements, remain on a school register so that the education body continues to get funding on behalf of all students.

The education body will contribute a portion of the funding it receives for the student's program. In all cases, the education body shall enter into a written contract with the southern agency providing the student's education program.

- During this placement year, staff from the education body with assistance from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, will determine whether supports such as staff training can be put in place to facilitate the return of the student to the community the following year.

- In cases where there is no possible option of the student returning to the NWT, the Department will continue to support the education costs, less the predetermined amount for which the education body will continue to be responsible.

1996-97:

Implementation of the first year of the revised funding formula is scheduled.

1997-98:

Implementation of the second year of the revised funding formula is scheduled.

1998-99:

Full implementation of the revised funding formula is anticipated.

Capital

Background

In the early 1980's work began to ensure that all students have physical access to schools. Plans for new schools now automatically ensure barrier-free access - that is, the money for this is included in the capital funding provided by the Department for each new facility. Today almost all schools in the NWT are accessible to people with physical handicaps. Older, existing schools, however, may require modifications to enable all students to access educational programs in the school setting. This is done on an 'as needed' basis.

Procedures

1. Education bodies may apply to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment for funding to modify existing facilities in order to make them accessible to all students.
2. Requests for such funding will be reviewed by the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.
3. While every effort will be made to meet these requests, all decisions will be dependent upon available resources.

Temporary Residency

Background

Education programs must be provided for students in temporary residency situations, that is, students residing in a residential facility (see definition of residency in section 2 of the *Education Act*), in a temporary foster placement or residing in a community while their family accesses services. In most cases, the program will be provided in the school in the community where they are temporarily located.

Exceptions to inclusive schooling provided in a regular school setting may occur for serious medical reasons or in instances of comparable severe limitations. Children in these situations shall not be denied access to an educational program.

Definitions

"Residential facility" (medical/long-term care facility, treatment facility, young offenders' facility or group home) means any residence operated or approved by the NWT Departments of Health and Social Services or Justice, where staff are paid a salary to provide lodging and care on a twenty-four hour basis for the individuals in the residence. It includes:

- a. treatment centres operated by the NWT Department of Health and Social Services;
- b. group homes operated by the NWT Department of Health and Social Services or the NWT Department of Justice;
- c. medical/long-term facilities operated by the NWT Department of Health and Social Services; and
- d. medical or treatment facilities outside the NWT approved by the NWT Department of Health and Social Services, where residential costs are paid by them.

Students may be residents of such a facility, having been placed there by the NWT Departments of Health and Social Services, or Justice through:

- a. hospital admission;
- b. formal legal action; or
- c. for protection.

It includes students placed in the facilities through:

- a. custody by agreement;
- b. temporary custody; or
- c. permanent custody.

“Medical/long-term care facility” means a facility where students are placed at the request of a medical doctor for a continuous term of 30 days or longer.

Temporary residency also includes certain temporary foster home placements and short-term residency with family members who are accessing services (e.g. Shelter for Abused Women).

Procedures

1. Education bodies are responsible for providing education programs for students resident in medical/long-term care facilities, who are unable to attend school for an extended length of time.
2. Education bodies with medical/long-term care facilities in their jurisdictions should develop a process to ensure that students who are unable to attend school for an extended length of time are provided with appropriate education programs.
3. As of September 1, 1995, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment in partnership with the Department of Justice, through education bodies will provide education programs for students within young offenders' facilities as outlined in the Inter-Departmental Protocol for the Provision of Educational Services to Young Offenders.
4. Education bodies are responsible for providing an education program for students in Health and Social Service facilities, other than closed custody, in temporary foster placement or in temporary residency while family members access social services.

5. Education bodies shall assume financial responsibility for the provision of education programs for all students registered with a school within their jurisdiction. This includes those students from their jurisdiction who are placed outside the NWT in order to access services not available in the Northwest Territories, regardless of which Department initiated the southern placement.

Educational Programs for Homebound Students

Background

In some situations, a student may be homebound and unable to attend his/her regular school for an extended length of time. These situations may occur for serious medical reasons. Students in these situations shall not be denied access to an educational program.

Definitions

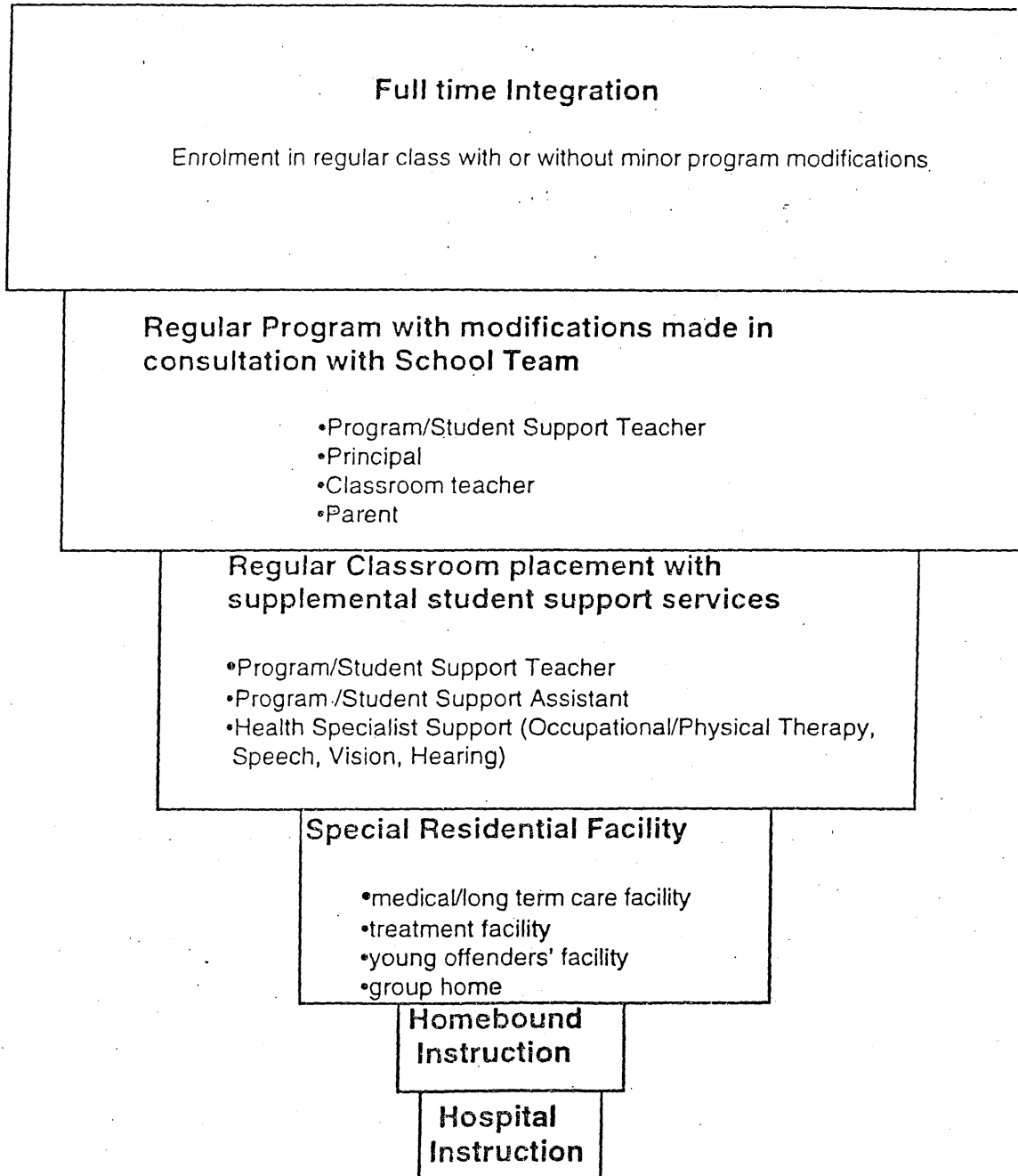
"Homebound" means where students have to stay home at the request of a medical doctor. "Extended length of time" means for a continuous term of 30 days or longer.

Procedures

Education bodies are responsible for providing an education program for students who are homebound for an extended length of time.

STUDENT PLACEMENT

less intensive
program needs



more intensive
program
needs

Educational Programming

Background

Educating all students in regular classroom settings does not mean that all students have to be engaged in the same activities or learning experiences all day every day. The provision of a broad range and variety of programs, along with the use of diverse instructional strategies enhances the learning opportunities for all students. Maximum learning takes place when students' programs are relevant and meaningful to them and are based on their individual strengths and needs.

In order to plan appropriate educational programs, students' strengths and needs must first be determined. Schools that offer a range of education programming and support services to their students, and school staff that are knowledgeable about a variety of teaching and learning strategies will be better able to respond to the needs of their students.

With any group of students, it is necessary to adjust, modify or change certain elements of a program in order for students to be successful learners. Education staff can adapt the school program where they think it necessary for the student in several ways, such as:

- adapting the program to meet the student's preferred learning style;
- using flexible assessment and evaluation strategies;
- encouraging peer support;
- using strategies for teaching in a multi-level classroom;
- allowing students more time to complete tasks;
- using co-operative education methods; and
- using technology.

Modified programs are used to make adjustments in the delivery of the program, often providing students with supports which allow them to meet curricular expectations. Program modifications occur at the classroom level and do not require further documentation or annotation.

Where the education program, even with modification, is not suitable for the student, an Individualized Education Plan may be necessary to effectively meet the needs of the student.

As a general practice, student success in school is enhanced when parents/guardians are involved in meaningful ways in their child's education. Parents/guardians have a wealth of knowledge and experience about the child. They are the primary advocates for their children and have a right to be involved in decisions related to their child's education program.

In the implementation of inclusive schooling, teachers need support to meet the broad range of needs of students in their classrooms. This support may take the form of appropriate teacher training and ongoing in-service in management and instructional strategies, consultant support or additional support personnel in the classroom. The establishment of interagency committees involving other service providers in the community promotes further support for teachers.

A cooperative/collaborative approach to planning facilitates the development of the most appropriate educational program to meet the broad range of student needs. Staff, parents/guardians, students, and other community members working together will ensure not only accurate assessment of students' strengths and needs, but will also enable the development of appropriate programs, using the skills and expertise of a variety of people.

Procedures

1. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment recommends that education bodies provide professional development for district and school staff with respect to meeting the needs of all students, the determination of students' strengths and needs and the development and implementation of appropriate educational programming.
2. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment provides financial assistance for professional development to education bodies through the funding it provides student support services.

3. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment will offer training sessions for education personnel to support the implementation of inclusive schooling.
4. Education bodies should ensure that program adaptations and a broad range of courses are available to meet the varied needs and goals of students.
5. Education bodies should ensure that schools develop a process that involves parents/guardians in their children's education program to the greatest degree possible.
[*Education Act*. Subsection 9(2)]
6. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment recommends that the inclusive schooling policies of education bodies provide for the establishment of a cooperative/collaborative approach to meeting the needs of students and to ensure support for the classroom teacher.
7. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment recommends that every effort be made to establish interagency committees at local, regional and territorial levels to ensure a co-ordinated approach to serving the needs of children.

Individualized Education Plan

Background

In some cases where the objectives of the educational program are too challenging for the student or do not challenge the student sufficiently, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) may be necessary to effectively meet the needs of the student. An IEP may be appropriate to accommodate a wide range of exceptional needs from giftedness to developmental disability. The IEP is written for a particular student, not for a program, particular course or group of students and it requires parental involvement. The IEP serves to:

- maintain a record of the student's program and services;
- provide a mechanism for monitoring progress;
- maintain a reference point for program review on a regular basis; and
- co-ordinate team personnel activities and responsibilities.

Planning an IEP should incorporate information from as many sources as possible, in particular from people inside and outside the school who know the student well. This will involve parents or guardians and, whenever possible, students themselves.

Parental/guardian consent is always required before the IEP is implemented or altered.

Definitions

Individual Education Plan (IEP): A comprehensive, written educational plan, with stated objectives, based on the student's strengths and needs.

Procedures

1. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment recommends that education bodies ensure that decisions to develop IEPs are made collaboratively among school staff, parents/guardians, and when appropriate, students themselves.

2. Education bodies shall establish a process for the development, implementation and evaluation of Individual Education Plans which includes:
 - a. identification of students who need IEPs;
 - b. assessment procedures to identify the strengths and needs of the student;
 - c. parental involvement;
 - d. diverse instructional strategies;
 - e. the provision of necessary supports for the classroom teacher and/or student; and
 - f. ongoing review of the effectiveness of the IEP.
3. An IEP must have written parental/guardian consent prior to its implementation. [*Education Act*. Subsection 9(3)]

Assessment

Background

Over the past 2 decades there has been intense study into how children learn. In order to assess student learning, researchers have focused both on clarifying the purpose of assessment and on broadening methods of monitoring student understanding. As a result of the research, there has been a change in emphasis from a testing culture to an assessment culture.

Definition

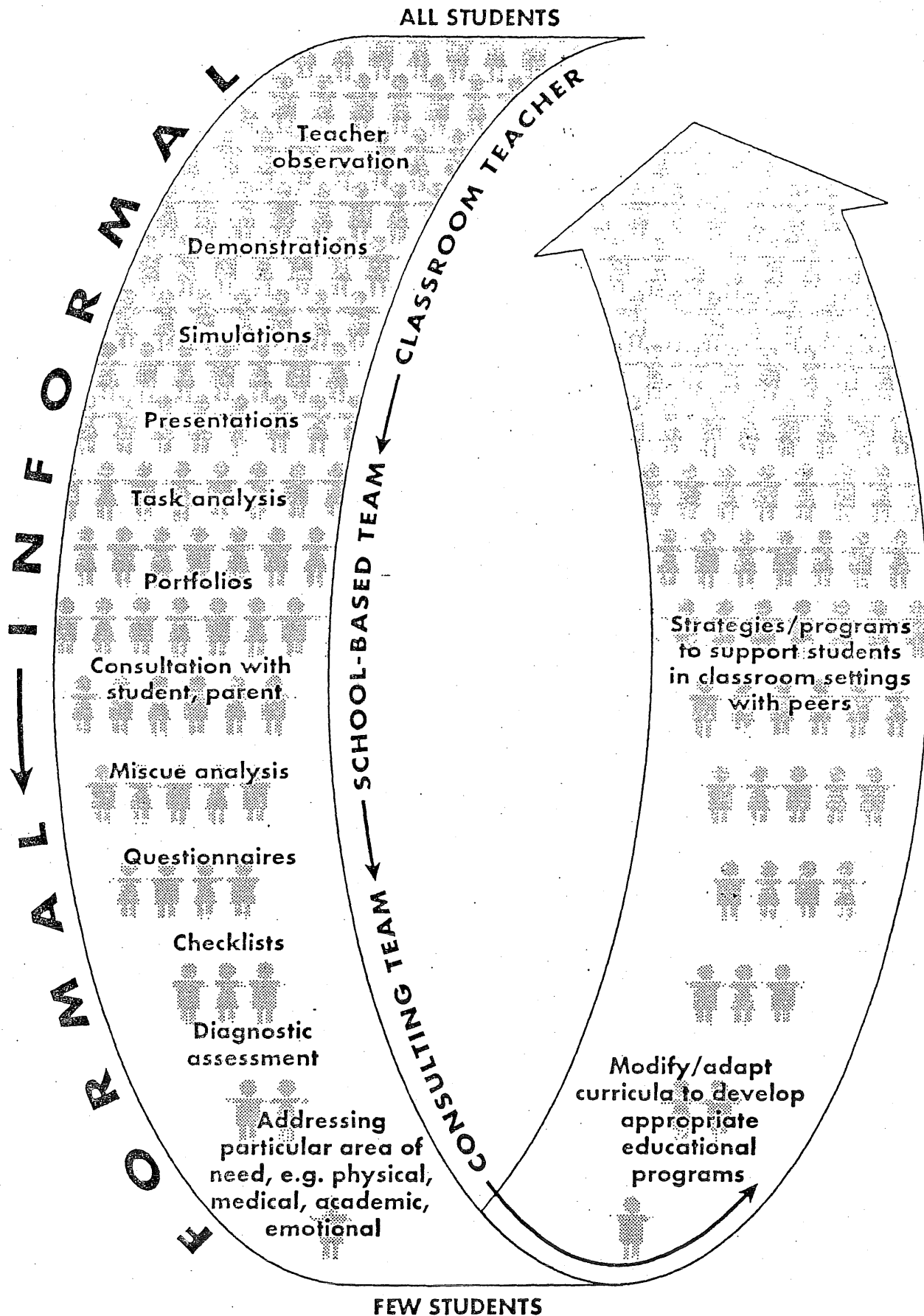
Assessment refers to the process of collecting data for the purpose of making decisions about students in order to:

- determine a student's strengths and needs;
- evaluate student progress;
- plan on-going instructional strategies;
- identify the need for program adaptation and modification; and
- identify individual learning styles. Different types of assessment may be used for each purpose.

Assessment: (See Diagram)

- uses a variety of techniques across a variety of time periods and situations;
- involves the student, whenever possible, as the student's age and needs permit;
- replicates challenges and standards of performance required in the real world;
- has meaningful outcomes in life and work activities;
- is ongoing;
- records competence over time;
- is responsive to the needs of individual students within their school settings;
- facilitates further learning; and
- may be formal or informal and may involve the classroom teacher alone, and/or the School Based Team, District Consultants, the school-community counsellor or medical professionals including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology and audiology.

ASSESSMENT



Procedures

1. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment recommends the practice of using a cyclical progression of assessment that begins with the classroom teacher and, has as its base, the administration of a wide variety of informal assessment tools over a period of time to assess all students' learning. As the diagram illustrates, for a progressively smaller number of students, more formal assessment tools and/or an increased number of professionals from outside the classroom may be involved, as required, based upon each individual student's program needs.
2. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment will identify opportunities for staff development and will provide assistance to education personnel to support understanding of the assessment continuum.
3. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment encourages education bodies to provide professional development to district and school staff with respect to types and appropriateness of assessment tools, the assessment cycle and the process of evaluation that progresses from informal to formal assessment. Education bodies should develop their own policies on assessment.

When formal tests are carried out, it is important that care be taken in the selection and administration of those tests to minimize the impact of cultural and linguistic biases. Interpretation of assessment results should consider the referent population. In particular, caution should be exercised in the interpretation of the results of standardized tests since they are not normed for the NWT population.

Interpretation of any assessment results should produce program recommendations for the classroom teacher, parents and support staff who are in daily contact with the child and should outline the use of particular strategies that should provide for student growth.

Appeal Procedures

Background

Parents, as the primary advocates for their children, have a right to be informed about and involved in their children's educational programs. Decisions about an individualized education program and services for children involving an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) must be reached by mutual agreement between school personnel and parents/guardians.

Parents/guardians have a right to approve an IEP developed for their child. Where it has been decided that an IEP is not necessary for a particular child, parents/guardians may appeal that decision. In a few instances, parents/guardians may disagree with the individual education plan developed for their child. In such cases, they may appeal decisions about their child's plan.

Parents/guardians may also appeal other decisions of the District Education Authority that significantly affect the education, health or safety of students. For instance, the parents/guardians might appeal a decision regarding supports provided to a child.

The July 1996 enactment of the *Education Act* means that:

- the role of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment is to set the regulations for the appeal procedure; not to hear appeals;
- an appeal may only be made to the body that made the decision with which the parents/guardians takes issue; for instance, an appeal of a decision made by the District Education Authority may only be made with the District Education Authority; an appeal of a decision made by the Divisional Education Council may only be made with the Divisional Education Council;
- in each instance, there is no higher level of appeal;
- the decision of the committee that hears the appeal is final.

It is assumed that education bodies, parents and students will proceed with an appeal as quickly as possible and with careful attention to the procedures outlined in the Education Appeal Regulations. All appeals will be conducted according to the principles of natural justice.

Procedures for Appeal at the District Level

1. The parents/guardians shall be informed of their right to appeal and of the appeal procedures.
2. The process of resolving disagreements shall involve:
 - in the case of a decision by education staff, a review at the school level by the principal;
 - where a disagreement has not been resolved at the school level, the parent or student shall notify the District Education Authority, in writing, of the disagreement;
 - the District Education Authority shall attempt to resolve the disagreement; if it is unable to do so, it shall notify the parents and student, in writing, that the parents may request an appeal committee to review the decision.
3. An appeal committee shall be established in accordance with procedures set out in the regulations with members chosen by the parent and the District Education Authority. The chairperson of the appeal committee will review the decision and decide whether there are sufficient grounds for the committee to hear the appeal. If, in the opinion of the chairperson, there are insufficient grounds for the appeal, or the appeal is frivolous or vexatious, the appeal shall not be heard. A decision of the chairperson not to hear the appeal is final and the chairperson shall notify the student, student's parents and the District Education Authority of the decision and the reasons for the decision, in writing.

4. Where the chairperson agrees to hear the appeal, the appeal committee shall investigate and hear the appeal in accordance with the procedure set out in the regulations. Upon completion, the appeal committee shall report its decision and the reasons for its decisions, in writing, to the student, student's parents and the District Education Authority. The decision of the appeal committee is final.

Procedures for Appeal at the Divisional Level

If the parent or student disagrees with a decision of the Divisional Education Council there are similar procedures in place to appeal that decision.

Particulars about time frames, the selection and composition of the appeal committee, and further details about roles and responsibilities of committee members for hearing appeals have been developed in accordance with the *Education Act* and have been set out in the Regulations. They are also included in the Toward Implementation of Inclusive Schooling Manual.

4. Where the chairperson agrees to hear the appeal, the appeal committee shall investigate and hear the appeal in accordance with the procedure set out in the regulations. Upon completion, the appeal committee shall report its decision and the reasons for its decisions, in writing, to the student, student's parents and the District Education Authority. The decision of the appeal committee is final.

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Transition Planning

Background

Effective communication and co-operative planning are required among family, school staff and personnel from appropriate agencies to meet the programming and service needs of students. This coordination is especially significant at important transition times, such as school entry, changes within the school system and exit from the school system.

Procedures

1. Home to School
 - a. Education bodies should collaborate with parents, other government departments and agencies to identify pre-school children who will require additional support when they enter the school system.
 - b. Given the efficacy of early childhood programs for 'at-risk' pre-school children, education bodies should, wherever possible, be a partner in the establishment of such programs.
2. Within the School System Effective transitions are required when:
 - a. students change from one teacher to another within the same school.
 - b. students transfer from one school to another within the same district.
 - c. students transfer from a school in one district to a school in another district.

Education bodies should develop processes to ensure that:

- a. effective communication occurs among students, staff and parents/guardians involved in the transition.
- b. strategies are in place to assist and support students during the transition time.

3. From School

A major transition occurs for all students when they leave the school system. Some students require additional support in the development of appropriate living and social skills, independence and work preparation before leaving school. They may also need community support to live independently once they leave school.

- a. Education bodies should develop strategies to help prepare students who have required additional support in the school system for the transition to independent living.
- b. Education bodies should develop processes for effective communication and co-operative planning to occur among students, parents/guardians, school staff and appropriate agencies to ensure that students will continue to receive the support they need once they leave the school system.

Implementation and Accountability

Background

During the past ten years the vision of an education system which includes and endeavours to serve the needs of all students has evolved from initial recommendations in **Learning, Tradition and Change (1982)** to the **Departmental Directive on Inclusive Schooling (1993)**. Implementation of any educational change takes time. It is not a new beginning, rather a continuation of the process of integration, which assures the inclusion of all children into the school system and the provision of appropriate education programming for them.

Full implementation of Inclusive Schooling requires a continuing collaborative effort among all partners in the education process: parents/guardians, community, schools, boards, education bodies, Health and Social Services, Justice, agencies and government departments. Interagency collaboration is a critical component of the effective implementation of both student support services and community wellness.

There are many challenges still remaining in order to create an education system which truly responds to the needs of the NWT student population. Full implementation of Inclusive Schooling involving the collaborative efforts of community resources will assist significantly in this process.

Procedures

1. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment will continue to work with education bodies to further develop an implementation strategy for inclusive schooling by:
 - a. revising the formula funding approach to contributions;
 - b. developing a process for monitoring the implementation of inclusive schooling that is consistent with the process for accountability of the whole school system;
 - c. ensuring accountability by collecting data; and
 - d. identifying future needs and priorities.

Commentary

During the past ten years the process of change has been evident, not only in the education system, but also in the expectations that parents/guardians, teachers and students have of that system. Along with a strong shift to community-based schooling is the desire to develop education programs which allow all children to reach their full potential.

Full implementation of Inclusive Schooling requires a continuing collaborative effort among all partners in the education process: parents/guardians, community, schools, boards, education bodies, Health and Social Services, Justice, agencies and government departments. Interagency collaboration is critical in meeting the diverse needs of students. It is also a critical component of community wellness.

There are many challenges still remaining in order to create an education system which truly responds to the needs of the NWT student population. Full implementation of Inclusive Schooling and interagency collaboration will assist significantly in this process.

