



December 11, 2017

Candice Finbow  
St. Francis Xavier University  
emailed to: cfinbow@inclusivedns.ca

Dear Ms. Finbow:

Excalibur ADHD Association has worked with children with ADHD since 2002. It is this background I use for this input to a system that is doomed to fail from the get go. I will answer your questions starting on the next page. I think inclusion is like beating a dead horse, expecting it to get up and work again. I am making some suggestion to an alternative, however, be aware I strongly suggest that it be tested thoroughly before implemented provincially. Bussing is not popular, but people, who want their children in French and Special Needs private schools do it willingly. I think this system will work a lot better than inclusion, which we as human beings are not ready to embrace. The human race needs to become a lot more tolerant before that can happen. People's attitudes need time to change. We need to act now, while that change is taken place. I have been working with Working Memory training for several years. I would be happy to discuss it with you. I think in order to pull this off without a huge drain on finances for education; the government needs to embrace working with charities, such as ours, to provide some of the services in a new system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maya Warnock".

Maya Warnock, B.A. (Hon.), M.B.A.  
President

**Adult, Child and Youth Mental Health Matters**

Excalibur offers: Family School POP Courses, Saturday & Summer Camps for Children 6-12, Support Groups, and Working Memory Training.



**1. What is working well with inclusive education?**

It benefits the less intelligent, less educationally successful children, who do not have a disorder or learning disability (LD). It does not benefit the children it claims to include.

**2. What is not working well with inclusive education:**

Inclusion will not work in the current climate. The stigma against these children is too strong. Teachers do not like them, which the other children in the class observe. The children with an LD or disorder can become the target for bullying, as the other students know, they will not be protected by the teacher.

Ex 1. I walked into a school playground. Four to five boys were pulling and pushing another boy. He yelled at them to stop tearing his jacket. I walked over to the two teachers monitoring the playground. I told them there was an incident happening. They looked up and answered "OH, that is just 'the boy's name'." I said they would not say that, if he finally slugged one of his tormentors. They would blame him, even though he basically only defended himself.

Ex.2. Teachers do not follow IPPs. One mother told me she was at her wits end, because the teacher did not use the behaviour plan laid out by the school psychologist. I have had numerous complaints about this about several schools in Nova Scotia.

Ex. 3 One mother wanted me to join her for a meeting with school personnel. She requested it in January. She repeatedly requested it all spring. The meeting never happened. She took her daughter out of that school.

Ex.4. A friend of mine worked as a substitute Teacher's Assistant (TA). She is an RN. The regular TA was absent for about three weeks. My friend received instructions from different professionals to assist this girl, who was in a wheelchair. My friend managed to reduce her inappropriate behavior and did what she was instructed to do by these professionals. She returned a few month later. The girl was behaving as badly as she had, when my friend first started working with her. It was quite clear that none of the programs had been adhered to, while she was gone. My friend left her work with the school board that spring. She did not want to be part of that system. The girl moved to another location. My friend hoped that she would be better treated at her new school.

**3. What specific changes need to happen to improve inclusive education so all students may achieve their full potential?**

One: you need to realize, whom our school system is for. The end-users are the students. The teachers are the service providers. Their behaviour indicate they perceive themselves as victims and the Special Needs students are the perpetrator of this injustice. In reality, the students are the victims. I doubt you can change the teachers' perception in the short-run.

These children need a separate school (well several in the province). In this school, the students would be more like their peers. We would no longer have special needs students wishing they were "just like the other kids". These schools would also be appropriate for gifted students, as many special needs students are gifted.

We need to remember that every child in Canada has the right to PUBLIC education. We have a choice of leaving these children as is, with the potential of "forcing" them into the criminal

system with jail-time at a cost of \$110,000/year/person (CBC Report) or giving them the proper education they need to allow them to become productive, contributing members of our society.

My son is brilliant; however, he does not have a disorder or LD. He was a sweet boy until after he went to school. The other students taunted him calling him ex. an egghead. He turned bitter and became very introverted. His son went to a gifted (and special needs) school. He is a very sweet and caring person. He is also brilliant (without a special need), but his school-experience did not sour his youth. He is now at Waterloo finishing his degree. Every child in Nova Scotia deserves to go to a school, where he is accepted. Inclusion robs them of that opportunity.

#### **4. Please identify the most important priorities in a new model.**

A school for special needs and gifted children needs to meet the requirements for the children's educational and emotional development. This entails specially trained teachers, psychologists, social skills coaches and working memory coaches. There are at least 14 Learning Disabilities (LD) plus many disorders. These schools would need to be able to teach at least some of the LDs. In a city such as Halifax the children could be bussed to a school that offer the education for the LD the child has. Economically we cannot have every school in Nova Scotia teaching all the disabilities even in a large centre such as Halifax. We need to specialize. Some of these children will be able to return to a "regular" school. We need to test these children before they enter grade four (i.e. children in grade three). These tests must be comprehensive, so the child's needs can be properly assessed.

Psychologists should work with the families. Behaviour modification should be done at home first, then brought to school after the child has become comfortable with the new behaviour. Now the teacher gets involved. Teachers should also be aware that they don't "know when I see ADHD". There are too many other reasons for the behaviour. They should not tell parents to put the child on drugs or... Teachers should not suspend or send a child to the principal's office. All that teaches the child, is how to get out of the classroom, when a subject becomes hard or boring.

Social skills should be taught by special coaches (not teachers=academic) usually in a group setting. Trained coaches should coach the Working Memory training remotely, which most likely would only take one school-year for each child. An assistant (not a trained coach) would assist in the Working Memory Lab at the school. These assistants would undergo training in how to effectively deal with children with behaviour issues. The psychologists would work with the families to change the undesired behaviour on a permanent basis.

#### **5. Provide any ideas you have to transform inclusive education.**

Scrap it. However, research the above, before making it a provincial model. It is new, so it needs to have the bugs worked out, before it is implemented provincially. Part of the difficulty with inclusion is that it was not tried out first and carefully researched. Our children would not have suffered in a system that is economically feasible, but educationally and emotionally a disaster.

