



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

Ministry of Education

INCLUSIVE AND SPECIAL EDUCATION 2013 DISCUSSION PAPER: A Summary

.....
GETTING IT RIGHT FOR EVERY CHILD



To educate a child, any child, is an awesome responsibility –
to that child, her family and bermudian society. – *Parent*

My child has a teacher that makes his heart sing!
I want him to have that with all of his teachers. – *Parent*

We don't just need a policy, we need legislation.
It is my experience that unless it is in the law,
it won't happen. – *Parent*



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How You Can Help – We Want to Hear From You

We want to know what you think about the Government’s proposals for inclusive and special education.

Written submissions are encouraged and can be sent by way of:

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PO Box HM 1185
Hamilton, HM EX
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By hand: Inclusive and Special Education Consultation
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Persons can contact the Ministry of Education policy analyst directly at 278-3300 if they have questions or wish to make a verbal submission.

Glossary of Terms

A discussion paper or green paper is a document that sets out proposals for new policy or changes in policy upon which the Government wishes to consult. Feedback and views of the public are invited and considered before the Government makes a final decision on the direction that it would like to take on a particular issue. A discussion paper is introduced in Parliament and is available to the general public.

Early Intervention means “intervening early and as soon as possible to tackle problems emerging for children, young people and their families or with a population most at risk of developing problems. Early intervention may occur at any point in a child or young person’s life”¹

Exceptional is a way of describing persons who have been diagnosed or identified as having an exceptionality (please see the term ‘exceptionality’ immediately below).

Exceptionality refers to an area of functioning which is significantly different from the established norm; some examples include giftedness, Asperger’s syndrome, language impairment, deafness, and specific learning disabilities or differences. Children or students who have exceptionalities can also be referred to as ‘exceptional.’

Inclusion or Inclusive Education is a “process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children (emphasis original)”

Inclusion is concerned with providing appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs in formal and non-formal educational settings. Rather than being a marginal issue on how some learners can be integrated in mainstream education, inclusive education is an approach that looks into how to transform education systems and other learning environments in order to respond to the diversity of learners. It aims towards enabling teachers and learners both to feel comfortable with diversity and to see it as a challenge and enrichment of the learning environment, rather than a problem. Inclusion emphasises providing opportunities for equal participation of persons with disabilities (physical, social and/or emotional) whenever possible into general education, but leaves open the possibility of personal choice and options for special assistance and facilities for those who need it.”²

1 (Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People’s Services, 2010)

2 (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2005)

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a working document that describes the special education programme and/or services required by a student with identified special education needs. It should be developed in consultation with parents and be based on a thorough assessment of the student's strengths and needs that affect the student's ability to learn and to demonstrate learning.³ It should also outline specific educational expectations, state the methods by which the programme and services will be provided to the student and include transition planning.⁴

Related services refer to specialised services and supports to help maximise the benefit of special education for students with exceptionalities. A non-exhaustive list of examples include speech and language pathology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, school health services, social work services, counselling services, psychological services, orientation and mobility services and transport.

Special education⁵ refers to specialised education that is particular to students who have been diagnosed and/or identified and who require specialised programming and services to meet their individual educational needs. It refers to the provision of direct educational and related supports for children with emotional or behavioural, communicational, intellectual (including gifted), physical or multiple exceptionalities, who require specialised instruction and supports; these needs may be met through accommodations, and/or educational programmes that are modified above or below the age-appropriate year level expectations for a particular subject or course of study.⁶

Special education need refers to an area of functioning which is significantly different from the established norm and where specialised education and related supports which are beyond what is usually provided through general education are required by students in order to learn to their ability.

Student achievement refers to the attainment and demonstration of growth in student learning and knowledge. It includes the ability of students to make progress and improve, and to demonstrate in school and in life, literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, communication, social, health, citizenship and life skills. Student achievement gives students a strong foundation for post-secondary education, employment and/or community life.

3 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2004)

4 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2000)

5 This definition was adapted from the Ontario Ministry of Education.

6 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010)

Our Vision for Inclusive and Special Education

The discussion paper proposes a new vision for inclusive and special education in Bermuda. We believe that a fundamentally different approach is needed so that all children, regardless of race, gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, background, familial status or connection, upbringing, aptitude and/or ability have the opportunity to achieve to their full potential. We believe that the public education system must meet the educational and developmental needs of all learners, including those who are gifted and/or who experience barriers to learning. Therefore a new direction for inclusive and special education is proposed; one that is fully inclusive, in name and in practice and designed to meet the educational and related needs of all students.

Purpose of the Discussion Paper

The discussion paper was developed to:

- Acknowledge and illuminate the need to radically improve the current provision with regard to inclusive and special education;
- Demonstrate a commitment to change and transformation;
- Initiate broad consultation regarding the policy direction that the Government of Bermuda and Ministry of Education would like to take; and
- Improve student achievement for all learners.

A non-exhaustive list of examples of special education needs includes: autism spectrum disorder (ASD), emotional or behavioural disorders, blindness and low vision, deaf and hard of hearing, developmental disability, giftedness, language impairment, mild intellectual disability, physical disability, specific learning disability or difference, speech impairment, and multiple exceptionalities.⁷

Feedback is invited from all people and organisations affected by and/or interested in public education and Bermudian society. Your views will be used to help shape the future direction of inclusive and special education.

Concerns about Inclusion

Despite the best of intentions, Bermuda's move to inclusion in the 1990s was fraught with significant challenges, many of which are still evident today. While some changes were made to inclusion, repeated calls for a radical overhaul have not been adequately acknowledged until now. While there have been a number of concerns raised over the years, reviews and consultation revealed some of the most salient issues that needed to be addressed to bring Bermuda's approach to inclusion into the 21st century:

- i] There is no shared educational philosophy and understanding about inclusion and special education within the public education system;
- ii] There are no comprehensive legislative or policy documents that set out the framework for inclusion and special education;
- iii] Inclusion was largely implemented as mainstreaming, so students with various special education needs were put in regular schools, even if the school was not geared towards meeting their needs;

⁷ The term exceptionalty refers to a functioning which is significantly outside of the norm.

- iv] There are unclear and sometimes inappropriate criteria and guidelines used to place children into special education;
- v] There are significant gaps between research and evidence-based best practices and many local teaching and learning practices;
- vi] There is no regular internal or external evaluation of inclusion and special education programmes and services;
- vii] Co-ordination of special education programmes and services and inter-agency collaboration is inadequate;
- viii] There is not a consistent or effective means of addressing the concerns of parents; and there has been poor planning and budgeting for special education, and a lack of confidence that the provision special education provides value for the money being spent.
- iv] These issues have had an impact on the quality of the education provided to students by the Ministry of Education and schools, and must be addressed to improve the achievement of all students.

Looking Forward

The discussion paper proposes a vision for both inclusive and special education. This is because we must focus on the needs of all learners to ensure that all children are given the opportunity to achieve to their potential. Special education cannot operate effectively if it is not part of a larger system that values all learners and tries to meet each of their needs. Within an inclusive public education system, special education is not a separate and parallel approach to education; it is a part of an inclusive framework, where general and special education are an integrated and complementary approach to the education of children. This approach facilitates education appropriate for children with various interests, challenges and needs.

Redefining Inclusion

We believe that the public education system must move dramatically beyond the current approach to inclusion. It is therefore important that we adopt an inclusive philosophy and a policy statement on inclusion to frame and guide future practice. We therefore propose to adopt the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) definition for inclusion as a:

*“process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children (emphasis original)”*⁸

⁸ (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2005)

Inclusion is concerned with providing appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs in formal and non-formal educational settings. Rather than being a marginal issue on how some learners can be integrated in mainstream education, inclusive education is an approach that looks into how to transform education systems and other learning environments in order to respond to the diversity of learners. It aims towards enabling teachers and learners both to feel comfortable with diversity and to see it as a challenge and enrichment of the learning environment, rather than a problem. Inclusion emphasizes providing opportunities for equal participation of persons with disabilities (physical, social and/or emotional) whenever possible into general education, but leaves open the possibility of personal choice and options for special assistance and facilities for those who need it.⁹

Policy Statement on Inclusive Education

- i] The philosophy of the public education system is an inclusive one where *all* children have the right to a high quality education, which means the right to enroll, access and participate in a high quality education that meets their needs.¹⁰
- ii] We believe that all children can and will learn if given time and the proper supports.
- iii] We acknowledge the need for change and must be reflective, responsive and model support and accountability for improved student achievement and student outcomes.
- iv] We will collaborate with parents, families, the community and one another for the common interest of being truly child- and student-centred.

Our Vision for Special Education

Our vision for special education is the same vision as that of the public education system: *to deliver a first-class education of global standards ensuring that students reach their full potential.*¹¹

Defining Special Education

To create common understanding, it is also important to define special education,¹² which we see as:

specialised education that is particular to students who have been diagnosed and/or identified and who require specialised programming and services to meet their individual educational needs. It refers to the provision of direct educational and related supports for children with emotional or behavioural, communicational, intellectual (including gifted), physical or multiple exceptionalities, who require specialised instruction and supports; these needs may be met through accommodations, and/or educational programmes that are modified above or below the age-appropriate year level expectations for a particular subject or course of study.¹³

9 (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2005)

10 (Western Australia Department of Education and Training, 2004)

11 (Ministry of Education, 2010)

12 This definition was adapted from the Ontario Ministry of Education.

13 (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010)

Proposed Policy Changes – Our Priorities

The proposed new approach to inclusive and special education reflects major issues of concern that arose through broad consultation with students, parents, general and special educators, administrators, paraprofessionals, school counsellors, related service providers, non-profit organisations, other Government Ministries and Departments and quangos, among others. In addition, extensive research regarding inclusive and special education locally and around the world was undertaken.

The policy proposals are complementary and largely interdependent on one another. They have been developed following consultation to help drive the modernisation of inclusion and ensure that Bermuda has a broad and comprehensive approach to special education that meets and will hopefully one day exceed modern-day standards. *The proposals have been drafted as policy priorities to articulate and communicate what we think needs to change and how.*

Policy Priority 1: Change beliefs and practices to improve student achievement.¹⁴

Our vision for inclusive and special education cannot be achieved without changing both beliefs and practices of persons who work with and for children.¹⁵

While many personnel espouse inclusive ideals, we want inclusive beliefs and practices for children to be universal so that all children can reap the resulting benefits. Therefore, the entire public education system has to be re-oriented towards an inclusive philosophy to bring our vision closer to reality. A multi-pronged approach is proposed consisting of:

- The development of knowledge and understanding regarding 21st century inclusive and special education;
- Clearly defined expectations, roles and responsibilities;
- The recognition of existing skills and the need for further skills development;
- The development of an appropriate organisational and support structure to help staff to be effective in meeting the needs of children; and
- Holding the system and persons accountable for their role and responsibilities for inclusive and special education.

Summary of Key Proposals for Action:

- Introduce a multi-pronged approach to change beliefs and practices.
- Develop plans to bring qualifications of personnel who fall short of the minimum requirements in line with the required standards.

¹⁴ (Council of Ontario Directors of Education, 2012)

¹⁵ (Council of Ontario Directors of Education, 2012)

- Develop up-to-date job descriptions for all educators and support staff including general education teachers, special education teachers, behaviour therapists, school counsellors and paraprofessionals, etc. In consultation with schools and Government Ministries, develop standards and expectations for training and professional development for staff.
- Use best practice standards to manage performance and develop and publicise performance indicators specific to performance management.

Policy Priority 2: Dramatically improve the legislative framework for inclusive and special education to 21st century standards.

The development of effective legislation, policies, standards and procedures are proposed because they would mandate and set higher standards and expectations for the minimum requirements for the appropriate provision of education for all students, including those with special education needs.

The proposed legislative framework would be instructive and prescriptive in terms of implementing and supporting inclusive education, and in detailing how special education and related services should be provided to students. It would provide for better support for students, families, educators, paraprofessionals, and related service providers. It would also include enforcement and appeals mechanisms for parents. Effective legislation is intended to make inclusive and special education a better supported mandate, and not a choice.

Summary of Key Proposals for Action:

- Amend the Education Act 1996 and develop appropriate supporting legislation such as rules and/or regulations regarding inclusive and special education.

Policy Priority 3: Develop and implement policies and support mechanisms for high quality early learning and development.

Early childcare education and development must be high quality and sit within a larger framework that includes parental, community and cross-ministry support. It must consist of programming that ensures the safety and health of all children. It should also balance physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development and be individualised for differing abilities. We would also like to develop, as a matter of urgency, an early childhood education and development strategy and supporting policies that reflect cohesive and aligned approaches to giving children the best start in life.

The following priorities are under consideration:

- i] Improving the integration and oversight of the early childhood education system;
- ii] The introduction of early learning standards and indicators of success for early childhood education and development;
- iii] Mandating that all educators, support staff and providers working with young children have basic knowledge about early child development and skills to implement developmentally appropriate practices including play based practices and meaningful adult inquiry;
- iv] Increasing participation of all children and families in high quality early childhood education and development including children with exceptionalities; and

- v] Better identification, intervention and co-ordination for early childhood special education services for families.

Summary of Key Proposals for Action:

- Develop an early childhood education and development strategy consistent with best practices to support children and their families.
- Improve the co-ordination, integration and oversight of early childhood education and development.

Policy Priority 4: Set clear expectations and provide support for whole-school and whole-system approaches to maximising student achievement.

The whole-school and whole-system approach to inclusive and special education is aimed at ensuring that everyone involved with schools plays a clearly understood and collaborative role in the success of children. We would like to introduce clear system priorities related to inclusive and special education, and ensure that they are reflected in school improvement plans.

The Ministry of Education therefore proposes a whole-school approach as one of the key components to inclusive and more effective special education. While there are various iterations, in the most basic sense, “a whole-school approach to improving student achievement means that the responsibility for every student’s achievement is shared by the school community.”¹⁶ Building on this, a whole-system approach is one where the improvement of student achievement is a responsibility shared by the entire public education system, and where the system focuses its attention and resources to support both individual students and entire schools.

Summary of Key Proposals for Action:

- Emphasise inclusive education and 21st century special education as part of the system improvement priorities of the public education system.
- Implement and provide support for a whole-school and whole-system approach to inclusive and special education.
- Require and provide support for the use of research and evidenced-based teaching practices that maximise effective student learning.

Policy Priority 5: Introduce a general problem-solving framework for all students, made up of:

- a. comprehensive prevention and early intervention supports across the public education system; and
- b. a mandatory pre-referral process and clear criteria for special education programmes and services.

¹⁶ (Queensland Department of Education and Training, 2011)

In order for the whole-school and whole-system approach to be effective, it must also be predicated upon comprehensive and early intervention frameworks to prevent problems for students, intervene early when or if issues do occur, and ensure that students are appropriately referred for special education programmes and services.

A framework that includes prevention, early intervention, and pre-referral processes and clear criteria and guidelines for entry into special education programmes and services should be implemented to prevent learning barriers and address them early when they do occur. This framework would be instituted across the public education system for all schools with support from the Ministry of Education. Such a framework would sit within and be supported by the whole-school and whole-system approach to improving student achievement.

Summary of Key Proposals for Action:

- Introduce an early detection, prevention, and support framework for students across the public school system.

Policy Priority 6: Diagnose and/or identify exceptionalities and special education needs.

The Ministry of Education would like to adopt a policy that all exceptionalities and special education needs be diagnosed and/or identified. In order to provide children with an education appropriate to their needs, we want to ensure that children, parents and professionals working with and for children have sufficient information and understanding about exceptionalities and special education needs of children. This would also help the Ministry of Education and other Ministries to engage in better short, medium and long-term planning for children with special education needs, and gather data on student achievement and the quality of service provision to improve programmes and services.

The purpose of adopting a policy and practice of diagnosis and/or identification is to help support students in ways that are appropriate to their needs, to create a culture of understanding and acceptance and to improve the quality of special education in Bermuda. Getting a grasp on the numbers of students who have identified special education needs (together with other quantitative and qualitative information) about general and special education, will also serve as a tool of insight for both the public education and public health systems, for example to generate the development of specific and/or targeted preventative services.

Additionally, gathering data on special education needs will help the Ministry of Education and schools to effectively plan and resource to support students with special education needs for the duration of their school careers, and assist the Ministry of Education and other Government Ministries to plan for and develop the most appropriate transition options, such as post-secondary education or employment for students once they complete school.

Summary of Key Proposals for Action:

- Institute a working group reflective of leaders in inclusive and special education within the Ministry of Education, other agencies and the community to:
 - a. develop common language and understandings of exceptionalities and special education needs that reflect best practice and local considerations.

- b. develop clear processes for the diagnosis and/or identification of exceptionalities and special education needs; and
- c. develop recommendations for the provision of needs based support for students experiencing learning barriers, but who do not have identified or unidentified exceptionalities or special education needs.

Policy Priority 7: Provide students with special education needs full continua of special education programmes, services, placements and service delivery models.

Similar to best international practices, we want special education programmes and services in Bermuda to be part of broad continua of different options of how and where students with special education needs are educated. In Bermuda, there are a number of special education programmes and services, consisting of various placements (type of classroom or school setting that a student will be educated in) and service delivery models (how the education services are delivered to students). However, there are not currently in place programmes and services that are appropriate for all children. Part of this pertains to the quality of the provision, but it also is related to the lack of options to meet the individual needs of all students. While we don't believe that what is currently provided is a 'one-size fits all' approach, we do think that it needs to be expanded to include a wider array of high quality options for students and their parents.

While the Ministry of Education is committed to the education of each child to the extent appropriate in the regular classroom setting, we want students with special education needs to be educated in the learning environment most appropriate to their unique needs. Therefore, where appropriate education and related services cannot be provided in the regular classroom to help students make continuous educational progress, more appropriate educational placements and service delivery models should be provided. Regardless of the education placement, we want students to have as much as possible meaningful participation and be integrated with similar-aged peers in school.

Summary of Key Proposals for Action:

- Develop full continua of special education programmes and services.
- Continue to expand placement options and service delivery models for students with special education needs.
- Mandate that decisions on educational placements for students be made within continua of appropriate programmes and services.

Policy Priority 8: Develop and implement a complex needs panel to fill the gaps in special education programmes and service provision.

It is proposed that the Government of Bermuda put in place a complex needs panel to make recommendations and decisions regarding the development and funding for special education programmes in Bermuda and abroad for students who have needs that are complex and not being met within local public schools. This approach would also consider children who have been excluded through expulsion or other reasons from public school.

A complex needs panel would be made up of staff from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Seniors, and the Ministry of Community, Culture and Sports, (and where appropriate, other Ministries, the Bermuda Hospitals Board and other relevant professionals) and would be empowered to make decisions regarding placement and funding intended to be in the best interests of the student. It is proposed that placement decisions be jointly funded from relevant Government Ministries.

A complex needs panel would in the first instance be a problem-solving vehicle to find or consider the development of appropriate special education placements and service delivery models within public schools or within the community. If the complex needs panel determines that no suitable placement or service delivery options exist or would be feasible to develop locally, it would then consider an overseas placement for the referred student.

Summary of Key Proposals for Action:

- Institute a cross-agency complex needs panel to make decisions regarding placement and funding for students who have complex needs and/or who have been excluded from public school.

Policy Priority 9: Require that all students with identified special education needs be supported by high quality Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

We want all children with identified special education needs to be supported by high quality Individual Education Plan (IEPs) that set out clear learning goals and objectives, identify who is responsible for the delivery of programming and services, and to serve as an accountability tool to be used by parents, schools, related service providers and the Ministry of Education.

If used properly, IEPs should be an accountability tool for the Ministry of Education, parents, principals and related service providers because they outline the special education programmes and services that students should receive, who is responsible for providing those programmes and services, and they measure the achievement of students, inclusive of how much progress students are making over specific periods of time. Additionally, IEPs can and should be used as one indicator of the effectiveness of both the individual and overall provision of special education.

Summary of Key Proposals for Action:

- All students with identified special education needs will be supported by high quality IEPs.
- Mandate IEPs in legislation as an agreement between parents, students, schools and the Ministry of Education, subject to enforcement and accountability.
- Individual Education Plans should be developed, monitored and updated along clearly identified international best practices, and quality controls should be put in place to ensure that individual learning goals are appropriate to each student.
- Individual Education Plans should be used to systemically measure student progress and achievement and the effectiveness of both general and special education programmes and services.

Policy Priority 10: Improve transition preparation and planning for students with special education needs.

The Ministry of Education must ensure that there is an alignment between placement options for students with special education needs at key transition points (e.g. from primary school to middle school and from middle school to senior school). We must also ensure that within schools, there is sufficient transition planning and support for students to move within schools and programmes and from one school year to the next. We also believe that the Government of Bermuda along with the community has a joint responsibility to increase transition options for students with special education needs.

Summary of Key Proposals for Action:

- Develop standards and guidelines for transition planning and support for students with special education needs.
- Transition information will be included as part of a student's IEP.
- The Government of Bermuda in partnership with the community should work to increase the availability of appropriate transition options for students with special education needs once they leave school.

Policy Priority 11: Develop and implement mediation and dispute resolution processes and institute the right of parent appeal regarding the special education placement of students with identified special education needs.

In an effort to improve responsiveness, the Ministry of Education would like to implement:

- A well-defined complaints and dispute resolution process to hear and resolve complaints that pertain to inclusive and special education;
- Mediation as a compromise driven process, designed to produce mutually agreed outcomes that are in the interests of students with special education needs; and
- An appeals process for parents regarding certain aspects of the provision of special education programmes and services, such as the identification of the specific special education need(s) of a student and the classroom placement of a student.

Summary of Key Proposals for Action:

- Introduce dispute resolution and mediation processes regarding the provision of inclusive and special education.
- Introduce appeals regarding certain aspects of the provision of special education.
- Conduct regular parent satisfaction surveys regarding the provision of special education programmes and services to benchmark current parent satisfaction and measure future parent satisfaction.

Policy Priority 12: Encourage, facilitate and be responsive to increased parent, family and community involvement and advocacy.

Parental concern is a driving force behind these policy proposals. Parents have intimate knowledge about their children and so their views and wishes must be a key consideration in the general and special education of their children, and in the development of policy, its implementation and the ongoing provision of inclusive and special education programmes and services.

The Ministry of Education proposes to increase parent knowledge about inclusive and special education through a parent guide and the establishment of an Inclusive and Special Education Advisory Committee. The committee would have clear and transparent functions and responsibilities to advise and advocate to the Minister of Education and those Ministers responsible for related and support services such as the Minister of Health and Seniors and the Minister of Community, Culture and Sports.

Summary of Key Proposals for Action:

- Develop a parent guide that clearly outlines how continua of inclusive and special education programmes and services should work, and what parents can do if they have concerns about the provision of inclusive and special education for their children.
- Work with parents, and community organisations to facilitate participation, engagement and advocacy for improved inclusive and special education through the establishment of an Inclusive and Special Education Advisory Committee.

Policy Priority 13: Measure value-added results to help improve investments in inclusive and special education.

We propose to measure the value that particular spending is bringing towards progressing the larger goals of inclusive and special education. This approach would allow the Ministry of Education to tailor future investments in programmes and services that produce results for inclusive and special education. This would not only increase knowledge about the effect of spending on programmes and services, but would also require that changes be made where results have not been demonstrated.

Summary of Key Proposals for Action:

- Incorporate the value that spending produces in funding for inclusive and special education.

Policy Priority 14: Dramatically improve interagency co-ordination.

It is proposed that inter-agency co-ordination between the Ministry of Education and other Ministries and agencies be improved through agreements that establish formal relationships, expected levels of service, how disagreements can be resolved, and what should happen if a particular agency, including the Ministry of Education is not doing what it should. It is also proposed that a joint accountability framework be developed that clearly lays out the roles, responsibilities, accountability expectations and methods for ensuring accountability for each agency involved in providing programming and services to children and young adults.

Summary of Key Proposals for Action:

- The introduction of a joint accountability framework across the Government and quangos regarding inclusive and special education.
- The creation of memoranda of understanding and inter-agency agreements regarding expectations, standards and programme and service delivery for all agencies involved with meeting the educational and related needs of children who are at risk and/or who have special education needs.

Policy Priority 15: Increase knowledge, transparency and accountability for results¹⁷ in general and special education.

The Ministry of Education believes that transparency regarding the processes, programmes and services of general and special education is an important apparatus for developing and spreading knowledge across the public education system. This is vital for communication and to inform discussions on how the entire public education system is doing. It can also facilitate better advocacy to help to drive the changes that are needed to improve inclusive and special education.

Summary of Key Proposals for Action:

- Develop and make available more information regarding general education and special education as a matter of course.
- Develop measures for improved accountability that focus on results that reflect improved student achievement.

Policy Priority 16: The Government of Bermuda will commit to the continuous improvement of inclusive education and special education programmes and services supported by internal and external evaluation.

The Government of Bermuda intends to implement and publish internal and external reviews on inclusive education on the appropriateness, efficiency and efficacy of special education programmes and related services.

Summary of Key Proposals for Action:

- Implement internal and external reviews on inclusive education and the appropriateness, efficiency and efficacy of special education programmes and related services.

What Happens Next?

The views of the public will be used to develop the policy proposals into an overarching inclusive and special education policy framework. A policy framework would consist of legislation, policies, procedures, and a system plan for implementation and ongoing monitoring, among other possible components.

Consultation will also continue along the way to provide increased value to the process and the final policy framework. We also propose to intensify our engagement with partners such as parents, community organisations and the larger society, on inclusive and special education.

¹⁷ (Bennett, Sheila Dr. and Wynne, Kathleen, 2006)

Consultation Questions

1. Do you have specific concerns about the current provision of special education and/or related services that you think would help inform the development of the inclusive and special education policy?
2. Do the policy priorities address the concerns that you may have about the current provision of special education and/or related services? If so, how?
3. What do you think can be done to help change beliefs about inclusive and special education?
4. What barriers do you see to full inclusion and establishing appropriate special education and related services?
5. What types of non-personal information would you like the Ministry of Education to make public regarding inclusive and special education?
6. Do you have any specific recommendations on how to the Ministry of Education can collaborate with the public regarding the development of the inclusive and special education policy framework.

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The complete bibliography can be found within the Inclusive and Special Education Discussion Paper on the Ministry of Education's website at **www.moed.bm**.

