

# Continuity and Change: Special Education Policy Development in Toronto Public Schools, 1945 to the Present

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**Background/Context:** *It is frequently assumed that changes in special education policies since 1945 have come mostly from “landmark research” or actions of a few “pioneers.” We argue in this article that there have been many different sources of change, including legislation, court rulings, activism, and even shifts in socially and historically constructed categories of ability. In contrast to the contention that there has been “a gradual but steady progression towards the present inclusive education,” we argue that remarkable continuity has characterized certain elements of policy as well. The article identifies general trends in special education policy development historically that can help to inform the most current thinking about policy change in special and inclusive education.*

**Purpose:** *How has special education policy developed historically? What factors have been involved? How can historical research help education researchers, policy makers, school personnel, and others to deepen their understanding of the development of policy? The Toronto public school system is examined. The developmental trajectory of special education policy in Canada’s largest urban school board generally resembles the development of policy in other large American and Canadian cities. The period from 1945 to the present was selected because the shifting character of special education policy across this broad sweep of time is not well understood.*

**Research Design:** *This qualitative study employs historical analysis. It draws on archival documents, school board and provincial government records, and pertinent secondary sources.*

**Conclusions/Recommendations:** *There are a few identifiable general trends in special education policy development historically. Prior to 1970, local school officials were empowered to make many changes in special education policy; since 1970, this ability has been eroded in favor of centralized policy making, with parents and others possessing some ability to influence policy change. Today, policy makers must balance different contextual factors and stakeholder interests that have developed over time, not least of all the interests of teachers who have been important partners to policy implementation. The degree of “policy talk” about inclusion, and*

*about a social model of disability, has exceeded the degree to which either has actually been implemented. Rather, a continuum of services model that hybridizes segregated and inclusive settings continues today to characterize special education policies, as it has since the 1970s. Money matters in special education policy, especially when it is tied to specific policy options and can therefore influence local policy decisions, but also depending on whether the power to raise and disburse funds is held locally or centrally.*

On a February evening in 1970, nine Toronto women from the inner city, whose collaboration with community activists had garnered them public notoriety and the name the “Trefann Court mothers,” listened while one of their members read a brief to Toronto Board of Education (TBE) trustees (Lind, 1971; “Opportunity Classes Useless,” 1970). The brief alleged that the city’s public education system “directly discriminates against the poor and the immigrant, and that the streaming of children into technical and special education is part of that discriminatory process.” The women urged the school board to reduce the number of special education classes or even to abolish the classes altogether (Trefann Court Brief, 1970). A few short months later, the TBE responded to the Trefann Court mothers by releasing the “Every Student Survey” (Wright, 1970). The results of the survey, which was answered by 97% of the TBE’s 106,921 students, “bore out the substance of criticism” made by the Trefann Court mothers (Lind, 1971). Significant policy reforms—including some mainstreaming of exceptional pupils—would follow the events of 1970 in very short order.

The fast-paced changes of the early 1970s in special education stand out, especially when we consider that for all but the final few of the 25 years leading up to 1970, there had been a great deal of continuity, even quiescence, in special education policy development in the public schools of Toronto, Ontario. Throughout that period, the Board pursued what it thought was a benevolent policy of expanding the number of separate special education classes. School officials saw no evidence of problems. Even as the fallout from the Trefann Court mothers brief rained down, a dumbfounded Edward McKeown, the TBE’s inspector of special education, insisted, “Educators throughout North America consider the board’s [special education] program to be one of the best on the continent” (Lind, 1971).

The historical development of special education policies, especially in local contexts, and in the post-World War II period of expanding educational opportunity (Gidney, 1999), is not widely understood. It is frequently assumed by people directly involved with special education that change since 1945 has come mostly, if not exclusively, from the “landmark research” (Hallahan & Cruickshank, 1973, p. 58) or advocacy of a few “pioneers” (Kirk & Gallagher, 1979, pp. 4–7; see also Wiener &

Siegel, 1992, pp. 340–350, 371). It is often also assumed that there has been “a gradual but steady progression towards the present inclusive education” (Lupart & Webber, 2012) in special education policy. A range of texts on special education— *The Handbook of Special Education* (Gerber, 2011, pp. 3–14), textbooks for practitioners (Winzer, 1993, pp. 363–365; Winzer, 2008, pp. 38–67), even policy documents (Zegarac, Drewett, & Swan, 2008)—reinforce one or both assumptions for a wide audience of researchers, policy makers, administrators, education students, practicing teachers, and parents.<sup>1</sup>

We wish to address this wide audience also (as well as historians). The purpose of this article is to show, using the case of Toronto public schools,<sup>2</sup> that policy change in special education can in fact occur for many different reasons. From 1945 until the early 1970s, top-down reforms were the most common causes of policy change. With scant provincial special education legislation or regulations, and with the ability to raise their own funds for programs through local property taxation, school boards had wide latitude to enact policy. The TBE used that authority to expand special education services in the city’s public schools substantially. Yet, by the 1970s, other policy change factors had arrived on the scene in dramatic fashion. The Trefann Court mothers were on the leading edge of the policy-making wedge represented by the greater involvement and impact on policy by groups of organized parents and activists, groups whose influence has grown from the 1970s to the present.

In the same time period, just as the TBE faced pressure to surrender some of its authority over special education policy to bottom-up policy actors such as parents, provincial legislation and court decisions also placed new top-down constraints on local officials. After the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was enacted in 1982 and came into full force in 1985, decisions by provincial and federal courts also informed policy change. Later, by the 2000s, provincially mandated inclusive education policies further restricted the special education policy choices available to Toronto public school officials. Since the 1980s, local school boards’ special education provisions have been tied to the shifting policy and political priorities of successive provincial governments.

Money has always mattered a great deal in special education policy. The availability of funds for new programs and schools from the mid-1940s to the early 1970s permitted school boards to expand programs according to their wishes. At times, for example, in the 1960s, attempts to access specific sources of external funding entirely drove parts of the TBE’s special education agenda. By the 1990s, as special education policy reform made gains, lack of funds and historic changes to the ability of local school boards in Ontario to raise their own funds through property taxation

further impinged on local policy decision-making power, especially in a city such as Toronto that benefited from a healthy local property tax base.

In addition to these political, social, legal, financial, and institutional change factors,<sup>3</sup> we also argue that the categories and diagnoses that special education uses can create policy changes. These categories and diagnoses of disability change often. They are socially—and historically—constructed and are also imbued with power relations that give them the authority and potential to reproduce and reify constructed differences and their attendant social disadvantages (Danforth, 2009; Gabel, 2005a), a fact that the Trefann Court mothers understood well. As Helen Harper has argued, the way that Ontario schools respond to difference and diversity has shifted over time. “Making visible these reactions,” she adds, “is crucial in rethinking issues of difference and diversity in new and more productive ways” (Harper, 1997, p. 192). Indeed, as constructed categories of pupil difference shift and change over time, these changes, as we will show in this article, create policy pressures. Changes to categories can contribute to the questioning of existing policies that are perceived to no longer meet student needs and to demands for new policies that do meet them.

Tracking the pace and extent of policy change, and the extent of continuity as well, are the final two tasks this article undertakes. The history that we recount demonstrates that special education policies do not change at a uniform or predictable speed or rate, with change happening slowly in some historical contexts and rapidly in others. Moreover, on top of change—even the appearance of landmark change, for example, in the events of 1970 in Toronto—astounding (and, at times, confounding) continuity has always been present in special education policy (Cuban, 1996). Continuity has acted as a brake on the true extent of policy change. Often disguised by “policy talk,” which has cycled more often than new and different policies have actually been implemented (Tyack & Cuban, 1995), significant continuities can easily be traced in special education policy development. Most notable is the ongoing existence of a continuum of services model that was first introduced in the 1970s. This model hybridizes (Tyack & Cuban, 1995) integrated and segregated approaches to exceptional children’s education within a single school system by offering options for both. The continuum of services remains central to policy even today, despite the level of talk about inclusion. The unresolved debate over placement (integration or segregation) still hangs over the schools (Dorn, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 1996; Porter, 2008).

There is growing recognition by scholars and educators, including Toronto public school officials recently (Brown & Parekh, 2013), of a social model (sometimes called a “social interpretation”) of disability in

education. The social model portends change. It asserts that disabilities represent differences but not necessarily deficiencies, repudiating a deficit or medical model that has focused for over a century on treatment and that confers on experts, not people with disabilities, the authority to define disabled experiences and identities (Gabel, 2005b). Notwithstanding recognition of a social model, there is significant continuity in the application of educational policies that have approached disabilities as deficits and that call out for medical, educational, or other treatments.

With commentators talking about the need for a “cultural shift across the system” (Parekh, 2013, p. 5), we believe that questions about continuity and change in the history of special education policy development are as germane today as they have ever been. Following the lead of other historians who have adopted a historical perspective on education policy (Cuban, 2001; Ravitch & Vinovskis, 1995; Silver, 1990; Stearns, 1984; Vinovskis, 1999; Wong & Rothman, 2009), we employ historical analysis in this article to deepen readers’ understanding of the development of special education policy, not only in Toronto but also in other parts of Canada and the United States as well.

Defending Toronto’s special education system in 1971, Edward McKeown said that educators across Canada and the United States looked to Toronto as an example. We also think that there is much to learn about urban special education policy in both countries since 1945 from a case study of Toronto. Using historical research by other scholars who have investigated special education (see Danforth, 2009; Franklin, 1994; Lazerson, 1984; Nelson, 2009; Osgood, 2005, 2008; Thomson, 1999), in this article—where the secondary literature permits—we point to the many similarities between the Toronto case and other Canadian and American jurisdictions, especially major cities.

#### SPECIAL EDUCATION IN TORONTO IN 1945

In 1945, the TBE had an established special education system, with a wide range of classes and programs addressing the needs of some 2,900 children and adolescents identified as having disabilities and learning difficulties. Separate special education classes, known as “auxiliary classes” for so-called mentally defective children, had been proposed in 1910. By 1920, special education was already a popular school reform, with a diverse constituency that included supporters of eugenics, administrative progressive school reformers, and social reformers who wanted to improve school conditions for children with disabilities and learning difficulties. From 1910 on, Toronto public schools added many different types of special education classes: auxiliary classes for “mentally defective” children (opened

1910); separate remedial classes for “backward” children (1912), which were combined with auxiliary classes around 1920 and renamed “opportunity classes” in 1937; forest schools (1912) and open-air classes (1916) for children with health problems, especially children believed to be susceptible to tuberculosis; junior vocational schools for adolescent special education students (1923, renamed handicraft schools in 1935); sight-saving classes for children with reduced vision (1922); speech correction classes (1922); day school classes for children who were deaf or hard of hearing (1924); and orthopedic classes (1926) for children with physical disabilities. An IQ testing program and a “Mental Hygiene” department supported the system (Ellis, 2011, 2013; MacDonald, 1918; TBE, 1912).

Thus, by 1945, Toronto’s special education programs had become part of the “grammar of schooling,” the one-time reforms that were eventually assimilated into the system’s regular workings and became so deeply ingrained that they seem part of “the way schools are” and have always been (Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Tyack & Tobin, 1994, p. 454). What Toronto public schools were doing for exceptional children by midcentury, many other Canadian and American cities were doing around the same time as well. For instance, Los Angeles, Detroit, Milwaukee, and Chicago all had separate classes for children with intellectual disabilities. All four cities, like Toronto, had special classes for children with speech, hearing, and visual impairments. Cleveland, Philadelphia, and Indianapolis had special schools for children with physical disabilities (Osgood, 2008, pp. 64–70). The major Canadian cities Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, and Ottawa had more or less the same range of classes as Toronto (Russell & Tyler, 1942).

At midcentury, educators making policy to address the needs of “exceptional” students supported a segregated approach to their education, in an expanding number of settings differentiated according to what the educators perceived as these students’ abilities and needs. As was also the case in urban school systems in the United States (Lazerson, 1984; Osgood, 2008), special education policies in Toronto and Ontario contained assorted messages of care and control, intellectual growth and physical normalization, adaptation to society’s structures, and real reforms designed to better adapt social institutions, such as schools, to exceptional children. There was not necessarily a contradiction between statements made by Mrs. H. E. McCullagh, outgoing chair of the TBE, who said, “If we are to serve handicapped pupils, let us do it generously” (1945, p. 6), and the report of the Royal Commission on Education in Ontario, which asserted, “Children with intelligence quotients below 50 should be recognized as requiring institutional or supervisory protection throughout life; otherwise they will constitute a menace to society and society them” (1950, p. 383).

## EXPANDING SPECIAL EDUCATION, 1950-1970

In 1950, the *Report of the Royal Commission on Education in Ontario* was published. The Commission's 20 members had begun meeting in 1945 to plan a major, modernizing overhaul of the province's school system for the new, post-World War II Canada. Also known as the Hope Report for its chair, Justice John Andrew Hope (Gidney, 1999, p. 23), the 1,000-page volume urged significant changes to Ontario's school system. Recommendations dealing with special education proposed the creation of a Special Education branch within the Department of Education and called for "special education clinics" in large cities, which would employ psychologists, teachers with special education certification, and health and welfare officials to provide more integrated and sophisticated assessment and treatment programs. The report also recommended compulsory special education legislation, such as that passed in England and Wales in 1944, which required all local education authorities to meet the needs of "those less severely handicapped" and to establish "special schools for those more severely handicapped" (Royal Commission on Education in Ontario, 1950, p. 380).

Although the Hope Report (Royal Commission on Education in Ontario, 1950, pp. 380–391) recommended compulsory legislation, it saw no reason to change the law exempting school boards from teaching some groups of disabled children, including the "ineducable" (children having an IQ score of 50 or less).<sup>4</sup> Nor, in fact, did Ontario adopt the recommendation for compulsory special education legislation. Instead, enabling legislation, spelled out in the Special Classes Act (1911) and Auxiliary Classes Act (1914), continued for some time to vest practically all policy decisions in local hands, including the decision to offer special programs at all (Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1914, 1927). In reality, the majority of Ontario's approximately 4,200 public and Roman Catholic separate school boards in 1950 were likely too small, too spread out over large rural areas, or too assessment-poor to implement a special education policy, even if the province had compelled them to do so (Gidney, 1999, pp. 29–30). Yet throughout the 1950s and 1960s, as conditions changed, school systems across the province implemented reforms and policies that brought their levels of special education services more in line with the standards set originally by assessment-rich urban centers such as Toronto (Gidney, 1999, pp. 152–155).

In 1953, the TBE opened a new and, for the first time, purpose-built facility for special education. Sunny View School soon gained pride of place in the city's public school system for what trustees believed was a modern exemplar of increasingly generous school provisions for exceptional

children. The school housed classes for children with physical disabilities and, in a separate wing, deaf children.

The arrival of metropolitan school governance in Toronto in 1954 helped to spread what many people saw as the city's forward-looking policies to its neighbors. Those still partly rural communities—the Township of York, Etobicoke, Scarborough, North York, and the other centers that became the inner suburbs—offered some auxiliary classes but often purchased services from the TBE. In 1954, the Ontario government created the Metropolitan School Board (MSB), an additional level of educational governance that federated 11 Toronto-area boards of education, including the TBE. The province permitted the MSB to provide some special education services on a regional basis, enabling Toronto's suburban neighbors to pool resources to achieve the same service levels found in the city's public schools. The TBE opted to mostly continue setting its own policies and operate its own special classes for exceptional children. A few small TBE programs, including Sunny View and a new Metropolitan School for the Deaf, which opened in 1962, were passed up to the MSB level after 1954 and became shared among all of the area boards (Fleming, 1971a, pp. 186–192; Fleming, 1972b, p. 214).

Aside perhaps from the development of purpose-built Sunny View, the 1950s and early 1960s were a time of continuity in the TBE's approach to special education policy. By 1956, there were some 3,500 Toronto students—out of a total enrollment of 83,000—receiving one form or another of special education (Stogdill, 1956, pp. 1–8). The largest number of special students were enrolled in “opportunity” classes and handicraft schools for (primarily) students with IQs falling in the 50–75 range (Stogdill, 1956, p. 4). By 1956, the board was also classifying its “academic vocational” classes, for children and youth with IQs between 75 and 90, as a special education program (Stogdill, 1956, p. 5).

Classes for “new Canadians”—that is, students lacking fluency in English—were placed directly under the board's special education umbrella. By 1956, there were eight such classes in operation in Toronto schools (Stogdill, 1956, p. 6). These classes were warranted in a city experiencing its first real immigration boom in decades (Gaskell & Levin, 2012; Lemon, 1985, p. 113). Classes for so-called gifted youngsters were also discussed in earnest after the launch of the Soviet satellite Sputnik in 1957 raised alarm bells about the costs to the West if its intellectual capital was not mobilized (Long, 1958, pp. ix–xvii; Siklauskas, 1958, pp. 20–26).<sup>5</sup>

Also in the 1950s, the slow process of extending special education to another new group of young people not previously covered in school policy began—so-called trainable retarded children,<sup>6</sup> or the “ineducable” group mentioned earlier. The issue of schooling for trainable retarded children

was an early example of parents successfully organizing themselves to change policy. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, a group of Toronto parents of trainable mentally retarded children were dissatisfied with the lack of assistance from the TBE and with options that consisted mainly of private schools or institutionalization. The parents organized and began to teach classes for their children without school board help (Pletsch, 1997, pp. 41–45). They joined organizations such as the Ontario Association for Retarded Children and gradually plied concessions and funds from provincial and local officials (Pletsch, 1997). Parents in the United States joined similar groups advocating in favor of expanding special education to a greater number of children. American parent organizations were a significant force for policy change, their influence in the 1950s and 1960s “hard to overestimate” (Lazerson, 1984, p. 38). By about 1970, Ontario parents were similarly influencing policy. In 1969, Ontario forced newly formed county boards and the new Metropolitan Toronto School Board (the MTSB, which succeeded the MSB in 1967<sup>7</sup>) to take over authority for the parent-operated classes, which were then fully absorbed into the public system (Fleming, 1971b, p. 379; Pletsch, 1997).

Harvey Simmons has argued that local school board control was not exactly the policy outcome that the Ontario parents had had in mind, but it was undeniably a policy they had had a hand in making (1982, p. 157). By locating schools for trainable retarded children at the MTSB, a regional board with few instructional responsibilities (those responsibilities being mostly the domain of the area boards federated to the MTSB), the province effectively ensured that schools for trainable retarded children would be located on separate school sites. Boards could also still exclude “multi-handicapped” and “hard-to-serve” children, the relatively small number of children perceived to be so acutely mentally and physically disabled that it was argued that schools could neither educate nor train them, nor even meet their basic care needs (Pletsch, 1997, p. 120).

By the 1960s, Toronto students with cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, and muscular dystrophy were receiving special education, and programs had been initiated for those with “learning disabilities attributable to neurological impairment, aphasia and dyslexia” (Pletsch, 1997, p. 109). Child Adjustment Services took responsibility for a range of struggling children—from those whose academic progress was deemed too slow, to those with behavioral and extreme discipline problems, to those developing “unhealthy personality traits such as extreme shyness, timidity or fears.” In 1961–1962, the TBE employed one full-time and four part-time psychiatrists, 27 psychologists (21 of them full-time), and five full-time psychiatric social workers to assess and help place such students in programs deemed suitable (Fleming, 1972b, p. 204). The growing number of experts on staff

in Toronto placed it on a par with Vancouver, where the school board's Mental Hygiene Division employed a psychiatrist, psychologists, and psychiatric social workers as well after 1949 (Thomson, 1999).

Throughout the 1960s, the TBE's policy was to further extend its provision of separate special education facilities, particularly at the elementary level. While the total elementary student population increased by 44% between 1962 and 1972, the number of teachers in "special programs" rose by 61% to 470, and the percentage of students participating in special education from 3.9% in 1960 to 7.2% in 1974 (Gershman, 1975, p. 2; Jaffary, 1975, p. 14). Most of this growth in special education programs was absorbed in opportunity and academic-vocational classes, which brought together children who had been labeled "slow learners," "limited ability," or "educable mentally retarded"—basically the same groups of children with IQs between 50 and 75, or 75 and 90, who had been attending these classes in the 1950s (Martell, 1974, pp. 39–58).

By the 1960s as well, however, a new policy was needed to address the needs of opportunity- and academic-vocational-class pupils who had reached high school age and remained in school, by this time a more regular occurrence than before. It had been expected in 1948, for instance, that fully 39% of all Ontario students entering Grade 1 would not make it past Grade 8 (Gidney, 1999, pp. 12–13; App. 1, p. 289). By the early 1960s, however, high schools were encouraged to do what they could to democratically distribute equality of educational opportunity to all teenagers (Gidney, 1999, pp. 38–39). Between 1960 and 1968, secondary school enrollment for 15- to 19-year-olds in Ontario jumped from 67% to 77% (Stamp, 1982, pp. 203–205). Changing enrollments injected into traditionally "rigorously academic and highly selective" high schools a new host of students whose ability to succeed was suspect to educators (Gidney, 1999, p. 39). Significant numbers of these youngsters had attended special education classes, either opportunity classes or academic-vocational classes, in elementary schools (Reich & Ziegler, 1972, p. 1).

#### ACADEMIC STREAMING AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

Academic streaming, in the form of new, purpose-built vocational schools, presented itself as a solution for dealing with adolescent exceptional students. The solution was irresistible, yet not totally inevitable. The new vocational schools that would be constructed, largely after 1960, were separate and distinct from the school board's other technical, commercial, and vocational programs for nonlabeled adolescents. At first, school officials in Toronto had not wanted to congregate adolescent exceptional students in special vocational schools. In 1960, the TBE's director of

education, Zack Phimister, presented a report that MTSB officials had authored, stating “that classes for slow learners should be disbursed in various schools and not centralized in separate vocational schools” (TBE, 1960, p. 30). However, also in 1960, the federal government announced the Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act (TVTAA), which was to provide federal capital construction funds for technical training institutes. Intended for college-level programs, the TVTAA was mostly used to construct vocational high schools, as provincial governments (especially Ontario) devised ways to gain access to the funds for badly needed secondary school construction.

In 1962, Ontario rushed to roll out a new provincial streaming policy for secondary schools. Called the “Reorganized Program of Studies” but known to most educators as the Robarts Plan, after the minister of education John P. Robarts, a main goal of secondary school reorganization was to take advantage of federal TVTAA funds for school construction. TVTAA money was not available for building academic high schools, and it was only available for adding new wings to composite high schools if the entire wing was used for vocational studies. To help school boards construct the types of facilities that were eligible for the largest amount of TVTAA money, the Robarts Plan reorganized Ontario’s high school program into five-year (Grades 9–13), four-year (Grades 9–12), and two-year (Grades 9 and 10) programs. The four- and five-year programs both had the same three branches: Arts and Science; Business and Commerce; and Science, Technology, and Trades. Pupils in any branch in the five-year program, including in the technical or commercial branches, normally took enough academic credits to qualify to attend university. Similarly, pupils in the four-year program accrued academic studies that allowed them to attend newly authorized community colleges of arts and applied technology. The two-year program was terminal at Grade 10. It had only a vocational branch, and its graduates were supposed to go directly into the workforce. Because the two-year program was not designed to mix academic and vocational subjects (beyond basic courses such as English) and had predominantly vocational content, it best fit the bill for receiving TVTAA funding (Gidney, 1999, pp. 45–46).

In 1961–1962, Ontario reaped \$230 million in capital funding from the TVTAA, an enormous sum compared with the \$15 million the federal government believed the province would spend (Cameron, 1972, pp. 163–178; Stamp, 1982, pp. 204–206). The deep desire to tap into federal funding drove Toronto’s special education policy agenda at the secondary level for the first several years of the 1960s (Curtis, Livingstone, & Smaller, 1992, pp. 86–87). Realizing the sums of money potentially available to the TBE, Zack Phimister and his superintendent of secondary schools

reversed course from 1960 when they had recommended distributing slow learners across the high schools. Now, the TBE planned instead to concentrate these pupils in new, purpose-built facilities that could draw on maximum TVTAA funding. One of these facilities was the new Castle Frank High School. By using TVTAA funds to cover 75% of capital and operating costs, plus funds from the Municipal Works Assistance Programme, trustees were able to erase from the local school tax bill “eleven-twelfths” of the school’s \$4.46 million price tag (TBE, 1963, p. 555). Toronto’s share of the TVAA money would go mainly into schools such as Castle Frank. Adolescent exceptional pupils were recruited to fill out the ranks of these vocational schools.

The stage was set for streaming. The TBE used TVTAA money to build, in all, four “special vocational schools” and four “special high schools” by the end of the 1960s (Clandfield et al., 2014, pp. 65–66). “Special vocational schools,” the lowest stream, were stand-alone, gender-segregated (all-boy or all-girl) schools for students coming from opportunity classes in the elementary schools. In the only slightly different “special high schools” stream, students of “less limited ability” than the “special vocational school” students followed a slightly different vocational program. This latter stream was designed for students who hailed from academic-vocational classes in the elementary schools, students failing Grade 8, and those who it was expected would remain in school only until age 16 (Curtis et al., 1992, p. 87; Reich & Ziegler, 1972). The list of high schools for students in the lowest two streams included Bickford Park, Brockton, Heydon Park, Lakeview, Parkview, West Park, and Castle Frank (Tsuji & Wright, 1983, pp. 7–8). This streaming, several authors have argued, limited academic and occupational prospects (Curtis et al., 1992, pp. 88–92; Martell, 1974, pp. 39–58; Smaller, 2003, pp. 95–112).

## CHALLENGES TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, hard questions were being asked about these streaming practices and about the TBE’s special education policies generally. The questions raised both by low-income and/or immigrant families and by research studies, including the much anticipated and celebrated 1968 Hall-Dennis Report<sup>8</sup> (Ontario, Provincial Committee, 1968) and the comprehensive 1970 Every Student Survey (ESS), conducted by E. R. Wright and others for the TBE, helped to provoke some of the most significant policy changes yet in the TBE’s special education system. The ESS found that “children of the lowest occupational group were twenty times more likely to be in a slow learner class than children of the highest occupational category” (Gershman, 1975, p. 14). Moreover, a follow-up

study 5 years later found that proportionately more children of lower socioeconomic groups were still in special classes than were children of the higher occupation categories (Gershman, 1975, p. 14).

Around the same time, class and racial bias also imbued special education programs in the United States. In the 1970s, “a highly placed official” with the California Department of Education admitted that in that state, the practice, since the 1940s, had been to deliberately place minority (mostly Mexican American) students in classes for the educable mentally retarded in part to avoid integrating them after California removed racially segregated schools from its education code in 1947 (Lazerson, 1984, p. 40). On the other side of the continent, Boston’s school board knowingly and deliberately channeled inner-city children into special education after 1963. In a move reminiscent of the Toronto board’s action around the same time, Boston public schools streamed these students to obtain federal grant money set aside especially for “retarded” and other exceptional children (Nelson, 2009). The Boston school board only relented from its deliberate practice of labeling inner-city children when a federal court ordered it to do so in 1971, ruling on a suit brought by a parent who alleged her child had been “entombed” in a special class. The terminology came from community groups in Boston, which had, a few years earlier in 1967, written a report, “End Educational Entombment,” that decried the placement of large numbers of “poor, minority, and limited-English-proficient students” in special education classes (Nelson, 2009, pp. 160–161).

Other skeptics, like American researcher H. Carl Haywood, whom Ontario’s Hall-Dennis Report also cited (1968, p. 106), leveled their criticisms at the effectiveness of segregating children with special needs at all when evidence documenting the success of this practice was sparse and unpersuasive. For its part, the Hall-Dennis Report was particularly critical of the treatment of older, academically limited students placed in opportunity or academic-vocational classes.

What is required are fuller educational programs up to age 19 for these students since they now struggle with transition to the work force and flounder when they enter too early. . . . It is difficult for the Committee to accept the idea that the less competent the student is, the more quickly he should be rushed into the labour force. Common sense would seem to dictate that the reverse should be true. (1968, p. 108)

In 1970, these issues erupted into controversy in Toronto following the release of a TBE report on opportunity classes. It cited the claims of teachers working in a low-income community in Toronto’s east end that

“the majority of children” in Sprucecourt Public School could qualify for opportunity classes—that is, those that admitted children deemed “educable mentally retarded.” In Toronto as a whole, 3% of students were enrolled in such classes. (Lorimer & Phillips, 1971, p. 85; see also Fraser, 1972, pp. 47–50). The report sparked an outcry in the community. A group of mothers from Trefann Court housing complex, aided by community activists, prepared its own brief, refuting the report and condemning both the implied labeling of their children as educationally incompetent and the poor quality of instruction provided in opportunity classes. “When you are admitted to Opportunity Class, then, what the society is saying to you loud and clear is that you are very dumb and you can expect to stay on the bottom both economically and socially.” Citing board and Canadian census statistics showing the location of students by socioeconomic class and national origin, the brief charged the school system with direct discrimination against poor and immigrant students. Special education and streaming were named specifically as a major source of that discrimination (Gaskell, Kearns, & Pollock, 2008; Trefann Court Brief, 1970). The brief also presented evidence that students from Parkway Vocational School, the majority of whom had been enrolled in opportunity classes, were, to a great extent, unemployed, working in unskilled jobs, or not sufficiently trained for trades they aspired to. For working-class students, the mothers concluded, “special” education was hampering their development rather than addressing their needs (Trefann Court Brief, 1970).

The 1975 board survey, a follow-up to the ESS, also found great variations in the treatment of children with disabilities. There was “a tendency for more specialized programs (perceptual, behavioural and special reading) to have higher ‘success’ rates than the ‘opportunity’ programs” (Gershman & Wright, 1975, p. 12). For instance, in the perceptual program, 55% returned to regular programs, whereas in the primary opportunity class program, only 17% did (Gershman & Wright, 1975, pp. 12–13).

Trefann Court and other controversies, together with research and policy developments elsewhere and growing political commitment to civil rights and equality, led to a questioning of the traditional special education instructional model and eventually to policy change in Toronto. School board elections in November 1969 in Toronto returned a majority of reform-minded trustees, most of them associated with the social democratic New Democratic Party (NDP). The new trustees put streaming, community involvement, inner-city issues, and racial and gender equity consistently on the policy agenda (Gaskell & Levin, 2012, pp. 74–91). The civil rights movement in the United States challenged the

principle of race-based and ability-based segregated schooling (Osgood, 2008, pp. 99–103). A widely circulated article by American researcher Lloyd M. Dunn, “Special Education for the Mildly Retarded—Is Much of It Justifiable?” (as cited in Marshall, 1990, p. 106), helped fuel the “segregation vs. integration” debate in Toronto. This was followed by an influential Canadian report in 1970 from the Commission on Emotional and Learning Disabilities in Children (CELDIC), titled *One Million Children*, which “advocated that the children with emotional and learning disorders be retained in the regular classroom” (Gershman, 1975, p. 4; Pivik, McComas, & LaFlamme, 2002). The Ontario Ministry of Education superintendent of special education, Harry Fisher, told the Ontario Education Research Council, “The weight of evidence suggested that separated special programs produced little that is superior to what is produced in the regular class” (cited in Lind, 1974, p. 86). A report on the administration of the Toronto school system by city politician Karl Jaffary adopted a similar perspective. “People worry that education is becoming social work, that children are being stigmatized, and perhaps worse, that they are being isolated from their peers, are being driven about the city to special classes filled with those like them. . . . There is a sense in which we diminish each child’s learning of tolerance if the special child is constantly whisked away” (Jaffary, 1975, p. 100).

By the early 1970s, as well, the explosion of diagnoses in a new category, “learning disabilities,” was pressuring special educators to rethink placement options for the majority of special education students, who could no longer be written off under the diagnoses “mild mental retardation,” “educable retarded,” or “slow learner.” Samuel Kirk defined *learning disability* (always a nebulous category) in 1962 as a

retardation, disorder, or delayed development in one or more of the processes of speech, language, reading, writing, arithmetic, or other school subject resulting from a psychological handicap caused by a possible cerebral dysfunction and/or emotional or behavioural disturbances. It is not the result of mental retardation, sensory deprivation, or cultural and instructional factors. (as cited in Hallahan & Mercer, 2001)<sup>9</sup>

In 1980, less than two decades after Kirk named the diagnosis, 35% of all American special education students carried the label learning disabled, the most common special education label in U.S. schools at that time (Handler, 2007). Learning disability grew as a diagnosis in Ontario as well after the 1960s. By 1989, nearly half of Ontario’s special education population was labeled learning disabled (Curtis et al., 1992).

## CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

In response to pressures for policy change from sources as diverse as researchers, politicians, parents, and a new diagnosis, the TBE in 1970 configured a new special education system it called the Continuum of Special Programs. It was based on Evelyn Deno's Cascade of Services, which was one model used in important American special education legislation passed in 1975, PL 42-142: the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Osgood, 2005, pp. 117–120). A similar mainstreaming experiment was also already under way in at least one other Canadian school system, the Vancouver School Board (Gershman, 1975, p. 4). In the continuum/cascade models, the "largest number of pupils would be in integrated programs and the smallest number in the most segregated programs" (Erwin & Wright, 1982, p. 2; Marshall, 1990, p. 114; TBE, 1978, p. 64). In one sense, the continuum of services approach marked a significant policy break from the past. From 1945—indeed, from the time the TBE established its first special education classes in 1910—the policy had been to educate children with disabilities and learning difficulties by removing them from regular classrooms and segregating them in self-contained special classrooms. In another sense, however, the new approach was not a totally novel venture because the board effectively replaced segregation not with integration but with a policy hybrid of integration and segregation. The policy hybrid, David Tyack and Larry Cuban argued, is a hardy policy strain, known for its longevity and its ability to survive policy climate changes. Hybrid policies strike a compromise between lofty policy goals and practical limitations, are adaptable, and generally represent the reality that while reforms and policies change schools, schools also change reforms and policies (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, pp. 60–84). The continuum of services approach displays these characteristics and, as we shall see, has been an enduring policy model for over four decades.

In the new hybrid policy, "self-contained" special education classes in TBE schools were converted into a "withdrawal program" consisting of "Learning Centres." The former special education teacher was reinvented as the Learning Centre teacher, and special education students rotated into his or her class for part of the day from the mainstream classes (Erwin & Wright, 1982, pp. 1–15; Marshall, 1990, p. 114). The first students mainstreamed under this initiative were taken from the separate Special Program classes at the primary and junior division levels (K–6) and from the English as a second language program, while those classes were reorganized or closed. The policy placed educational assistants in Learning Centres as well (Marshall, 1990, App. A, pp. 200–202). By 1978, the TBE's Draft Report of the Special Education Work Group recommended a Learning Centre in each school to

serve as the “method of implementing” the “mainstreaming” of a portion of Toronto’s special education population (Erwin & Wright, 1982, pp. 2–15; Marshall, 1990, p. 114; TBE, 1978, p. 64).

The TBE’s policy innovations in the area of a continuum of services, and the greater integration of previously segregated special class students using Learning Centres, anticipated policy shifts that would affect all Ontario school boards in the 1980s. But before these shifts happened, Ontario began the process of completing its existing special education system. The combined pressure of organizations such as the Ontario Association for Children with Learning Disabilities (OACLD) and the Association of Bright Children (ABC), two private members’ bills in the Ontario legislature, the personal commitment to legislative change by minister of education Bette Stephenson, and the politics of a minority government drove policy change (Gidney, 1999, pp. 152–155; Mombourquette, 1985, pp. 73–76). In 1980, the Ontario government passed its landmark special education reform legislation, Bill 82. The law made special education programs into a right that school boards were required to deliver to all exceptional pupils under their jurisdiction (Gidney, 1999, p. 155). Bill 82 instigated a round of policy making that increasingly centralized special education authority in the hands of the Ontario Ministry of Education.<sup>10</sup>

## BILL 82

Bill 82 had wide-ranging policy implications for all Ontario school boards. It replaced the enabling legislation with compulsory requirements, obligating the large number of boards that did not provide a complete range of separate special education programs to, by 1985, either add programs for (practically all) exceptional schoolchildren in their districts or buy these services from other boards (Zegarac, Drewett, & Swan, 2008, p. 8).<sup>11</sup> Because the TBE already provided most of the services Bill 82 named, the only classes it was required to add were stand-alone gifted education classes and educational provisions for “hard-to serve” children (acutely disabled pupils). Programs for both were in place by 1984 (MTSB, 1984, pp. 74–75; TBE, 1984a, pp. 606–607; TBE, 1984b, pp. 387–392; TBE, 1986, pp. 855–857). Bill 82 also finally cancelled the 1914 Auxiliary Classes Act’s exclusion clause. It was no longer legal for school boards to exclude altogether from public schooling children who scored 50 points or lower on an IQ test—children labeled “trainable retarded” or, by the early 1980s, “moderate mental handicap” (O’Neill, 1984, pp. 19–20; Ontario Ministry of Education, 1984, p. 17).

Amendments introduced during a quarrelsome legislative process further expanded the scope of Bill 82. One change was that school boards

would not be required to teach hard-to-serve pupils but would have to help parents find appropriate alternative educational placements for them (Marshall, 1990, pp. 145–147; Nagel, 1981, p. 9). Further amendments established crucial mechanisms for parent appeals. Bill 82, and the accompanying Regulation 554/81, required school boards to convene Identification, Placement and Review Committees (IPRCs). These IPRCs had three responsibilities: identify students with special needs, place them, and review the placements. Parents could appeal any aspect of an IPRC decision, first to a special education appeal board at the school level, then to the school board, and after that to a regional Special Education Tribunal (Godsell, 1991, pp. 67–73; Mombourquette, 1985, p. 53; Wilson, 1983, pp. 3–4). The appeals process was especially controversial. A late addition to the legislation that was triggered by opposition party pressure at the committee stage, education minister Stephenson denounced it as exceedingly bureaucratic (Marshall, 1990, p. 147). Finally, Bill 82 required boards to develop accountability practices; each board had to create and consult a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), with representation from local “associations” for children with disabilities and learning disabilities such as the OACLD and ABC.

Bill 82 is today, and was already in the early 1980s, often associated with the landmark PL 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, discussed earlier (Wilson, 1983; Winzer, 1993, p. 365). But there were decisive differences between the two laws.<sup>12</sup> PL 94-142 famously used the phrase “least restrictive environment,” which American policy makers interpreted as a requirement to mainstream as many children as possible into regular classes.<sup>13</sup> Bill 82 actually left out that crucial phrase (Wilson, 1983, p. 3). Although since 1975, it had been the Ontario government’s official policy, as stated in the submission of the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Colleges and Universities to the OECD, to “encourage the placement of children as close as possible to the total integration end of the spectrum of programs and placements” (1975, p. 65). Bill 82 required school boards to provide special education services for all, or nearly all, pupils in their district. But it did not require them to mainstream even a single pupil (Wilson, 1983, p. 1).

### MAINSTREAMING

By the 1980s, the TBE had moved ahead on its own, adventurously and ambitiously, on mainstreaming. By September 1982, the TBE had the equivalent of 99.5 full-time Learning Centre classes spread across its schools (3 times the number in 1978), which helped integrate significant numbers of educable retarded, learning disabled, and other exceptional students

(Erwin & Wright, 1982, p. 64). The MTSB participated in mainstreaming as well, announcing a “divestment” policy to the area boards in 1988 that set forth the dissolution of MTSB separate schools for trainable retarded children by 1993. Nearly 900 students were slated for transfer to regular public and high schools in Metro area boards, including in the TBE (MTSB, 1989a, p. 3; MTSB, 1989b). A “continuum of service that ranges from special schools to resource withdrawal” was envisioned for trainable retarded students everywhere in Metro (MTSB, 1989a.) Across the area boards federated to the MTSB, only the TBE offered practically unequivocal support for divestment.

Five boards were against divestment, citing new costs and funding increases that would be necessary “to avoid taking from [nondisabled students]” (MTSB, 1989b). The tiny City of York board stated that because of divestment’s high cost, it would have no alternative but to do what it wished to do least: place trainable retarded students in regular classes. In 1988, the TBE received the Metro board’s blessing to do just that. A new pilot program saw four trainable retarded children (who were eligible for the MTSB’s segregated classes) mainstreamed with 12 “regular” students in Grade 1 in Duke of Connaught, a neighborhood public school (MTSB, 1989b, pp. 35–36).

However, administrators and front-line staff alike maintained strong attachments to the idea of segregated settings for at least some exceptional children. This attachment to segregated classes helped to ensure important elements of continuity within the board’s policy of mainstreaming students through Learning Centres and the continuum of services. A report on a 1981–1982 pilot project that studied principal and teacher responses to mainstreaming in the TBE concluded,

The major concern expressed by the school staff was that the Learning Centre would be seen as a replacement for all self-contained classrooms. School staff stressed that regardless of the success of the Learning Centre, some pupils would still require self-contained placement and that placement in a regular class with Learning Centre support would be completely inappropriate for these pupils. (Erwin & Wright, 1982, p. 45)

For some teachers, Bill 82 had become a focal point for unusually high anxiety and unfounded fears about the legal ramifications of mainstreaming, especially the possibility of legal action against individual teachers accused of negligence in carrying out their duty to educate and properly care for disabled students. The Ontario Public School Teachers Federation (OPSTF) urged calm in a special 1983 booklet. Talk of litigation amounted to “rumors” that had “migrated’ north” following the American

experience with PL 94-142. "People inaccurately talk about mainstreaming as the placing of severely handicapped pupils, without support, into mainstream classrooms," the pamphlet continued (Wilson, 1983, p. 1). Teachers would not be required, under Bill 82, to give medication or help with toileting because those duties were the responsibility of other school personnel (Marshall, 1990, p. 151; Wilson, 1983, p. 19).

### LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CHANGE

Under Bill 82, the TBE and the MTSB still had some latitude to make policy, to push the envelope on issues such as mainstreaming. Yet, after 1985, other factors were quickly conspiring to circumscribe policy-making options for local officials across the province of Ontario. The new special education tribunals created by Bill 82, the courts, and parents of children with disabilities became major forces for policy change. Bill 82 gave school boards the authority to place exceptional children in the best setting, as the child's IPRC determined it. IPRCs often recommended segregated placements, but parents were increasingly demanding integrated settings (TBE, 1987). Appeals at the school, school board, and tribunal level often sided with the school board's placement decision (Valeo, 2002, pp. 68–69). In contesting placements, parent and school board appellants and defendants regularly raised considerable medical evidence, including competing expert testimony. In this way, the new IPRC and appeals process reinforced an existing medical or treatment approach to young people's disabilities or learning difficulties (Valeo, 2002, pp. 86–92).

By the mid to late 1980s, parents and caregivers of exceptional children who were unsatisfied with their say in the special education system joined disability activists to lobby provincial governments for policy change (McCallum, 1991, pp. 61–71; Uditsky, 1993, p. 84). Parents also increasingly explored legal avenues to have their voices heard (Valeo, 2002, p. 115). Constitutional change in the 1980s had a significant impact on their efforts. In April 1985, Section 15 of the new Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms took effect, stating that the law's protections and benefits applied equally to all, "without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability."<sup>14</sup> Terri Sussel contended that "parents and lobby groups representing special needs children" were the ones "who literally 'shamed'" governments into adding protections for people with disabilities to the Charter (1994, p. 91). A raft of court rulings based on the Charter suggested that Ontario school boards could no longer lean on the IPRC to overrule parents' wishes for mainstreaming and that they might be compelled by higher legal authority to place even children labeled trainable retarded or hard to

serve in regular graded classrooms (McCallum, 1991, p. 64; Sussel, 1994, pp. 99–101). The rules surrounding special education were changing.

Indeed, by the early 1990s, legislative and then policy changes followed from the new legal landscape that the courts and parents had created. These changes took the decision to integrate even further out of school board hands. In 1991, for example, the Ontario Human Rights Commission ruled that the Carleton Board of Education had violated 12-year-old Alexandra Hysert's rights when it denied the Hyserts' request that Alexandra, who had Down syndrome, be placed in a mainstream classroom in a suburban Ottawa public school (Pletsch, 1997, pp. 122–123; "School Settlement Called Landmark," 1991).

Around this time, Ontario's political landscape was undergoing its largest shift in a generation. In 1990, Ontario voters elected the province's first NDP government, handing the party a surprise majority mandate that it could use to carry out its moderately activist education agenda (Gidney, 1999, pp. 216–218). In 1991, the Ministry of Education, under Minister Marion Boyd, abruptly defected from the side of its co-respondent in the Hysert case, the Carleton Board of Education (Pletsch, 1997, p. 123; "School Settlement Called Landmark," 1991). "We are committed," Boyd said in explaining her government's actions in the legislature, "as our party has been and as this government continues to be, to the notion of parental choice and to the notion of parental choice within a context which offers integration within a community school wherever possible" (Boyd, 1991).<sup>15</sup> Over the next two years, Boyd introduced new legislation, Bill 114 and Bill 4, that compelled school boards to "consider integration as their first-choice placement wherever possible" and empowered parents by giving them rights to deliberate as part of the IPRC and to have "equal say" in appointing members to an appeal board.

Bill 114 and Bill 4 ended the differential treatment that youngsters labeled trainable retarded and hard to serve had received under Bill 82. The new bills helped to pave the way for them to also be integrated into regular classes (Pletsch, 1997, pp. 122–124). A subsequent NDP-initiated Royal Commission on Learning report, *For the Love of Learning*, issued in 1994, supported the notion that "integration should be the norm" for exceptional children, but it added that a "continuum of services for students" should still be available if "in the opinion of parents and educators [students were] best served in other settings" (Ontario, Royal Commission on Learning, 1994, Ch. 10, Rec. 39, n.p.). The report also took aim at the "medical model" in special education, which it said "does not work very well." It called for less dependence across the system on labels, which the commissioners asserted seemed to shift over time and were often arbitrary. Significant intersections of learning disability and poverty (among

others), the report said, further muddied medicalized definitions of who was learning disabled and what that actually meant (Ontario, Royal Commission on Learning, 1994, Ch. 10).

Other school reforms in the late 1980s and early 1990s at the provincial level further supported integration. A new provincial policy of “destreaming” aimed to abolish the different ability streams in schools (especially secondary schools) and create a Common Curriculum to be shared by all students. In 1987, George Radwanski, a former *Toronto Star* editor hired by the then still Liberal government, had argued in favor of disposing of streams in Ontario high schools, in part because of poor educational outcomes in the lower streams, Basic and General (Clandfield et al., 2014; Curtis et al., 1992, pp. 116–117; Gidney, 1999, pp. 172–173). That year, for example, nearly 90% of the TBE’s Basic-level students had not accumulated the number of high school credits that was expected of them after two years of study (Cheng, Tsuji, Yau, & Ziegler, 1989, p. 47).

Just as the TBE had taken a lead on other special education reforms in the 1970s and 1980s, it also piloted destreaming in the 1990s. Olivia Chow and Pam McConnell, two NDP trustees, convinced the board in 1990 to approve converting Castle Frank High School, which had fallen victim to declining enrolment, into Rosedale Heights High School and to make it the first in Ontario to destream its entire Grade 9–12 program (McCaskell, 2005, p. 133; Walker, 1991).<sup>16</sup> TBE trustees then passed a broader de-streaming policy by a single vote, but had difficulty implementing the plan (Gaskell & Levin, 2012, p. 93). Between 1993 and 1995, the NDP government began to destream Grades 1–9, implementing the Common Curriculum (Anderson & Ben Jaafar, 2003, p. 8; Curtis et al., 1992, pp. 117–118).

### FUNDING CUTBACKS

With integration, destreaming, and challenges to the medical model of disability near the top of the agenda, the 1980s to the mid-1990s was a reform era in special education policy. But a significant portion of this time frame was also marked by major retrenchment in educational funding. A first round of cutbacks occurred in the dying days of Premier Bob Rae’s mandate. In a particularly bad recession, and after trying several different fiscal options, Rae’s NDP was left with no politically workable alternative but to clear-cut spending on hospitals, schools, and municipalities (Gidney, 1999, pp. 168–169). Economic woes shrank local tax revenues as well, leading TBE trustees to reluctantly make cuts of their own. In a series of close votes, they reduced the number of gifted classes and laid off 368 educational assistants who had served special education programs (Duffy, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c; TBE, 1995a, pp. 208–209; TBE 1995b, pp. 646–652).

In autumn 1995, Mike Harris's Progressive Conservative (PC) government swept the NDP from power. The PCs did not make a clean sweep of NDP education policies, however, moving forward on several reforms that the NDP had first proposed.<sup>17</sup> Yet, the early years of the Tory (PC) mandate were dominated by more frank talk about slashing expenditures and introducing cost savings in education (and other policy areas). The government demanded that school boards locate major savings. To start, the government announced "a staggering 22.7 per cent reduction in spending"—some \$400 million to be cut from its transfers to school boards in the last four months of 1996 alone (Gidney, 1999, p. 242). The Tories matched real cuts with rhetoric about back-to-basics reforms that would return the Ontario school system to more conservative roots (Ibbitson, 1997, pp. 221–240). This included a plan to reverse de-streaming in high schools, which would have been implemented sooner than it was (in 1999) if rookie Minister of Education John Snobelen had not bungled his first pass at secondary school reform (Gidney, 1999, pp. 238–239).

Deep as the Tory education cuts were, they did not represent the main finance-related source of change in Toronto's special class policy after 1995. Instead, a historic shift in the basic organization of educational finance in Ontario caused much more dramatic change across the system and in special class policy. First, in 1997, the Tories passed Bill 104, the Fewer School Boards Act. Through mergers, the Act cut the number of school boards in Ontario nearly in half and forced a union of the TBE with five other area boards as well as the absorption of the MTSB, thus creating the new Toronto District School Board (TDSB) (Anderson & Ben Jaafar, 2003, p. 18; Gidney, 1999, pp. 246–247).

Before this time, all Ontario school boards were funded through local property taxes. Big-city public boards—for example, the Toronto board, the Ottawa board, and the London, Ontario, board—which could foot the entire education bill without provincial assistance, benefited from stronger tax assessment bases, while school trustees hiked tax rates repeatedly to fund "Cadillac" programs ("Relief for Cities," 1997). In 1997, however, the Harris government seized the keys to the Cadillac, grabbing control of the revenue side of educational finance in Bill 160, the Education Improvement Act. This was the major school reform bill that quickly became the *bête noire* of the resistance to Harris's education agenda (Gidney, 1999, pp. 244–248).

Under the new legislation, the province set the education property tax rate, revenues went directly to provincial coffers, and the Ministry of Education doled out a set grant amount—basically the same amount per capita—to every board based on a "funding formula." Trustees could no longer tax local ratepayers to generate additional funds for designer programs (Anderson & Jaafar, 2003, pp. 19–20).

In 1998, when the new funding formula took effect, the TDSB was stripped of its ability to raise extra funds for its generous special education programs by adjusting the local property tax rate. Nor could the board rely any longer on its rich urban assessment base to boost revenues, as all boards were allotted the same basic per-capita amount by the province. Forced into a one-size-fits-all model, the TDSB's revenues fell immediately and substantially. Trustees estimated that approximately \$305 million in cuts would be necessary over the new board's first five years of operation to balance the budget. Balanced budgets were now a legal requirement under Bill 160 (Anderson & Jaafar, 2003, pp. 19–20; Gidney, 1999, p. 267; Toronto District School Board [TDSB], 1998a, p. 226).

To make matters more complicated, the new funding formula stipulated a totally new method of raising and distributing special education monies (TDSB, 1998b, pp. 392–393). Toronto and the other boards each received a Special Education Per Pupil Amount (SEPPA) grant, calculated per capita on the total enrolment across all of a board's programs (regular and special education). The boards also received an Intensive Support Amount (ISA), a funding amount tied for the first time to each special education student and his or her specific needs (Chamberlain, 1998; Ontario, Ministry of Education and Training, 1998, pp. 8–9). Boards had to formally apply for ISA funds on behalf of each eligible special education student (Dean, 1999, pp. 12–15; Ontario, Ministry of Education and Training, 1998, pp. 8–9).

The ISA grant's implications were nightmarish for the TDSB. There were, first of all, four different categories of ISA funding to sort through. Categories 1, 2, and 3 were available to school boards. The fourth category was for other provincial institutions, such as juvenile custodial or correctional centers. ISA-1 funded general equipment needs for exceptional students, for example, special computers. ISA-2 and ISA-3 allocated \$12,000 or \$27,000 per qualified pupil-applicant respectively, based on the type of "specialized programming required by the small number of pupils with very high cost needs" (Ontario, Ministry of Education and Training, 1998, pp. 8–9).

The ISA funds were only available if the school board submitted a separate application for each and every one of its pupils believed eligible for an ISA amount. The Ministry of Education reviewed every single application and rendered its decision on each one. In 1998, the first year of ISA, the Ministry of Education challenged fully one third of the TBE's ISA applications. The board was left either to cut the special education rolls or find money elsewhere to cover the shortfall (Chamberlain, 1998). On top of this new bureaucracy, the province added another stack of paperwork by legislating new requirements for school boards to develop, for the

first time, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for every special education student in the province and prepare “transition plans” for adolescent developmentally handicapped students reaching school-leaving age (TDSB, 1998c, pp. 392–393).

The combination of the new funding formula and loss of local taxation powers, plus the new SEPPA and ISA grants for special education specifically, as well as the bureaucratic challenges generated by the denial of a large number of the Board’s ISA funding requests, meant that the TDSB was left with a staggering special education funding shortfall in 1998–1999. The TDSB was due to receive \$165 million in 1998–1999 for special education, a full \$48 million less than it had spent the previous year, when the trustees had more of a say in funding allocation (TDSB, 1998a, p. 267).

In 1999, the TDSB reallocated from elsewhere what funding it could under the new funding formula in order to pay for 130 more secondary school special education teachers than the formula covered (TDSB, 1999c, p. 401). However, the rigid general funding formula, allocating amounts in different pots for different programs, made even this nearly impossible as boards could only with great difficulty shift money from other programs to cover special education expenses (Dean, 1999, pp. 12–15). When school boards had raised and spent money for special education free from provincial involvement, they had enjoyed greater latitude to set special class policy locally. The provincial funding formula imposed fiscal pressures that constrained local decision making.

There was no relief from budget pressures until the final days of the PC administration, when the Tory government changed the funding formula to make it less rigid and returned to the special class system some of the money that had been cut. Responding to persistent complaints that the formula was not working, the government convened the Education Equality Task Force, led by the University of Guelph’s president and vice-chancellor, Mordechai Rozanski. Special education funding was one of the six problem areas of the provincial funding formula that Rozanski was tasked to investigate (Anderson & Jaafar 2003, pp. 36–37). Released in 2002 under the title *Investing in Public Education: Advancing the Goal of Continuous Improvement in Student Learning and Achievement*, the Rozanski report raised concerns about the general level of special education funding that the SEPPA made available. It also criticized the ISA for the significant unpredictability it had brought to planning special education services. Rozanski recommended the government increase the SEPPA amount, which was tied to each board’s 1997 spending and had not risen since. Reviewing the ISA, and paying particular attention to the Minister’s Advisory Council on Special Education<sup>18</sup> submission to the taskforce, Rozanski suggested easing the ISA bureaucracy’s stringent requirements.

He also recommended measures to end the practice that had emerged where boards aggressively diagnosed students in the ISA-2 and ISA-3 categories for students with a “very high level of need” in order to qualify for larger funding amounts from the province. This practice had become known euphemistically in official circles as “diagnosing for dollars” (Rozanski, 2002, p. 44). Other changes that would increase special education funding were also recommended.

In response to the Rozanski Report recommendations, the government announced over \$700 million in additional education funding for all the province’s schools (spread over multiple years) to address shortcomings in the provincial funding formula, with a portion of that money earmarked to shore up special education spending as well. However, it would take a change in government (to occur within a short time of Rozanski’s recommendations) before significant changes were brought to the SEPPA and ISA grants (Anderson & Jaafar, 2003, pp. 36–39; Office of the Auditor General, 2008, p. 367).

Despite its show of largesse, the provincial government still kept a watchful eye on school board spending. To force a balanced budget at the TDSB, the government in 2002 stripped trustees of all their powers<sup>19</sup> and handed them to a single individual, PC “party stalwart” and former Metro Toronto councillor Paul Christie. As the province’s appointed “supervisor,” Christie helmed the TDSB for the rest of 2002 and most of 2003 until a newly elected Liberal government restored the authority of the elected TDSB trustees (Brennan & Brown, 2003; Mallan & Kalinowski, 2002).

## MAINSTREAMING AND INCLUSION

Cutbacks and policy changes in the mid to late 1990s and early 2000s also helped to expose a new rift in special education. On one side: those who believed that the search for educational equity for exceptional children demanded mainstreaming and integration policies; on the other: those who believed that equity demanded adequately funded separate classes and diagnostic and treatment services for exceptional pupils. Parents were especially active, and increasingly influential, in these debates. In 1994, for example, Wendy Dines and other parents came before the TBE’s Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) to discuss “the exclusion of their children from the larger school community, both social and academically,” contrary to the TBE’s “commitment” to “integration.” Dines’ daughter, who attended “the learning disabled program” at Oriole Park School, had not been allowed by her school to go on an “out-of-province class field trip” with her classmates (TBE, 1994, p. 333). As adamantly as parents such as Wendy Dines supported mainstreaming, other parents of exceptional children

opposed it. Heather Caron, chair of the School Advisory Council at Frank Oke Secondary School (a TDSB special education school), for instance, argued against the planned closure of the school and the transfer of the program to a “composite school” on the basis that “many students at the school are too far behind academically . . . and socially, to fit into a mainstream high school program” (TDSB, 1999a, p. 211).<sup>20</sup>

Wendy Dines, like many parents, was asking that her child and other disabled children be allowed to participate in all school activities as equals, on their own terms, and that this participation be visible and valued equally with nondisabled children’s contributions and right to participate. Full and equal participation in all facets of school life, freedom from discrimination, and equitable treatment are tenets of inclusion. These principles were not fully developed in the concepts of integration and mainstreaming in the 1980s, concepts that had focused laboriously on placing students in mainstreaming schools or regular classrooms, with much less thought given to welcoming students to those spaces (Osgood, 2005, pp. 182–183; Uditsky, 1993, p. 86).

Taking part in a North America-wide educational trend (Osgood, 2005, pp. 180–183), the TDSB in the early 2000s began to adapt a range of policies, within and beyond special education, to achieve greater inclusion of children with disabilities. In 1999, the Board’s Task Group for Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity took up the issue of equity for disabled children. Instead of focusing on instructional needs alone, the Task Group reviewed the TDSB’s special education plan to determine whether disabled students, as an equity-seeking group—not unlike racialized or lesbian and gay students—were treated in all their interactions without discrimination and without recourse to stereotypes or prejudices about disabled people as a social group (TDSB, 1999b, p. 272). Attempts to remove discrimination against children with disabilities cut across policy areas. Parents and the TDSB’s SEAC endorsed a plan to make school playgrounds more accessible to disabled children because “interacting with peers in the schoolyard is an important part of the school experience” (TDSB, 2000, pp. 106–107). The same group opposed Ontario’s new Safe Schools Policy because of its “potentially, inequitable and discriminatory” effects on children with disabilities and learning problems (TDSB, 2000, p. 107).<sup>21</sup>

In 2003, a newly elected Liberal provincial government also proclaimed its commitment to inclusive principles. Its policies, encapsulated in a 2009 Ministry of Education report, increased the focus on special education and inclusive education as equity issues, with inclusive education defined as an approach where “students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected” (p. 4).

One of the new government's first actions was to commission two blue-ribbon panels on special education and inclusion: the Expert Panel on Literacy and Numeracy Instruction for Students with Special Education Needs, Kindergarten to Grade 6 (reporting in 2005), and the Working Table on Special Education (reporting in 2006). The second panel was led by Sheila Bennett, an education professor at Brock University in St. Catharines, and Kathleen Wynne, parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Education (Bennett & Wynne, 2006, pp. 2–3).<sup>22</sup> One question stood front and center for both panels: “Is the vision of an inclusive system one that we support and what do we mean by an inclusive system?” (p. 4).

The Expert Panel and the Working Table built on a greater knowledge base about inclusion than previous policies, issuing concrete suggestions on implementation. The two panels committed to helping teachers acquire “expertise to deal with a range of students in their classrooms” (Bennett & Wynne, 2006, p. 8), recommending training specifically in the two fundamental concepts of inclusive pedagogy, “universal design and differentiated instruction.” The panels also recommended encouraging boards to develop detailed IEPs that would help modify classrooms and tailor placements for children who had yet to see an IPRC (Bennett & Wynne, 2006, pp. 13–14). However, Bennett and Wynne, although they embraced inclusion, also endorsed the continuum of services model, which Toronto public schools had been using since the 1970s. “In a transformed system,” they wrote,

the first consideration regarding placement would continue to be the regular classroom. A range of placement options would continue to be available for students whose needs would not be met within the regular classroom. These placements would be duration-specific, intervention-focussed, and subject to regular reviews. (Bennett & Wynne, 2006, p. 8)

A new round of changes to the special education funding formula under the Liberals also suggested that the government wished to reinvest interest as well as funds in the special education system (Bennett & Wynne, 2006, pp. 20–21; Zegarac et al., 2008). In 2004, the government eliminated the troubled ISA-2 and ISA-3 categories by condensing them into a “high needs amount” (HNA) fund. Unlike the ISA-2 and ISA-3, HNA funds were distributed on the basis of a board's total enrolment, not on a case-by-case basis that had school boards filing for review individual applications for all students they believed qualified. The policy change also renamed ISA-1 the “special equipment amount.” Mostly as a result of these changes, combined per-pupil funding allocated to special education under SEPPA and HNA grants grew considerably, from \$650 per pupil in 2001–2002 to \$1,009 in 2007–2008 (Office of the Auditor General, 2008, p. 367).

## INCLUSION AT THE TDSB, 2012–

By 2012, TDSB policy also reflected the core belief that “inclusion of students with Special Education Needs” is a “critical piece . . . in equity” (TDSB, n.d., p. 4). Then TDSB Director of Education Chris Spence confirmed his support for a social model of disability (Brown & Parekh, 2013, p. 8). Brown and Parekh argued for “new approaches to identification” at the TDSB, which could include greater reliance on “a social model of disability” (pp. 2–6). However, like the province’s policy, seams of significant continuity are stitched across the TDSB’s special education policy quilt. Its special education “vision” for 2013, set out in its annual special education report, “is that students with exceptionalities be welcome, included, and supported within well-resourced neighbourhood schools. Some students with unique strengths and needs (behaviour, communication, intellectual, and physical) may require more specialized or intensive programs and supports” (TDSB, 2013, p. 9). Under this policy, Toronto public schools still claim to offer “a full continuum” of “placement options,” such as “Regular Class with Indirect Support,” “Regular Class with Withdrawal Assistance,” and “Special Education Class Full Time” (TDSB, 2013, pp. 55–56). This ongoing attachment to the continuum of services model is consistent with the American experience, where there has also, since the late 1990s, been a reluctance to stray from the model (Osgood, 2005, pp. 187–190). In Toronto schools in 2013, there were more identified exceptional pupils attending separate settings for 50% or more of their school day (13,247) than the number of identified exceptional pupils attending mainstream classes for 50% or more of their day (9,428). Any commitment to a social model of disability that might have also recently existed has not slowed labeling, which in the TDSB has increased dramatically. Between 2005 and 2012, total TDSB enrolment fell by 15,460, whereas the “Special Education Needs” population rose by 8,532 (Brown & Parekh, 2013, pp. 16–17). One cause of the significant growth is the new provincially sanctioned practice of giving students an IEP—granting access to special services—before an IPRC has met to assess them (Bennett & Wynne, 2006, pp. 13–14; Office of the Auditor General, 2008, p. 367). In the TDSB, the number of students who obtained an IEP without an IPRC grew from 17,807 in 2005–2006 to 23,731 in 2011–2012 (Brown & Parekh, 2013, p. 17).

Streaming of exceptional and nonexceptional youngsters in TDSB secondary schools receives less attention now than it did in the 1990s. However, streaming continues. Approximately 26.5% of the TDSB Grade 9 cohort between 2006 and 2011 attended the Applied stream or took Locally Developed courses, both widely perceived to be (although they are not officially) lower streams than the most populated stream, Academic.

Among “congregated” special education students in the cohort, 45.5% took Applied courses, and 33.3% took Locally Developed courses (TDSB, n.d., p. 3).<sup>23</sup> All-girls Heydon Park Secondary School offers only lower stream programming at the Non-credit, Applied, Locally Developed, and Open levels. There are no Academic- or University- (preparation) level courses at the school, which in 2010 enrolled approximately 100 adolescent girls with “mild intellectual disabilities,” Down syndrome, autism, Asperger’s syndrome, and “fetal alcohol syndrome,” as well as 200 girls labeled “high risk” by virtue of their learning disabilities, “mental health issues,” or behavior (Monsebraaten, 2010; TDSB, 2014).

### CONCLUSION

Our research on Toronto supports the conclusion that policy change in special education occurs in unique conditions that historically no single policy maker or group (be that government, a school board, experts, teachers, or activists) can hope to command entirely. Change in special education policy has many idiosyncrasies. There are, nevertheless, some identifiable general trends.

School board control over special education policy, particularly when this control is held away from provincial government influence and beyond parental interests and demands, can lead to the reproduction of existing policy structures. Between 1945 and 1970, most of the policy introduced into the Toronto public system by the school board had the effect of extending special education services to new groups in new types of classes. In fact, the ability of the school board to dominate policy change ensured a great deal of continuity in the segregated model of special education classes.

This began to end around 1970, when parents and activists gained the ability to force small policy changes. When the Trefann Court mothers asked the school system to let their children out of special education classes, they disrupted the notion that segregated settings were best for exceptional children and questioned a quiescent system by condemning streaming and labeling. However, whatever parents and activists may have wanted in the wake of Trefann in the 1970s, the board—then still largely unfettered in its authority—was able to make policy change mostly of its own accord. It chose to implement the then forward-thinking Learning Centres policy and the continuum of services model, which tentatively integrated some children with disabilities and learning difficulties.

When school boards fail to listen to calls for change from parents, the courts have helped parents speak louder. Parents’ use of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the court rulings that ensued, forced policy

change. Nevertheless, like any group involved with policy making, parents and activists do not speak with one voice. In Toronto, at different times in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, some parents favored mainstreaming as equitable; others opposed it as inequitable.

When policy change came next to Toronto, in the 1980s and 1990s, it was because the provincial government was exerting its authority over a greater number of aspects of special education policy. The history shows that this greater centralization of policy authority in special education restricts local decision-making capacity significantly. This is most evident in the case of large, urban school boards, such as the Toronto public board, that used their autonomy and (in the 1960s and 1970s) favorable financial circumstances to expand services or venture into various policy areas. Yet by the early 2000s, most policy decisions were made provincially and passed down to the school boards.

Another of our conclusions is that money matters a great deal in the framing of special education policies. Historically, money matters when it has been abundant, as was the case with the TVTAA funds in the 1960s. It matters equally when it is scarce, or when its disbursement is not controlled by local officials, as in the case of financial restructuring under Bill 160 in the 1990s.

Our next to last conclusion from the historical evidence is that in the world of special education, “policy talk,” as Tyack and Cuban (1995) called it, may be at odds with “institutional trends,” or the actual operationalization and implementation of special education reforms (pp. 40–47). Policy talk about inclusion, the prevailing discourse in special education today, is out of step with the primary institutional trend in policy: the continuum of services model. The TDSB and the province of Ontario espouse a commitment to inclusive principles. And yet, at the level of implementation, the continuum of services model, which has been policy since 1970 and encourages both segregation and inclusion, remains the defining special education policy in Toronto public schools. This is further evidence, as we suggested at the beginning of the article, that in special education, policy continuity and policy change exist side by side, often in a confounding manner.

This leads us to further conclude that hybrid (Tyack & Cuban, 1995) special education policies best withstand the tests of time. The continuum of services model, as an amalgam of segregation and integration, has absorbed waves of policy change. The continuum works in a mostly segregated system; it works in an integrated system; and it works in a system that places higher value on inclusion.

If an often stated policy goal today is to bring general and special education more closely together, policy makers would do well to heed lessons

from previous efforts to create this union. At the instructional level in Toronto schools, these efforts, going back to the 1970s, have encountered teacher apprehension. As front-line workers, teachers are essential to the implementation of new instructional approaches. Yet, frequently, in the fields of special education and inclusive education (and in other fields as well), teachers are not fully informed by policy makers about the intent or content of new approaches or the policies that underwrite them (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). When, for instance, Toronto public schools first began to move toward partial integration of exceptional pupils for part of the day through the creation of Learning Centres in the 1970s and early 1980s, it was teachers (as well as principals) who evinced strong anxieties about labeled students falling through the cracks if they were not educated separately. Similarly, when the province rolled out Bill 82 in the early 1980s without adequately educating teachers about its content, it was the teacher federations that were left with the task of correcting misperceptions that the new legislation could lead to litigation against teachers, as it was rumored had been the case with PL 94-142 in the United States.

Indeed, educating and informing teachers has historically almost always been important to the relative success of policy changes (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). New research on special education policy change, especially the implementation of inclusive education policies, has acknowledged the importance of making teachers partners if implementation is to be both smooth and successful (Killoran et al., 2013). Many teachers support inclusion. But even those who do are sometimes hesitant about the policy's philosophy. Or they profess to find inclusion difficult to practice in the real world of the classroom (Jordan, Glenn, & McGhie-Richmond, 2010). Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) surveyed literature going back to 1958 on the attitudes of general education teachers toward exceptional children in their classrooms. They found that teachers can often hold favorable attitudes about inclusion as an idea, while overriding "procedural classroom concerns" about how inclusion would actually unfold in the classroom inhibit "teacher willingness" to embrace it. Historical evidence about the nature of special education policy change strongly suggests that to make change in the present, policy makers will have to work hard to balance many different contextual factors and stakeholder interests.

## NOTES

1. For a notable exception, see the detailed historical analysis in Sarason and Doris (1979), an approach that few researchers have tried to replicate.

2. At this time in Ontario, two parallel, property-tax-supported school systems operated in overlapping geographical jurisdictions. Nondenominational “public schools” enrolled the majority of the population. Parallel “separate schools” and a separate school board for Roman Catholics, supported by the education property taxes of Catholics in the same district served by a public school board, enrolled Catholic children up to Grade 10. (Starting in 1985, this was extended up to Grade 13, the fifth year of secondary school in Ontario that was later abolished in 2003.) Our article examines only Toronto’s public school board, the Toronto Board of Education (TBE). After 1997, this board was enlarged to become the Toronto District School Board (TDSB).

3. See also Goodson, 2001.

4. This practice had been legal since 1914 under the province’s Auxiliary Classes Act; see Simmons, 1982, p. 149; and Hackett, 1969, p. 14.

5. See also comments in the Ontario School Inspectors Association Report, 1958, cited in Winzer, 2009, p. 175.

6. The term *trainable retarded* had come into general use by the 1950s to refer to all children with IQs of 50 or less who, it was argued, could not learn in schools. The companion term, *educable retarded*, referred to children with IQs in the range of 50 to 70 (sometimes 75), who were deemed capable of academic learning and were therefore not excluded from schools but were often assigned to separate special education classrooms within schools. See Covert, 1965; Fleming, 1971b, p. 370.

7. For the creation of the MTSB in 1967, see Fleming, 1972a, p. 113.

8. The report was titled *Living and Learning*; see Ontario, Provincial Committee on Aims and Objectives of Education in the Schools of Ontario (1968).

9. Inasmuch as Kirk invented learning disabilities, the concept also reprised and reinvigorated theories about children’s specific learning difficulties, such as reading disability, which were reshaping policy as early as the 1930s; see Danforth, 2009, pp. 137–179; and Franklin, 1994, pp. 49–77.

10. Centralization and standardization of curriculum, governance, and educational finance in provincial hands are major themes in the recent policy history of general education in Ontario as well; see Anderson & Ben Jaafar, 2003, pp. 40–48.

11. At first, there were many exceptions, and although they covered only small number of students, the effect on some still-excluded students was profound. Blind and deaf students were allowed to attend “provincial schools,” such as the W. Ross MacDonald School, a residential institution for blind students in Brantford. So-called hard to serve pupils were also only partially covered. Some (but not necessarily all) of these young people were allowed to continue to attend classes in custodial and correctional institutions, such as the Huronia Regional Centre (the former Ontario Hospital School at Orillia, for intellectually disabled residents) and the provincial “training schools” at Cobourg, Oakville, Sudbury, and Simcoe for the “secure care, secure treatment, and education” of 12- to 16-year-olds sent there “by court order”; see Ontario Ministry of Education, 1984, pp. 22–34.

12. A second distinction was that PL 94-142 required schools to eventually develop Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for students. Bill 82 did not include any IEP rules and left assessment up to the IPRCs; see Wilson, 1983, pp. 14–17. As we shall see, a different Ontario government added an IEP requirement in the 1990s.

13. This was the interpretation, although “the terms integration, mainstreaming, or inclusion” did not appear in the law; see Osgood, 2005, pp. 111–115.

14. <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-15.html>Charter.

15. Within a few weeks of the government’s change of position, Alexandra Hysert was integrated into a regular Grade 5 class; see “School Settlement Called Landmark,” 1991.

16. Destreaming was also assisted by a system that seemed to be destreaming on its own momentum in the 1980s. By 1987, nearly three quarters of TBE high school students were enrolled in the Advanced stream. The lowest stream, Basic, was in sharp decline. In 1980, 19% of Grade 9 students were in the Basic stream, but by 1987, this figure had fallen to 10%; see Cheng et al., 1989, pp. 21–22.

17. The Tories retained NDP plans to eliminate the Ontario Academic Credit (Grade 13), to introduce provincewide standardized testing, and to establish a teacher-regulation body, the Ontario College of Teachers; see Anderson & Ben Jaafar, 2003, pp. 14–15.

18. The Minister’s Advisory Council on Special Education (often abbreviated MACSE) had existed since 1974. It was founded as the Advisory Committee on Special Education. See Minister’s Advisory Council, 1997.

19. One major cut the trustees refused to implement was reassigning 62 special education teachers to save \$4 million; see TDSB, 2002a, pp. 571–572; TDSB, 2002b.

20. For others opposed to cuts and changes to segregated programs, see TDSB, 1998c, p. 731; TDSB, 1999c, p. 453. For other examples, see TDSB, 1999d, p. 762; TBE, 1993, pp. 146–147.

21. Eventually, it would be revealed that Toronto special education students (gifted students excepted) were much more likely to receive school suspensions than their peers; see Brown & Parekh, 2013, p. 5.

22. In 2003, Wynne, a former TDSB trustee, was elected to provincial parliament. She became Ontario’s 25th premier in 2013.

23. See also People for Education, 2014, p. 1.

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