

system. In our view, a more positive and constructive approach is in the interest of all concerned. The essential elements of this approach are the following:

1. The support the *Charter* offers for integrated education should be acknowledged and school authorities should initiate programs to develop and implement such programs.
2. School authorities and professionals must work to develop real partnerships with parents, drawing on their visions for their children's future, as well as including them in a meaningful way in actual program planning.
3. Professionals engaged directly or indirectly in public education, such as teachers, psychologists, social workers, and therapists need to develop strategies for more effective collaboration to support a more inclusionary educational program.

The opportunity to enhance the natural capacity of our communities to support individuals with disabilities through integrated school programs is clear. We conclude with the words of a parent who articulated her support for a new approach to schooling to the New Brunswick legislative committee:

*I went to a school ... that was not integrated. I was an adult when I had my first encounter with an integrated person, and it happened to be my own child. I think my idea of society was incorrect because I was not allowed to have that experience ... I cannot see how there is a negative aspect to learning something new, getting rid of a prejudice, learning how to get along with someone who is different, whether mentally, physically, or racially. I think that it is only positive. (Thompson, 1989)*

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