

The McGill Action Planning System (Lusthaus and Forest, 1987) is an excellent procedure for involving parents and allowing parent participation and decision making. This system has been used extensively throughout New Brunswick in planning integrated programs for students with severe disabilities. School administrators have also found the McGill Action Planning System useful in helping resolve conflicts between parents and teachers.

Increase Parent/Community Communications

The teachers and principals questioned said that school administrators should be responsible for informing parents and the community about the school's integration philosophy and policy. In some districts, brochures were developed to help inform parents about integration and student services.

There were a variety of suggestions on how to involve parents more in their children's school life. These included: an active Home and School Association; periodic newsletters; and information meetings for parents and people in the community.

It was also suggested that school administrators take the initiative and meet with parents before problems arise. For example, one principal had heard that a parent of a non-disabled student was upset about the integration process in her school. The principal immediately called that parent and said, "I've heard you have some concerns about John's placement in Mrs. Ryder's class. Could we set a time to meet and discuss your concerns?" She met with the parent on the following day and listened to his concerns. She then explained the reasons for integration and had the parent observe his child's class, which included the child with special needs. By the end of the school day, the parent was satisfied and appeared to have a better understanding of integration and the school's philosophy and practices. The school administrator, by acting immediately on a rumour, alleviated a potentially harmful situation and cleared up misunderstandings about integration.