

centred and less system-centred. It is also achieved by applying good integration techniques to all pupils.

In our struggle for appropriate education for "exceptional students" (the term used in our province for all pupils who require an adapted program) parents can seek out these potential allies, make them aware that we are allies and work with them. They can work to change the system from inside, while we work for change from the outside. Experience has shown that determined leadership and clear goals make a pupil-centred school system a possibility.

In a pupil-centred school the arguments for keeping pupils with a mental handicap out of the regular classroom have no validity. So our second principle, to educate all pupils together in the same class, is a natural outcome of the first.

Our third principle, to make the school system accountable to the pupil, is also an extension of the first principle and is stated separately as a reminder that the school system serves parents and their children — we do not serve it. Too frequently the school system blames the pupil or the parents for whatever goes wrong with the pupil's education. When the school system fails any pupil it must be held accountable for its failure. This accountability encourages acceptance that the education of all pupils is the joint responsibility of the school system, the parents and their children.

Our fourth principle, to recognize that the real expert on a pupil is usually his or her parent(s), is based on this joint responsibility and applies to all pupils, not just those with a disability. However, parent involvement is particularly important in the case of a pupil with a mental handicap. Most people in regular school systems have little or no experience with such pupils. Moreover, there are relatively few pupils with a mental handicap, and there is great variation between them, which means teachers and administrators will lack understanding of a particular pupil's capabilities. Rosi and I know our son better than anyone else does; we know his capabilities and how he learns best.