

draw attention to the districts' relatively late development of special education programs. This is true of many small and rural school districts in Canada as well as many of the separate or Roman Catholic school systems, where the neighbourhood school may be the only school available. Developing support for integration in such circumstances can be based on the natural sensitivity of a local school to the families that live in the community.

Administrators from a small school district in New Brunswick illustrated this point well in their presentation to the province's legislative committee. District 21 is made up of several small towns and islands along the southwest coast of New Brunswick. It has 1,550 students in eight community schools. The superintendent describes his school board's close relationship with the public:

*We are not at arm's length, but shoulder to shoulder with the public, [who] are involved in their community school. [T]hey were involved with the integration process before and after 1987, and they feel reasonably comfortable with it. (Hayes, 1989)*

The separate or Roman Catholic school boards in several provinces also have features that have made them more receptive to integration. First, the traditional segregated special education programs have been linked to the public school system. Therefore, the segregated schools and segregated classes so characteristic of the last several decades passed them by (Forest, 1983; Forest, 1984a). A second and equally important factor is the stress Roman Catholic school systems have placed on the importance of values and the nurturing of family, church, and community through the school (Flynn and Kowalczyk-McPhee, 1989; Hanson, 1987):

*What is critical and essential in the Catholic School System [is] the sense of community that reaches out and*