Wherefore art thou, Inclusion? Analysing the development of inclusive education in New South Wales, Alberta and Finland

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Abstract

Over the last two decades, moves toward "inclusion" have prompted change in the formation of education policies, schooling structures and pedagogical practice. Yet, exclusion through the categorisation and segregation of students with diverse abilities has grown; particularly for students with challenging behaviour. This paper considers what has happened to inclusive education by focusing on three educational jurisdictions known to be experiencing different rates of growth in the identification of special educational needs: New South Wales (Australia), Alberta (Canada) and Finland (Europe). In our analysis, we consider the effects of competing policy forces that appear to thwart the development of inclusive schools in two of our case-study regions.

From Segregation to Integration to Inclusion… and back again?

Since the 1994 *Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education* (UNESCO, 1994), the notion that schools should be inclusive has gained international momentum (OECD, 1995; 1999). While some might say that we have witnessed the "globalisation of inclusion," questions remain as to *what* has spread. The term "inclusion" was initially adopted, not as a semantic sleight of hand, but as a symbol of departure from normative thinking. The shift was much more than an exercise in re-branding. It occurred because the practice of "integration" had been judged and found wanting by those whom it affected the most (Uditsky, 1993). Initially viewed as the natural antidote to segregation following de-institutionalisation (Wolfensberger, 1972), "integration" began to receive criticism for perpetuating an assimilatory logic. The realisation that exclusion can be multi-faceted and not necessarily addressed by mere changes in placement highlighted the importance of

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challenging existing social norms in order to forge the kind of social, economic and cultural contexts that would be more accepting and open to structural change (Northway, 1997). In other words, inclusion was intended to bring about the political change that integration could not.

Despite the blurring of conceptual boundaries in recent years, inclusive education is distinguishable by its outward-looking focus: put simply, traditional special education locates the "problem" of disability within an individual who must be assisted to "fit in" to social institutions pre-designed by able-bodied others (Oliver, 1996). In contrast, inclusive education fixes its sights on barriers that produce disablement and thereby construct "the disabled." How these theoretical points of difference translate to educational practice is clear. Special education draws on the medical model of disease classification to diagnose and treat students experiencing difficulty in schools, often by withdrawal to "special" schools or other segregated settings (Lipsky & Gartner, 1996). Scholars in inclusive education however have long argued that the dichotomisation of "general" and "special" works to naturalise exclusionary social norms, thus perpetuating the very barriers that "inclusion" was designed to challenge (Graham & Slee, 2008).

One inexorable barrier appears to be the attraction that special education holds for policy. By both validating and relieving the "general" education system, special education supports the widespread belief that school failure is intrinsic to those students who have been diagnosed with "special educational needs" (Barton, 1998). Meanwhile, a significant increase in the identification of such needs and referral to segregated settings in many educational jurisdictions around the world indicates that the original intent of the inclusive education movement has not yet been realised. In the United Kingdom and United States where inclusion finds its conceptual roots, continued growth in the identification of "special educational needs" has led to an unsustainable increase in direct public expenditure on special education in the last twenty years (Fletcher-Campbell, et. al., 2003). Despite these increases, student disengagement, referral to off-site education settings and educational failure remain intransigent. Doubt as to the effectiveness of educational support services, resource allocation and institutional frameworks remains (Hanushek, Kain & Rivkin, 2002); as does considerable opposition to the inclusion of students with diverse abilities in neighbourhood schools (Allan, 2008).

Some might argue that the increase is an indication that diagnostic practices have improved and/or developments in neonatal and paediatric health care have resulted in higher survival rates. However, such theories fail to explain why identification rates in the traditionally normative categories of disability are slowing,[1] while those in non-normative categories are

rising (Greene & Forster, 2002). This means that "low-incidence" disabilities (hearing, vision, physical, and severe intellectual impairment) have tended to remain steady or have decreased, whereas "high-incidence" disabilities (sometimes called "soft" or "judgmental" diagnoses) have increased. These diagnostic categories represent children who are described as having social, emotional, behavioural and general learning difficulties (Tomlinson, 1982).

There is now increasing evidence that this experience has spread to other educational jurisdictions with a habit of policy-borrowing from the United Kingdom or the United States; particularly in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and some European countries. Disaggregation of statistical data reveals considerable variance according to gender, socioeconomic status, geographic area and disability type both within and between educational jurisdictions (see OECD, 1999). Epidemiological differences are unlikely to produce such variation, which indicates instead differences in processes of identification, categorisation and enrolment (Ibid). These are themselves affected by practitioner attitudes and capacity, policy design, resource allocation approaches, and practices of assessment and identification used in schools (Florian & McLaughlin, 2008).

Not surprisingly, while an increase in diagnosis has been noted internationally, each context is unique with its own particular mix of a diverse range of contributing factors. In what follows therefore, we do not attempt to provide an "apples to apples" comparison as characteristics constituting "special educational needs" are defined differently in our chosen jurisdictions: New South Wales in Australia, Alberta in Canada, and Finland in the European Union. Following Crossley and Vulliamy's (1984) assertion that international comparison should be conducted on a "case for the case" basis, we have built independent case studies specific to each site to enable more holistic judgments about what has happened to inclusive education – *where and when* – via comparative analysis. Such an approach to comparison reveals perhaps more than it obscures (see Ball, 1998). Differences in terminology, identification and educational practice indicate that globalization is far from being a monolithic entity and that educational policy-borrowing has perhaps more to do with the political affiliation of policy makers and the cultural history of a nation (Whitty & Edwards, 1998), than with "evidence-based policy making" or the global spread of an "ideological bandwagon" (Kauffman & Hallahan, 1995).

CASE 1: NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA

New South Wales (NSW) is Australia's largest state comprising one third of the national population. Children can enter Kindergarten from 4 years and 9 months. In 2008, there were 1,109,950 school-aged students, 34% of which attended non-government (or private) schools. NSW has one of the largest "private" school markets in the world and, whilst Catholic and other non-government providers have long been part of the educational landscape, government schools have been steadily losing market share over the last two decades (Campbell, Proctor & Sherington, 2008). There is therefore great diversity in the organisation of schooling with some schools enrolling from Kindergarten to Year 12, and some senior colleges enrolling just Years 11 and 12. On average however, provision is split into Primary (K-6) and Secondary (7-12) phases.

While it has been suggested that New South Wales government schools enrol 80% of students with a disability and that non-government schools do not share the "heavy lifting" (Bonnor & Caro, 2007), interviews with primary school principals in New South Wales government schools (Graham & Spandagou, in press) reveal that reluctance to enrol students with learning and behavioural difficulties is not restricted to the non-government sector. Further, and as shown by a recent federal government report (DEEWR, 2006), significant inequity exists between government and non-government schools in terms of funding.[2] Students with a disability enrolled in non-government schools are ineligible for state government assistance that they would otherwise receive if enrolled in a government school. Non-government schools therefore have to apply to the Federal government for additional program funding to support students with a disability; however, the sum available is exceptionally low (DEEWR, 2006).

This state/federal policy settlement acts as a significant deterrent towards the enrolment of students with a disability in non-government schools which, in turn, limits the enrolment options open to parents of children with a disability. Not surprisingly, some government schools are experiencing stress with many students with complex and high support needs that are not necessarily disability-related. This is particularly the case in disadvantaged areas where the parent body is unable to raise sufficient funds to supplement the school's income and resources. Insufficient enrolment data is available for non-government schools to test who educates whom, therefore the remainder of this analysis focuses on the bulk of the student population attending New South Wales government schools.

Considering Inclusion in New South Wales

Glenfield was the first special school to be established in New South Wales in 1927 (Snow, 1990), but the education of children with a disability was principally a private concern until government schools for special purposes and support classes increased from the 1940s (Ladwig, Griffiths, Gore & Lingard, 1999). As is often the case in Australia, developments overseas were the catalyst to policy change at a national level (Parmenter, 1979). The 1970s heralded a new era with the US legislation of the *Education for all Handicapped Children Act* in 1975, and the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* in 1978, together with the release of the highly influential *Warnock Report* in the UK. Shortly thereafter in 1982, a number of Australian reports and studies contributed to a national policy consensus that every child should be able to attend their neighbourhood school where possible and in the best interests of the child (McRae, 1996).[3] Placement statistics would suggest the sentiment was quickly embraced for the number of students enrolled in government special schools across Australia dropped by 37 per cent from 23,350 in 1982 to 14,768 in 1992 (De Lemos, 1994).

Although New South Wales recorded a similar 30% decline in special school enrolments in the decade between 1985 and 1995, the *McRae Integration/Inclusion Feasibility Study* (1996) reported that approximately two-thirds of that fall had occurred between 1985 and 1989 inclusive. In fact, despite the introduction of the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act* in 1992, McRae (1996) found that New South Wales had seen very little increase in the inclusion of students with a disability in mainstream classes since 1986. Instead substantial growth was noted in the placement of students in other forms of segregated placement, such as support classes that were said to be acting as "surrogate" special schools within "mainstream" school campuses (McRae, 1996, p. 23). Also of concern were newly emerging trends that pointed to increased diagnosis in particular categories of disability. Implicating shifts in funding policy as opposed to changes in incidence, McRae (1996) pointed to large and sudden increases in the number of students classified as disabled in NSW government schools. For example, between 1994 and 1995, the "identification of students with mild and moderate intellectual disabilities rose 4.8% and 8.1% respectively, and behaviour disorders rose 33.4%" (McRae, 1996, p. 24). McRae (1996) also found inequity in the provision of support services on a geographic basis, as well as disparities relating to gender, age and disability type.

Following the McRae (1996) report, the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) commissioned the development of an instrument to better allocate resources for the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classes (see Foreman, Bourke, Mishra & Frost,

2001). "Funding Support," as the program became known, calculated additional support needs according to characteristics of impairment and the frequency that assistance is required (DET, 2000). The formula then allocated an amount of funds that followed the child. However it appears that continued escalation in the identification of children in eligible disability categories led to a series of adjustments in the instrument by the DET for the current version is unrecognisable from the original (see DET, 2007). The latter included an average of 5 levels of support need across 13 focus areas in 5 domains and measured frequency of assistance required in 7 bands. The current instrument features an average of 3 levels of support need across 10 focus areas in 5 revised domains and the notion of frequency appears to have disappeared altogether.[4]

In addition, the disability categories eligible for support in New South Wales government schools have changed since 1996 (see Table 1). The DET now lists only five categories of disability eligible for support, with the collapsing of Behaviour Disorder, Conduct Disorder and Emotional Disturbance into the over-arching category of Psychological Disability or "Mental Health" which, since 2004, now also encompasses Autism Spectrum Disorder. Although Learning Disabilities featured in 1996, children with learning, reading and/or language disabilities are now supported through a different support allocation mechanism known as the Learning Assistance Program (LAP), which is reserved for children with disabilities considered to have low-support needs and/or learning difficulties.

Table 1: Disability Categories eligible for Support in NSW Government Schools

1996	2009
Intellectual Disability (IM, IO, IS)	Intellectual Disability (IM, IO, IS)
Sensory Disability (Vision, Hearing)	Vision Disability (V)
	Hearing Disability (H)
Physical Disability (P)	Physical Disability (P)
Behaviour Disorder (BD)	Psychological Disability/Mental Health (ED, BD, Autism Spectrum Disorders)
Conduct Disorder (CD)	
Emotional Disturbance (ED)	
Learning Disabilities (Reading, Language Disorder)	
Source: McRae (1996, pp. 7-9).	*Source: Graham (2008, p. 113).*

(IM: Mild Impairment, IO: Moderate Impairment, IS: Severe Impairment; ED: emotional disturbance; BD: behaviour disorder).

The reason for these adjustments may well be due to the rapidly increasing number of children in regular classes being identified with some form of disability since 1997, particularly those considered to have low support needs (see Figure 1 below). The separation of children classified as having moderate to high support needs (still supported through Funding Support) from those considered to have low support needs in 2004 through the introduction of the Learning Assistance Program (LAP), may have been an attempt to stem the proliferation of diagnosis for access to LAP utilises a non-categorical approach (regulated by student performance in standardised assessments). As shown in Figure 1 however, the identification of students with low support needs declined after the introduction of LAP, while the diagnosis of disability in the moderate to severe range increased. Later in this paper, we note similar trends in Alberta (see Case 2).

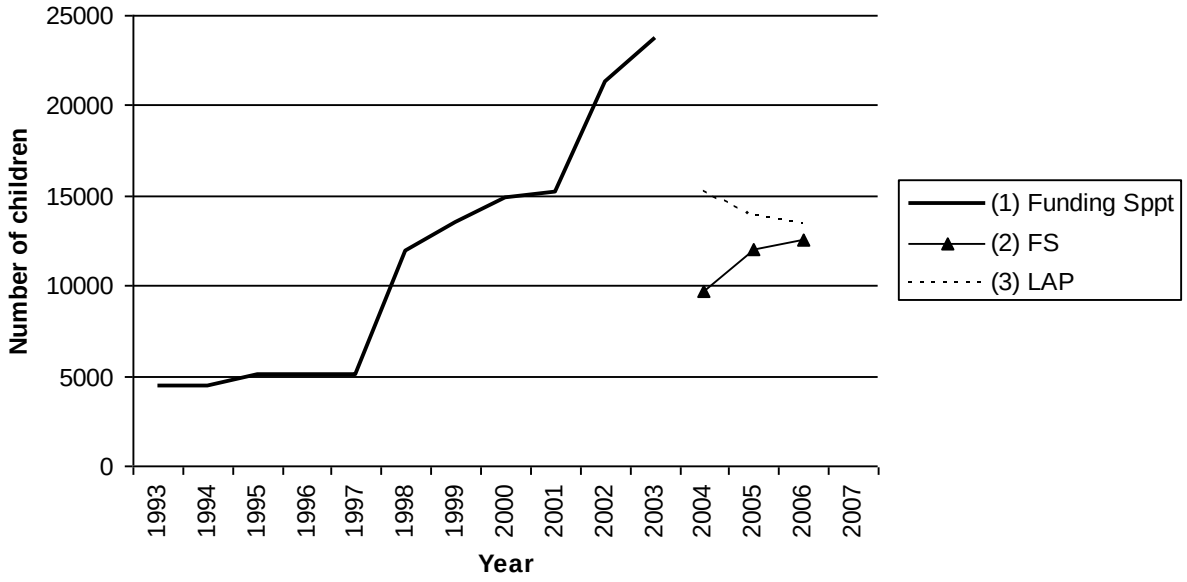

Figure 1: Number of students with disabilities in regular classes receiving (1) Funding Support (1993-2003) compared to post-2004 policy changes: (2) number of students with a disability (mod/high support needs) supported through the amended Funding Support program; (3) number of students with a disability (low support needs) supported the Learning Assistance Program (LAP)

Recent research finds that these trends have accelerated rather than abated (Graham & Sweller, in press). What has taken place is complex but, fundamentally, the move to make schools more inclusive in New South Wales appears to have had limited success. Since 1997, the percentage of students with a diagnosis of disability in New South Wales government schools has more than doubled rising from 2.7% to 6.7% of total enrolments (Graham & Sweller, in press). Disaggregation of data reveals however that the number of enrolments in segregated settings

have also increased; particularly with respect to the use of separate support classes in secondary schools and the movement of students with challenging behaviour to special schools. Whilst various stakeholders use the overall increase as evidence of the large-scale "integration" of students with a disability (PSPF, 2009; NSWTF, 2006), Graham and Sweller's analysis suggests otherwise. In reality, there has been a significant increase in the number of students in special schools and classes, coupled with a proliferation of diagnosis amongst students who would always have been enrolled in the mainstream; particularly with respect to children with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties (Graham & Sweller, in press). As a consequence of rising special education costs, the NSW Audit Office (NSWAO, 2006, p. 6) has observed that "greater accountability is required in terms of assessing needs and the use of resources to meet those needs." While the escalation in identification and costs might suggest limited policy action, the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) has been anything but idle during the period under review.

Changes in policy, effects in practice?

Since the McRae (1996) *Integration/Inclusion Feasibility Study*, New South Wales has grappled with the complex operational realities of changing practice across an educational system comprising some 2240 schools. Over the years policy documents have reflected shifting discourses in relation to "integration," "inclusion," and most recently "responses to diversity" however, in the end, it appears that not much has changed in practice. The persistence of the belief that the local school is and should be for the "average" child was a pervasive theme in recent research that investigated the views of primary school principals on inclusive education in New South Wales (Graham & Spandagou, in press). Increasingly, the existence of students with additional support needs is perceived as detracting from the school's capacity to attend to what various stakeholders deem to be the "core business" of schooling (APPA, 2007). This, as has been found in England (Ball, 2008; Gillborn & Youdell, 2000), is strangely bound up with very narrow ideals as to what constitutes valued learning (e.g., as measured by benchmark assessments and that which stands to improve the school's competitive status). In such cases, constructions of "normal" or "average" ability and, by extension, "disability" are set in relation to normative curriculum standards, and additional funding is sought to provide "something extra" for those who cannot meet the standards by way of "general" provision. Students who constitute a threat to the school in terms of reputation (academic or otherwise) are poorly

viewed, which creates hierarchies of student value and innumerable incentives to shift undesirable students elsewhere.

Recent trends in NSW point again to the attraction of special education as a policy lever to deal with problems caused in and by "general" education. Despite significant increases in the number of special schools and support classes over the last decade (Graham & Sweller, in press; Dempsey & Foreman, 1997), the New South Wales government recently amended the *Education Act* to allow greater powers for the Director-General to enforce the removal of students with "potential and/or demonstrated violent behaviour" to segregated settings (DET, 2010, p. 1). Further, given the recent reappearance of the term "integration" in education policy documents, it now seems that the DET has decided that "inclusion" is not that feasible after all; resolving instead to retain a strong parallel system of special schools and classes for students who experience difficulty in schools and with learning.

Given that the policy of the NSW Teachers Federation is "to continue to emphasise and pursue the maintenance of Schools for Specific Purposes (SSPs) and special classes as major providers of special education for students with disabilities" (NSWTF, 2006), the limited ability of the DET to advance a philosophy of inclusive education in New South Wales government schools is not altogether surprising. While previous studies have questioned the historical and industrial culture of schooling in New South Wales (see Dempsey & Foreman, 1997), at the same time it must be noted that the DET is responsible for introducing policies that directly counteract the development of more inclusive schools. For example, New South Wales introduced standardized testing for years 3, 5 and 7 as a system overview and accountability measure in the mid-1990s (Bruniges, 2001). Although departmental analysis takes school characteristics into account (through the comparison of "like schools" and the measurement of the "value added" between years 3, 5 and 7), overall the measurement of school/teacher performance has placed a premium on the heads of students who are difficult to teach. The ongoing development of new special schools and tutorial centers for students with challenging behavior in New South Wales government schools reflects a disturbing trend as to how decisions about inclusion are being made in practice.

In the face of a rapidly growing "special" education population, New South Wales is currently trialling the School Learning Support Program, a model which appears similar to the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) in English schools. This program is intended to reduce the system reliance on disability classification. We note here that there are some similarities with the model proposed in NSW to the role of the "part-time special education"

teacher in Finland that we describe later in this paper (see Case 3); however, some significant differences remain with respect to the professional qualifications required, the allocation of this resource to schools based on student numbers, the authority, knowledge and prestige of the classroom teacher, the culture of the teaching workforce and the level of support made available through the comprehensive part-time special education system already operating in the Finnish school system. Certainly the move toward a non-categorical system of support allocation is a positive step for NSW but with the maintenance of a strong parallel system in the form of increasing numbers of special schools and support classes, it is hard to see how incremental changes in the form of school-based Learning Support Coordinators can effect the seismic shift required to address the problems we outline here.

CASE 2: ALBERTA, CANADA

In Alberta, children enter Kindergarten at the age of five, and begin elementary schooling (grades 1-6) at six years of age. Secondary schooling consists of junior high (grades 7 – 9) and senior high (grades 10 – 12). In 2008, there were 596,113 students through K-12 enrolled in 2,097 schools across Alberta. The majority (561,255) of these students were studying in publicly funded (public or Catholic) schools. Though there has been more acceptance of private schooling in Alberta than other Canadian provinces (Taylor, Shultz & Wishart Leard, 2005), the percentage of students enrolled in the private sector has been relatively low (6% in 2008). It is assumed that students will enroll in their designated local school; however, free school choice has a long history in Alberta, reflecting the conservative values characteristic of the province (McLaughlin & Jordan, 2005). For example, in Edmonton (the capital city of Alberta) more than half of the students did not attend their designated school in the 2005/2006 school year (Taylor & Mackay, 2008). Though the public school system is strong, there is active competition between schools, starting from kindergarten. Forced to act as "citizen consumers" (Taylor & Woolard, 2003), parents shop for the most promising educational opportunities for their children, and the schools try to attract the top students with enrichment programs. Inside the public system, there are several alternative programs based on different religions, teaching philosophy, language or cultural programming, academic challenges, or arts-focus (Taylor & Mackay, 2008, 552).

The policy of free school choice is partly related to the much-criticised restructure of the Alberta education system in the early 1990s (Taylor, 2002), which was part of a broader

restructure of the public sector to reduce costs via efficiencies garnered through greater accountability (Taylor, Shultz & Wishart Leard, 2005). As in the United States, the Albertan approach to educational reform was anchored to large-scale standardized testing programs for grades 3, 6 and 9 (Spencer & Couture, 2009). Alberta Education paved the way for these major changes through an initial three-year business plan, released in 1994. Despite strong resistance from teachers, this plan was introduced with significant reforms that included: a budget cut of 12.4% (incorporating a 5% wage roll-back from teachers), the provincial centralization of education funding, expanded provincial testing, and permission for the establishment of charter schools (Taylor, Shultz & Wishart Leard, 2005, p. 238). This was the starting point of an open educational market in Alberta. As in New South Wales, school competition placed pressure on school budgets, requiring parent associations to fund-raise to support their children's schooling. Some affluent schools generate over $500,000 CAD per school year (Taylor, Shultz & Wishart Leard, 2005, p. 244), and others augment their income through the enrolment of international students who pay significant fees. Parental rights and free school choice also played an important role in the formation of the current special education system.

Considering Inclusion in Alberta

In the early 1900s, there were very few services for students requiring additional support in Albertan schools. From 1919 to 1932 there were only classes for students deemed "subnormal" in major cities like Edmonton and Calgary. The other groups deemed eligible for special education were children with visual or hearing impairment, but these students were originally sent out of province to access specialist services elsewhere (Church, 1980). According to Lupart (2000), many educational support services were informally provided by parents and volunteers. Since the 1950s however, the number of students with a diagnosis of disability enrolled in Albertan public schools began to grow after parent lobby groups pressed for local services to support their children (Church, 1980). As in New South Wales, far-reaching changes began in the 1970s when the Albertan government further supported the expansion of existing special education programs and introduced many new initiatives (Church, 1980). Diagnosis and programming for learning disabilities increased and, by the 1980s, a very diverse range of programs and placement options were available (Conn-Blowers & Mcleod, 1989).

In 1982 the Canadian government issued national legislation called the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982), which underpins a system of legal redress similar in constitution to the US Bill of Rights. Since the enactment of the *Charter*, there have been

hundreds of cases in which the courts have rejected provincial laws and programs on the grounds that they failed to properly respect citizens' constitutional rights. With regards to education, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom* states that every student has the right to an education and no child should be a victim of discrimination as a result of race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex, age, and intellectual or physical disability. Coinciding with the internationalisation of the inclusive education movement in the 1980s were new expectations for classroom teachers and the granting of legal rights to enhance access and participation for "exceptional" students. At the same time however, the Albertan government also demanded more accountability from its education department, as well as school boards who were now expected to account for how they were addressing the needs of their students. To improve programming in regular schools, classroom teachers were required to complete Individual Education Plans (IEP) or Individualized Program Plans (IPP) to keep track of learning aims, program adjustments, and special services required by individual students (Lupart, 2000). The government then introduced block funding based on base enrolment numbers, which was motivated by a desire to reduce complexity and bureaucracy (Conn-Blowers & Mcleod, 1989); however, the allocation of additional support required the development of a secondary funding mechanism. Thus began the unique Albertan special education coding and funding system which, as we describe later, is currently under review.

In the ensuing years, many different types of disabilities and degrees of severity were being recognized through what had become a "huge, specialized bureaucratic system" (Lupart, 2000, p. 5). By the early 1990s, the government reported that the majority of special education students (60%) were placed in regular classrooms full-time (Alberta Education, 1992). Yet, as was the experience in NSW (McRae, 1996), in addition to increases in the total number of students being identified with special educational needs, there were increases in both the number and types of special classes (Alberta Education, 1992). This expansion has continued until the present day.

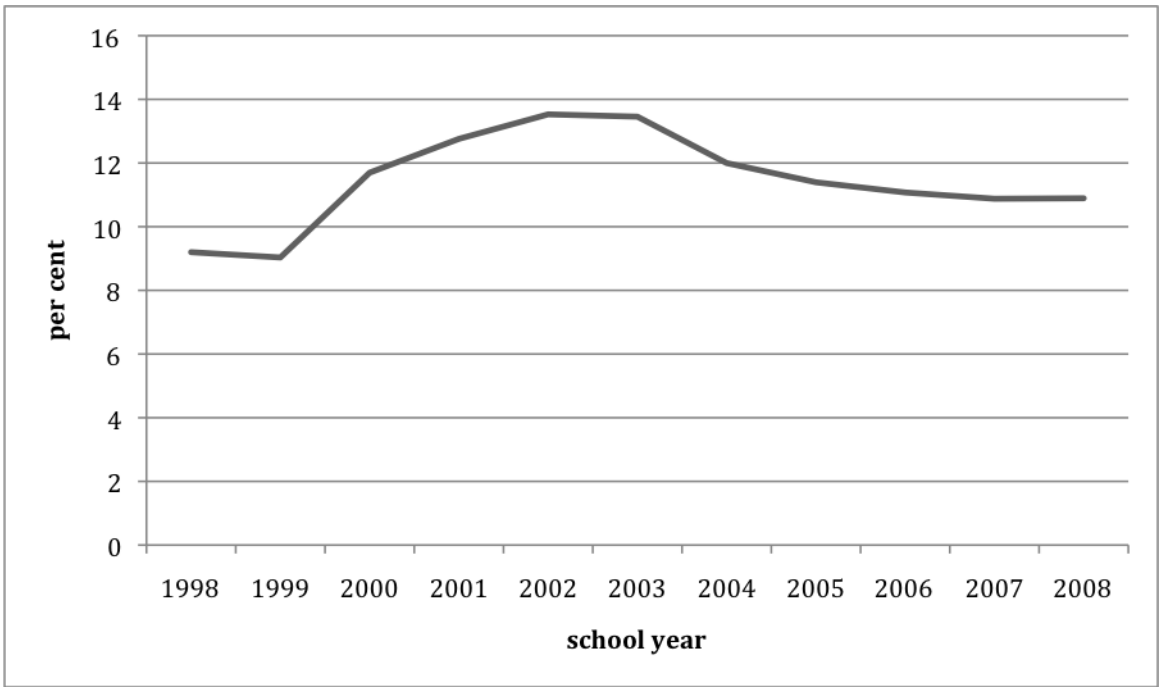

Figure 2. Percentage of students in special education (grade 1 to 12) in province of Alberta from 1998 to 2008 (Source: Alberta Education 2009a)[5]

For example in the late 1980s, almost 10% of total enrolments (37,727 students) from Kindergarten to Year 12 were identified as "exceptional" (Alberta Education, 1989). In the 2007/08 school year, that number had grown by 115% to 81,082 students or 13.4 % of total enrolments (Alberta Education, 2008b). This represents a substantial increase over the last decade (see Figure 2). In addition, the number of special education eligibility categories increased from 13 in 1992 to 19 in 2008 (with codes for students deemed "gifted and talented" and students with multiple disabilities). As in New South Wales, policy shifts from the 1990s to the present have led to changes in the language and classification systems (Table 2).

TABLE 2: SPECIAL EDUCATION CATEGORIES IN ALBERTA, CANADA	
1992	**2007**
Severely Handicapping Conditions	**Severe Disabilities**
Dependent Mentally Handicapped	Severe Cognitive Disability
Severely Behaviorally Disordered	Severe Emotional/Behavioural Disability
Multi-handicapped	Severe Multiple Disability
Severely Physically Handicapped	Severe Physical or Medical Disability
Deaf	Deafness
Blind	Blindness
	ECS Severe Delay Involving Language

Mildly/Moderately Handicapping Conditions	Mild/Moderate Disabilities
Educable Mentally Handicapped	ECS Developmentally Immature
Trainable Mentally Handicapped	Mild Cognitive Disability
Behavior Disordered	Moderate Cognitive Disability
Learning Disabled	Emotional/Behavioural Disability
Hearing impaired/Hard of Hearing	Learning Disability
Visually impaired/Low Vision	Hearing Disability
Speech & Language Impaired	Visual Disability
Educable Mentally Handicapped	Communication Disability/Delay
	Physical/Medical Disability
(Sources: Alberta Education 1992, 2008)	Multiple Disability

Changes in policy, effects in practice?

Closer analysis of this shift in disability categories indicates that changes in eligibility criteria and diagnostic nomenclature can account for a drop in the number of students in the Learning Disability category from around 35,000 in 2003 to below 20,000 in 2007 (a decrease in the order of 40%). Cross-matching of enrolment trends with policy timelines finds that Alberta Education employed a new definition from 2003 to describe LD as "due to genetic and/or neurobiological factors or injury" (Alberta Education, 2002), as opposed to an earlier, looser formulation which stated that "LD may arise from genetic variation" (Alberta Education, 2001). This decrease in the number of students identified as LD is the main reason for a downward trend in the total number of students classified as in receipt of special education services displayed in Figure 2.

During this particular phase in a long chain of reforms, Alberta Education also decentralized special education policy to local jurisdictions to avoid "having to go through the more complex process of having Alberta Education make funding decisions on individual students" (Alberta Education, 2008a, p. 1). With the development of "Severe Disabilities Profiles" and an elaborate special education coding system, "jurisdictions became responsible for monitoring their own conformity to provincial policy" (Ibid). In effect, the revised special education coding system produced two disability streams based on levels of educational need: "mild/moderate" and "severe" (see Table 2). Under this system, each student that meets the eligibility criteria for any of the severe codes qualifies for CAD$16,465 additional funding (A.L. Charette Consulting, 2008). Students considered to need only "mild" to "moderate" levels of support receive no additional funding, and schools must fund their program requirements

from total funding allocations. As in New South Wales however, there has been a significant increase in the diagnosis of disability in Albertan schools; particularly within the severe range.

The emergence of these trends has prompted a recent review of the special education coding system in Alberta, which found that a very large percentage of student case-files did not meet eligibility criteria in the severe coding range (Alberta Education, 2008a). Similar to the trends that have been reported in New South Wales, the majority of the increase in the identification of special educational needs across the Albertan school system derived from a rise in the categorization of students with social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, where "nearly 50% of students with a severe disability were identified with a severe emotional/behavioural disorder" (Alberta Education, 2008a, p. 11). Further analysis through an audit of student case-files revealed that a high proportion of these had multiple diagnoses. In this group, the most frequent secondary diagnoses were attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (69.3%), learning disability (16%), mild cognitive disability (12%), and moderate cognitive disability (1.8%) (Alberta Education, 2008a, p. 11).

As in NSW, the current process of identifying students for support in Alberta is based on the psycho-medical or individual deficit model, where difficulties with school and education are considered to lie within the student. More recently however, questions have been raised in Alberta as to whether "a disproportionate amount of time and money is being dedicated to documenting disabilities to justify coding" and whether resources may be "more effectively directed to programming for all students who are performing poorly?" (A.L. Charette Consulting, 2008, p. 12). Not only has identification mushroomed but, as is the case in New South Wales, the high expense (both in terms of fiscal and opportunity costs) associated with such gate-keeping procedures is becoming a substantial issue in its own right. This size and scale of this growing problem has prompted a second, larger-scale review through the current project, *Setting the Direction for Special Education in Alberta* (Alberta Education, 2009b).

CASE 3: FINLAND, EUROPEAN UNION

Although kindergarten is not compulsory in Finland, 95% of children begin "preschool" at the age of 6 years. Children may enter Grade 1, the first year of formal schooling, the year they turn 7. In 2007, there were 570,689 students from Kindergarten to grade 9 in 3,263 comprehensive schools in Finland. Upper secondary schools had 115,253 students in 461 academic high schools and 266,479 students in 210 vocational high schools (Statistics Finland,

2008b). The total student body equivalent to a K-12 grade system during the 2007-08 school year was approximately 950,000. Typically Finnish students attend their neighbourhood school during the compulsory years (grades 1-9) and the drop-out rate is very low, around 0.07%. Some students continue to have an optional grade (10) of compulsory schooling before entering either of two routes in secondary education: academic upper secondary school or the vocational school. At secondary level, student support services are only available in vocational schools. In direct contrast to the adoption of policies promoting school competition in both New South Wales and Alberta, 99% of the comprehensive schools in Finland are public and run by municipalities or the state (Kumpulainen & Saari, 2006). As such, there are only a few semi-private schools in Finland; of these, most are language schools (like English, German and Russian school) or have an alternative pedagogy (e.g., Steiner schools).

Although the 1990s "rainbow government"[6] introduced the concepts of free school choice and school evaluation to Finland (Simola, Rinne & Kivirauma, 2002), the move has had very little real effect in practice. First, there is little difference between schools and the great disparity that can be found on the basis of student performance, educational resourcing and social dis/advantage in both New South Wales and Alberta is relatively non-existent in Finland. In other words, because there is consistency in quality and relative equity in educational outcomes, the Finnish parent is not compelled to choose. Second, neither idea has ever been fully exploited through high stakes testing (as in the United States with *No Child Left Behind*) or school rankings (as in England through the publication of school league tables). Indeed, with regards to national testing and ranking of student/school performance, Finland is considered the most "under-developed" of the Nordic countries (Johannesson, Lindblad & Simola, 2002). The unpopularity of the neoliberal accountability policy agenda in Finland may also be related to the traditional respect for educators and the "pedagogical conservatism" that is considered typical of Finnish teachers (Simola, 2005). Sahlberg (2007) also mentions the culture of trust, which means that education authorities, political leaders and parents believe that teachers know how to provide the best possible education for their children.

Rather than stagnation, Finland's cultural conservatism has fostered stability and considered decision-making. Since the first *Compulsory Education Act* of 1921, the Finnish education system has been based on a philosophy of "Education for All" (Jahnukainen, 2003). Drawing on the four social democratic pillars of equity, participation, flexibility and progressiveness said to represent the "Nordic model" (Antikainen, 2006), Finnish education policy begins from the idea that everybody needs to have equal educational access to educate

him or herself to the highest possible level without cost (Rinne, Kivirauma & Lehtinen, 2004). Unlike regions that have adopted neoliberal, market-based policy agendas with high-definition curriculum and high-stakes assessment (Luke, Graham, Sanderson, Voncina & Weir, 2006), curriculum development in Finland has been ongoing and has focused "on consolidating basic values than on searching for short-term solutions" (Halinen et al., 2008, p. 17). Not surprisingly, it took decades to change the system to become genuinely comprehensive after the long tradition of a parallel school system and at least partial exclusion of students with severe disabilities (see Tuunainen, 1994).

The first big step was the gradual shift to a comprehensive school system following the *Comprehensive School Act* of 1970 (Kivinen & Kivirauma, 1989). For the first time in the history of the Finnish school system, education was seen "as a way of achieving far reaching social reforms" (Kivirauma, Klemala & Rinne, 2006, p. 118). From 1972 to 1976, the divided school system of two graded streams[7] from grade 4 onwards were "gradually combined into one nine-year comprehensive school," guided by the principles of "equality and equity in educational opportunities" (Kivinen & Kivirauma, 1989, p. 68). Drawing influence from earlier reforms in Germany and Sweden, the "part-time special education" model was created to cater with the growing diversity of the student population (Kivirauma & Ruoho, 2007). The Finnish "Education for All" reform was complete in 1997 (see Figure 3) when the responsibility for the education of children with the most severe intellectual disabilities moved from the social welfare service to the educational system. Like most change in Finland, this process was gradual, starting with the inclusion of students with moderate intellectual disabilities in the mid-1980s (Jahnukainen & Korhonen, 2003).

Another big revision occurred during late 1990s, when the new *Basic Education Act* (BEA, 1998) was launched. The aim of the new Act was to achieve more coherent, explicit and flexible legislation (Virtanen, 2002). The BEA also launched Individual Education Plans, which made it possible to place students requiring significant support in regular class-rooms full-time. In practice, all these changes mean that currently every child – *including those with a disability* – has the right to enrol in their local school. Even though a few special schools still exist, both the number of special schools and special school placements has been decreasing over time (see Figure 4). Although the decrease of special schools has been partly related to the growing influence of inclusive philosophy, research shows that fiscal strategies to reduce expenditure during the deep economic recession of the 1990s were of greater influence (Jahnukainen, 2006).

Considering Inclusion in Finland

Up until the 1950s, educational support services in Finland were primarily made available through a system of separate special schools and self-contained special classes, mostly for heterogeneous groups of students labelled as "subnormal" (Kivirauma, 2002). As in the neighboring Nordic countries, discussion about integration began in Finland in the 1960s; although, in Finland it took more time for the ideas to be implemented (Tuunainen, 1994). The 1970s witnessed the launch of the "osa-aikainen erityisopetus," a term which in English translates to "the part-time special education". The development of this particular model of support was a key lever in the shift from a parallel general/special education model to fully comprehensive schooling (Kivirauma, 2009). The aim was to address all student support requirements within the context of the new "comprehensive" school (Jauhiainen & Kivirauma, 1997). Due to its continued success, the "part-time special education" has become the main point of support provision since the 1980s (see Figure 3).

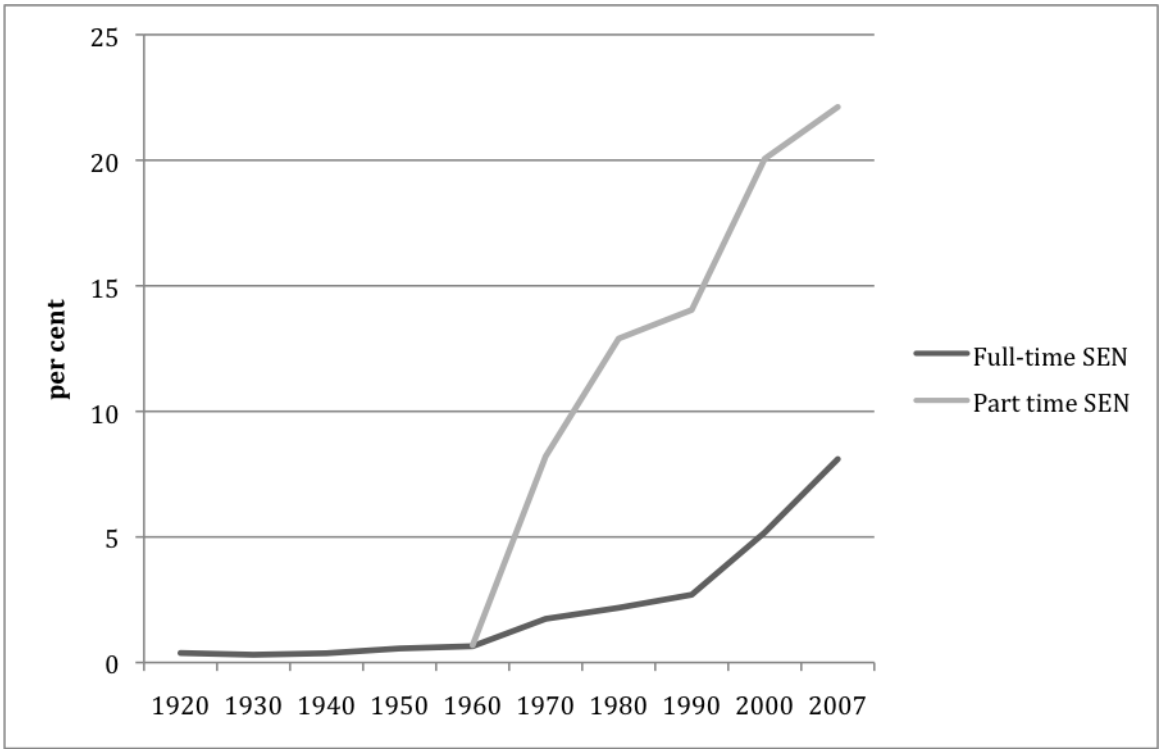

Figure 3. Percentage of students receiving special education in Finnish compulsory school from 1920s to 2007 (Sources: Kivirauma, 2002; Statistics Finland, 2008)

The latest statistics (Statistics Finland, 2009) tell us that around 30% of compulsory school students (K-9) receive some form of additional support, which is undoubtedly a kind of unofficial world record. However, in full-time special education (a definition more comparable with "disability" status in other countries), there were 8.1% of compulsory age students (K-10). The rest (around 22 per cent of the age group) were served by the part-time special education system, which we will describe more fully later in this paper. Special education services in post-compulsory schools are available in vocational schools only, where the special education student percentage was 5.8% in 2007. Combining statistics from both comprehensive and secondary schooling phases, the percentage of special education students in Finland equivalent to K-12 systems elsewhere was around 6.4% in 2007.[8]

It is noteworthy that the percentage of special education students is much lower in secondary schools. There are two possible explanations for this: First, earlier studies have shown that the focus in Finnish special education is in early years (Itkonen & Jahnukainen, 2010; Kivirauma & Ruoho, 2007), which reflects both the preventive nature of the support and, contrary to trends in NSW and Alberta, because many students do not need special support during later years. Second, the instruction in vocational education is based on more hands-on activities and many students with academic difficulties do not tend to require extra support in that context. Unlike Germany however, vocational education in Finland is not a "terminal track" – students can transfer to the academic stream or continue from the vocational stream to higher education through enrolment in either a polytechnic or university (Luke, et al., 2006). Incidentally, the lower use of special education in Finnish secondary schooling is astonishing when retention rates are taken into account. Of our three case-study sites Finland had by far the highest senior year retention rate in 2007 (89%); New South Wales had the lowest (66.4%), with Alberta only marginally better at 70.4%.

Although some of the current special education terminology has been influenced by the United States, the Finnish system of defining student eligibility for support is not based on specialized assessment or diagnosis as often is the case elsewhere (Itkonen & Jahnukainen, 2010). Additional support requirements are determined in the first instance by teacher/parent observation. After consulting with the special education teacher, and preferably the school psychologist, the IEP team defines the needed services together with parents and the student as part of the IEP process. Yet, there have been changes in the Finnish special education classification system. Prior to 2002, classification was based on the curriculum offered for the special education students. The current model is based on the aetiology and nature of the

learning difficulty (see Table 3). The rationale behind the changes was the demand for greater international comparability (Jahnukainen, 2006). As such, the medical terminology was adopted from and influenced by OECD categories (e.g. OECD 1995; 2004).

TABLE 3: CATEGORIES FOR FULL-TIME SPECIAL EDUCATION IN FINLAND	
1998	**2002**
Training school education (for educable or trainable mentally retarded children)	Severely delayed development
Adjusted education (for slow-learning children)	Slightly delayed development
Education for physically handicapped students	Varying degrees of cerebral dysfunction, physical disability or similar
Education for the maladjusted	Emotional disturbance or social maladjustment
Education for visually impaired	Visual impairment
Education for hearing impaired	Hearing impairment
Other curriculum	Learning difficulties related to autism or the Asperger's syndrome
	Learning difficulties caused by impaired linguistic development (dysphasia)
(Source: Jahnukainen, 2006)	Other

Allocation of educational support funding is relatively straightforward in Finland and, like our other two jurisdictions, the funding follows the child; a system referred as ‘bounty’ funding (Greene & Forster, 2002). Students eligible for full-time support might expect to receive 1.5 times base funding and a relatively small proportion of students with severe disabilities may receive between 2.5 to 4 times base funding. Every municipality and every school decides independently how they use their own funding allocation. Typically it is used for hiring special teachers and teaching aides.

Changes in policy, effects in practice?

As mentioned earlier, one special feature of the Finnish special support system is the extensive use of the “part-time special education”, a fairly unique system that was developed to support the transition from a parallel track to a fully comprehensive model with the aim of keeping every student in the same school system (Kivirauma & Ruoho, 2007). On average, there is one full-time special educator in schools with around 300 students and smaller schools share the services of one peripatetic special teacher. This support is open for any students who struggle with learning for whatever reason without any need for administrative decision or diagnosis. The emphasis of the part-time special education is in the early school years with a particular

focus on early reading, writing and arithmetic (Itkonen & Jahnukainen, 2007; 2010, Kivirauma & Ruoho, 2007). The students typically participate in the part-time special education for one to two hours per week for a limited time span (4 to 10 weeks). The benefit of this system is that a child doesn't need to "wait to fail" to get additional support and thus the nature of this service is at least partly preventive.

Some Finnish researchers (Itkonen & Jahnukainen, 2007, 2010; Kivirauma & Ruoho, 2007; Moberg & Savolainen, 2006) have argued that this is a key explanation for the low standard deviation in PISA surveys. In addition to this support, classroom teachers have resources to give extra tuition to students who have temporarily fallen behind. This extra teaching can happen before or after the normal school day in the usual classroom. Yet, despite the success of the part-time support service, placements in full-time special education have continued to increase (Figure 3). After the *Basic Education Act* was introduced in 1998, there have been several interesting changes in the full-time special education placement trends displayed in Figure 4. Similar to the trends in New South Wales and Alberta, both regular class placements and special class placements have increased (see Figure 4).

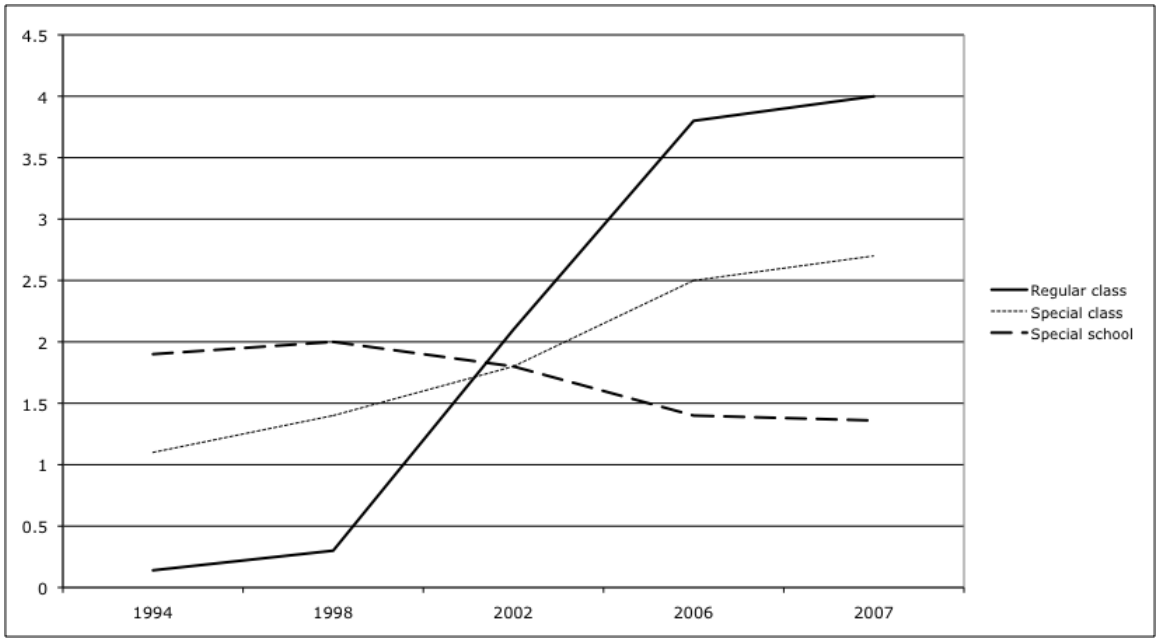

Figure 4: Trends in enrolment of student placed in full-time special education in Finland calculated as a percentage of total enrolment in compulsory schools (K – 9/optional 10) in Finland.

Prior to the *Basic Education Act*, extra funding was connected exclusively with the special class/special school placement; a policy setting that has been noted to drive the segregation of

low-performing students who require additional support (McLeskey, Hoppey, Williamson & Rentz, 2004). The rapid increase of students placed full-time in regular classrooms during early 2000 is related to the new BEA mandate for students with a disability to be placed either full or part-time in the regular classroom with an IEP. In addition, these policy changes highlighted many students already enrolled in regular schools but who now qualified for extra support. This expansionary trend is clearly similar to that which occurred in New South Wales in the late 1990s (Figure 1).

It is important to note however that the growth in the number of students with a disability in Finland and New South Wales did not start from the same base. For example, in Finland, the overall picture has been substantially altered by several administrative changes between 1994 and 2004, which introduced approximately 18,000 to 20,000 new students to special education (Jahnukainen, 2006). Some of these students are totally new, including, for example: (1) students with profound intellectual disabilities who transferred administratively from social services to students of comprehensive schools starting 1997 (around 1,200 students annually); and (2) a larger cohort of full-time special education students (around 1,500 annually) through kindergarten, which has not been part of comprehensive schools before 1999. The largest group of "new" students consisted of those already in mainstream classes but whom, under the revised policy criteria, could now be defined as having special educational needs requiring an IEP (Figure 4). Many of these children have relatively minor support requirements but, under the earlier system, they were left outside of existing services or were waiting for a special class placement (Jahnukainen, 2006). However, unlike New South Wales, where enrolments in support classes are to be growing due to an increase in segregation from the mainstream (Graham, Sweller, Van Bergen, in review), the increase in support class placements in Finland is explained by the transfer of students previously enrolled in special schools (Figure 4). Therefore, while some similarity can be found in terms of an overall increase in the number of students receiving support in the three sites examined here (NSW, Alberta and Finland) deeper analysis finds that the nature of those trends is quite different.

Ironically, the major Finnish reforms of the last three decades have succeeded in constructing the kind of uniform, comprehensive system that was severely criticised and later dismantled in England for making "schools mediocre in quality and too much alike" (Whitty & Edwards, 1998, p. 213). While similar criticism of the comprehensive schooling model was mounting in Finland during the 1990s, consistently high achievement by Finnish students in PISA assessments has since silenced calls for change from the conservative Right (Rinne &

Järvinen, in press). Our review finds that by swimming against the tide and eschewing neoliberal policy orthodoxy, Finland has avoided applying the blow-torch of school-markets, league tables and high-stakes accountability to the smouldering tinder-box that is push-down curriculum and increasing student diversity. And, although the Finns never quite bought into the rhetoric of inclusion, through their notion of the "fully comprehensive school" Finland appears to have built a more inclusive system by default; effectively stretching the problematic and limiting concept of "general education" to "Education for All."

Discussion: Finnishing first by swimming against the tide?

Each of the educational jurisdictions examined here has experienced fundamental change over time both in terms of whom and how they educate. Going by student performance in the OECD's Programme of International Assessment (PISA), each has been judged as relatively successful at doing so. At the same time however, each of our case-study sites has witnessed growth in the categorisation of students as having "special educational needs". In each system there is evidence that the policies put in place to facilitate the movement of students from segregated to inclusive settings has contributed to an increase in the labelling, diagnosis and, in some cases, segregation of students already enrolled in the mainstream. There are two fundamental, yet inter-related forces behind this growing problem. The first is that categorical funding policies create incentives to identify students within the categories that hold the highest reward (Cullen, 2001); and the second is that neoliberal market-based policies are counter-intuitive to the development of inclusive schools (Barton, 1997). Our comparison of New South Wales, Alberta and Finland indicates that these twin forces are exacerbated where funding is tight and stakes are high.

New South Wales and Alberta have both embraced a retrospective "gate-keeper" approach to student support based on the psycho-medical model. Each of these systems has also instituted standardised assessment programs that enable the comparison of student performance at the individual level. These fulfil a dual role as accountability tools by allowing for comparison at school and regional levels. Further, the development of educational markets through policies that promote "school choice" has intensified competition between schools. While academics in education have pointed to the effects of similar experiments in England and the United States (see Ball, 1993; Jonathon, 1997; Power Edwards, Whitty & Wigfall, 2003), the prevailing wisdom in Australia is that "transparency" and the provision of "rich information" will empower parents to operate as consumer agents to drive improvement in

school performance (Gillard & Rudd, 2009). Similar trends have been noted in Canada where, as argued by Davidson-Harden and Majhanovich (2004), neoliberal discourses emphasising quasi-market mechanisms such as choice and competition proselytise the idea that, "individuals ought to be able to exercise their particular preferences and direct funds toward whatever education is desirable for them (or their children)." These approaches to social policy pit "different conceptions of rights against one another" as individual competition for public goods works in direct contrast to "the idea that a universally accessible public education system ought to exist which is available to any [persons] regardless …of economic means" (Davidson-Harden & Hajhanovich, 2004, p. 270).

Such a climate is hardly supportive of an inclusive ethos. Due to the competitive environment created by policies designed to increase school competition and academic standards, students who experience difficulties in school and with learning are exposed to at least two dangers: first, such students may be viewed by school administrators as a drain on scarce resources; and second, they may be viewed as detracting from the school's ability to compete in the education marketplace. In combination these two factors produce strong exclusionary effects: first, students who require additional support are dissuaded from enrolling in their local school, and second, schools are encouraged to actively seek alternative placements for "needy" students who are already enrolled. Mounting research evidence demonstrates that such policy formulations can contribute to even more subtle forms of segregation. For example, some schools in the United States have responded to *No Child Left Behind* through the increased use of resource rooms so that the school can meet mandated performance targets (Wappett, 2009).

It appears that governments have yet to realize that the higher the hurdle, the tighter schools may find their operational budgets. As we can see from these three jurisdictions, tying funding to disability categories not only incentivizes the diagnosis of disability but, in some cases, may encourage the inflation of student impairment. In New South Wales, this has been noted in the aggregation of learning and behavioral problems through multiple diagnoses (particularly those under the umbrella of "mental health") with the aim of catapulting difficult students into a disability category eligible for support, or to secure their enrollment in special schools or district support classes (Graham & Spandagou, in press; Graham & Sweller, in press). Alberta Education has created a similar problem through the development of a tiered-grant system which recognizes disability in the "severe" range with substantial additional funds. Similar aggregation of individual student "deficits" to those found in New South Wales was

noted in Alberta's review of the Severe Disabilities Profiles (Alberta Education, 2008a).

As our first two case-studies show, neither tightening eligibility criteria or capping the availability of funds appears to curb the perverse incentives created by the use of categorical resource allocation methods within the context set by high-stakes accountability (Figlio & Getzler, 2002). Indeed, our analysis indicates that the application of such crude policy levers to react to a problem without adequately understanding its origin can produce very costly effects. For example, while tighter criteria and funding may reduce the overall number of students who are "eligible" for support, enrolment trends in New South Wales and Alberta show that a *decrease* in the identification of students considered to have "low-support needs" is accompanied by a significant *increase* in the definition of "high-support needs". In other words, because the core problem still exists, its effects simply manifest in other ways; albeit comfortably submerged under a new set of symptoms. It is our contention however that the nature of that core problem is not the vision of inclusive education but, as indicated in our introduction, the co-dependence of "general" and "special" education in contexts where high-stakes policy environments work to narrow both *what* "general" education is and *who* it should be for. Interestingly, as indicated by Figure 5 below, this trend does not appear to have taken root in Finland, where classification of student impairment in the severe range is significantly lower. As noted in the research literature (Florian & McLaughlin, 2008; OECD, 1999), such variance does not indicate stark differences in international incidence rates, rather differences in education policy, identification processes and school practice.

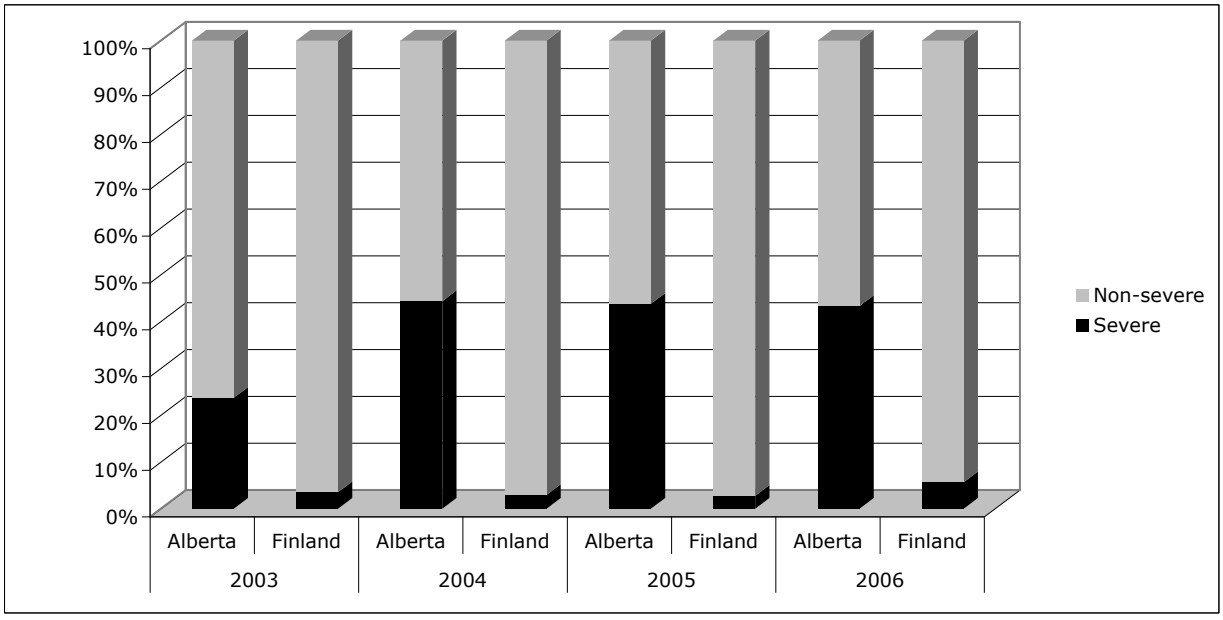

Figure 5: Percentage of students classified in the "severe" and "non-severe" ranges in Finland and Alberta (2003-2006)

Our research finds that Finland appears to have mitigated the worst effects of two increasingly popular policy levers in education: first, Finland has not embraced competitive education markets and, as such, has not pitted students with diverse abilities against one another, nor made teachers and schools suffer for the performance of students who require additional support. Second, Finland has softened the effects of a psycho-medical model of special education by "front-loading" support structures through the extensive availability of support that is proactive, responsive and independent of diagnosis. As part of this effort, significant resources are poured into the early years of primary school: Kindergarten to Year 3. Up to 30% of Finnish students are in what they call "part-time special education," *yet* because such a large number of students receive "special" support, there is nothing all that special about it. Diagnosis is not required and children are not ascribed stigmatising labels that come to speak for who they are and what they can be expected to achieve. Ultimately, while drawing on somewhat old-fashioned medical terminology, "special" education in Finland aims to keep students *in* their local comprehensive school by providing support in the early years before academic difficulties become entrenched. Although this may not have been the explicit intent of Finnish policy changes at the time, the changes instituted through the Finnish comprehensive school movement and Basic Education Act 1998 have succeeded in bringing about a more inclusive, equitable schooling system that is more successful for a greater proportion of enrolled students.

Conclusion

Since the 1994 *Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education* (UNESCO, 1994), the notion that schools should be inclusive has gained international momentum (OECD, 1995; 1999). Whilst some might say that we have witnessed the "globalisation of inclusion," questions remain as to *what* has spread. In simple terms, the inclusive education movement is geared towards a re-conceptualisation of schooling and the removal of exclusionary barriers through deep change to school cultures, structures, practices and logic (Ainscow, 1995; Carrington, 1999; Slee, 1995; Thomas & Loxley, 2001). A significant increase in the identification of "special educational needs" and subsequent referral to special educational settings in many educational jurisdictions around the world however indicates that something else is operating in its place. Far from constituting evidence that

inclusive education was but an "ideological bandwagon" (Kauffman & Hallahan, 1995), such an outcome demonstrates the intractability of counter-intuitive ideologies, structures, political interests and teaching practices. While each of the sites examined in this paper have adopted policies of "inclusion," we would argue that two have not moved very far beyond the mechanics of *integration* which, as Ainscow (1995) puts it, is when "additional arrangements [are] made to accommodate exceptional pupils within a system of schooling that remains largely unchanged" (p. 2). Although "inclusiveness" cannot be read off placement data, statistical analysis can identify irregularities that betray the existence of unchecked exclusionary pressures. At some point, the first two educational systems that we have reviewed here and others with models based on similarly borrowed logic will need to reassess their aims and strategies from a deeper philosophical basis in order to genuinely deal with the paradox of growing exclusion in societies that profess to be inclusive.

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[1] We draw here on Sally Tomlinson's (1982) seminal work in the "sociology of special education" to distinguish between normative and non-normative categories of disability. Normative disabilities are those that few can or would argue with as requiring additional support or adapted instruction: severe intellectual impairment, cerebral palsy, classic autism, and vision and hearing impairment. The non-normative category of disability is not so clear-cut. Many of these children could be described as "canaries in the coal mine" for their "disability" has been formed through negative and repeated 'experiences of failure in their early encounters with the educational system' (Farran & Shonkoff, 1994, p. 148).

[2] Government schools are funded by respective state governments, but the states do provide some base instructional funding to non-government schools. For example in NSW, this amount has been set at 25% of base instructional funding for government school students on a per capita basis (e.g., if per student base funding for the government system is $10,000 then non-government schools will receive $2500 from the NSW government for each student enrolled). This equation, however, fails to consider the additional costs associated with educating students with disability.

[3] Although education is a state responsibility in Australia, the development of national legislative frameworks including the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Act in 1986, the Disability Discrimination Act in 1992, and the Disability Standards for Education in 2005 have contributed towards state compliance in the education of students with disabilities.

[4] Although this was recommended by the developers (Foreman et al., 2001), as a result of changes to the design of the original instrument, the high construct and face validity reported may no longer apply.

[5] Kindergarten is not included in the annual statistics available from Alberta Education.

[6] This 'coalition' was termed a "rainbow" because it included members from the "red" political parties on the left to the "blue" conservative party on the political right.

[7] First path consisted of 6 years of primary school and 2 years of further education. Another path consisted of 4 years of primary school and after that 5 years of academically oriented grammar school, which was the only way to upper secondary school and later to the university studies (see Tuunainen, 1994).

[8] There is no official statistics related K-12 education in Finland. This percentage should be considered as a best estimate calculated by combining different educational statistics provided by Statistics Finland (2009).