

Validity Testing of the Inclusive Schools Checklist

The original checklist was based on feedback from students with disabilities and their parents (Pivik, McComas & Laflamme, 2002¹), as well as an extensive literature review of accessibility barriers, environmental design, universal design, inclusive education and standardized building codes. It was submitted for content and face validity testing to a large number of experts in the area. These included: 1) the Special Education Team, Eastern region, Upper Canada District School Board (UCDSB), which included eight regional special education resource specialists; 2) architectural experts including The Superintendent of Plants and Maintenance, UCDSB and an architect (Heather Clarke Kembel of Colbourne & Kembel Architects); 3) eight occupational therapist team leaders, UCDSB; 4) a focus group of four school principals (both elementary and secondary) and one SERT associated with vision impairment; 5) a focus group of 3 parents of students with disabilities and an interview with another parent of a student with multiple disabilities; 6) Focus groups of 4 students with physical disabilities; and, 7) two university professors specializing in disability research.

Based on the feedback from the above experts, the checklist was modified to address stated concerns. The students involved in the focus groups had level 5 mobility limitations according to the Gross Motor Function Classification System (Palisano et al., 1997²), i.e., all students used electric wheelchairs for independent mobility. Further, one student had a

¹ Pivik, J. R., McComas, J., & Laflamme, M. (2002). Barriers and facilitators to inclusive education.

Exceptional Children, 69(1), 97-107.

² Palisano, R., Rosenbaum, P., Walter, S., Russell, D., Wood, E., & Galuppi, B. (1997). Gross motor function classification system for cerebral palsy. *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*, 39, 214-223.

visual impairment and two exhibited communication challenges. However, all students were fully cognizant of the reason for the meeting and provided excellent feedback.

Pilot testing of the revised checklist was conducted with four school principals, four parents of students with disabilities, nine youth without disabilities between the ages of 7-10 years and three adults not associated with the school board. Participants were asked to provide feedback on the level of comprehension and usability of the checklist. It was determined that youth younger than 9 years of age had difficulty completing the checklist independently (Pivik & McComas, 2002³).

³ Pivik, J. R., & McComas, J. (2002). *The development of an inclusive school checklist: Validity and pilot-testing*. Report to the Upper Canada District School Board, Ontario Canada.