What is the definition of ‘inclusive education’?

Inclusive Education · https://inclusionactionontario.ca/docs/definition-of-inclusive-education/

Inclusion Action in Ontario defines 'inclusive education' as the following:

Inclusive education occurs when ALL students attend and are welcomed into their neighbourhood schools in age-appropriate regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute to and participate in all aspects of the life of the school. As well, all students are challenged to meet their unique intellectual, social, physical and career development goals.

The term is much abused in the education system. For many, it means simply being allowed into the public education system at all, whether that's a special education classroom or school. In Ontario it wasn't until 1985 that students with disabilities had a legal right to access public education. Many parents and families experience these settings as indeed more inclusive, because students with disabilities are made to feel welcome, rather than unwelcome at these facilities. For some families, schools exclusively for the disabled provide a community of support which they do not otherwise experience in regular schools.

However, human rights should not be defined by whether other people welcome your presence. If that were the case, it would still be legal to have signs on restaurants doors saying "No Dogs or Jews allowed". Yet, few people are willing to see the segregation of the disabled from the neighbourhood school as the same as the segregation of others, based on other characteristics.

Here at Inclusion Action in Ontario, we will continue to advocate for the right of students with disabilities - and their families - to be full, welcome, and supported members of their community, wherever they live, work, go to school, or play.