

## Profile This Week

### A Report on Special Education

by PAULINE ZIEGLER

The Lake Superior Board of Education, which includes the Terrace Bay Public School, views Special Education as an integral part of the total school programme.

Special Education deals with exceptional children on either end of the spectrum; from the gifted to those with physical handicaps, below average abilities, speech or language difficulties, and also emotional or behavioural problems. It is the administration and the staff's belief that the most desirable placement for these children is in the regular classroom.

LaVaughn West who is the Special Education teacher for the Terrace Bay Public School says, "in realizing each child has individual successes and problems, we are more sensitive to their needs today." Mrs. West received her Specialists in Education

degree at the Lakehead University, with an additional course at the Trillium School in Milton, Ontario on the teaching aspects of Special Education. In addition, she remains in constant touch with associated sources. These sources may provide new information on dealing with the individual needs of a child finding difficulty within the regular classroom.

Mrs. West's help in the resource room, aids the child in overcoming a problem but she agrees that it is the co-operative effort by all those involved, that is making Special Education such a success story in the school.

In some cases, a student will voluntarily approach Mrs. West for assistance or parents may call suggesting help for their child. But in most cases the classroom teacher will pick up on a difficulty that

the child is experiencing and then informs the school principal, Don Davey. The principal then refers the child to Mrs. West and that is when she will assess the child's needs and if necessary, will set up a programme in consultation with the regular classroom teacher and also with the parents of that child.

The programme helps overcome the difficulty and the child's learning is most apt to improve within the regular classroom setting. If further assessment is necessary, Mrs. West may make a referral to an outside agency with the parent's consent.

Angela Pretty who is a teacher's aide for the primary students, helps in the resource room and also assists the classroom teacher. The volunteer help of Diane Phytilla and Warren

Morril also adds to the success of the Special Education programme within the school.

Special Education has been in effect in the public school since 1970 - long before Bill 82 was passed making the programme mandatory within all school systems. Bill 82 under the Education Act amendment, received royal assent on December 12th, 1980. This guaranteed that every Ontario school age child has the right to receive an education which is appropriate to his or her individual needs and requirements. The needs are met by the indepth planning and installation of Special Education in our schools.

When Special Ed was made mandatory (by the year of 1985), the Lake Superior Board of Education had about ten years experience. In addition, they were one of



LaVaughn West - Special Education teacher.

17 school boards chosen throughout Ontario, to act as a pilot project in planning an effective way to implement Special Education within the schools.

The Board appointed Gail Conrad as the co-ordinator of Special Education in the district. In order to further

satisfy Bill 82 requirements, the Lake Superior Board has put together a committee, currently active in setting up a Special Ed Procedure Manual for gifted children. The Manual will include criteria on identifying gifted children and procedures in dealing with them in

the classroom concerning their special needs. Mrs. West is a member of the committee, and it is with this and other efforts, plus the co-operation of everyone involved, that keep the exceptional children in the Terrace Bay Public School.

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