

Intentional Planning and Practices for Inclusive Equitable Schools

As we look to this fall, and think about students' returning to school, whether in the building or at a distance, we understand that parents and teachers are working hard to plan and prepare for uncharted teaching and learning during this pandemic. What we do know is that relationships and communication are key, and with collaboration, inclusion and equitable outcomes for all students can be increased. While planning, consider best practices in inclusive schools including but not limited to the following:

- 1. High Expectations**
Presumed competence, strength-based descriptors, ability and needs focus, age appropriate materials/vocabulary/inflection, goals reflect state standards, all students are engaged, involved, and participate
- 2. General Education Membership and Full Participation**
Inclusion in neighborhood school, proportionate disability representation in general education, equal member of class, accessibility, related services and specialized instruction are provided during core general education academic instruction, access to grade level curriculum, all students feel they belong and are valued
- 3. Quality Augmentative and Alternative Communication**
Supports to develop language and communicate for a variety of purposes, used to demonstrate learning, include core vocabulary, enable self-determination, promote language and literacy, provide training for use
- 4. Curriculum, Instruction, and Supports**
Based on state standards, presented in accessible formats, [universally designed](#) with options for representation/presentation/engagement, reflects all learning styles, identify and provide supports to enhance social and academic participation in general education, meaningful instruction
- 5. Family-School Partnerships**
Engaged/equitable partners to create quality inclusive educational experiences, families are connected to resources to develop their knowledge/leadership/advocacy, student/family priorities are center and reflected, family/school staff efforts are acknowledged, school is culturally responsive
- 6. Team Collaboration**
School staff/parent(s)/student collaborates, roles and responsibilities reflect commitment to teach, supports/services enable participation in general education, regular meetings, problem solving
- 7. Self-determination**
Choice-making, decision-making, problem solving skills, goal setting, self-management skills, self-advocacy, participation in IEP, understanding strengths and needs
- 8. School Improvement**
All students achieve at high levels, intention and effectiveness, efforts are designed to create equitable and inclusive learning environments, addresses barriers, values diversity and inclusion, accept and promote change, recognizes disability history, provides ongoing professional development related to school inclusion, eliminates disability biases and discrimination, high quality teaching and learning occurs

Note. Adapted from "[Essential Best Practices in Inclusive Schools](#)" by Jorgensen, McSheehan, Schuh, Sonnenmeier (2012).

NW Disability Support is a coalition, hosts the annual all born (in) inclusion conference, has staff to provide Spanish support, and provides resources and training. Find this and other resources at www.abicommunity.org.