

## 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, so with collaboration inclusion and equitable outcomes for all students can be increased. We are grateful to the many families and partners who continue to support this work.

In effort to provide relevant and useful information, this resource is based on feedback parents of children with disabilities have provided in surveys, through interviews, and on training evaluations. While developing this resource we considered 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).

*"It's a journey. No one is ahead of you or behind you. You are not more 'advanced' or less enlightened. You are exactly where you need to be. It's not a contest. It's life. We are all teachers and we are all students."* — Anonymous

## Ten Tips for General and Special Education Teachers, and Parents for Inclusive Equitable Schools During COVID and Beyond

This resource has been created considering best practices in inclusive schools, sensitivity to the capacity and demands of parent(s)/teacher(s), impacts to disability communities now with additional stressors/barriers, expectations that Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) will be followed, and supports on and not on the IEP will be implemented so all students have access to education.

- 1. Define Communication Details and Options to Connect**  
Provide contact information and understand availability of teachers, para, parent(s) to communicate and support/supervise student and schoolwork
- 2. Determine if Student Needs Food or is Homeless**  
What supports can be put in place?
- 3. Determine What Technology a Student Needs and Has and What Their Strengths Are**  
Including the Internet, device to access internet, assistive technology tools and services, a [SETT](#) meeting, training to utilize technology, ability to access/navigate educational platforms, website accessibility
- 4. Determine What Technology Parent(s) are Familiar with and What Parent(s) Strengths/Needs Are**  
Including access to tutorials and training for devices, online educational platforms, website affordability/accessibility
- 5. Decide What Type of Supports Student Needs to Engage and Learn**  
Provide background information, accommodations, footrest, printed materials, manipulatives, calculator, fidgets, visuals, social/emotional tools to build relationships and self-regulate, resources at language/writing level, translated materials in primary language, clear instructions/expectations, related services, modifications, tools to develop self-management, cultural responsiveness, personal planner
- 6. Determine What Type of Supports Parent(s) Need for Student's Engagement and Learning**  
Background information, resources at language/writing level, translated materials in primary language, interpreter, clear instructions/expectations, schedule, learning/teaching strategies, culturally responsiveness
- 7. Schedule Ongoing, Weekly Communication and Collaboration with Team Members**  
Including student and parent(s), that is proactive, supportive, individualized, two-way/mutual, positive, built on trust/respect, focused on student support and progress, and allows for feedback (Was the student/parent prepared? Could student engage/participate in curriculum? What were the barriers and how can they be removed or worked around? Were modifications made? Were accommodations implemented? Were instructions/expectations clear?)
- 8. Provide Consistent and Predictable Content and Assignments**  
Prepare flexible, inclusive, individualized, universally designed lessons, post instruction and schoolwork prior to delivery so students and parents can be prepared, and the school team can plan to pre-teach, modify, implement accommodations, and incorporate para support
- 9. Plan and Schedule Routine and Interactive Instructional Opportunities**  
Minimize chaos, organize learning agenda, use tools for engagement (examples of key concepts, hands on supports, ask questions, check for understanding, make study groups), incorporate time for students to respond and be involved
- 10. Post Instruction and Assignments in One Location**  
Share recorded instruction, videos, resources, assignments, worksheets, links, learning objectives/study guide for test, and all pertinent information in a single location for student/parent(s) to refer to and ask questions about

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