***Best Practices for Inclusive Education (BPIE)***

***District Level***

#### Developed by the Florida Inclusion Network (FIN), in collaboration with the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS)

This product was developed by the Florida Inclusion Network, through funds provided by the State of Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, with federal assistance under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B.

Published 2013

Updated August 2018

Florida Department of Education

# Acknowledgements

The Florida Inclusion Network (FIN) would like to thank the following individuals for their commitment, guidance and contributions to the development of the *Best Practices for Inclusive Education (BPIE)* assessment indicators and process.

Vicki Barnitt, Former Director of Program Development, FIN

Kathy Black, Executive Director, Exceptional Student Education (ESE) and Student Services, Alachua County Public Schools

Rose Calco, Statewide Leadership Associate, FIN

Kelly Claude, Content and Training Developer, FIN

Donna Djerf, Parent and Family Liaison, School District of Lee County, Florida

Meghan Everett, Executive Director, FIN

Kim Galant, Ph.D., Regional Facilitator, Technical Assistance and Training System for Programs Serving Prekindergarten Children with Disabilities (TATS), University of Central Florida

Brian Gaunt, Inter-Project Coordinator, Florida’s Positive Behavior Support Project, University of South Florida Mickie Hayes, Project Director, Florida Consortium on Postsecondary Education and Intellectual Disabilities

Carmelina Hollingsworth, Coordinator, Outreach Services for the Blind/Visually impaired and the Deaf/Hard of Hearing David Hoppey, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Special Education, University of South Florida

Phyllis Jones, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Special Education, University of South Florida Don Kincaid, Ph.D., Director, Florida’s Positive Behavior Support Project, University of South Florida Jordan Knab, Ed.S., Dean, Marino Campus, The Dan Marino Foundation

Cheryl Liles, Former Director, FIN

Ruthie Lohmeyer, Ph.D Principal, Alternative Learning Center, School District of Lee County, Florida

Charlotte Luzietti, Director of Operations, FIN

Bethany Mathers, Program Specialist, Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS)

Mike Muldoon, Regional Facilitator, FIN

Jodi O’Meara, Regional Facilitator, FIN

Diane Ryndak, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Special Education, University of Florida

Sheryl Sandvoss, Former Executive Director, FIN

Laura Sidoran, Statewide Leadership Associate, FIN

Sandy Smith, M.Ed., Project Director, TATS, University of Central Florida

Rachel Taylor, Learning Resource Specialist for Inclusion, School District of Lee County, Florida

Monica Verra-Tirado, Ed.D. Chief, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

Stan Weser, Regional Facilitator, FIN

# About the Florida Inclusion Network

FIN is an organization funded by the Florida Department of Education, BEESS, with support from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B.

FIN’s primary goals are to:

* Support Florida districts to increase regular class placement, decrease separate class placement and decrease other separate environment placements of students with disabilities, regardless of disability label;
* Provide services, within a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS), that build district capacity to increase reading and math gains of **all**

students with disabilities;

* Support Florida districts to increase the number of students with disabilities graduating from high school with a standard diploma; and
* Provide information and support to build family, school and community partnerships to implement and sustain best practices for inclusive education

##### For more information on the BPIE or FIN services and supports, please visit the website:

[http://www.FloridaInclusionNetwork.com](http://www.FloridaInclusionNetwork.com/)

##### or call, toll-free, at 1-888-232-0421.

Table of Contents

[Introduction 5](#_Toc520115324)

[Overview of the District BPIE 6](#_Toc520115325)

[BPIE Team Membership 7](#_Toc520115326)

[Directions for Completing the BPIE 10](#_Toc520115327)

[Rating the Indicators 11](#_Toc520115328)

[Planning for Short-term and Long-term Improvement 11](#_Toc520115329)

[District-Level Self-Assessment 12](#_Toc520115330)

[Leadership and Decision-Making 13](file:///C:\Users\kclaude\Desktop\BPIE%20District%20Level%2007232018notracking.docx#_Toc520115331)

[Instruction and Student Achievement 19](file:///C:\Users\kclaude\Desktop\BPIE%20District%20Level%2007232018notracking.docx#_Toc520115332)

[Communication and Collaboration 26](file:///C:\Users\kclaude\Desktop\BPIE%20District%20Level%2007232018notracking.docx#_Toc520115333)

[Sources 30](#_Toc520115334)

[Appendices 35](#_Toc520115335)

[Glossary 37](#_Toc520115336)

[Resources 52](#_Toc520115337)

[Publications: 53](#_Toc520115338)

**Best Practices for Inclusive Education (BPIE) 2.0 District-Level Self-Assessment**

## Introduction

In July 2013, Florida lawmakers enacted § 1003.57(1)(a)(2), Florida Statutes (F.S.) (http://www.leg.state.fl.us), which defines inclusion as follows:

a student with a disability receiving education in a general education regular class setting, reflecting natural proportions and age- appropriate heterogeneous groups in core academic and elective or special areas within the school community; a student with a disability is a valued member of the classroom and school community; the teachers and administrators support universal education and have knowledge and support available to enable them to effectively teach all children; and access is provided to technical assistance in best practices, instructional methods, and supports tailored to the student’s needs based on current research.

Inclusion is much more than scheduling students with disabilities (SWDs) in general education classrooms. It means that all SWDs have a civil right to be together for instruction and learning, **regardless of their disability label**, and that collaborative integrated services are planned and provided by district- and school-level education teams, across disciplines (Ryndak et al., 2000). Students who make progress in general education environments are provided the appropriate services and support to learn academic and functional skills within the context of core curriculum content and activities. When inclusive practices are effectively implemented, SWDs develop skills for independent living, SWDs develop skills for independent living, college and career readiness and the development of meaningful and reciprocal relationships with same-age peers without disabilities.

In 2013, FIN revised the *Best Practices for Inclusive Education (BPIE) 1.0 District* and *School Level* assessment process and instruments, originally published in 2007, in response to §. 1003.57(1)(f), F.S. (http://www.leg.state.fl.us), which requires “each district and school to complete a BPIE assessment every three years.” Further revision to these documents, in 2018, included updated language and adjustments to FIN facilitator processes. As districts and schools have implemented the new BPIE 2.0 process, they have engaged stakeholders in the analysis, implementation and improvement of inclusive practices to promote change for meaningful inclusion of **all** students with disabilities, including students with significant disabilities.

The revised **district-level** BPIE includes 30 indicators of specific, inclusive educational practices that are based on peer-reviewed research, current literature and best practices throughout Florida and across the nation. While statutory requirements shape the BPIE, input on all of the BPIE indicators was obtained from experts in the field, district- and school-based educators and stakeholders across Florida.

Led by a FIN facilitator team, the district BPIE is designed for leaders working to develop, implement and sustain system wide best practices for inclusive education. Several leadership elements are embedded within the BPIE assessment process, including:

* + creation of a context for developing a shared vision;
  + creation of a context for shared ownership of development;
  + development of processes for shared decision making;
  + the use of focused questions to bring in different voices, knowledge, and experience; and
  + development of consensus decision-making (Jones, Forlin, & Gillies, 2013, p. 64).

### Overview of the District BPIE

The district BPIE process is designed to be used *primarily* as an improvement planning and technical assistance (TA) tool rather than an instrument to monitor compliance of district practices and programs. The self-assessment process, led by a FIN facilitator team, is intended to identify and prioritize critical areas of need, and to develop short-term and long-term improvement efforts in order to facilitate inclusive practices in schools where all SWDs achieve to their highest potential and enjoy a life of meaning and value.

##### The district BPIE process is intended to:

* + Facilitate a self-assessment for districts to evaluate current status of inclusive best practices
  + Initiate discussion among district leaders and stakeholders to identify priority needs for improvement
  + Develop measurable goals and action steps to increase or improve inclusive best practices across the district
  + Validate areas of strength in the implementation of best practices for inclusive education for all SWDs
  + Monitor and report progress toward the implementation of inclusive best practices at the district level
  + Analyze data from districts to determine the status of inclusive practices across the state

##### The BPIE includes 30 indicators that address the following three domains:

* Leadership and Decision Making
* Instruction and Student Achievement
* Communication and Collaboration

Each indicator has a list of specific examples or samples of evidence of the practice in place or implemented. The examples are provided to add clarity to the intent of each indicator and to stimulate thinking about specific examples, in each district, of practices that may reflect level of implementation. The examples are **not** provided as individual measures of each indicator, but rather as a means to assist team members in rating the extent to which the practice **is or is not** in place in the district.

Many indicators and examples refer to *students with disabilities* and *students*, or *peers*, without disabilities. It is important to note that the term *students with disabilities* refers to **all** students with disabilities, including those with high- and low-incidence disabilities (e.g., students with a significant cognitive disability), students served in Pre-K programs, and students ages 18-22 receiving transition services as specified in their IEP. **It is important for school teams to consider *all students with disabilities* when rating each indicator.**

Analysis of data and information obtained through the BPIE assessment process will lead to the selection of priority indicators, and subsequent development of short-term and long-term improvement efforts, including measurable goals, action steps, timelines, persons responsible for implementation and evaluation criteria. A trained FIN facilitator team conducts the BPIE team assessment and assists with the subsequent development of the plan for inclusive education. Per §. 1003.57(1)(f), F.S., the district’s BPIE document and Plan for Inclusive Education (PIE), with short-term and long-term improvement efforts, are submitted with the Special Programs and Procedures (SP&P) to the Florida Department of Education.

### BPIE Team Membership

The BPIE is completed by a district team of key individuals who have knowledge of current practices related to all or some of the 30 indicators in the instrument. Other stakeholder groups must be represented on the BPIE team, including parents and school-based general and special education personnel, who can provide valuable perspectives during the self-assessment process.

A district BPIE team should include the following members who will each complete the BPIE indicator review and ratings, in part or in full, **and should attend the BPIE team meeting:**

* A lead district contact person (generally the ESE director or designee)
* District ESE administrators and staff
* Student services administrators (such as guidance, school psychology, social work)
* Career and technical education administrators
* School-based administrator(s): elementary, secondary, career or technical, ESE center schools
* ESE teachers: elementary and secondary (who have experience teaching students with low- and high-incidence disabilities)
* General education teachers: elementary and secondary
* Support services personnel: occupational therapist, physical therapist, speech language therapist
* Other district administrators:
  + Superintendent or assistant superintendent
  + Deputy director or executive director of ESE
  + Title 1 director
  + District literacy coordinator or specialist
  + English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) director
* Family members\* (of students with low- **and** high-incidence disabilities)

The following areas, departments or programs should also have a representative who completes the BPIE assessment, in part or in full. If the following BPIE team members cannot attend the BPIE team meeting, **they should provide their completed indicator ratings to the contact person prior to the meeting:**

* District transportation administrator
* District human resources director
* Paraprofessional representative
* BEESS discretionary project representatives:
  + Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD)
  + Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS)
  + Florida Multi-tiered Systems of Support/Positive Behavioral Support (MTSS/PBS)
  + Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities (SEDNET)
  + Project 10: Transition Education Network
  + Technical Assistance and Training System for Programs Serving Prekindergarten Children with Disabilities (TATs)
  + Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Impaired (FIMC-VI)
  + Resource and Materials Technology Center for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing (RMTC-DHH)
  + Outreach Services for the Blind/Visually Impaired and the Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing (OSBD)
* School board member(s)
* Community agencies or institutions:
  + University and college representatives
  + Vocational Rehabilitation
  + Early Childhood Coalition
  + Other community agencies

*\*It is strongly recommended that the BPIE team meeting include a minimum of two family members, as noted above.*

It is also suggested that the team invite an external, critical friend (e.g., a university professor or representative from a local parent organization), who can provide a broader context of inclusive practices in relation to thoughts, assumptions, and beliefs. A critical friend does not rate or score the indicators but can provide expert guidance and support to implement and improve inclusive practices.

## Directions for Completing the BPIE

Prior to the district BPIE assessment team meeting, districts should first establish a district BPIE contact person. Then, the district should identify those stakeholders who will make up the BPIE team and complete the assessment instrument. Distribute a copy of the “BPIE District Indicators” along with the “BPIE Letter of Invitation” and “Directions for Completing the BPIE Self-Assessment” (see Appendices) to identified team members. The letter invites members to review the indicators, complete their Implementation Status ratings and note data sources or supporting evidence in the appropriate column. Team members who **cannot** attend the meeting submit their completed BPIE to the district contact person **prior to** the scheduled BPIE team meeting. Team members who **can** attend the meeting bring their completed BPIE to the meeting.

Depending on their job roles, experience and background knowledge, team members should complete any indicators that they determine are **directly related** to their area of expertise and responsibility. For those indicators that are completed, team members should refer to current, available and specific data (e.g., student data) and tangible evidence (e.g., school board policies, district documents, bus schedules), **whenever possible**, to determine and support their rating for each indicator. For example, when completing Indicator 4, the rater may make note that “District data show that 85 percent of SWDs, ages 3–5, receive special education and related services in the regular early childhood program or kindergarten, with peers without disabilities,” or they may indicate the source where the data can be found. If a team member does not have evidence or data sources to support their rating, they may (a) choose to rate the indicator and note, in the comment box below the indicator, their rationale for rating the indicator in the absence of data or tangible evidence, or (b) skip that indicator and move to the next indicator.

Team members are **not** required to bring hard copies of data or supporting evidence to the BPIE team meeting; however, they should be prepared to justify their ratings based on the information noted in the comment box and/or Data Sources/Supporting Evidence column. During the BPIE meeting, a FIN facilitator will guide the group discussion and rating process, including identification of **priority areas** of need, based on all indicator ratings and group consensus. Priority needs will be used to create achievable goals and identify a **core team** who will come together after the BPIE team meeting to develop short-term and long-term improvement efforts, including specific and measurable goals, action steps, persons responsible, timelines and evaluation criteria.

### Rating the Indicators

BPIE team members will read and rate the indicators based on the status of district implementation of the practice. There are four levels of implementation for each indicator: Not Yet, Partially Beginning, Partially Almost or Fully implemented. Team members should select one rating per indicator and note data source(s) or evidence of the practice in the appropriate column.

##### Following are the definitions for the Implementation Status ratings:

* **Not yet (NY):** There is **no evidence** that the district has put in place actions to address this indicator or implement the practice.
* **Partially Beginning (PB):** There is some evidence that the indicator **is in place or practiced in some instances or schools**. The practice is not implemented consistently across the entire district and **further action or improvement is needed.**
* **Partially Almost (PA):** There is evidence that the indicator **is almost fully in place or practiced in most instances or schools**. The practice is implemented consistently across most schools in the district and **minimal action or improvement is needed to reach full implementation.**
* **Fully (F):** There is clear evidence that this indicator is **consistently practiced and in place across the entire district.**

### Planning for Short-term and Long-term Improvement

The purpose of developing a plan for inclusive education to capture short- and long-term improvement efforts is to ensure that priority goals, identified through the BPIE assessment, lead to the initiation and implementation of steps resulting in measurable outcomes of inclusive best practices. The plan must include specific and measurable goals, action steps, person(s) responsible for each action, timelines and evaluation criteria. The plan can be aligned with existing district action or improvement plans, establishing shared ownership and responsibility among district leaders and stakeholders.

The plan is developed by a core team of individuals with background knowledge associated with the specific, priority indicators identified during the assessment process. For example, if a priority goal is to provide ongoing, job-embedded district professional development and technical assistance to all schools on effective instructional approaches, the core team will include representatives from FIN, FDLRS and the district’s office of professional learning or development.

It is recommended that the district’s plan for inclusive education to capture short- and long-term improvement efforts be developed soon after completion of the BPIE assessment process. The planning process includes discussions about the priority goals and what is feasible to accomplish within one to three years. For assistance in facilitating the plan for short- and long-term improvement, please contact your local FIN facilitator: [http://www.FloridaInclusionNetwork.com](http://www.FloridaInclusionNetwork.com/)

**Best Practices for Inclusive Education (BPIE) 2.0**

## District-Level Self-Assessment

#### Name:

#### Title:

**Department, School or other Affiliation:**

**Date Completed:**

**Please bring your completed BPIE District Self-Assessment to the BPIE team meeting on** **, 20****. If you cannot attend the BPIE team meeting, please submit your completed BPIE Self-Assessment to:**

**District BPIE Contact Person:**



**Directions for completing the indicators:**

1. Please enter all responses directly on the BPIE assessment form.
2. Read each indicator and the accompanying examples provided.
3. Determine if you have evidence or data source(s) to support one of the following ratings:
   * **Not yet (NY) –** There is **no evidence** that the district has put in place actions to address this indicator or implement the practice.
   * **Partially Beginning (PB) -** There is some evidence that the indicator **is in place or practiced in some instances or schools**. The practice is not implemented consistently across the entire district and **further action or improvement is needed.**
   * **Partially Almost (PA) –** There is evidence that the indicator **is almost fully in place or practiced in most instances or schools**. The practice is implemented consistently across most schools in the district and **minimal action or improvement is needed to reach full implementation.**
   * **Fully (F) –** There is clear evidence that this indicator is **consistently practiced and in place across the entire district.**
4. For each indicator you rate, click on the gray box in the “Implementation Status” column to select your rating from the drop-down menu provided (*Not Yet, Partially Almost, Partially Beginning, or Fully*). Please note your data source(s) or supporting evidence in the last column.

**BPIE DISTRICT INDICATORS**

## Leadership and Decision-Making

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Examples or Evidence of Practice** | **Implementation Status**  Select from the drop-down menu in  each box. | **Data Sources/ Supporting Evidence** |
| 1. District analyzes data to identify barriers and initiate improvement steps that increase the number of students with low- and high- incidence disabilities in general education and natural contexts in every school. | * District analyzes data of all SWDs (e.g., alternate assessment data, achievement data, behavioral data, educational environment data, graduation data, post-school outcome data and progress on individual educational plan [IEP] goals), to identify current practices and barriers to providing educational services for all SWDs in general education and natural contexts in every school. * District increases the number of SWDs who receive educational services in inclusive classrooms and natural contexts in every school. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |
| 2. District data reflects that in each school there  is alignment to the natural proportion of SWDs in the district. | * SWDs receive their education in age-appropriate general education school campuses, reflecting natural proportions of SWDs to students without disabilities across the district. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |
| 3. District provides SWDs with the same school choice options as students without disabilities to ensure all SWDs receive educational services in their neighborhood school or school of choice. | * District has written criteria, including decision-making steps or guiding questions, to determine placement of all SWDs in their neighborhood school or school of choice. * Assignment of all SWDs to schools or programs is not based on exceptionality or perceived lack of resources at the school. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Examples or Evidence of Practice** | **Implementation Status**  Select from the drop-down menu in  each box. | **Data Sources/ Supporting Evidence** |
| 4. District data reflect that SWDs, ages 3–5, receive special education and related services in the regular early childhood program or kindergarten, with peers without disabilities. | * District increased the number of SWDs, ages 3–5, who receive special education and related services in inclusive settings with peers without disabilities. * District regularly monitors (e.g., monthly) the number of SWDs, ages 3–5, who receive special education and related services in inclusive settings with peers without disabilities. * District has written agreements with early childhood centers to establish programs reflecting natural proportions of   students with and without disabilities. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |
| 5. District-level administrators allocate special education units and resources to all schools and grade levels, based on student need and flexible models of service delivery, to facilitate best practices for inclusive education in every school. | * District has an allocation formula that reflects unit allocations based on the needs and number of all SWDs and models of in-class service delivery (including co-teaching and support facilitation) as determined by the inclusive scheduling process at each school. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Examples or Evidence of Practice** | **Implementation Status**  Select from the drop-down menu in  each box. | **Data Sources/ Supporting Evidence** |
| 6. District has key personnel with expertise in inclusive best practices for all SWDs who oversee, coordinate, monitor and provide technical assistance (TA) for the implementation of best practices for inclusive education at the district and school levels. | * Key district personnel…   + Conduct ongoing monitoring of district progress toward goals established from the BPIE   + Coordinate and oversees the BPIE assessment process in each school   + Provide ongoing support and TA to schools in the implementation of BPIE-related plans for all SWDs   + Maintain ongoing communication of BPIE plan progress monitoring to stakeholders   + Make ongoing recommendations for improvement goals and steps to increase best practices for inclusive education, for all SWDs, across the district. * The key personnel contact information is shared in all applicable district and school publications (e.g., website, newsletters).   + District provides each school with district-wide and school-specific data related to progress on State Performance Plan (SPP) Indicators 3 (student achievement) and 5 (educational environment). |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Examples or Evidence of Practice** | **Implementation Status**  Select from the drop-down menu in  each box. | **Data Sources/ Supporting Evidence** |
| 7. District has key personnel with expertise in the MTSS and positive behavior intervention plans (PBIP) who provide ongoing professional development (PD) and TA to schools to ensure that students who need them receive multi- tiered behavior supports in general education classrooms and natural contexts. | * Districts allocate sufficient time and resources for personnel to train and support school-based MTSS, functional behavior assessment (FBA) and PBIP. * District uses a problem-solving process to identify (a) key personnel on the district team and (b) needs for ongoing PD in schools. * Key district personnel have content expertise in behavior assessment, planning and evaluation practices within an MTSS. * There is a district-wide plan and schedule to provide PD and TA to school personnel about the core components of an MTSS framework. * There is a district-wide schedule of PD for schools on FBAs and PBIPs. * There is a plan and schedule to provide follow-up and ongoing TA to schools on FBAs and PBIPs * PD and TA activities for implementing MTSS are documented in a District Improvement and Assistance Plan (DIAP), including evaluation criteria to measure desired outcomes. * PD and TA activities are provided with the goal of matching tiered supports with the behavior support needs of individual SWDs in general education classrooms and natural contexts. * District provides support and resources to schools to engage families in the FBA and PBIP processes. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Examples or Evidence of Practice** | **Implementation Status**  Select from the drop-down menu in  each box. | **Data Sources/ Supporting Evidence** |
| 8. District data reflect that SWDs who have behavior support needs are not excluded from the general education classroom at a higher rate than their peers without disabilities. | * In-school and out-of-school suspension and expulsion data reflect that SWDs in general education classes are not suspended or expelled at a higher rate than those without disabilities. * All SWDs receive multi-tiered behavior supports, as determined by MTSS, PBIPs and IEPs, in general education classrooms and natural contexts. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |
| 9. District policies and student transportation schedules indicate all SWDs arrive and leave schools and district facilities at the same time, in the same place and on the same daily schedule as students without disabilities, except for those SWDs who have an IEP indicating a shortened school day. | * All SWDs are provided transportation to and from school or school-related activities in the same manner as students without disabilities. * Transportation schedules for all SWDs are the same as those for students without disabilities attending the same school or district event (e.g., extracurricular activity bus, field trips). * SWDs do not spend more time on the bus getting to school than their peers without disabilities. * SWDs do not lose instructional time getting to and from school on the bus. * SWDs arrive and leave school and district facilities in the same location as students without disabilities. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |
| 10. District uses decision-making guidelines to ensure schools transition all SWDs from grade to grade, school to school and district to district to maintain placement in the least restrictive environment. | * District provides guidance and TA on transitioning all SWDs from grade to grade, school to school and district to district. * District provides resources and guidelines for schools to ensure that supports follow all SWDs as they transition from grade to grade, school to school and district to district. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Examples or Evidence of Practice** | **Implementation Status**  Select from the drop-down menu in  each box. | **Data Sources/ Supporting Evidence** |
| 11. All district departments and schools use job interview questions to appraise an applicant’s knowledge and beliefs pertaining to diversity and best practices for inclusive education, as applicable to the position. | * District departments and schools include job interview questions related to student diversity, including knowledge and beliefs of inclusive best practices, as applicable for the position in the hiring process, including instructional and non-instructional personnel. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |

## Instruction and Student Achievement

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Examples or Evidence of Practice** | **Implementation Status**  Select from the drop-down menu in  each box. | **Data Sources/ Supporting Evidence** |
| 12. District data reflect that SWDs receive most, if not all, of their education and related services in age- and grade-appropriate general education classes, regardless of the type or severity of their disability. | * SWDs are not assigned to schools with separate classes or programs because of their exceptionality or perceived lack of resources at the school. * Districts identify and implement strategies that result in increased numbers of students with low-incidence disabilities who spend 80% or more of their day in general education contexts in all schools. * Districts identify and implement strategies that result in an increase in the number of students with an emotional/behavioral disability who spend 80% or more of their day in general education contexts. * Related services (e.g., occupational, physical and language therapy, and interpreting and mobility services) are provided to SWDs in general and natural contexts, rather than in segregated settings. * Transition programs are provided to SWDs in natural school and/or community settings. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Examples or Evidence of Practice** | **Implementation Status**  Select from the drop-down menu in  each box. | **Data Sources/ Supporting Evidence** |
| 13. District and school leaders receive ongoing and current information and professional development about best practices for inclusive education for all SWDs. | * District provides information, materials, PD and TA to district and school leaders – in multiple formats (e.g., print and electronic) – on current research and best practices for inclusive education, including instruction and assessment for all SWDs. * District provides information to all district and school leaders on Florida legislation related to inclusion, including BPIE and the IDEA. * District regularly provides current data to district and school leaders related to SPP Indicators 3 and 5. * District provides electronic learning resources related to best practices for inclusive education (e.g., FIN’s *Building Inclusive Schools*) for all SWDs. * District and school leaders participate in forums for discussion and problem solving (e.g., online communities of practice) related to best practices for inclusive education. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |
| 14. District provides job-embedded, collaborative PD and TA to all schools to integrate IEP goals and objectives and the Florida Standards in general education classes and natural contexts. | * District collaborates, across departments and other appropriate service providers, to provide PD and TA that include implementation of methods to integrate IEP and other learning goals (e.g., independence, participation, communication and social/emotional goals) and Florida Standards to maximize teaching and learning in the general education curriculum and other contexts. * There is a published schedule of PD and TA related to the topics listed above. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Examples or Evidence of Practice** | **Implementation Status**  Select from the drop-down menu in  each box. | **Data Sources/ Supporting Evidence** |
| 15. District provides ongoing PD and TA to all school leaders on the implementation of an inclusive scheduling process and collaborative teaching service delivery models to provide instruction and support to all SWDs in general education contexts, regardless of the type or severity of their disability. | * District provides a published schedule of PD opportunities, made available throughout the school year, for all school leaders. * The PD and TA includes information on:   + In-class support models, including co-teaching and support facilitation for all SWDs   + Flexible models of service delivery and support based on data for all SWDs   + Methods for hand-scheduling students to ensure   supports are in place to meet their needs |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |
| 16. District provides PD and TA to schools in the use of a variety of tools to gather and analyze data and evaluate the effectiveness of instructional *and* behavioral interventions for all SWDs in general education and natural contexts. | * District schedules and provides ongoing PD, resources and TA to teachers and support staff in the use of data collection and analysis tools and processes for SWDs in general education classrooms and natural contexts:   + Checklists   + Ecological inventories   + Portfolios   + Performance assessments   + Reading assessment tools   + Scoring criteria/rubrics * District has trained and designated data coaches, with expertise in gathering and analyzing student data to provide ongoing PD and TA to teachers from each school and   monitor data of all SWDs. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Examples or Evidence of Practice** | **Implementation Status**  Select from the drop-down menu in  each box. | **Data Sources/ Supporting Evidence** |
| 17. District provides ongoing, job-embedded, collaborative PD and TA to school-based personnel to implement best practices for inclusive education, including instruction and assessment for all SWDs based on all Florida Standards. | * PD and TA activities are included in the district professional development plan and involve collaboration among ESE, general education, other district departments and/or statewide TA and support projects (e.g., FIN, FDLRS). * District collaborates, across departments and other service delivery providers, to provide PD and TA that includes strategies to implement research-based instructional approaches and methods for all SWDs, such as:   + Curricular accommodations and modifications in general education classes and non-instructional activities   + Universal Design for Learning (UDL)   + Accessible instructional materials   + Assistive technology   + Differentiated instruction   + Alignment of modified curriculum to Florida Standards   + Formative assessment   + Collaborative teaching in inclusive classes * There is a published schedule of PD and TA related to the topics listed above. * PD and TA are provided to a variety of professionals and paraprofessionals, at all grade levels, per their job roles and responsibilities. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Examples or Evidence of Practice** | **Implementation Status**  Select from the drop-down menu in  each box. | **Data Sources/ Supporting Evidence** |
| 18. District facilitates and supports access to AT, including augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices, as determined by the assessed need of SWDs for meaningful learning, participation and communication in general education and natural contexts. | * District provides resources and support to assess the need for AT and AAC devices for SWDs in every school. * District provides supports and equipment to all SWDs, based on identified need, to communicate and participate with same-age peers and access general education curriculum. * SWDs use AT devices to participate in instructional and non- instructional activities in the school, home and community. * SWDs use AT devices to participate in instructional activities and show progress toward achieving IEP and general education learning goals in general education contexts. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |
| 19. District provides job-embedded, collaborative PD and TA on the use and integration of AT (including AAC) to special and general education teachers, instructional support personnel and family members at all schools. | * District has a published schedule of PD and TA for teachers, paraprofessionals, therapists and family members on the use and integration of AT and AAC devices. * PD and TA are provided to families in their native languages. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |
| 20. District has data that reflect an increasing number of students with low-incidence disabilities and/or receiving instruction through the access points are educated in general education classes, with supplementary aids, services and curricular modifications as stipulated in student IEPs. | * Students with disabilities are provided accommodations to be involved in and make progress toward achieving academic standards and IEP goals in age- and grade- appropriate general education classes. * Students with low-incidence disabilities and/or significant cognitive disabilities are provided accommodations and/or modifications to be involved and make progress in general education electives or special classes. * Teachers are provided supplementary academic resources and materials for instruction of students receiving instruction through the access points in general education classes. |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Examples or Evidence of Practice** | **Implementation Status**  Select from the drop-down menu in each box. | **Data Sources/ Supporting Evidence** |
| Comments: | | | |
| 21. District data reflect that SWDs receive supplemental supports and services in order to participate in all school and district extracurricular activities. | * District has guidelines to ensure all SWDs have equal access to participate in the same extracurricular activities and in the same locations as their peers without disabilities, including meals, recess periods, counseling services, athletics, transportation, field trips, health services, recreational activities and special interest clubs sponsored by the school or district. * SWDs are provided accommodations, modifications and related services, as outlined on the IEP, to participate in the same district- or school-sponsored extracurricular activities as their same-age peers without disabilities. * SWDs are provided with adaptive equipment in order to participate in athletics or other extracurricular activities. * All SWDs transitioning between schools are provided equitable and consistent access and opportunities for participation in band, cheerleading, clubs, etc. * Parent surveys reflect that SWDs are participating in extracurricular activities. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |
| 22. District provides support and resources to schools to facilitate the development of positive, interdependent relationships among all students with and without disabilities in instructional and non-instructional general education and natural contexts. | * Strategies, such as cooperative learning, peer supports, social supports and positive behavior supports, are embedded in district and school programs and events, including, but not limited to, anti-bullying, athletics, cheerleading, character education, dances and proms, recreational activities, clubs, etc. * District provides resources and support to implement peer mentoring or support programs. |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Examples or Evidence of Practice** | **Implementation Status**  Select from the drop-down menu in  each box. | **Data Sources/ Supporting Evidence** |
| Comments: | | | |
| 23. District data reflect that all SWDs are given equal consideration for recognition through honors, awards and other designations offered by schools. | * All SWDs who are on a modified curriculum are included in honors and awards programs (e.g., principal’s honor roll, citizenship awards and attendance awards) except those honors and awards based solely on the completion of general education requirements (e.g., class standing for academic scholarships, honor societies and International Baccalaureate programs). * All SWDs are eligible, within the same guidelines as their peers without disabilities, for candidacy for homecoming   court, prom court, etc. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |

## Communication and Collaboration

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Examples or Evidence of Practice** | **Implementation Status**  Select from the drop-down menu in  each box. | **Data Sources/ Supporting Evidence** |
| 24. District provides all district and school personnel with information and resources pertaining to the use of person first language in all written and verbal communications. | * All district personnel are provided with print or electronic resources and/or PD on the use of person first language. * District provides guidelines on the use of person first language to all schools, including instructions to eliminate the use of disability-related labels in school print and electronic publications (e.g., website, classroom designations, published teacher titles). * School websites, nametags and classroom identifiers refer to teachers by their instructional role, such as “collaborative teacher,” rather than the diagnostic labels of the SWDs on their caseload, such as “autistic teacher.” |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |
| 25. District documents, forms, program materials and other communication that refer to SWDs reflect the use of person first language*.* | * District personnel use person first language in all written, verbal and electronic communication with colleagues, families and community members. * Transcripts and recordings of district-level meetings, including school board meetings, reflect the use of person first language by all district and school personnel. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Examples or Evidence of Practice** | **Implementation Status**  Select from the drop-down menu in  each box. | **Data Sources/ Supporting Evidence** |
| 26. District provides information to families about research-based, inclusive educational practices and ways they can support their child’s learning, independence and participation at home, at school and in the community. | * District publishes and disseminates contact information (in print and electronic formats) to families related to district personnel who can provide information on best practices for inclusive education for all SWDs. * District provides workshops, information and/or print materials for families, which include topics related to PBS, differentiated instruction, UDL, communication support, literacy support, Florida Standards, Core Content Connectors and other topics related to educational supports and services in general education classes and natural contexts. * Information is provided to families on ways to support and facilitate self-advocacy of all SWDs in school, home and community contexts, beginning in elementary grades. * Information is provided to families in their native languages. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |
| 27. District provides resources to all district and school staff that include strategies for effective family communication and collaboration to increase learning and achievement for all SWDs in inclusive classrooms and natural contexts. | * All school staff members are provided with information and strategies to effectively communicate and collaborate with parents and involve them in planning and problem solving to increase achievement and other learning outcomes for their children, including those with low-incidence disabilities, in general education and natural contexts. * Special and general education staff members communicate with and engage family members, consider them a resource and value their input in planning and problem solving throughout the year. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Examples or Evidence of Practice** | **Implementation Status**  Select from the drop-down menu in  each box. | **Data Sources/ Supporting Evidence** |
| 28. District uses a variety of processes and tools to involve family members of students with and without disabilities in district-wide decision-making and planning processes, including initiatives related to inclusive practices. | * District conducts an annual survey with families of all SWDs to obtain input and identify barriers to the implementation of best practices for inclusive education. * District provides information and resources to schools to promote involvement of family members of SWDs, including those with low-incidence disabilities, in district meetings. * District includes family members of SWDs, including those with low-incidence disabilities, on advisory or other committees. * District includes family members of SWDs, including those with low-incidence disabilities, in BPIE assessment activities. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |
| 29. District disseminates information to all families in the same manner and at the same time. | * Families of all SWDs receive progress reports in the same manner as the families of students without disabilities. * Student code of conduct is distributed to all families on the first week of school. * Invitations to participate in the district Parent Advisory Council go out to all families at the same time. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Examples or Evidence of Practice** | **Implementation Status**  Select from the drop-down menu in  each box. | **Data Sources/ Supporting Evidence** |
| 30. District has partnerships with colleges, universities and career and technical schools to provide inclusive, postsecondary educational and career opportunities for students with a significant cognitive disability, ages 18–21, to enroll in programs with adults without disabilities. | * District has partnerships with local colleges and career and technical schools to provide the following:   + Reasonable entrance requirements, including substitutions for any standard enrollment requirements, for college or career and technical courses or programs   + Opportunities for students to complete a course or program of study and participate in employment or internships with adults without disabilities   + Opportunities for students to engage in learning, social and recreational activities within the same locations and activities of students without disabilities * District has contact(s) for communication, program coordination and transition from high school to the postsecondary setting. * District provides information to families, during initial transition planning (age 14 or earlier), on postsecondary opportunities provided for students with a significant cognitive disability, ages 18–21. |  |  |
| Comments: | | | |

## Sources

Boyd, B., Seo, S., Ryndak, D., & Fisher, D. (2005, August). *Inclusive education for students with severe disabilities in the United States: Effects on selected areas of outcomes.* Paper presented at The Inclusive and Supportive Education Congress, International Special Education Conference. Glasgow, Scotland.

Burrello, L. C., Sailor, W., & Kleinhammer-Tramill, J. (Eds.) (2013). *Unifying educational systems: Leadership and policy perspectives*. New York, New York: Rutledge.

Castillo, J. M., Batsche, G. M., Curtis, M. J., Stockslager, K., March, A., Minch, D., & Hines, C. (2012). *Problem solving/response to intervention evaluation tool technical assistance manual* (Rev. ed.). Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Education.

Copeland, S. R., & Cosbey, J. (2010). Making progress in the general curriculum: Rethinking effective instructional practices. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 33*, 4–1, 214–227.

Cushing, L. S., Clark, N. M., Carter, E. W., & Kennedy, C. H. (2005). Access to the general education curriculum for students with significant cognitive disabilities. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, *38*(2), 6–13.

Denton, P. (2008). The power of our words. *Educational Leadership, 66(1),* 28–31.

Downing, J. E., & Eichinger, J. (2003). Creating learning opportunities for students with severe disabilities in inclusive classrooms. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, *36*(1), 26–31.

Ericson, K., Hanser, G., Hatch, P., & Sanders, E. (2009). Research-based practices for creating access to the general curriculum in reading and literacy for students with significant intellectual disabilities. Chapel Hill, NC: Center for Literacy & Disability Studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2003). *Inclusive urban schools.* Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services. (2005). *Florida’s Part B state performance plan for 2005*–

*13.* Tallahassee, FL: Author.

Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (2013). *Assistive technology for students with disabilities*

[Technical Assistance Paper]*.* Tallahassee, FL: Author.

Florida Department of Education, Division of Technology and Information Services. (2013). *District technology plans: Essential components and E- rate plan criteria*. Retrieved from <http://www.fldoe.org/bii/Instruct_Tech/downloads/EssentialComponents.pdf>

Florida Inclusion Network. (2007). *Best practices for inclusive education: An assessment tool for systems change.* Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services.

Florida Inclusion Network. (2010). *Inclusive scheduling for in-class supports: A guide for student-centered teams.* Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services.

Florida Inclusion Network. (2011). *Building inclusive schools: An e-learning module.* Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services.

Florida’s Positive Behavior Support Project. (2013). *PBS fact sheet.* Retrieved from <http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/pdfs/pbs_fact_sheet.pdf>

Florida’s Multi-tiered System of Support Project. (2013). *What is “special” about special education? Specially designed instruction for students with disabilities within a multi-tiered system of supports.* Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Education.

§ 1007.264 and 1007.265, Fla. Stat. (2011). Persons with disabilities; admission to postsecondary educational institutions; substitute requirements; rules and regulations.

§ 1003.57, Fla. Stat. (supp. 2013). Exceptional students instruction.

Halvorsen, A. T., & Neary, T. (2009). *Building inclusive schools: Tools and strategies for success.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson. Hehir, T. (2005). *New directions in special education*. Boston, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Jackson, L., Ryndak, D., & Wehmeyer, M. (2010). The dynamic relationship between context, curriculum, and student learning: A case for inclusive education as a research-based practice. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 33*, 4–1, 175–195.

Jones, P., Forlin, C., & Gillies, A. (2013). The contribution of facilitated leadership to systems development for greater inclusive practices. *International Journal of Whole Schooling, 9(1), 60*–*74.*

Jorgensen, C. M., McSheehan, M., & Sonnenmeier, R. M., (2009). *Essential best practices in inclusive schools.* Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability. Retrieved from <http://www.tash.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Essential-Best-Practices-for-Inclusive-> Schools.pdf

Kluth, P., Villa, R. A., & Thousand, J. S. (2002). “Our school doesn’t offer inclusion” and other legal blunders. *Educational Leadership, 59(4),* 24–27.

Losert, L. (2010). *Best practices in inclusive education for children with disabilities: Applications for program design in the Europe and Eurasia region.* Washington D.C: United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Retrieved from <http://transition.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/dem_gov/docs/best_practices_in_inclusive_ed_final_040110.pdf>

Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education (2011). *Quality indicators for inclusive building based practices.* Retrieved from <http://www.mcie.org/usermedia/application/8/quality_indicators_-_building-based_practices_2011.pdf>

Lynch, S. L., & Irvine, A. N. (2009). Inclusive education and best practice for children with autism spectrum disorder: An integrated approach. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 13(8), 845*–*859.* Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13603110802475518>

National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2011). *Early childhood education professional development: Training and technical assistance glossary*. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies. Retrieved from <http://www.naeyc.org/GlossaryTraining_TA.pdf>

National Center on Health, Physical Activity, and Disability. (2013). *Project GAIN: A model for best practices in inclusive recreation programs.*

Retrieved from [http://www.ncpad.org/390/2146/Project~GAIN~~A~Model~for~Best~Practices~in~Inclusive~Recreation~Programs](http://www.ncpad.org/390/2146/Project%7EGAIN%7E%7EA%7EModel%7Efor%7EBest%7EPractices%7Ein%7EInclusive%7ERecreation%7EPrograms)

National Council on Disability. (2004). *Improving educational outcomes for students with disabilities.* Washington, D. C.: National Council on Disability. Retrieved from <http://www.ncd.gov/publications/2004/Mar172004#evidencebased>

New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities. (2010). *Quality indicators for effective inclusive education guidebook.* East Brunswick, NJ: New Jersey Coalition for Inclusive Education. Retrieved from <http://njcie.net/pdf/tools/quality-indicators-for-inclusive-education-manual.pdf>

Roeher Institute. (2004). *Inclusive policy and practice in education: Best practices for students with disabilities.* Kingston, Ontario, Canada: Roeher Institute.

Ryndak, D., & Alper, S. (2003). *Curriculum and instruction for students with significant disabilities in inclusive settings.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Ryndak, D. L., Jackson, L., & Billingsley, F. (2000). Defining school inclusion for students with moderate to severe disabilities: What do experts say?

*Exceptionality: A Special Education Journal, 8(2)*, 101–116.

Ryndak, D. L., Moore, M. A., & Orlando, A. (2010). Access to the general curriculum: The mandate and role of context in research-based practice for students with extensive support needs. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 33*, 199–213.

Schleien, S. J., Miller, K. D., & Shea, M. (2009). Search for best practices in inclusive recreation: Preliminary findings. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration, 27(1),* 17–34. Retrieved from <http://www.sirc.ca/newsletters/mid-March11/documents/BestPracticesInclusiveRecreation.pdf>

Snow, K. (2008). *People first language*. Retrieved from

<http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/Uploads/1/docs/centers/CRSRL/FIN/Articles/People%20First%20Language.pdf>

Telfer, D. M. (2011). *Moving your numbers: Five districts share how they used assessment and accountability to increase performance for students with disabilities as part of district-wide improvement.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes. Retrieved from <http://www.cehd.umn.edu/NCEO/OnlinePubs/MovingYourNumbers.pdf>

University of South Florida St. Petersburg. (2013). *Provisions of the Higher Education Opportunities Act*. The Florida Consortium on Postsecondary Education and Intellectual Disabilities. St. Petersburg, FL: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.fltpsid.info/>

U.S. Department of Education. (2010). *Thirty-five years of progress in educating children with disabilities through IDEA.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/idea35/history/index.html>

Valle, J. W., & Connor, D. J. (2011). *Rethinking disability*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

Villa, R. A., & Thousand, J. S. (2003). Making inclusive education work. *Educational Leadership, 61(2),* 19–23.

Villa, R. A., Thousand, J. S., Nevin, A., & Liston, A. (2005). Successful inclusive practices in middle and secondary schools. *American Secondary Education, 33(3),* 33‒50.

Ward, T. (2010). Voice, vision, and the journey ahead: Redefining access to the general curriculum and outcomes for learners with significant support needs. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 33*, 241–248.

West, J. E., & Schaefer-Whitby, P. J. (2008). Federal policy and the education of students with disabilities: Progress and the path forward. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, *41*(3) 1–16.

Winter, E., & O’Raw, P. (2010). *Literature review of the principles and practices relating to inclusive education for children with special educational needs*. Trim, Ireland: National Council for Special Education, Institute of Child Education & Psychology.

## 

## Appendices

### Glossary

**Academic—**Having to do with school subjects such as reading, writing, math, social studies and science.

**Access points—**Academic expectations written specifically for students with significant cognitive disabilities. As part of the Florida Standards, access points reflect the essence or core intent of the standards that apply to all students in the same grade, but at reduced levels of complexity (<https://accesstofls.weebly.com/uploads/2/3/7/3/23739164/accesspointsbrochure.pdf).>

**Accommodations—**Changes made to the **way** students with disabilities learn and **how** they are tested. Accommodations include a wide range of techniques and support systems that help students with disabilities work around any limitations that result from their disability. Students who are blind might need to use braille textbooks or books on tape. Students in wheelchairs may need a ramp or elevator to be able to move independently in a school building.

**Adaptive equipment—**Adaptive equipment refers to equipment that assists people with disabilities to engage in daily living activities and improve their ability to engage in the school environment.

**Age appropriate—**Describes materials, activities and experiences that are useful and suitable for persons of a particular age. For example, age‐appropriate books for a teenager are different than age‐appropriate books for a seven‐year‐old, even if the teenager reads on a second‐grade level.

**Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) —**All forms of communication, other than oral speech, that are used to express thoughts, needs, wants and ideas (<http://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/AAC/>). AAC includes special augmentative aids (e.g., picture and symbol communication boards and electronic devices) that help people express themselves to increase social interaction, school performance and feelings of self-worth.

**Assessment—**A process of collecting information about what a student knows and can do and what a student still needs to learn.

Assessments may include giving tests, observing the student and evaluating the student’s portfolio or work samples.

**Assistive technology (AT)—**Any item, piece of equipment or product system—whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified or customized—that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of a student with a disability (SWD). The term does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted or the replacement of that device. For more information on the use of technology for students with disabilities, please download the Florida Department of Education publication *Exploring New Territories*

(<http://www.tlc-mtss.com/assets/exploring_new_territories.pdf>).

**Autism Spectrum Disorder**—A person who has an autism spectrum disorder has trouble communicating and interacting with others. The person may also repeat patterns of behaviors and activities. In order to qualify for programs and services for students with autism spectrum disorder, a student must meet all the requirements listed in the Florida State Board of Education Rule 6A‐6.03023, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.).

**Career and technical education (CTE)—**Education related to the skills needed for a trade or technical career (<http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/>). It includes the knowledge, skills and dispositions that are important for students to become career ready, such as occupational-specific standards and technical content standards.

##### Collaborative models of support—

* + - **Consultation—**A general education teacher (grades K–12) is providing instruction and a special education (ESE) teacher is providing consultation services for SWDs in the general education classroom, in accordance with a student’s IEP.
    - **Support facilitation—**Two teachers, one general and one special education (ESE) teacher (grades K-12), are providing instruction in the general education classroom. The ESE teacher provides services to individual or small groups of students on an individualized basis within the general education classroom, but not as a co-teacher.
    - **Co-teaching—**Two teachers, one general education and one special education (ESE) teacher, share responsibility for planning, delivering and evaluating instruction for all students in a class/subject for the entire class period.

**Cooperative learning—**The instructional use of small groups of students who work together to maximize their own and others’ learning. The essential components of cooperative learning include positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, social skills, structured group processes, individual accountability and personal responsibility.

**Critical friend—**A trusted person who provides added perspectives and feedback to an individual or group. A critical friend asks provocative questions, provides information and data to be examined through another lens, offers critical feedback related to a specific context of work and serves as an advocate for the success of the individual or group.

**Differentiated instruction—**A broad term that refers to a variety of classroom practices that allow for differences in students’ learning preferences, interests, prior knowledge and need to learn in social contexts. Teachers who differentiate instruction are responsive to the many and varied needs of students rather than taking a “one-size-fits-all” approach to learning. They recognize that they must plan and implement a variety of strategies to help each learner reach their highest potential.

**Disability—**A condition that makes it hard for a person to learn or do things in the same ways as people without disabilities. A disability may be temporary or permanent.

**Exceptional Student Education (ESE)**—The name given in Florida to educational programs and services for students with special learning needs (including those who have disabilities and those who are gifted). It is sometimes called “special education.”

**Functional behavioral assessment (FBA)—**FBA is a process to identify the function or purpose of an individual’s inappropriate behavior by examining the environment in which the behavior is occurring and identifying the variables that maintain the behavior (http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7590/urlt/0107234-tap99-3.pdf).

**General education and natural contexts—**All physical settings frequented by students without disabilities and the people and naturally occurring activities taking place in those settings, to include the following:

* Natural school settings (e.g., classrooms, cafeteria, football stadium, common areas);
* Community-based settings;
* Roles and contributions of the participants in natural settings, such as involvement in student presentations, volunteer activities, etc.; and
* Interpersonal relationships among the participants in natural settings, such as reciprocal learning and social interactions or norms among students and/or adults.

**Heterogeneous—**A heterogeneous classroom is one that reflects the rich diversity of students. Rather than grouping children based on their ability or achievement, a heterogeneous classroom is composed of students with varying interests, attitudes, talents, and backgrounds (Rubin, 2006). Research strongly supports the positive effects of heterogeneous groupings of students because of its noticeable effects on attitude toward school, increase of self-concepts as learners, relationships with peers, reduction of anxiety, and future aspirations.

**High-incidence disabilities—**Students with the most commonly occurring disabilities, such as a communication disorder (speech and language impairment), specific learning disability, mild/moderate cognitive disability or an emotional or behavioral disorder.

**Inclusion** (as defined in s. 1003.57, Florida Statutes [F.S.])**—**A student with a disability receiving education in a general education regular class setting, reflecting natural proportions and age-appropriate heterogeneous groups in core academic and elective or special areas within the school community; a student with a disability is a valued member of the classroom and school community; the teachers and administrators support universal education and have knowledge and support available to enable them to effectively teach all children; and a student is provided access to technical assistance in best practices, instructional methods, and supports tailored to the student’s needs based on current research. ([http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/1003.57](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?mode=View%20Statutes&SubMenu=1&App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=1003.57&URL=1000-1099/1003/Sections/1003.57.html))

**Inclusive scheduling—**A team-planning process to schedule supports for students with disabilities in inclusive, general education classrooms.

Students are scheduled for services and supports in general education classrooms based on their individual needs rather than their disability label. The inclusive scheduling process results in teacher master schedules that allow services to be provided where and when supports are needed (http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/CUECardScheduling-Rev-080917.pdf).

**Individual educational plan (IEP)—**A written plan that describes the individual learning needs of a student with disabilities and the ESE services, supports, aids and accommodations and modifications that will be provided to that student ([http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/,root,dynamic,TopicalArea,1,](http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cdynamic%2CTopicalArea%2C1%2C)).

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (**IDEA**)**—An important United States law regarding the education of students with disabilities (<http://idea.ed.gov/>). The IDEA requires that all students with disabilities be provided a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

**Interventions**—Interventions are the supports provided to student(s) that help them learn (it could include a specific curriculum, a teaching strategy, one-on-one, or small group assistance from a teacher). Interventions are often provided to individual students or small groups of students in order to give them extra help so that they can be successful in meeting their educational goals ([http://www.florida-](http://www.florida-rti.org/reveal/glossary/glossary.htm) [rti.org/reveal/glossary/glossary.htm](http://www.florida-rti.org/reveal/glossary/glossary.htm)). The important thing to remember is that the intervention should match each student’s learning needs.

**Least restrictive environment (LRE) —**The IDEA entitles all students with disabilities to a free, appropriate education in the least restrictive environment ([http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/,root,statute,I,B,612,a,5,](http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cstatute%2CI%2CB%2C612%2Ca%2C5%2C)). This means that, to the maximum extent possible, children with disabilities are to be educated with children who are not disabled. Special classes, separate schooling or other ways of removing children with disabilities from the regular educational environment should only occur when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes cannot be achieved satisfactorily with the use of supplementary aids and services.

**Low-incidence disabilities—**Students with a particular disability or combination of disabilities, such as blindness, low vision, deafness, hard- of-hearing, dual sensory impairment, significant cognitive disability, complex health issues, serious physical impairment, multiple disability, traumatic brain injury, and autism spectrum disorder, that generally do not exceed 1 percent of the school population.

**Modifications—**Changes made to **what** students with disabilities are expected to learn. Students who are not able to work on grade level or pass the required courses for a standard diploma may need a modified curriculum to meet their priority educational goals. Generally, these students will be those with a significant cognitive disability and working toward completion of standards based on the Florida Standards and access points.

**Multi-tiered system of support (MTSS)—**MTSS uses a data-based, problem-solving process that matches the intensity of support with student needs to most efficiently allocate resources to improve learning and behavior for all students (http://www.floridarti.usf.edu/). Effective core instruction and interventions are provided for all students, including students with disabilities, who need various levels of supports to master all academic standards. Three tiers describe the level and intensity of the instruction/interventions provided across a continuum of support: Tier One ‒ core, universal instruction; Tier Two – supplemental intervention; and Tier Three ‒ intensive intervention. The MTSS may also be referred to as Problem‐Solving/Response to Intervention or Instruction (PS/RtI).

**Natural proportions—**SWDs are distributed throughout general education classes based on the natural proportion, or ratio, of students ***with*** disabilities to students ***without*** disabilities. ***For example***, if the whole school student population is comprised of 12 percent SWDs, then classes should also reflect no more than 12 percent SWDs. Also, students with a significant cognitive disability typically comprise no more than 1 percent of the total school population. Therefore, those students should be placed into general education classes at a ratio of no more than 1 percent of the total number of students in that class.

**Person-centered planning (PCP)—**Person-centered planning is a term used to describe an approach to assist individuals in planning for their futures (<http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=103>). The goal of PCP is to aid an individual in developing meaningful life goals based on his or her strengths and talents, utilizing individual, natural and creative supports and services. PCP focuses on the person and their needs by putting them in charge of defining the direction for their lives, not on the systems that may or may not be available to serve them.

**Person first language—**A respectful, accurate way of communicating about and describing people. This approach puts the person first and the descriptors afterward. Instead of describing a person as a “Down Syndrome boy,” this approach describes him as “a boy with Down Syndrome.” People with disabilities are not their diagnoses or disabilities; they are people, first. When we adopt new ways of thinking and talking about people with disabilities, we'll not only exert a positive influence on their lives, but also on our society as a whole. (<https://vsafl.org/sites/default/files/2012%2520revised%2520peoplefirst.pdf>)

**Plan for Inclusive Education (PIE)—**The document that captures a district’s efforts towards short-term and long-term improvement. This plan, collaboratively developed by a team, identifies S.M.A.R.T goals, and action steps to address the district’s identified BPIE priority indicators, School BPIE results, and other relevant data relating to the State’s Strategic Plan. Per §. 1003.57(1)(f), F.S., the district’s BPIE document and plan for inclusive education, with short-term and long-term improvement efforts, are submitted with the Special Programs and Procedures (SP&P) to the Florida Department of Education.

**Positive behavior intervention and support (PBIS)—**The application of evidence-based strategies and systems to increase academic performance, increase safety, decrease problem behavior and establish positive school cultures (<http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/>).

**Problem‐Solving/Response to Intervention or Instruction (PS/RtI)—**RtI is a problem‐solving process that matches resources to individual student needs (<http://www.florida-rti.org/floridamtss/index.htm>). It involves understanding where the student is struggling; designing a way to help the student (an intervention); monitoring how the student responds to the intervention; and changing, decreasing, or increasing the intensity of the intervention depending on how the student responds.

**Professional development (PD)—**Job-embedded learning opportunities that include formal and informal means of helping educators learn and apply new skills, develop new insights into pedagogy and their own practice and explore new or advanced understandings of evidence-based content and resources ().

**Related services—**Those services provided by professionals as noted in the student’s IEP, such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech-language pathology and audiology services and interpreting services

**School leadership team—**A team of individuals at the school level who have individual and unique strengths that, together, comprise a collective group of broad strengths. These broad categories of strengths include: executing, influencing, relationship building and strategic thinking (Rath & Conchie, 2008). School leadership teams generally include members representing school-based administrators, department or grade-level chairpersons, general education and special education lead teachers, instructional coaches, school services personnel, etc.

**School leaders—**Personnel who provide leadership for all aspects of the school, including curriculum, instruction, assessment, budgets, operations, etc. School leaders typically refer to school-based administrators who include principals and assistant principal(s).

**Self‐determination—**Taking control and making decisions that affect one’s own life. Self-determination skills help students with disabilities make choices, set goals and manage their own lives.

**Stakeholder groups—**Administrators, general education teachers, special education teachers, related services personnel (speech/language therapist, occupational therapist, physical therapist), other certified personnel (e.g., guidance, academic and non-academic coaches), non-instructional personnel (e.g., paraprofessionals, front office staff, cafeteria staff), families of students with disabilities, families of students without disabilities.

**Student profile**—A comprehensive description of the abilities of a child with a disability, including academic, non-academic, social, communication, and behavior strengths and types or intensity of support (e.g., communication or peer supports) needed to participate fully and become independent. A student profile includes information about the student’s abilities and support needs at school, home, in the community and when interacting with same-age peers without disabilities.

**Students with a significant cognitive disability—**A significant cognitive disability is more than a significant delay in intellectual and adaptive skills. A significant cognitive disability is one in which the impact of the cognitive disability is permanent, prominent and pervasive.

Furthermore, the disability affects all aspects of the student’s academic, domestic, community living, leisure and vocational activities.

**Supplementary aids and services—**Aids, services and other supports that are provided in general education classes or other education- related settings that enable children with disabilities to be educated alongside children without disabilities, to the maximum extent possible. AT, adapted physical education and training in the use of braille or large print books are examples of supplementary aids and services ([http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/,root,statute,I,A,602,33,](http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cstatute%2CI%2CA%2C602%2C33%2C)).

**Technical assistance (TA)—**The provision of targeted and customized supports by a professional or teacher, with subject matter and adult learning knowledge and skills to develop or strengthen processes, knowledge application or implementation of services by recipients.

**Transition services/postsecondary**—Activities that help a student move from school to post‐school activities. For more information on transition planning for students with disabilities, visit the Project 10 (Transition Education Network) website: http://[project10](http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=103).info/

**Universal design for learning (UDL)—**UDL is a flexible approach to curriculum design that offers all learners full and equal opportunities to learn (<http://www.cast.org/udl/>). Based on research on the diverse ways people learn, UDL offers practical steps for giving everyone the chance to succeed. For example, whereas some students might be motivated by working in large groups, others may prefer small groups with structured activities. UDL is based on three principles:

* + 1. Provide multiple means of representation;
    2. Provide multiple means of expression; and
    3. Provide multiple means of engagement.

### Resources

#### Federal Regulations, Florida Statutes (F.S.) and Florida State Board of Education Rules:

##### Section 1003.57(1)(a)(2) and (1)(f), F.S.: [http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/Sections/1003.57.html](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?mode=View%20Statutes&SubMenu=1&App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=1003.57&URL=1000-1099/1003/Sections/1003.57.html)

1003.57(1)(a)(2) defines inclusion to mean:

…a student with a disability receiving education in a general education regular class setting, reflecting natural proportions and age- appropriate heterogeneous groups in core academic and elective or special areas within the school community; a student with a disability is a valued member of the classroom and school community; the teachers and administrators support universal education and have knowledge and support available to enable them to effectively teach all children; and a student is provided access to technical assistance in best practices, instructional methods, and supports tailored to the student’s needs based on current research.

1003.57(1)(f), requires the completion of BPIE self-assessments:

Once every 3 years, each school district and school shall complete a Best Practices in Inclusive Education (BPIE) assessment with a Florida Inclusion Network facilitator and include the results of the BPIE assessment and all planned short-term and long-term improvement efforts in the school district’s exceptional student education policies and procedures. BPIE is an internal assessment process designed to facilitate the analysis, implementation, and improvement of inclusive educational practices at the district and school team levels.

##### Requirements for the provision of assistive technology to students with disabilities:

Section 300.105, Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR §300.105) states:

Each public agency must ensure that assistive technology devices or assistive technology services, or both, as those terms are defined in §§

300.5 and 300.6, respectively, are made available to a child with a disability if required as a part of the child’s –(1) Special Education under §

300.36; (2) Related services under § 300.34; or (3) Supplementary aids and services under §§ 300.38 and 300.114 (a)(2)(ii). (b) On a case by case basis, the use of school-purchased assistive technology devices in a child’s home or in other settings is required if the child’s IEP Team determines that the child needs access to those devices in order to receive FAPE.”

The corresponding state requirement is found in State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.03028, Florida Administrative Code.

##### Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):

[http://idea.ed.gov](http://idea.ed.gov/)

##### Florida’s Part B State Performance Plan:

<http://www.fldoe.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/data/>

### Publications:

*Accommodations: Assisting Students with Disabilities*

<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070069-accomm-educator.pdf>

*Accommodations and Modifications for Students with Disabilities in Career Education and Adult General Education*

<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070068-311201_acmod-voc.pdf>

*Building Inclusive Schools: Online Learning Module*

<http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/BIS-2015/presentation_html5.html>

*Circles of Friends*

[http://www.inclusion.com/artcommonsensetools.html](%20http://www.inclusion.com/artcommonsensetools.html)

*Course Code Directory and Instructional Personnel Assignments*

<http://www.fldoe.org/articulation/CCD/>

*Digital Classroom Program Plans and Allocation*

<http://www.fldoe.org/about-us/division-of-technology-info-services/educational-technology/dcp.stml>

*Disability History and Awareness: A Resource Guide*

<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070081-dha-resource2010.pdf>

*Documenting, Reporting, and Monitoring the Use of Seclusion and Restraint on Students with Disabilities*

<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070154-restraintseclusion-parentbrochure.pdf>

*Family and Community Engagement for Positive Behavior Supports*

<http://flpbis.cbcs.usf.edu/foundations/FACE.html>

*Family FACT Folios, Volumes 1-4*

<http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/family-fact-folios/>

*Measuring Children’s Progress in Early Intervention and Preschool Programs*

<https://tats.ucf.edu/administrators-resources/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2017/08/measuringprogress.pdf>

*New Roles for General and Special Education Staff in Inclusive Schools*

<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070051-newrole.pdf>

*P.A.T.H.: Planning Alternative Tomorrow’s with Hope Fact Sheet* [*http://pcp.sonoranucedd.fcm.arizona.edu/resources/person-centered-planning-tools/path*](http://pcp.sonoranucedd.fcm.arizona.edu/resources/person-centered-planning-tools/path)

*People First Language*

<http://vsafl.org/sites/default/files/2012%2520revised%2520peoplefirst.pdf>

*Prekindergarten Children with Disabilities: Expanding Opportunities for Providing Services*

<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070134-prek-disaball.pdf>

*Program Options for Students with Disabilities: Career and Technical Education*

<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070074-311350_fam-know.pdf>

*Secondary Transition Roadmap for Families*

<http://project10.info/Documents/Secondary_Transition_Roadmap.pdf>

*Students Transitioning to Adult Roles (STAR)*

[http://project10.info/star.php](%20http://project10.info/star.php%20)

Technical Assistance Paper (TAP) *– Assistive Technology for Students with Disabilities*

<https://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-6801/dps-2013-65.pdf>

*Transition at Age 3: Family Booklet*

<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/fishbooklet.pdf>

*What Is Special about Special Education? Specially Designed Instruction for Students with Disabilities within a Multi-tiered System of Supports*

<http://sss.usf.edu/resources/format/pdf/specially_designed_instruction.pdf>