



# Values & Research-Based Rationale for Inclusive Education

# Rationales for Inclusive Education

- Social Justice and Civil Rights
- IDEA's LRE Mandate
- Outcomes Research
- Negative Effects of Segregation
- Better Use of Resources to Benefit All Students
- Value Added Contribution of Inclusive Education

# Inclusion Is...

- All students are welcomed members of age-appropriate general education classrooms in which there is a natural proportion of students with and without disabilities
- All students are presumed competent.
- All students fully participate in general education instruction based on general education learning standards
- All students have reciprocal social relationships
- All staff have the support they need to implement inclusion with fidelity

# Civil Rights

Ari Ne'eman, President and Founder, Autistic Self Advocacy Network, said:

“When school districts maintain segregated classrooms and separate schools for students with disabilities, such as children on the autism spectrum, this is not an educational necessity but instead reflects outdated and exclusionary attitudes. How children are treated in the schools often mirrors how they will be treated in later life. As with other minorities, segregated school placements lead to a segregated society, whereas inclusion in the earliest years promotes increased opportunity and greater understanding of differences for all involved.”

# Social Justice

“ Inclusion is not about disability, nor is it only about schools. Inclusion demands that we ask, what kind of world do we want to create? What kinds of skills and commitment do people need to thrive in diverse society? By embracing **inclusion as a model of social justice**, we can create a world fit for all of us.”

Mara Sapon-Shevin, 2003

# IDEA and Inclusive Education

IDEA does not mention inclusion, but throughout the law there is a preference for students with disabilities to be educated in general education classrooms with supplementary aids and services.

*“Congress finds:* Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self sufficiency for individuals with disabilities.”

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004.

*“Congress finds:* ...that thirty years of research and experience...education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by...having high expectations...ensuring...access to the general curriculum...in the regular classroom, to the maximum extent possible... “

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004.

IDEA – the federal special education law, says that “to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities should be educated in the regular classroom, with necessary supplemental aids and services.”

IDEA says that schools are obligated to PROVE that students CAN'T learn in the regular class, with appropriate supports and services, before they are removed from the regular class.

IDEA says that students with disabilities should be educated in the “least restrictive environment” in which they can meet the goals of their Individualized Education Programs.

IDEA says that, to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities should be educated alongside peers without disabilities.

IDEA says that even students in more restrictive placements should have opportunities to socialize with students without disabilities.

IDEA says that students with disabilities should “make progress within the general curriculum” and should pursue, to the maximum extent appropriate, the same learning goals as students without disabilities.

# Outcomes Research

Students' academic achievement, communication skills, social relationships, and post-school outcomes (i.e., living in the community, being maximally independent, being financially secure, the number and quality of their social relationships) are **positively correlated** to the amount of time that they spend in a **general education classroom**.

# Benefits of Inclusion

- Higher expectations
- Better performance on reading and math tests
- Fewer days missed from school
- Fewer problem behavior referrals
- Value-added benefits to the general education classroom
- Students who receive their educational program with same age peers without disabilities have greater access to the general curriculum
- Opportunity to develop social relationships
- Promotes the value of diverse community for all students
- Best preparation for adult life

# Summaries of Selected Research

- ▶ Meta-analysis of 74 research studies from the 1980's and 1990's show a small-to-moderate beneficial effect of inclusive education on the academic and social outcomes of students with disabilities. Investigation into the impact of students' ages or their disability type revealed no consistent pattern that differed from the overall positive effect.
- ▶ Students with disabilities demonstrate high levels of social interaction in settings with typical peers, but placement alone does not guarantee positive social outcomes

- Social competence and communication skills improve when students with disabilities are educated in inclusive settings
- There is an overall “added value” to the general education classroom of students with disabilities and their support resources
- Students with disabilities have demonstrated gains in other areas of development when they are educated in inclusive settings, such as level of engagement, involvement in integrated activities, affective demeanor, and social interaction
- Social relationships develop between students with disabilities and their typical peers in inclusive settings

- The performance of students without disabilities is not compromised by the presence of students with disabilities in their classrooms
- Typical students derive benefits from their involvement and relationships with students with disabilities

- The IEPs of students with disabilities who are included in general education classes are of higher quality; that is, they include goals and objectives that are more closely related to desired adult outcomes and roles than the IEPs of students with disabilities who are in segregated classes
- There is evidence to suggest that while start-up costs may initially increase the cost of inclusive services, the costs over time decrease, and are likely to be less than segregated forms of service delivery

- ▶ The presence of students with disabilities provides a catalyst for learning opportunities and experiences that might not otherwise be part of the curriculum, especially relating to social justice, prejudice, equity, etc.
- ▶ Facilitating the inclusion of students with disabilities requires the sensitivity to make on-the-spot judgments about the type and amount of support to encourage participation while not interfering with student interactions

- Although many teachers are initially reluctant about inclusion, they become confident in their abilities with support and experience
- Support from other teachers is a powerful and necessary resource to empower teachers to problem-solve new instructional challenges

- Parent support for inclusion is positively impacted by actual experience with inclusion, although experiences alone does not shape attitudes
- Parents of students with disabilities are looking for positive attitudes, good educational experiences, and acceptance of their child among educators

# Negative Effects of Segregation

- Creating school cultures of “us” and “them”
- Poorer quality instruction in academic skills
- Poorer quality IEPs
- Lack of generalization of learning to regular environments
- Disruption of opportunities for social relationships
- Inefficient use of resources based on labels or other eligibility criteria creating “silos” of resources that don’t coordinate

# Negative Effects of Segregation

- Decrease in confidence that general education class teachers have for teaching diverse learners
- Puts a “condition” on belonging...i.e., you need to perform in a certain way in order to be part of the mainstream of school life

# Research Citations

The National Center on Inclusive Education at <http://iod.unh.edu/PriorityAreas/inclusive-education/ncie-resources/research-publications.aspx> - “Outcomes and Insights from Researchers on Inclusive Education: For Families and Teachers” and “Rationale For and Research on Inclusive Education: For Professionals and Researchers”

TASH at <http://tash.org/advocacy-issues/inclusive-education/> - “Frequently Asked Questions About Inclusive Education” and “Dispelling the Myths of Inclusive Education”

SWIFT SCHOOLS – funded by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs - <http://www.swiftschools.org/>

# Better Use of Resources

“There is even a growing body of scientific evidence suggesting that integrated service models for students with disabilities (all disabilities) enhance educational outcomes for *all* students.”

Wayne Sailor, Ph.D. University of Kansas. Congressional Briefing on Inclusive Education. July 9, 2009.

# Integrated Service Delivery Models

- All students are members of general education classrooms.
- All staff – general and special education teachers, Title 1 staff, reading specialists, related service providers, paraeducators – are assigned to support all students in general education.

- There are no places in the school just for students with disabilities and students with disabilities have access to all classrooms and programs.
- Multi-tiered systems of support provide interventions for students who are not meeting grade-level standards without removing those students from universally designed core instruction.

# Value-Added Contribution of Inclusive Education

# **“Teachers’ perspectives of curriculum and climate changes: The added value of inclusive education”**

Doug Fisher, Caren Sax, Karen Rodifer, and Ian  
Pumpian

San Diego State University

# The “Other Side of the Equation”: The Added Value of Inclusion

Premises: The sum total of the resources and benefits that flow into an inclusive environment add “value” to that classroom for all its members

# The “Other Side of the Equation”: The Added Value of Inclusion

- One large high school studied
- Long experience and national recognition for inclusion
- Students fully included

# The “Other Side of the Equation”: The Added Value of Inclusion

23 Teachers Interviewed...

- Has including students with disabilities affected you personally?
- Has including students with disabilities affected your curriculum?
- Since including students, have you noticed any change in classroom climate?
- What recommendations do you have for others?

# The “Other Side of the Equation”: The Added Value of Inclusion Results

- Increased tolerance and understanding of human differences
- Teachers view all students more individually
- 65% reported impact on curriculum and instruction – use of more adaptive methods
- 91% reported that classroom climate became more positive

# The “Other Side of the Equation”: The Added Value of Inclusion *Value-Added Impact on Teachers...*

- New info on the experience of disability
- Expanded definition of which children could learn
- Improvement of teaching skills re: all students
- Enjoyment of collaboration with colleagues
- High expectations for all students

# Other research on the added value of students with disabilities

## *Value-Added Impact on Students...*

- improved self-concept
- growth in social understanding and skills
- increased tolerance
- increased responsiveness to the needs of other people
- positive changes in their status among their peers
- greater interpersonal acceptance and friendships