

# WAYS 2 EQUITY PLAYBOOK ENHANCEMENT



## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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The electronic version of the *Ways to Equity Playbook* can be found here: <https://www.innovationscollaborative.org/cepip.aspx>.

# Introduction

## Students with Disabilities

Historically, students with disabilities have faced a variety of challenges and inequities within the educational system which were further exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. This enhancement updates students with disabilities demographics in the state and highlights some of the ongoing inequities and progress that has occurred since the publication of the *Ways 2 Equity Playbook* in 2020. Included in the enhancement are reflection questions, an updated list of evidenced-based best practices, and updated resources for working with students with disabilities.

## Update on Equity and Achievement for Students with Disabilities

The educational system continues to struggle with providing an equitable free and appropriate education (FAPE) for students with disabilities. During the pandemic, teachers, students, and families struggled with the move to remote instruction and then the return to in person instruction. The impact of the pandemic can be seen in attendance, academic performance, graduation rates, and the disproportionality of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) in special education.

## Continuing Inequities in Education for Students with Disabilities

The overrepresentation of certain groups of students in special education has been a trend in the California educational system for many years and has led to disproportionality in numerous districts. In the Students with Disabilities Enhancement, the current

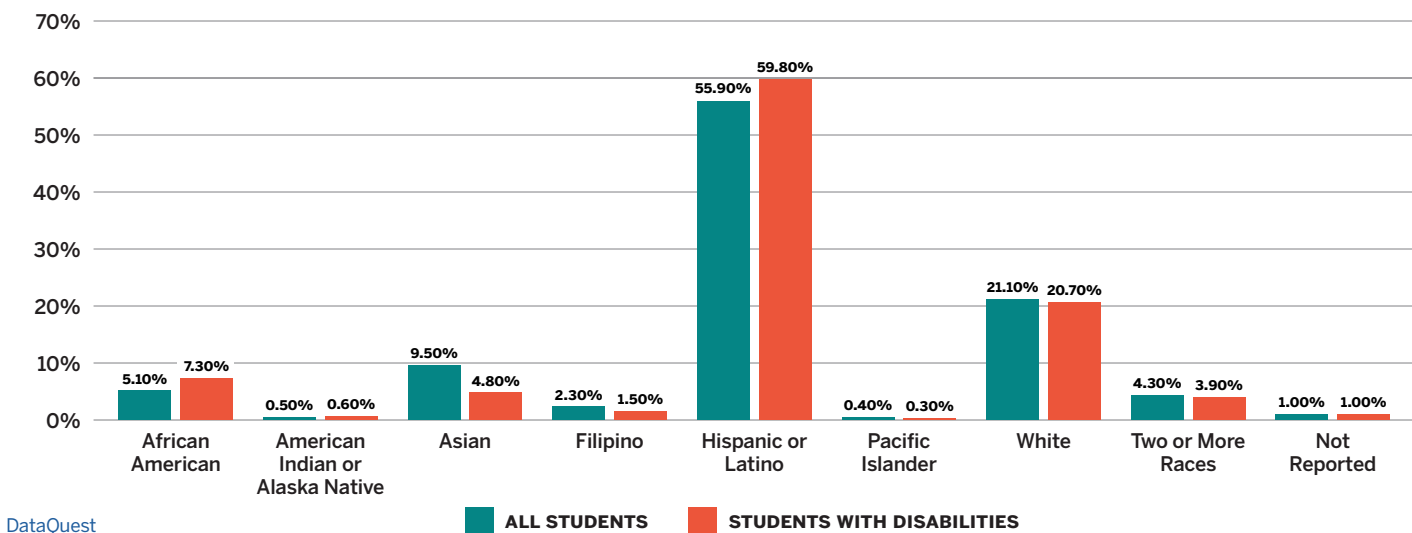
trends in students' demographics are highlighted including how those trends are reflected in the need for more robust interventions and supports for students.

According to [Ed Data](#), between 2017-2022 there has been a decrease in the overall student population in the state of over 320,000 students while simultaneously an increase in students with disabilities of over 22,000. In examining the data for students in the state by ethnicity and disability, it is apparent that certain groups of students are overrepresented in special education. African American students constitute 5.10% of the children in the state yet the percentage of African American students with disabilities is 7.3%. There are similar overrepresentations for students who are American Indian or Alaska Native and students who are Hispanic (See Figure 1).

During the past few years, the educational system has faced many challenges with the onset of COVID-19, distance learning, and the return to the classroom. Since the pandemic the mental health of students and staff is under more stress and continues to impact the learning environment. According to KidsData, in June of 2022, over half of caregivers surveyed expressed concern over their oldest child's emotional/mental health (See Figure 2).

Mental health concerns and learning loss further compound the continued experience and opportunity gaps for many students which manifests itself in numerous ways. When students do not have a multi-tiered system of support or if schools do not have the resources or knowledge to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students, an environment is created where students may be over referred or over identified for special education services.

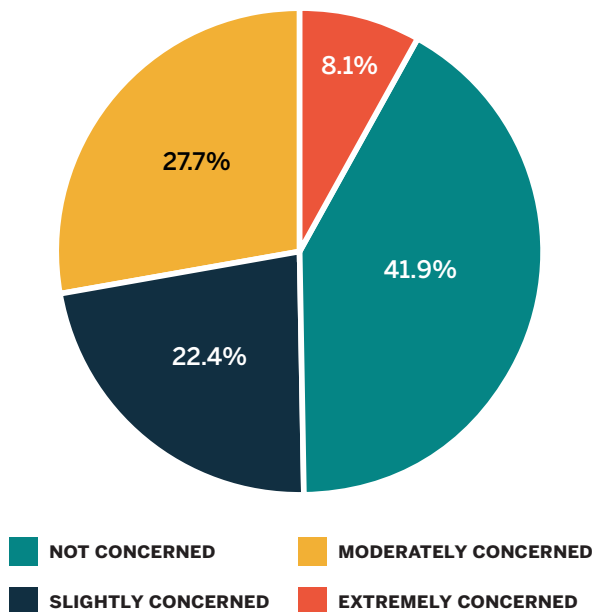
**Figure 1. Comparison of the Percentage of Students Statewide by Ethnicity and Students with Disabilities by Ethnicity 2021-2022**



[DataQuest](#)

## Introduction

**Figure 2.** State of California Percent of Parents' Concerns Over Emotional or Mental Health in June 2022



[KidsData](#)



## Reflection Questions:

1. Reflect on your site's or LEA's data for students with disabilities. What set of data concerns you the most? How can you address this data where you are and create more equitable outcomes?
2. What support measures has your district or site put into place to address students' mental health concerns?
3. What types of structures are built into everyday routines that allow students to express their emotional state in a proactive manner?

## Resources

### Learning Loss

This section contains articles and websites to assist schools with ideas and strategies for learning recovery.

#### Article:

- From Learning Loss to a Liberatory Mindset. ACSD. Retrieved <https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/from-learning-loss-to-a-liberatory-mindset>

#### Websites:

- National Center for Learning Disabilities  
Nine Suggestions for Learning Recovery for Students with Disabilities  
<https://www.ncl.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/9-Recommendations-for-Inclusive-Learning-Recovery-for-Students-with-Disabilities-Final-1.pdf>
- WestEd Spotlight on Cultural and Racial Equity to Support Learning Recovery  
<https://www.wested.org/wested-bulletin/news/spotlight-on-increasing-cultural-and-racial-equity-to-support-learning-recovery/>

### Social Emotional Learning

The resources listed below focus on social emotional learning and provide frameworks and structure for incorporating social emotional learning into the curriculum. This can be an essential part of PBIS and a MTSS.

#### Websites:

- Adolescent Counseling Services  
<http://www.acs-teens.org/>
- Children's Health Council (CHC)  
<https://www.chconline.org/>
- Measuring Social Emotional Learning (SEL)  
<http://measuringSEL.casell.org/our-initiative/>
- Wallace Foundation Research on Social Emotional Learning:  
[https://www.wallacefoundation.org/promos2/pages/navigating-social-and-emotional-learning.aspx?ef\\_id=XXxf-dwAAAdc7cLHP:20190515185031:s](https://www.wallacefoundation.org/promos2/pages/navigating-social-and-emotional-learning.aspx?ef_id=XXxf-dwAAAdc7cLHP:20190515185031:s)

# Background

In September 2020, the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) officially launched the *Ways 2 Equity Playbook* at the 7th annual Innovations Collaborative State Conference (ICSC). The *Ways 2 Equity Playbook* is a navigation tool that can be used to identify equity needs throughout organizations with a primary focus on looking at equity through a systems lens to ensure improved student outcomes. To download a free copy, click [here](#).

From November 19, 2020, to May 20, 2021, SCCOE hosted monthly two hour-long informative webinars for educators. A group of 30+ professionals joined to network with peers, shared best practices, and learned about facilitating equity conversations. They participated in thought-provoking activities and take-home tasks to incorporate the *Ways 2 Equity Playbook* elements in their classroom practices. To see previous recordings of the Equity Institutes and Navigating Equity Network series, click [here](#).

The *Playbook* purposefully examines three historically marginalized student groups: African American students, students with disabilities, and English Learners. Additionally it provides targeted universal tools and resources to address the equity efforts of supporting those student groups. The underlying belief is that while we focus our efforts on supporting African American students, students with disabilities, and English Language Learners, these targeted tools and resources will also be a means to addressing the needs of *all* students that we serve.

“We have learned the way to develop the most effective, sustainable model of equity in education begins and continues with

a conversation,” said Santa Clara County Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Mary Ann Dewan. “With the *Ways 2 Equity Playbook*, we have an opportunity to address and respond to inequitable practices in our education system in a meaningful, deliberative way that will facilitate dialogue and improve communication, which is the only way we will continue to learn, understand and eliminate bias.”

The *Ways 2 Equity Playbook* is the culminating two-year project of the California Equity Performance and Improvement Program (CEPIP) grant made possible by Assembly Bill 99, authored and promoted by Assemblywoman Dr. Shirley Weber. The grant was designed to create funding to promote equity in California’s public schools by supporting and building capacity within County Offices of Education, local educational agencies, and schools. To fulfill this effort, the SCCOE has partnered with several national equity organizations, including the National Equity Project (NEP) and Western Educational Equity Assistance Center (WEEAC), as well as several local school districts. Case studies highlighting the partnering school districts are featured in the *Playbook*.

Educators using the *Ways 2 Equity Playbook* can access additional resources to support classroom implementation as well as examine school wide systems. In keeping with the navigational metaphor, the *Playbook* features a series of “on-ramps,” allowing users to approach the conversation and equity journey where applicable. The first on-ramp stresses the need for an organization to define equity, which will be discussed next.



# Defining Equity

To achieve equity, one must define what is meant by equity. In essence, educational equity means that every student can go to school and feel that they belong, are valued, and can succeed. Noguera (2019) explains that the “true” meaning of equity is “acknowledging students’ differences and giving them what they need to be successful. It also means staying focused on outcomes, both academic and developmental”. In other words, to achieve equity, educators and administrators must know the students whom they teach, understand which pedagogies and resources each student needs to thrive, and remain attuned to how quantitative and qualitative data reflect this. This requires focused investigation of the systems in place that are producing the current results. This way, new systems can be established that ensure that each child receives what they need to succeed.

The focus on equitable outcomes rather than equality (sameness) of resources is key to defining “equity”. Making this point visually, the graphic below demonstrates that different students require different resources and support to achieve desired outcomes. As Kimberlé Crenshaw (1998) put it, “Treating different things the same can generate as much inequality as treating the same things differently.” Therefore, to achieve equity, educators

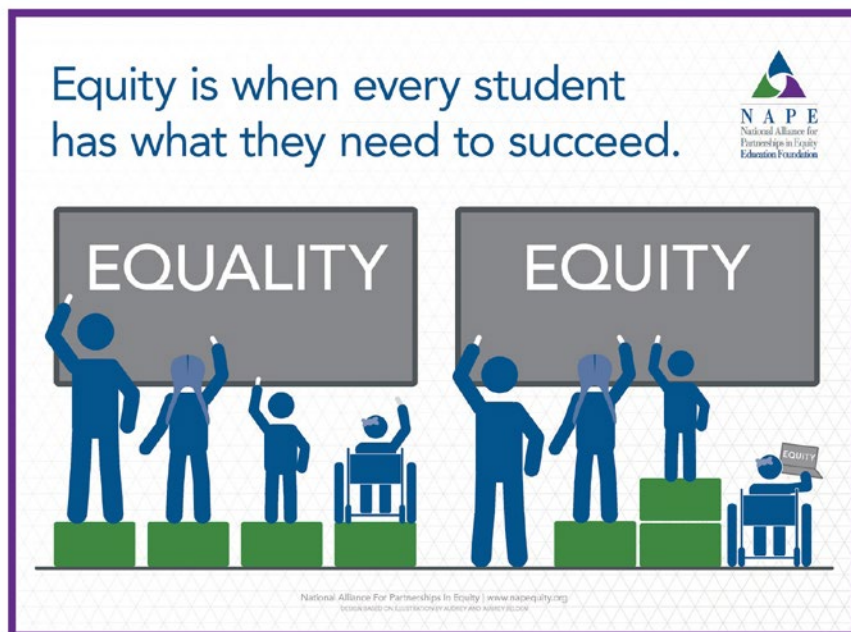
must be willing to learn how to provide differently for different students. This, however, can be challenging to put into action.

The main purpose of the *Ways 2 Equity Playbook (W2EPB)* is to assist schools, districts, and county offices of education in taking thoughtful action by helping them to find their unique pathways to equity. Equity that is, by definition, systemic. Because working toward equity requires ongoing action and continuous improvement, the *W2EPB* definition of equity centers “ways”, or practices that support its advancement. It is understood that for many, the road taken will quite likely feel like uncharted territory. After all, the infrastructure for equity as an overarching objective for public education has yet to be built into the system—but is both possible and necessary.

With the public education system a legacy has been inherited. Boldly put: the U.S. education system originated as a tool to further privilege the racially and economically advantaged (see Kliever & Fitzgerald, 2001; Rooks, 2020). To a great extent, mental “fitness” was measured through standardized tests norm-referenced to White, educated men, thus advantaging them and those like them while disadvantaging the “other” (Kendi, 2019; see also the National Education Association’s “[History of Standardized Testing in the United States](#)”).

When we analyze data and take honest stock of the outcomes, we see that this pattern persists within the education system. As is shown through the *W2EPB*, it is undeniable that in comparison to most other student groups, White students continue to receive higher test scores, enroll in and pass more honors and Advanced Placement classes, go to college more, have better teachers, and be suspended less.

There is a hard truth in the data presented throughout this document: For students who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)<sup>2</sup>, poor, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, plus other groups (LGBTQIA+)<sup>3</sup>, and/or identified as having disabilities, schools are often institutions which systematically reproduce and maintain their oppression. Consequently, the institution of schooling does not value what these students bring to school: their



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<sup>2</sup> BIPOC stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. This term is used “to highlight the unique relationship to whiteness that Indigenous and Black (African Americans) people have, which shapes the experiences of and relationship to white supremacy for all people of color within a U.S. context” ([The BIPOC Project](#)). In effect, the term illuminates the fact that U.S. concepts of race were built on white supremacist notions of blackness and indigeneity.

<sup>3</sup> LGBTQIA+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, plus other groups marginalized due to gender and sexual identities.

## Defining Equity (from National Equity Project)

**Each student<sup>4</sup> receives what they need, when they need it, to thrive social-emotionally and academically.**

Working toward equity means that we engage in these practices and behaviors:

- Promoting just and fair inclusion, and creating the conditions in which each person participates, prospers, and reaches their full potential.
- Removing the predictability of success and failure that is currently correlated with a student's ethnicity, culture, race, or socio-economic status.
- Interrupting inequitable practices, examining biases, and creating inclusive school environments for each student and their families.
- Paying attention to the social and historic forces which create and maintain systems in which students are treated differently based on who they are.

culture (Valenzuela, 1999; Perry & Steele, 2004), including their languages (Rosa & Flores, 2017), agency (Paris & Alim, 2017), funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992), community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005), and their bodies (Hattery & Smith, 2017; Morris, 2016). The core motivation of the *W2EPB* is the strong belief that all students deserve dignity and respect and that they should be valued for their full humanity.

At times a deficit perspective (or mindset) is used to understand BIPOC students, students with disabilities, and students whose first language is not English. A deficit perspective views students through what they *do not* have, or what they lack, as opposed to seeing them for the assets they possess and bring to school every day. To counter the pervasiveness of this deficit perspective, a commitment to transforming the education system must be cultivated. Paris and Alim (2017) write, "We believe that equity and access can best be achieved by centering the dynamic practices and selves of students and communities of color in a critical, additive, and expansive vision of schooling" (p. 3). How do we take action toward equity? The objective of the *Ways 2 Equity Playbook* is to offer a response to this question.

Given the profound and heavy nature of the above, people who serve students and schools must be tenacious and bold. It should be expected that the work ahead will be challenging. And while it may be uncomfortable for some, it will be inspiring and uplifting

for many. Working toward equity is the best thing we can do for all students, families, and everyone who makes up the life of schools. Accordingly, it is necessary to cultivate opportunities for what Singleton (2014) calls "courageous conversations"; or critical dialogue and reflection. Engagement in such discussions can cultivate essential attitudes of an equity mindset: humility, transparency, courage, and a willingness to learn and change. With emphasis simultaneously placed on work to address implicit biases, great strides can be made to advance equity. From the beginning, the *W2EPB* highlights learning about systemic oppression, activities that address implicit biases, processes which include self-reflection, engagement with equity ideas, and critical dialogue.

### Reflection Questions:

1. What is your organization's working definition of equity? Whose voices were included in this definition? Whose voices were not?
2. How has your organization engaged in conversations about the meaning of equity? Who has participated in these conversations? Who has not?
3. What are some reasons educators might be fearful about introducing conversations about racism in their classes? What can school leaders do to alleviate that fear? What can we do as individual educators to alleviate that fear in ourselves?

<sup>4</sup> The use of "student" reflects an awareness of the audience for this playbook. It is understood that those using these materials are engaged in the education sphere. However, there are some realms of the education sphere where "student" may not be the most accurate word when referring to those in TK, preschool, early childhood programs, or adult education programs.

## Defining Equity



### Resources

- To further examine different types of educational inequity, such as societal, socioeconomic, familial, cultural, etc.: <https://www.edglossary.org/equity/>
- Equity Literacy Institute offers a free-low-cost self-paced learning module. <https://equity-literacy.thinkific.com/>
- See Glen Singleton's *Courageous Conversations about Race: A field guide for achieving equity in schools* (2005) for a powerful guide for talking about power and privilege related to race so that education systems can then create plans necessary for their transformation.

### Tools

- CA-1 Course with Micro-Credential Badge: "Vision One" <https://www.learningdesigned.org/node/975/initiative-resources>
- Use the History of Education Timeline Activity to investigate the history of educational inequity. [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NCN7QxGbLewltm-mMY\\_68\\_leqpsNVlkqg45CrucNrfU/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NCN7QxGbLewltm-mMY_68_leqpsNVlkqg45CrucNrfU/edit)

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# How to Use the *Ways 2 Equity Playbook*

As a product of the California Statewide System of Support, the *Ways 2 Equity Playbook* (W2EPB) draws on methods of continuous improvement in its approach to systems-based equity work. This section provides guidance on how to use the W2EPB. Please note that you will find a list of recommended equity audits and assessment resources, but the W2EPB is not in itself an equity audit. In addition, the W2EPB was designed as a resource to be used electronically, offering digital-only sections and links to online resources and tools throughout. Please check the electronic version for updates, as we understand the *Playbook* as a “prototype” upon which we will continue to iterate with input and new developments in the field. Please see <https://www.innovationscollaborative.org/cepip.aspx> for the electronic document that includes additional sections: district case studies and a list of equity assessments and audits.

## Organization of the *Ways 2 Equity Playbook*

The W2EPB is organized to guide schools, district, and county offices through their equity work. It has been assembled so that the sections of the *Playbook* move the reader from the more conceptual and theoretical to the more practical. However, just as equity work requires simultaneous engagement with theory and practice, the *Playbook* sections strive to address both layers of equity work at the same time. The education system cannot advance equity without seeing these as two parts of an integrated whole.



## Preparing for Equity Work

1. In the original *Playbook*, thoroughly read the sections in Part I: Ramping Up. (These pages will orient the reader to the thinking behind the W2EPB and its approach to the process.)
2. Assess where to *start* by using the “[On-ramps to Equity](#)”.
3. Establish your core equity team that is representative of the school community. (Through the process, there will be a need to develop smaller teams to guide specific aspects of the work.)
4. Choose and use assessment/audit tools to take the equity temperature of your site.
5. Using a planning tool, begin designing your site’s ways to equity. (E.g. Sampson’s “[Digging for Equity](#)”.)

## Engaging the Equity Work

Use the “[On-ramps to Equity](#)” to begin the process. As has been stated, undertaking equity work is not a one-size-fits-all process; intentionality and planning are key to achieving successful outcomes. In addition, it is imperative to simultaneously and continuously explore the comingling of implicit bias and systemic oppression in personal reflection and within your educational contexts. Note: The Innovations Collaborative of the Santa Clara County Office of Education has created an online micro-credential module for teachers to support implementation of the W2EPB in the classroom: [Utilizing the Ways 2 Equity Playbook](#).

## Using Protocols to Guide your Equity Work

Throughout the W2EPB, tools, resources, and support are offered in the journey toward equity. Many of these tools come in the form of “protocols”. A protocol is a structured process or set of guidelines that promote meaningful, efficient, and equitable inquiry and communication. Using protocols can help ensure that work is collaborative, equitable, and focused. (Links to protocols are provided throughout the W2EPB. They can be accessed through the electronic version of the *Playbook* at <https://www.innovationscollaborative.org/cepip.aspx>)



# On-Ramps: Beginning and Continuing on your Equity Journey

These “on-ramps” should be used to help the user identify where they are in their journey, their objectives, and how to proceed. This tool can be used as a self-assessment and inventory of actions, with each component essential to designing and carrying forth equity work. For example, beginning in column #2, everything listed in column #1 is still a necessary component to be addressed and should be as fully engaged as possible. This is intentional. While equity is an urgent need, to truly see changes in any system, the work must be deliberate, purposeful, collaborative, and deep. Use these on-ramps to gauge where you are. From there, engage in [continuous improvement cycles](#). Finally, remember this: Working toward equity is complex, so not everything here happens in every place and at every time. To that end, the following is offered as a set of processes to help your system delve into the work.

## “PRE” WORK:

- Beginning this journey means preparing your system to engage in work that is sometimes messy, often emotional, and challenges our most basic assumptions.
- Leadership must communicate the importance, excitement, and challenge of this work toward equity to staff: personal work and institutional work.
- Gather and explore relevant data, both public and internal; especially investigating disproportionality through an intersectional data analysis of the focal student groups: African American students, students with disabilities, and English learners.
- Read through the *Ways 2 Equity Playbook*, highlighting areas of focus.



## On-Ramps: Beginning and Continuing on your Equity Journey

	<b>1. Starting your Engine:</b> Learn about Equity in your System	<b>2. Picking up Speed:</b> Dive into Planning for Equity	<b>3. Merging onto the Highway:</b> Share Plans and Begin your Equity Cycles	<b>Relevant W2EPB Sections: Access to find information and tools</b>
<b>Leadership Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Establish a core leadership team that will identify and develop a broader equity leadership team</li> <li>❑ Identify trainings/education for leadership team on systemic racism &amp; implicit bias</li> <li>❑ Take implicit bias assessment</li> <li>❑ Explore equity literature for future book circles (see resources)</li> <li>❑ Establish community agreements/norms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Establish a broader, representative equity leadership team across stakeholder groups</li> <li>❑ Leadership team engage in an equity assessment</li> <li>❑ Develop smaller leadership teams for specific areas of work (ongoing)</li> <li>❑ Identify an equity team facilitator who is available, consistent, and experienced</li> <li>❑ Initiate equity literature book circles/equity discussions with all staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Ensure that representative stakeholders are participants at all levels of process</li> <li>❑ Continue equity literature book circles/equity discussions with all staff</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Team Development &amp; Facilitation</a>  <a href="#">Implicit Bias &amp; Cultivating Equity Mindshifts</a>  <a href="#">Equity Literature</a>
<b>Teacher/Staff Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Take implicit bias assessment</li> <li>❑ Participate in trainings/education on systemic racism &amp; implicit bias</li> <li>❑ Explore equity literature for future book circles (see resources)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Reflect on results of implicit bias assessment; consider next steps for individuals and collective action based on results</li> <li>❑ Further focus trainings/education for teachers on systemic racism &amp; implicit bias</li> <li>❑ Initiate equity literature book circles/equity discussions with all staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Continued, focused trainings/education for teachers on addressing systemic racism &amp; implicit bias through effective pedagogy</li> <li>❑ Continue equity literature book circles/equity discussions with all staff</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Team Development &amp; Facilitation</a>  <a href="#">Implicit Bias &amp; Cultivating Equity Mindshifts</a>  <a href="#">Equity Literature</a>
<b>Data &amp; Research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Needs assessment: Investigate Dashboard data of districts/schools using data exploration protocol</li> <li>❑ Identify focal student groups</li> <li>❑ Needs assessment: Survey teachers, staff, parents, students, and other stakeholders</li> <li>❑ Explore equity audits/assessments to use in your context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Continue to collect relevant quantitative and qualitative data at the local and state levels</li> <li>❑ Conduct intersectional data analysis for disproportionality</li> <li>❑ Conduct root cause analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Continue to collect and share relevant quantitative and qualitative data</li> <li>❑ Continue to conduct intersectional data analysis for disproportionality, with attention to African American students, SWD, and ELs</li> <li>❑ Plan cycles of research and measurement for improvement</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Using Data to Inform Equity</a>  <a href="#">List of Equity Audits &amp; Assessments</a>  <a href="#">African American Students</a>  <a href="#">Students with Disabilities</a>  <a href="#">English Learners</a>

## On-Ramps: Beginning and Continuing on your Equity Journey

	<b>1. Starting your Engine:</b> Learn about Equity in your System	<b>2. Picking up Speed:</b> Dive into Planning for Equity	<b>3. Merging onto the Highway:</b> Share Plans and Begin your Equity Cycles	<b>Relevant W2EPB Sections: Access to find information and tools</b>
<b>Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Identify and broadly define equity challenges</li> <li>❑ Begin to draft equity goals that explicitly address inequities found in needs assessment</li> <li>❑ Develop a timeline starting with these on-ramps and cycles of continuous improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Develop shared definition of equity</li> <li>❑ Define and prioritize your equity goals</li> <li>❑ Choose set of tools to address the challenge based on defined equity goals</li> <li>❑ Begin drafting an equity plan (made up of report of findings, tools, strategies, communication plan, plan to monitor progress)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Narrow focus to one equity challenge, drawing on stakeholder input</li> <li>❑ Finalize equity plan</li> <li>❑ Initiate and continue use of equity tools and strategies</li> <li>❑ Check for integrity of the equity plan</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Defining Equity</a>  <a href="#">Using Data to Inform Equity</a>
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Identify stakeholders</li> <li>❑ Begin development of communication plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Continue to develop communication plan</li> <li>❑ Share equity data with community of stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Finalize communication plan</li> <li>❑ Communicate the equity plan to stakeholders</li> <li>❑ Continue to share data findings and open up conversations with stakeholders</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Developing an Equity Communication Plan</a>
<b>Culture &amp; Climate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Calibrate potential equity goals to mission and vision</li> <li>❑ Begin process of ongoing personal reflection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Align equity objectives to mission and vision</li> <li>❑ Continue ongoing personal reflection</li> <li>❑ Include students and community representation in decision-making and work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Check for and build student and community representation in decision-making and work</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Creating a Culture of Inclusion &amp; Belonging</a>  <a href="#">Implicit Bias &amp; Cultivating Equity Mindshifts</a>  <a href="#">Student Engagement</a>  <a href="#">Family Engagement</a>
<b>Progress Monitoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Check-in with teachers and staff about their response to the equity focus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Continue monitoring equity and representativeness of leadership team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Monitor progress: Schedule regular meetings (every 2-4 weeks)</li> <li>❑ Monitor leadership capacity-building</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Team Development &amp; Facilitation</a>  <a href="#">Using Data to Inform Equity</a>

These on-ramps were developed at the Santa Clara County Office of Education from a combination of vetted sources: *The Equity Framework*, (Linton, 2011); *Self-Assessment of MTSS Implementation (SAM)*, (Stockslager, K., et. al., 2016), *Culturally Responsive Organizational Series*, Sampson, 2019, and the SCCOE W2EPB Team.

# Implicit Bias and Cultivating Equity Mindedness

In this section implicit bias is defined and explained in relation to developing equity mindsets toward systems change. It is emphasized that implicit bias, while necessary to investigate, will not result in systems change unless structural oppression is simultaneously addressed. Tools and resources, including self-assessments, are offered at the end of the section.

## What is Implicit Bias?

“Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner” (Kirwan Institute, [2015](#)). Over the past decade, talk of implicit bias (or unconscious bias) has become standard within organizations, and scientific research has shown that the impacts of implicit bias reach further than we might imagine. Schools, non-profit organizations, police departments, hospitals, and private corporations have taken up the work of addressing implicit bias. The hope is that mindsets can be changed and along with that the practices and policies that lead to inequitable education outcomes, such as the over-representation of African American students in suspensions for willful defiance starting in preschool (Gilliam, et. al., [2016](#)). Living in a system of inequity, we are conditioned to learn specific forms of prejudice, accept certain behaviors as normal, and internalize a value structure that reflects this social context. Therefore, we all have biases. If our biases go unchecked, there is a risk that our actions and decisions can have negative real-world impacts that were not intended and may not even reflect your conscious values. This is what is referred to as “implicit bias”—the unconscious actions that result in unintended, sometimes detrimental, outcomes. Our biases, however, are malleable and can be interrupted and changed.

Stanford Professor of Psychology Jennifer Eberhardt has conducted award-winning studies on implicit bias. She shows how implicit bias begins early in life and is developed over the course

***“Implicit biases come from the culture. I think of them as the thumbprint of the culture on our minds. Human beings have the ability to learn to associate two things together very quickly—that is innate. What we teach ourselves, what we choose to associate is up to us.”***

of one’s life. In her [2019](#) book, *Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do*, Eberhardt explains how basic building blocks of knowledge are formed early on, which shape information acquired thereafter. This new information is then filtered through older lenses, affecting the meanings ascribed to the new information. Taken at face value, this process is biological—our brains are hardwired for bias. Because it is biologically based, the process is sometimes misunderstood as a neutral one. However, while the process may be biological and therefore understood as somehow neutral, the information that comprises the biases are not neutral. Since the development of our brains is responsive to the context in which they are shaped, our biases are greatly influenced by the belief systems inherent in our social contexts.

## Implicit Bias and Systems Change

To understand implicit bias, one must start with an understanding of the human brain. Given that our brains are historical organs, they develop with the messages and cues that come from the world in which we live, in other words, our social contexts. Therefore, if our brains develop within a culture of whiteness, as long as our biases go unchallenged, they will reflect these values. For this reason, equity work must examine both implicit (personal) biases alongside structural biases. There are myriad equity issues that surface every day in our schools, and each of these issues requires that we learn about and reflect on our personal implicit biases while also learning about and examining the ways in which our structures—policies, practices, and programs—maintain inequities. Examples of such equity issues include the over-representation of:

- African American boys in suspensions and expulsions (Wood, Harris, & Howard, [2018](#))
- English Learners in special education (Harry & Klingner, [2014](#))
- White students in Advanced Placement courses (Lewis & Diamond, [2018](#)).

It is vital that we examine these issues on multiple levels—that is, as a system. By definition, a systems investigation includes the people who make up the system (ourselves) as well as the processes and tools that are part of that system (see Kania, Kramer, and Senge, [2018](#)). If implicit biases are produced within particular social contexts, in order to change systems, we must

## Implicit Bias and Cultivating Equity Mindedness

be able to examine and reflect on our individual, personal biases (also known as meta-cognition) while simultaneously analyzing the structural oppressions that support inequities. As Osta and Vasquez (2019) of the National Equity Project explain:

Most work on implicit bias focuses on increasing awareness of individuals in service of changing how they view and treat others. However, in order to lead to meaningful change, an exploration of implicit bias must be situated as part of a much larger conversation about how current inequities in our institutions came to be, how they are held in place, and what our role as leaders is in perpetuating inequities despite our good intentions.

Implicit biases are held and acted upon by individuals, but they also take root in our systems, made up of the programs, policies, and practices of schooling.



### Addressing Implicit Bias

Although implicit bias runs deep, it is possible to change mindsets. In fact, systemic transformation depends upon it. As stated above, the important thing is to remember that changing individual mindsets needs to happen simultaneously with changing the policies and practices of equity. It is therefore constructive to think of the two levels as interrelated and mutually informing.

How do you change mindsets? According to Kahneman (2011), it is important first to understand that as humans, we need to be able to make snap decisions, so our brains are designed to act quickly, especially in stressful situations or if we are tired. Most of the decisions we make are made using fast judgments. Our brains can also function more deliberately, which provides us with an aptitude to think critically. Implicit biases are more likely to express themselves when making snap judgements. Likewise, it is more probable that implicit biases can be assessed and modified when we are slow and deliberate in our thinking. Recent work on “de-biasing” has supported efforts not only to understand implicit bias but also to develop new ways of thinking (see John Lewis Jr.’s [video](#) on de-biasing). Putting into practice processes for developing equity-mindedness is another way to challenge our implicit biases.

In education, for example, practitioners must work to mitigate their own biases, and institutions need to provide structural systems to reduce bias in decision-making practices (e.g., discipline policies). With experimentation and improvement, strategies such as equity mindedness can help reduce the impact of bias.

### Developing Equity Mindedness

Equity mindedness is a set of attitudes and beliefs that lead to individual and collective behaviors that favor equity. It is a predisposition to critical self-reflection, a propensity toward distributed leadership, and a willingness to “stay in the conversation” (Watson, 2020). According to the University of Southern California’s [Center for Urban Education](#), “Equity-minded practitioners question their own assumptions, recognize stereotypes that harm student success, and continually reassess their practices to create change.” Beyond individual reflection, equity mindedness is an “individual’s capacity to recognize and address racialized structures, policies, and practices that produce and sustain racial inequities” (Bensimon & Malcom, 2012; Dowd & Bensimon, 2015).

It is not necessary to first be cleansed of implicit bias to become equity-minded. In fact, it is important to take time to understand personal biases and structural inequities at the same time. To reflect on yourself and the deep questions that will inevitably arise about your belief systems, to develop understanding of when it’s time to step up and when you should step back, to continue to learn about the historical systemic oppression, to stay in the equity conversation with your colleagues (especially when it’s hardest), and to listen. This is what it means to be equity minded.



## Reflection Questions

### Personal:

1. What were you taught about race, gender, disability, and language? How might this teaching impact your implicit biases? First, answer this question through examination of the explicit teaching you received. Next, answer the question through examination of the implicit teaching you received.
2. What steps do you take to interrupt your own unconscious biases?

### Institutional:

1. What practices are in place at your site to ensure that people have the time, space, and resources to engage in reflection on their implicit biases?
2. In what ways are students authentically recognized and celebrated in your school community?
3. How are you continuously investigating and developing assets-based approaches to your instruction and behavior management?

## Resources

### Learn much more about implicit bias:

- **Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald's book *Blindspot: Hidden Bias of Good People***  
<http://blindspot.fas.harvard.edu/Book>
- **Institute of Humane Education: 9 resources to teach about unconscious bias**  
<https://humaneeducation.org/9-resources-teaching-unconscious-bias/>

- **NYTimes video series Who me? Biased? Peanut butter, Jelly Racism'**

<https://www.nytimes.com/video/who-me-biased>

### Take a course:

- **Western Education Equity Assistance Center course on implicit bias: Exploring the Foundations of Bias and the work we must do to change it.**  
<https://www.msudenver.edu/weeac/virtualcollege/courseaccess-who-has-bias-we-all-do/>
- **Kirwin Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at Ohio State University: 'Implicit Bias Module Series'**  
<http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/implicit-bias-training/>
- **MTV's Bias Cleanse 'Look Different'**  
<http://www.lookdifferent.org/what-can-i-do/bias-cleanse>

## Tools:

### Take action:

- **John Lewis, Jr.: Implicit Bias and Debiasing**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EMN4065xlw>
- **Californians for Justice: 6 Things School Staff can do to Interrupt Unconscious Bias**  
<https://caljustice.org/resource/6-things-school-staff-can-do-to-interrupt-unconscious-bias/>
- **NPR Morning Edition: How to Fight Racial Bias When It's Silent and Subtle**  
<https://www.wbur.org/npr/203306999/How-To-Fight-Racial-Bias-When-Its-Silent-And-Subtle>

### Take an implicit bias assessment:

- **Harvard's Project Implicit:**  
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

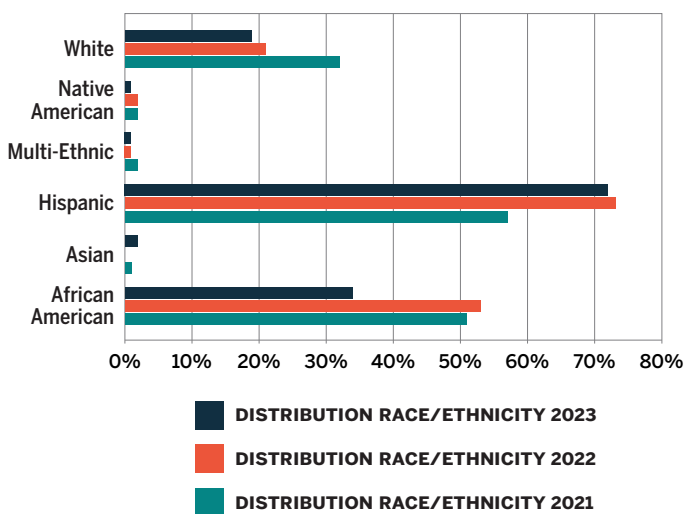
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- Harry, B. and Klingner, J. (2014). *Why Are So Many Minority Students in Special Education?: Understanding Race and Disability in Schools*. Teachers College Press.
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- Wood, J. L., Harris III, F., & Howard, T. C. (2018). *Get Out! Black Male Suspensions in California Public Schools*. Community College Equity Assessment Lab and the UCLA Black Male Institute.

# Significant Disproportionality

Over the past few years there has been an increase in the disproportionality and the significant disproportionality of students with disabilities. Disproportionality exists when a specific racial or ethnic group of students with disabilities is overrepresented as compared to other student groups. The inequity can exist in discipline, the overall number of students in special education, a disproportionate number of students identified for a specific disability, and for placement. Significant disproportionality is when a district or charter school is disproportionate in the same area for three or more years. (See Figure 3).

**Figure 3. State of California Significant Disproportionality Distribution by Race/Ethnicity 2021-2023\***



[State Performance Plan Technical Assistance Project](#)

When looking at the risk ratios for students with disabilities it is African American and Hispanic students who have the highest risk ratios for being in special education in the state. Historically, African American students with disabilities have the highest risk ratio for discipline and suspension. Hispanic students have the highest risk ratio for Specific Learning Disabilities. Risk ratio is a computation which predicts the likelihood that a student will be identified as having a disability, or once identified, that the student will be overly disciplined, or overly identified for one specific type of disability and for their type of placement.

Nationally, many districts and charter schools struggle with significant disproportionality. Figure 4 displays the risk ratio for students with disabilities in the United States. In 2016 the federal government created a standard methodology to calculate dispro-

portionality across the states. In 2020, the California Department of Education (CDE) applied a threshold risk ratio of 3.0. Between 2019 and 2020 the number of LEAs that were identified under the new threshold risk ratio rose from 11 to 132.

In California, a district or charter school is considered disproportionate if the risk ratio for a specific group of students is a ratio of 3.0 or higher. In examining the data there was an increase in the number LEAs having significant disproportionality in one or more of the identifying indicators from 2021 (110 LEAs) to 2022 (113 LEAs), but that decreased slightly in 2023 (103 LEAs). The current number of LEAs may be lower because there were far fewer disciplinary actions during the pandemic. This decrease in reporting is a likely cause of the reduction in identification of significant disproportionality by LEAs between 2022 and 2023. The number of LEAs identified as significantly disproportionate is smaller than the total distribution (See Figure 3) because an LEA can be out for more than one indicator or element.

## Reflection Questions:

1. What instructional practices and systems can your LEA or site put into practice to mitigate the disproportionality of students with disabilities?
2. What are the early screening measures and interventions in place at your site or LEA to support students coming from differing backgrounds and experiences in early reading and math literacy?
3. How are you supporting your multi-language learners who are also students with disabilities?

## Resources

### Multi-Language Learners

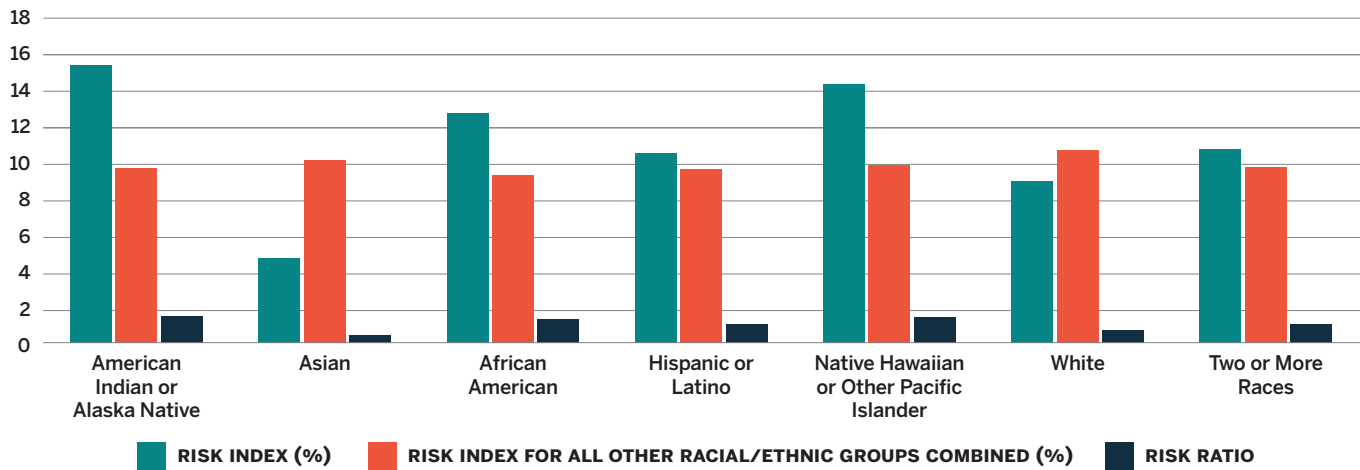
#### Websites

The resources below focus on Multi- Language Learners (MLLs) and MLLs who are also students with disabilities.

- California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA)  
[https://ccsesa.org/wpfb-file/improving-performance-of-disabilities-handbook\\_updated-pdf-3/](https://ccsesa.org/wpfb-file/improving-performance-of-disabilities-handbook_updated-pdf-3/)
- California English Learner Roadmap  
<https://www.elroadmap.org/>
- California Department of Education Learning Foundations: Research and English Learner Programs  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/rm/foundations.asp>
- Colorin Colorado  
<http://www.colorincolorado.org/>
- California Practitioner's Guide for Educating English Learners with Disabilities  
<https://www.icoe.org/selpa/el-swd/resources/ca-practitioners%E2%80%99-guide-educating-english-learners-disabilities>



**Figure 4.** National Risk Index, Comparison Risk Index, and Risk Ratio for Students with Disabilities, by Race/Ethnicity: Fall 2019



<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/2021-individuals-with-disabilities-education-act-annual-report-to-congress/>

- Council of State Chief School Officers (CCSSO) English Learners with Disabilities Guide [https://ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/CCSSO%20ELSWD%20Guide\\_Final%2011%2011%202017.pdf](https://ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/CCSSO%20ELSWD%20Guide_Final%2011%2011%202017.pdf)
- English Language Learners with Learning Disabilities (Webcast) <http://www.readingrockets.org/webcasts/2007>
- Imperial County SELPA Improving Outcomes for English Learners with Disabilities <https://www.icoe.org/selpa/el-swd>
- Meeting the Needs of English Learners (ELs) with Disabilities Resource Book [https://www.mcoe.org/deptprog/SPED/Documents/Resources/EL-SPED%20Resource%20Book%20Revised%202017%20Final\\_.pdf](https://www.mcoe.org/deptprog/SPED/Documents/Resources/EL-SPED%20Resource%20Book%20Revised%202017%20Final_.pdf)
- United States Department, Office of English Language Acquisition, <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/index.html>
- United States Department of Education English Learner Toolkit: [https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english\\_learner\\_toolkit/OELA\\_2017\\_ELsToolkit\\_508C.pdf](https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/OELA_2017_ELsToolkit_508C.pdf)
- Chapter 6 Tools and Resources for Addressing English Learners with Disabilities <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap6.pdf>

## Disproportionality and Significant Disproportionality State Performance Plan Technical Assistance Project

## Books on English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities

- *English Language Learners with Special Education Needs: Identification, Assessment, and Instruction*  
Editors: Alfredo Artiles and Alba Ortiz.  
Center for Applied Linguistics and Delta Systems, McHenry, IL. Pages 249. ISBN 1-887744-69-X
- *English Language Learners: Differentiating Between Language Acquisition and Learning Disabilities*  
Janette Klingner and Amy M. Eppolito.  
Council for Exceptional Children, Alexandria, VA. 2014. 117 pages. ISBN 978-0-86586-478-8
- *Culturally Responsive Design for English Learners: The UDL Approach*  
Patti Kelly Ralabate and Loui Lord Nelson.  
CAST, Wakefield, MA. 2017. 213 pages. Paperback ISBN 978-10930583-05-4 eBook ISBN 978-1-930-583-06-1
- *Routines for Reasoning: Fostering the Mathematical Practices in All Students*  
By [Grace Kelemanik](#), [Amy Lucenta](#), [Susan Janssen Creighton](#). Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH 03801. 2016. 208 pages ISBN 978-0-325-07815-1 / 0-325-07815-7 <https://www.heinemann.com/products/e07815.aspx>
- *Supporting English Learners with Exceptional Needs*  
[Patricia M. Rice Doran](#) (Author), [Amy Noggle](#) (Author), [Heather Wayson Wilson](#) (Author), [June Lucas Zillich](#) (Author) (2019) ISBN-13: 978-1945351235 ISBN-10: 1945351233

# Creating a Culture of Inclusion & Belonging

**Fostering a culture of inclusion in schools is important for developing a sense of belonging and welcoming for all of our students. In addition to defining inclusion, this section addresses the essential role of inclusive practices to create a sense of belonging when working toward equity. To this end, we offer tools and resources to break down barriers to inclusion with regard to the three focal student groups.**

## What is Inclusion?

The fundamental reason we must consider inclusion in education is because exclusion is a structurally entrenched problem. While a difficult notion, it is important to remember that the U.S. public school system originated in exclusionary practices (see sections “[Defining Equity](#)” and “[African American Students](#)”, also [Timeline of Education](#) activity). The male children of the educated White elite were the first to benefit from this system that was built uniquely for them. Since the beginning, the U.S. education system has been a site of intense debate over who can, should, and will be included in the group that benefits from this public good, one that brings with it the promise of the nation’s principles of democracy and equality. Who is included and who is not? Who belongs and who does not? How is this made known? What are the practices put into place that lead to inclusion, to exclusion? How is belonging felt/not felt in practice? These are the questions to guide your efforts to create a culture of inclusion and belonging.

According to the [Innovations Collaborative](#) at the Santa Clara County Office of Education, inclusion is when children of *all* abilities participate in a learning environment *together*. They emphasize that *all* students can benefit from inclusive routines and activities and that inclusion teaches *all* students about respecting differences and diversity in a learning community.



The concept of “inclusive classrooms” emerged from the disabilities rights movement, and in education it is commonly understood as pertaining to students with disabilities (SWD). Inclusion is when students with disabilities and their supports are included in the general education classroom. It is important that educators continue to build on this model of inclusion by expanding its meaning to all students. This means that educators will need to take action to ensure that their inclusive practices result in their students feeling a sense of belonging. Chris Kliever, researcher and long-time disabilities rights activist, provides a beautiful and clear example of such a practice in this [video](#).

While the concept of inclusion must maintain students with disabilities as the ones who were intended to benefit from these practices, the idea is not *only* for students with disabilities as it impacts all students. (How ironic would it be if we only intended to practice inclusion to serve one group of students?). Everyone in the classroom benefits from every person being included, accepted, and feeling that they belong. This is the essence of an inclusive school culture: each student has a role and feels their purpose for being there. Inclusive education removes barriers to learning through intentional practices to include all students, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized (Ahmad, [2012](#)). Without inclusive practices, students may have more difficulty integrating into their classrooms, an important social environment (Kavkler, Babuder, & Magajna, [2015](#)).

## Barriers to Inclusion

Historically, the U.S. education system has excluded students with disabilities (SWD) from going to school or has placed them in separate classrooms (see section “[Students with Disabilities](#)”, Boroson, [2017](#); Dukes & Berlingo, [2020](#)). However, categorizing students with disabilities in such a way has had an “othering” effect on those placed in separate classrooms and contributes to discrimination against students who are not included in the “regular classroom” (Dukes & Berlingo, [2020](#)). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act has made access to the least restrictive learning environments (LRE) a right for students with disabilities. According to a [2020 U.S. Department of Education report](#), nationally, 63.5% of children with disabilities are in general education classrooms 80% or more of their school day while in California that number is about 57% ([2019 Legislative Analyst’s Report](#)).



Barriers that inhibit students from achieving a sense of belonging in the general education classroom continue to exist. Placing a student in the general education classroom also does not guarantee that they are receiving the support needed for an equitable education. When we consider what the “least restrictive learning environment” means for the student, we are not just deciding between the special and general education classrooms, for an environment is so much more than a location. An environment includes *everything*; it is the teacher, the peers, aids, and other members of a student’s support team. The environment is the learning material, the physical accessibility of a room, and every element that can add to or detract from a student’s learning. It is the educator’s responsibility to understand that these elements add to our students’ learning experiences.

The need for a focus on inclusion not only applies to students with disabilities but to any student who is not a part of the predominant student population. According to Dover and Rodriguez (2018), English learners make up 18.6% of California student enrollment, but those who are learning the predominant language of a school may be challenged to feel connected academically, socially, and relationally at school and in their community. They write, “Institutional forces in schools, including pressure towards standardization, monolingualism, and test-based accountability, can trouble teachers’ efforts to center the immediate, localized, and situated needs of their students.” California classrooms are increasingly diverse, and it is necessary to be aware of the structures that pressure students to fit into one standardized, monolinguistic culture. In addition to students feeling excluded, families of English learners may also struggle to feel engaged with the school community. Parents have expressed sadness over the communication gaps with their schools (Good, Maseqicz, Vogel, 2010).

Over decades people have written about and discussed the myriad ways in which African American students experience exclusion in schools. The W2EPB is but one of multiple efforts to transform an education system so that the practices of school reflect a fundamental belief system of inclusion that leads to all students feeling that they belong, are valued, and respected. As discussed in previous sections, African American students are more likely to experience exclusionary discipline practices like out of school suspensions. These exclusionary practices not only negatively affect student engagement in the school and classroom environments, but they also increase their likelihood of being pushed out of school before they graduate (see sections “[Suspension Rates and School Discipline](#)” and “[African American Students](#)”). Suspension leads not only to lost instructional time, but these exclusionary practices convey the message that they are not welcome, or that they do not belong.

### Breaking Down Barriers to Inclusion

As educators, we may practice placing ourselves in the position of each student before us. Questions we may ask: *Are there any barriers preventing all students from accessing this lesson? How can these barriers be overcome?*

Through this exercise, we may consider what language, learning tools, and perspectives are being used and if these are fully accessible to all students. Creating an accessible classroom may take some creativity. This is why teachers must know and build relationships with their students in the practice of facilitating an inclusive environment. Additionally, students must also have the opportunity to learn about one another. Knowing one another as people, and not through labels, is what helps break down barriers to inclusion and belonging.

### Promising Practices

#### Greetings at the Door

Making an effort towards inclusion can begin as soon as students enter their learning environment, with something as simple as intently greeting students at the door (Cook, C. et. al., 2018). This [video](#) provides an example of how teachers can welcome students right at the classroom door with a personalized handshake for each student. This is just one way for teachers to convey to students that they are seen and cared for in the classroom. The importance of this greeting is to build relationships and communicate a message of inclusion and belonging to students. What does your school do to ensure that each student who walks into their classroom feels welcome? (See [ARUSD case study](#).)

#### My Name My Identity Initiative

The [My Name, My Identity initiative](#), launched in 2016 through the Santa Clara County Office of Education, is intended to bring awareness to the importance of respecting one’s name and identities in school communities. The second objective is to help create a culture of respect and inclusiveness in school

## Creating a Culture of Inclusion and Belonging

communities across the nation by asking educators, parents, community members, and students to take the pledge to pronounce student names correctly and to honor their identities.

### Equitable Inclusion

Figure 5 displays the placement data for students with disabilities in the state of California and the United States. In 2019, students with disabilities in the state of California spent less time in the general education setting than did their peers with disabilities in the rest of the country. Overall, in the state of California, a higher number of students with disabilities spend more time in restrictive environments than in other states. This means that more than 20% of students with disabilities in the state are segregated from their general education peers and are educated in a separate marginalized setting. The state does have less students in 'other environments' (e.g., students in a separate school, homebound or hospitalized and incarcerated students) when compared to the rest of the country.

The continued segregation of students with disabilities persists despite the decades long research supporting students with disabilities being educated alongside their neurotypical peers. In the past inclusive education has shown positive outcomes in social and academic skills of students with disabilities (National Center for Special Education Research, 2006). Recent research by the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, found that high school students with disabilities who were placed in general education classrooms for more than 80% of their day scored higher in math and reading than did their peers who were in general education classes for less than 80% of their school day (Fosha, 2022).

The placement of students with disabilities in general education does not necessarily guarantee positive results. There are many instructional strategies and elements that must be implemented in the general education classroom for equitable opportunities and positive outcomes for all the students in the general education classroom. For example, in a recent meta-analysis of the inclusion literature a group of researchers found that the learning outcomes for students with disabilities were not necessarily better or worse than those who received instruction in segregated classrooms (Nina T. Dalgaard, Anja Bondebjerg, Bjørn C. A. Viinholt, and Trine Filges, 2022). Because of the methodology the researchers used in their work their findings were based upon 15 studies that met the criteria of rigorously tracking academic progress and that noted the severity of the disability. The authors noted that how the inclusion is structured does seem to make a difference. Classes that are co-taught with one special education teacher and one general education teacher had better outcomes (Dalgaard, et al., 2022).

In their article on inclusion, Walker, Carpenter, Kittleman and Rowe (2023), discuss the benefits of planning supports for stu-

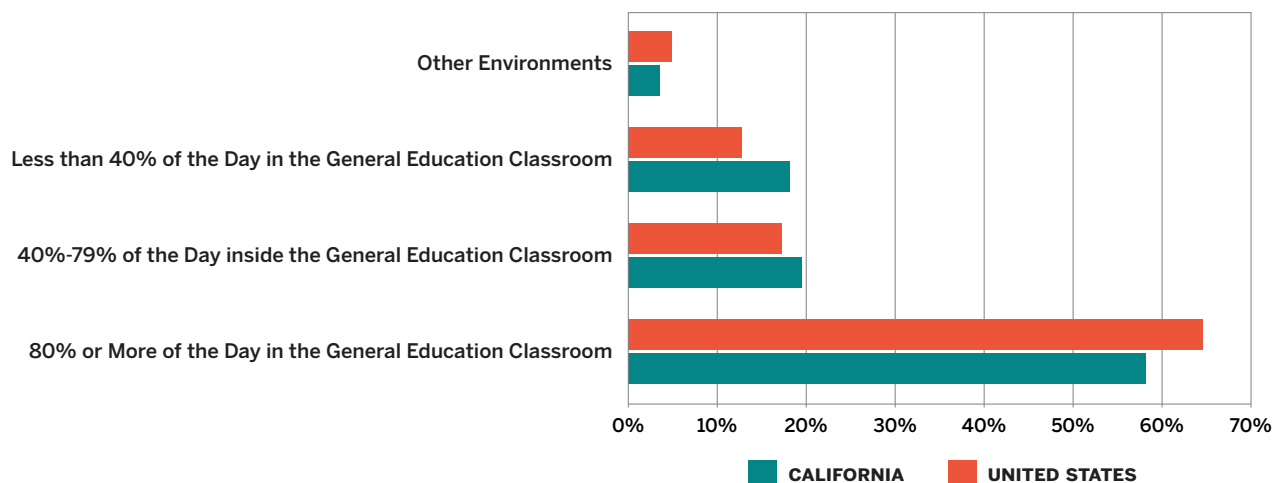


dents with disabilities to provide for success in general education classroom. Taking a social-ecological lens the authors argue that the student's disability becomes apparent in the general education classroom when there is a mismatch between the student's abilities and the demands of the classroom. The first step is to gather extensive assessment data on the student which highlights strengths and areas of support which can then be used to create a learner profile. The creation of the learner profile is one of the High Leverage Practices for students with disabilities. The authors then suggest using a support process such as UDL to address the social-ecological universal supports that the student will need. Last, using a collaborative approach any additional individual supports needed for the student should be structured jointly by the general and special education teachers (Walker, et al., 2023).

### Reflection Questions:

1. What are some ways inclusion and belonging are measured for your school community? What is not being measured?
2. In your school community which students are set up most to feel a sense of belonging? Which students are not? What data support this?
3. What practices do you engage to develop a sense of inclusion and belonging for your school's families? When families enter your community, where during the onboarding process are there opportunities to begin to develop a sense of inclusion and belonging?

**Figure 5.** Percentage of Students Ages 5 through 21 served under IDEA, Part B, by Educational Environment: Fall 2019



<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/2021-individuals-with-disabilities-education-act-annual-report-to-congress/>

4. “It would be more surprising if Black males were doing well academically in spite of the broad array of difficulties that confront them. Scholars and researchers commonly understand that environmental and cultural factors have a profound influence on human behaviors, including academic performance” (Noguera, 2003).

- Noticing this described relationship between a student’s environment and their learning, what is the environment that your students are walking into as they enter your school?
- What efforts are being made to welcome each student who walks into their classroom?
- Conversely, what practices are in place that result in the exclusion of particular students?

### Tools

- **Think Inclusive: 5 Strategies for Structuring and Inclusive Classroom Environment**  
<https://www.thinkinclusive.us/5-strategies-for-structuring-an-inclusive-classroom-environment/>
- **Teaching Tolerance: Learning Plans for Diversity**  
[https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/learning-plans?keyword=&field\\_social\\_justice\\_domain%5B40%5D=40](https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/learning-plans?keyword=&field_social_justice_domain%5B40%5D=40)
- **Scholastic: Lesson Plans on Multiculturalism & Diversity**  
<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plans/teaching-content/multiculturalism-and-diversity/>

### Resources

#### Creating a Culture of Inclusion for All Students

This section contains information on how to affect culture change in districts and sites so that all students can

achieve and feel welcomed in school. The resources in this section can be used with multiple audiences to build an inclusive environment.

#### Websites

- **Te Kete Ipurangi: Inclusive Education guide to developing an inclusive classroom culture**  
<https://www.inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/developing-an-inclusive-classroom-culture/>
- **Think Inclusive: What does inclusion look like?**  
<https://www.thinkinclusive.us/inclusion-is-belonging/>
- **Othering & Belonging Institute: Blueprint for Belonging**  
<https://belonging.berkeley.edu/b4b>
- **Five Moore Minutes**  
<https://fivemooreminutes.com/strategies/>
- **Forward Together: Helping Educators Unlock the Power of Students Who Learn Differently**  
<https://www.nclid.org/research/forward-together/>
- **Forward Together: A School Leader’s Guide to Creating Inclusive Schools**  
<https://www.nclid.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Guide-to-Creating-Inclusive-Schools-12.9.2019.pdf>
- **Inclusion Self-Assessment Survey**  
[https://inclusiveschools.org/Course%20HTML%20Files/Self-Assessment%20Survey%20-%20Storyline%20out-put/story\\_html5.html](https://inclusiveschools.org/Course%20HTML%20Files/Self-Assessment%20Survey%20-%20Storyline%20out-put/story_html5.html)
- **Making Us Whole: 10 Children’s Books that Teach Inclusion**  
<https://makinguswhole.wordpress.com/2014/06/30/10-childrens-books-that-teach-inclusion/>
- **National Center for Learning Disabilities**  
<https://www.nclid.org/>

## Creating a Culture of Inclusion and Belonging



- Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE): California 1- California Equity Performance and Improvement Program (CEPIP)  
<https://www.innovationscollaborative.org/cepip.aspx>
- The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH)  
<https://tash.org/>

### Youtube Videos

- Amazing Grace-Your WHY Gives Your WHAT More Impact  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfzpNVDzre0>
- Whatever it Takes: A SWIFT Academic Instruction Film  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzVaecgNvlj>
- Reimagining Disability and Inclusive Education, Jan Wilson, TEDx University of Tulsa  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CtRY\\_1mZWW-g&t=241s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CtRY_1mZWW-g&t=241s)

### Books on Inclusion and School Culture Change

- *Creating an Inclusive School (2nd ed)*  
Richard Villa & Jacqueline S. Thousand. ACSD. Alexandria, Virginia.  
2005. 220 pages. ISBN 1-4166-0049-3
- *High Leverage Practices for Inclusive Classrooms*  
James McLeskey, Lawrence Maheady, Bonnie Billingsley, Mary T. Brownell, and Timothy J. Lewis. Routledge. New York, NY. 2019. 336 pages. ISBN 978-1-138-03918-6.
- Inclusion Press (Books on Inclusive communities)  
<https://inclusion.com/>

- *The Inclusive Education Checklist: A Self-Assessment of Best Practices*  
Richard Villa, & Jacqueline S. Thousand. 2016. 111 pages. ISBN 978-1-938539-01-5. www.NPRinc.com
- *Time for Change: Four Essential Skills for Transformational School and Districts Leaders*  
Anthony Muhammad and Luis F. Cruz  
Solution Tree Press. Bloomington, IN. 2019. 152 pages. ISBN 978-1-942496-15-1

### Select References

- Boroson, B. (2017). *Inclusive Education: Lessons From History—Educational Leadership*. 74(7), 18–23.
- Dover, A. G., & Rodriguez-Valls, F. (2018). Learning to “brave up”: Collaboration, agency, and authority in multicultural, multilingual, and radically inclusive classrooms. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, 20(3), 59.
- Dukes, C., & Berlingo, L. (2020). Fissuring Barriers to Inclusive Education for Students with Severe Disabilities. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 45(1), 14–17.
- Good, M.E., Maseqicz, S., Vogel, L. (2010). Latino English language learners: Bridging achievement and cultural gaps between schools and families. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 9(4), 321-339.
- Kavkler, M., Babuder, M. K., & Magajna, L. (2015). Inclusive Education for Children with Specific Learning Difficulties: Analysis of Opportunities and Barriers in Inclusive Education in Slovenia. *Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal*, 5(1), 31–52.

# Intersectionality

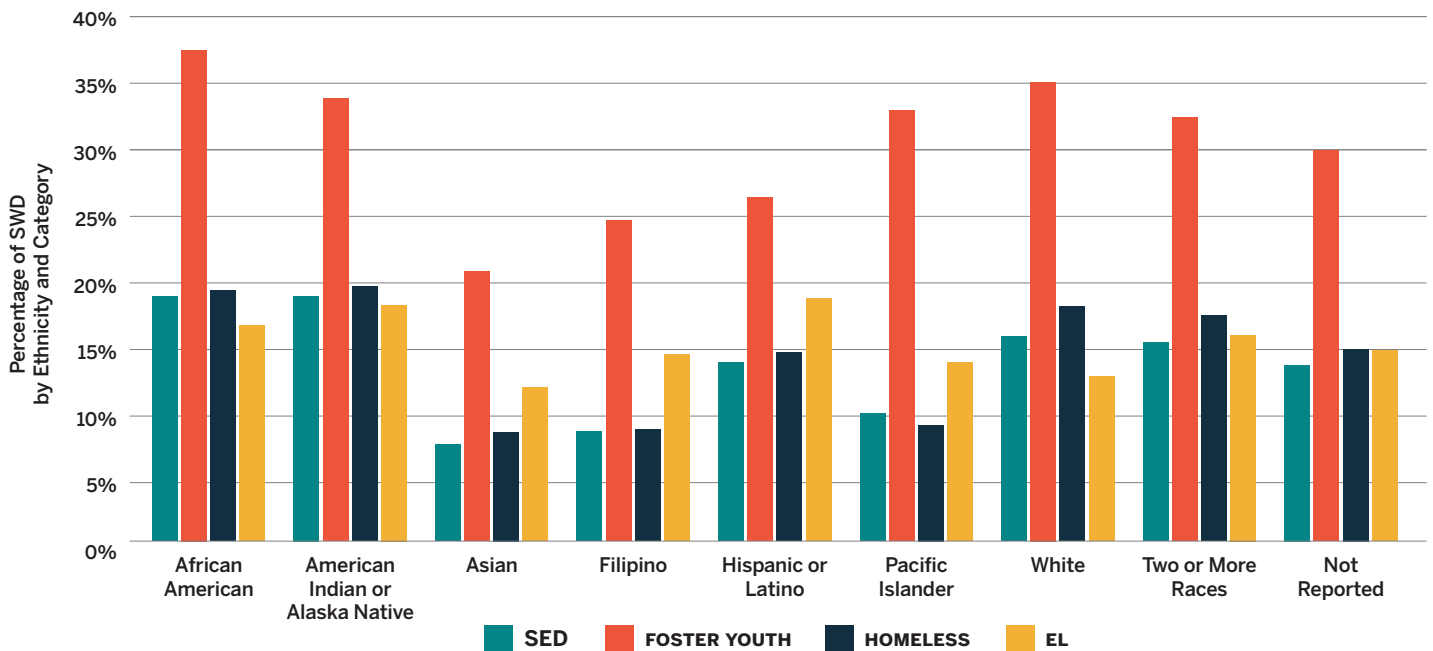
Students with disabilities are not monolithic, and it is important to consider their intersectionality within other groups. For example, a student with a disability who is an English learner is different from a student with a disability that is not an English learner. Intersectionality occurs across and within a variety of groups: BIPOC students, students living in poverty, students without shelter, foster youth, and students who are LGBTQ+. When reviewing the data for students with disabilities in the state, there are intersections with several groups (see Figure 6).

When supporting students, particularly students with disabilities, intersectionality needs to be considered. Students with disabilities are frequently marginalized in classrooms and schools (see Figure 5). Intersectionality is a framework for analyzing how an individual's multiple social and political identities impact how they benefit or are disadvantaged throughout life. Frequently, students who are living in poverty, who are English learners or who are foster youth, and LGBTQ+ are marginalized and disadvantaged. The concept of intersectionality arose from the work of Kimberlé Crenshaw (2017) and highlights the dual, sometimes triple marginalization of persons in society. Intersectionality does not only affect students with disabilities, but other students who are not disabled can be marginalized. The difference is that with students with disabilities, a formal process set in the law was used to designate the student as being different and established

a system of exclusion and/or marginalization. This educational disadvantage is further compounded if the student with disabilities lives in poverty, is foster youth, an English learner, or is without shelter.



**Figure 6. State of California Intersectionality of Students with Disabilities 2021-2022**



[DataQuest](#)

## Intersectionality

According to Pak and Parsons in their 2020 article, *Equity Gaps for Students with Disabilities*,

Inclusion and differentiation are incredibly complex expectations for educators, especially considering the intersectional identities of SWDs who come with a variety of diverse backgrounds. When schools and districts do not actively work to disrupt the deficit narratives that teachers may have about low-performing students and students who come from minoritized subgroups or disadvantaged backgrounds, especially in urban settings, the potential of inclusive education to enhance the equity of educational experiences for all students is greatly reduced (Harris, 2012). However, researchers have not yet produced a sufficient number of intersectional evaluations of instructional approaches for SWDs, nor have we sufficiently examined how educational leaders and teachers implement pedagogies that center intersectionality (Kozleski et al., 2014) (p.7).

### Reflection Questions:

1. How are teachers, staff and administrators encouraged to explore their own cultural and ability biases regarding students who are BIPOC, youth in foster care, students living in poverty, unsheltered youth, students who are LGBTQ+, and students with disabilities?

2. Reflect on your site's or LEA's data for students with disabilities. How do you analyze the data to reflect the impact of intersectionality?
3. How can you address intersectionality data and create more equitable outcomes for students who are marginalized due to the multiple social and political identities that place them at a disadvantage?

### Resources

#### Intersectionality

These resources can be used to learn about intersectionality and how it affects students and the learning community.

- George Washington University  
<https://diversity.gwu.edu/resources-intersectionality>
- County of Santa Clara Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Affairs  
<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/lgbtq/Pages/lgbtq.aspx>
- UN Women (United Nations Women)  
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/01/intersectionality-resource-guide-and-toolkit>

#### YouTube Video

- Kimberlé Crenshaw: What is Intersectionality?  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViDtnfQ9FHc&t=90s>





# Success Gaps

## Success Gaps in Academic Performance

The academic performance of students with disabilities continues to be inequitable. Students with disabilities are on average 97.3 points below grade level standards in English Language Arts and on average 130.8 points below grade level standards in math (See Figure 7). Numerous factors contribute to the inequitable instruction of students with disabilities. Throughout the nation there is a shortage of teachers and a decrease in the number of candidates who are preparing to become teachers. This shortage is particularly acute in special education. In the state of California, the shortage has been growing over a number of years as reported in the [Getting Down to Facts Report II, Teacher Supply Falls Short of Demand in High Need Areas and Locations](#) (2018). Since the authors reported the shortages in the state the need has only increased.

According to Carver-Thomas (2022) of the Learning Policy Institute,

Teacher shortages can significantly depress student achievement, as schools often cancel courses due to vacancies or staff classes with substitutes and underprepared teachers who are not certified to teach their subject matter. Underprepared teachers leave their schools

at 2 to 3 times the rate of those who enter with comprehensive preparation. High turnover rates, in turn, can contribute to staff instability that disrupts relationships with students and other teachers, undermines professional learning, and impedes collaboration, all of which are critical to creating the supportive environments students need after nearly two years of disrupted learning.

The author continues to discuss how the impact of teacher shortages disproportionately affects schools that serve students in poverty and students of color. This holds true especially for students with disabilities. The United States Department of Education reports that there has been a continuous shortage of special education teachers in the state since 1993, this has created inadequate educational environments for instructing students with disabilities ([Department of Education Report on Teacher Shortage Area Nationwide Listing](#)).

The authors of *Teacher Quality Gaps by Disability and Socioeconomic Status: Evidence From Los Angeles*, explored the differences in teacher quality for students with disabilities and students without disabilities (Lai, Wood, Imberman, Jones, and Strunk, 2021). The researchers analyzed how access to quality teachers varied within school sites and across school sites. The authors used several tools to measure general education teachers' effectiveness who taught both students with disabilities and students without disabilities. The authors found that students with disabilities in general education classes are, "typically assigned to

**Figure 7. English Language Arts and Math Performance Indicator 2022**

Student Group	All Students	English Learners	Foster Youth	Homeless	Socio-Economically Disadvantaged	Students with Disabilities
ELA* Status Level	Low	Low	Very Low	Low	Low	Very Low
Average Distance from Standard	-12.2	-61.2	-85.6	-62.9	-41.4	-97.3
Standard in Reading and Math* Status Level	Low	Low	Very Low	Very Low	Low	Very Low
Average Distance from Standard	-51.7	-92	-126.3	-101.8	-84	-130.8

\*Grades 3-8 and 11

ELA: <https://www6.cde.ca.gov/californiamodel/report?indicator=ela&year=2022&cdcode=0000000&scode=>

Math: <https://www6.cde.ca.gov/californiamodel/report?indicator=math&year=2022&cdcode=0000000&scode=>

## Success Gaps

math teachers with lower value-added measure scores and lower teacher-evaluation scores than their peers without disabilities. In English classes, SWDs are typically assigned to teachers with lower teacher-evaluation scores and are more likely to be novice teachers (Lai et al., 2021).” Additionally, the variations in students’ assignments were site based decisions, most profoundly affected students with specific learning disabilities, and were most acute at the middle school level (Lai, 2021).

### Reflection Questions:

1. What is the process for placing students with disabilities in their general education classes?
2. How is your site or LEA ensuring that students with disabilities are afforded an equitable and high-quality education like their non disabled peers?
3. What processes are in place to ensure that general education teachers have the prerequisite knowledge and skills to teach students with disabilities?

## Resources

### Educator Preparation Programs

Local educator preparation programs listed in this section are for current educators to clear their credentials and aspiring educators to earn their credentials.

### Websites

- California State University East Bay  
<http://www.csueastbay.edu/ceas/index.html>
- San Mateo County Office of Education:  
Learning and Leadership  
<http://www.smcoe.org/learning-and-leadership/>
- San Jose State University  
<http://www.sjsu.edu/education/>
- Santa Clara County Office of Education:  
Educator Preparation Program  
<https://www.sccoe.org/educator-preparation-programs/Pages/default.aspx>

### Additional Resources to Support Students with Disabilities

The websites below provide additional information and resources on students with disabilities that can be used by all staff.

- California Collaborative for Educational Excellence  
<https://ccee-ca.org/resource-collection.asp>
- California State Council on Developmental Disabilities  
<https://scdd.ca.gov/>
- California Department of Education:  
Special Education Resources  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/sr/selinks.asp>
- Council on Exceptional Children  
<https://www.cec.sped.org/>

- Museum of disABILITY History  
<https://www.museumofdisability.org/>
- Supporting Inclusive Practices  
<https://www.sipinclusion.org/>

## Long Term Effects of Inequitable Educational Practices

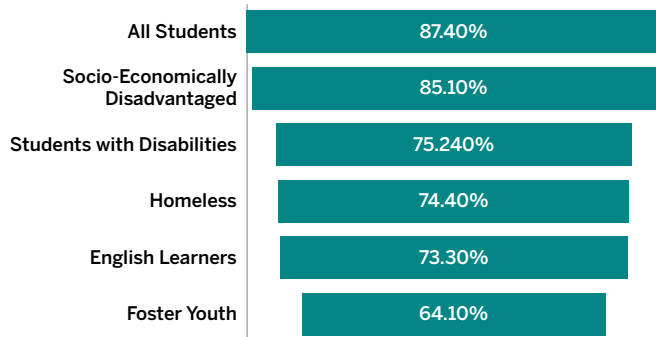
The long-term effects of these inequities are reflected in the graduation rates, drop-out rates, and the college and career readiness of students with disabilities. When comparing the graduation rates of students with disabilities with all students in the state there is a 12% difference between the two groups (See Figure 8). Examining the longitudinal data for students with disabilities versus the overall student dropout rate, the data indicates a positive trend. Over the last five years the dropout rate for all students has decreased, including students with disabilities, but the rate for students with disabilities continues to remain higher (See Figure 9). In their recent study on *A Systematic Review of the Literature Related to Dropout for Students with Disabilities*, the authors found that similar to their non-disabled peers, students with disabilities that were engaged in high school were less likely to drop-out of school. The study also looked at the impact of placement as a factor of dropping-out but found that a more restrictive environment did not necessarily have a significant impact on the rate of students leaving school (Foreman-Murray, Krowka, and Majeika, 2022).

The ability of students to be college and career ready by completing the University of California (UC) and the California State University (CSU) requirements is also affected by inequitable education practices. Students at the secondary level are frequently placed in separate classes that do not have the rigor necessary to meet the UC/CSU requirements to qualify for college admission. Over the past five years the rate of students with disabilities meeting the UC/CSU requirements has increased by three percent; however, it continues to lag behind the rate of all students by almost 32% (See Figure 10).

### Reflection Questions:

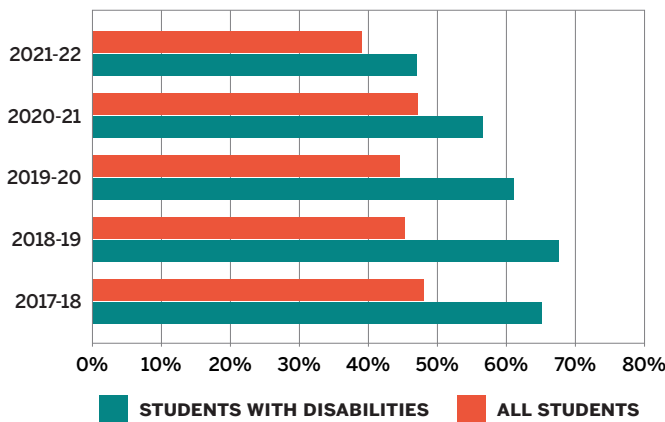
1. How are general education classrooms structured to promote equal access to UC-CSU classes for students with disabilities?
2. What role does a growth mindset play in the expectations and equitable opportunities for students with disabilities?
3. How can teachers, staff, and administrators promote student engagement for students with disabilities both in and out of the classroom?

**Figure 8. State of California Graduation Rate Four and Five Year Combined 2022**



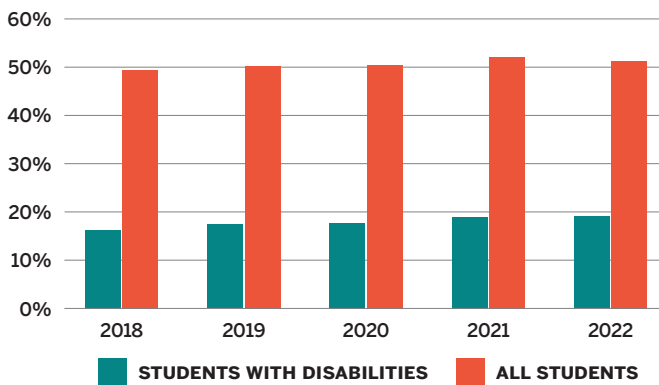
<https://www6.cde.ca.gov/californiamodel/gradreport?&year=2022&cd-code=0000000&scode=&reporttype=schools>

**Figure 9. State of California Drop-Out Cohort Rates**



<https://www.ed-data.org/state/CA>

**Figure 10. State of California Students with Disabilities Meeting the UC-CSU Requirements**



<https://www.ed-data.org/state/CA>

## Resources

### Co-teaching

The resources below highlight co-teaching strategies for working within general education classrooms with a general education teacher and a special education teacher.

- 2Teach, LLC (Wendy Muraski-Co-teaching) <https://2teachllc.com/>
- Baybridge Consortium, Inc. (Richard Villa Co-teaching) <https://www.ravillabayridge.com/>
- California State University at Northridge: Center for Teaching and Learning <https://www.csun.edu/center-teaching-learning>
- Co-teaching Connection (Marilyn Friend) [http://www.marilynfriend.com/mid\\_high.html](http://www.marilynfriend.com/mid_high.html)

### Transition and Post-Secondary Education

The resources below are focused on transition and the student's post-secondary experience in college, career, or community.

#### Websites:

- California Department of Education: Secondary Transition Planning <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/st/>
- California Transition Alliance <http://www.catransitionalliance.org/content.aspx?id=1561&title=Resources>
- Center on Transition Innovations <https://centerontransition.org/transition/index.html>
- Disability Rights California: Transition Services for Students (Written for Students) <https://www.disabilityrightscalifornia.org/system/files/file-attachments/556701.pdf>
- National Center on Secondary Education and Transition <http://www.ncset.org/>
- National Parent Center on Transition and Employment <https://www.pacer.org/transition/>
- National Technical Assistance Center on Transition <https://transitionta.org/>
- Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/transition.html>
- Workability I: A California Transition Program <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/sr/wrkabltl.asp>

# Additional Inequitable Factors Contributing to Success Gaps

## Discipline

Within the state of California students with disabilities have a higher rate of suspension compared to their non-disabled peers. Figure 7 displays the California Dashboard data for the 2021-2022 suspension rates for students throughout the state. The data for suspension rates for students in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 are not representative of a typical school year due to the pandemic; however, in reviewing the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) data from 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, the number of suspensions for students with disabilities is less in 2021-2022 (See Figure 11). The post pandemic increased awareness and funding of social emotional learning (SEL), the use of positive behavior intervention services (PBIS), and the emphasis on positive school climate may have supported the decline in the suspension rates. In addition, when analyzing the data for suspensions and comparing the rate for the last complete year of data (2018-2019) to this past year the number of students with disabilities suspended for defiance was cut in half for 2021-2022 (See Figure 12).

### Reflection Questions:

1. What discipline policies, practices, and procedures are in place to support students with disabilities so that they can remain in school?
2. How does your site or district disaggregate and analyze discipline data to establish positive behavior interventions?

### Resources

#### Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

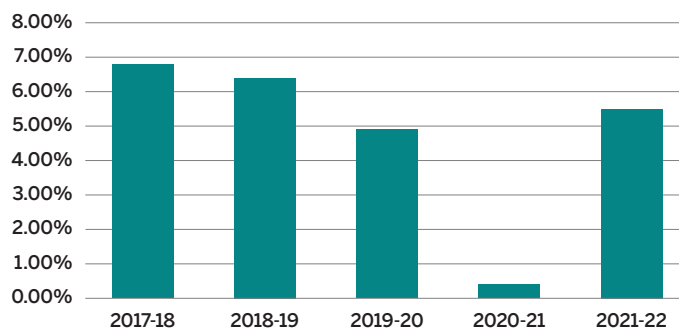
An essential part of a MTSS are positive behavior interventions and supports. Listed below are several federal, state, and local resources to assist school sites and districts in establishing and maintaining positive behavioral interventions and supports.

**Figure 11.** State of California Suspension Rate Indicator 2021-2022

Student Group	All Students	English Learners	Foster Youth	Homeless	Socio-Economically Disadvantaged	Students with Disabilities
Status Level	Medium	Medium	Very High	High	Medium	High
Suspension Rate	3.1%	3.2%	12.4%	5.5%	4.0%	5.4%

<https://www6.cde.ca.gov/californiamodel/report?indicator=susp&year=2022&cdcode=0000000&scode=>

**Figure 12.** Longitudinal Data of Suspension Rates\* for Students with Disabilities



\*2019-2020 and 2020-2021 are incomplete data due to Covid-19.

<https://www.ed-data.org/state/CA>

### Websites:

- California Inclusion and Behavior Consultation Network <https://www.cibc-ca.org/wp/>
- Northwest PBIS Network (PBIS) <https://pbisnetwork.org/resources/>
- PBIS (OSEP Technical Assistance Center) <https://www.pbis.org/>
- Positive Environment, Network of Trainers (PENT) <http://www.pent.ca.gov/>
- Santa Clara County Office of Education PBIS: Technical Assistance <https://pbis.sccoe.org/home/Pages/default.aspx>
- Schott Foundation for Public Education, Restorative Practices: A Guide for Educators <http://schottfoundation.org/restorative-practices>

## Additional Inequitable Factors Contributing to Success Gaps

**Figure 13.** State of California Chronic Absentee Indicator Rate 2022

Student Group	All Students	English Learners	Foster Youth	Homeless	Socio-Economically Disadvantaged	Students with Disabilities
Status Level	Very High	Very High	Very High	Very High	Very High	Very High
Current Chronic Absenteeism Rate	30.00%	33.60%	42.10%	45.10%	37.40%	39.60%

<https://www6.cde.ca.gov/californiamodel/report?indicator=chron&year=2022&cdcode=0000000&scode=>

### Chronic Absenteeism

Since the pandemic the chronic absentee rate for all students in the state of California has increased (Ed Data). All but two groups (Asian and Filipino) fell into the very high category for the absentee indicator. This is particularly true for students with disabilities, foster youth, students living in poverty, and students who are unhoused (See Figure 13). Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing more than 10% of the school year. The impact of so many students missing school affects student achievement, school culture, and the ability of students to graduate and be college and career ready. For students with disabilities, this is compounded since so many often struggle with academics and are often not fully included in the general education classroom and school culture. When comparing the pre-pandemic data for chronic absenteeism to the post pandemic data, the rate of chronic absenteeism more than doubles for students with disabilities. According to the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), the main reasons for student absences are poor grades, bullying, illness, caring for another family member, mental or emotional health issues, and difficulties with food or housing. Districts are now in the process of trying

to reengage with students after more than a year of remote instruction. Post pandemic students had to relearn or learn for the first-time school routines and procedures. This was particularly difficult for younger students who were encountering school for the first time. The kindergarten rate of chronic absenteeism rose to over 30% which was almost twice the pre-pandemic rate (Ed-source). The long-term effects of chronic absenteeism will need to be monitored as it affects students' outcomes particularly for students with disabilities and students who are foster youth, not housed, and are living in poverty (See Figure 14).

#### Reflection Questions:

1. How are students with disabilities' lived experiences affirmed and validated at your site? How are these lived experiences used as an asset to bridge new learning and keep students engaged?
2. What are the interventions and supports in place to prevent chronic absenteeism? How has the district or site engaged with families to support students attending and staying in school?

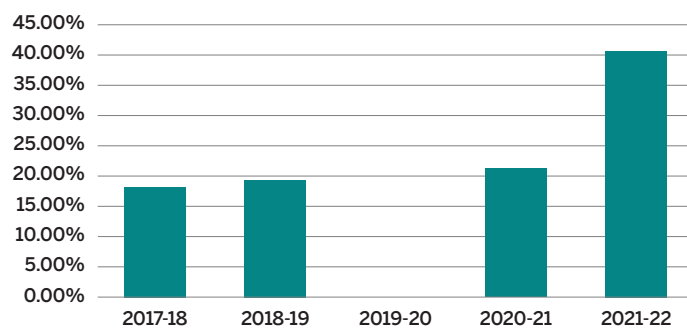
#### Resources

##### Chronic Absenteeism

The websites below provide information to schools and families to reduce chronic absenteeism.

- California for Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE)  
Chronic Absenteeism  
<https://ccee-ca.org/resources/understanding-district-successes-andchallenges-in-reducing-chronic-absenteeism-implications-for-statewide-supports/>
- Keep Learning California  
<https://keeplearningca.org/resources-for-educators/>
- PACE  
Chronic Absenteeism Post-Pandemic  
<https://edpolicyinca.org/newsroom/chronic-absenteeism-post-pandemic>

**Figure 14.** Longitudinal Chronic Absentee Data\* for Students with Disabilities



\*Data was not taken for 2019-2020 due to Covid-19

<https://www.ed-data.org/state/CA>

# Asset-Based Approach

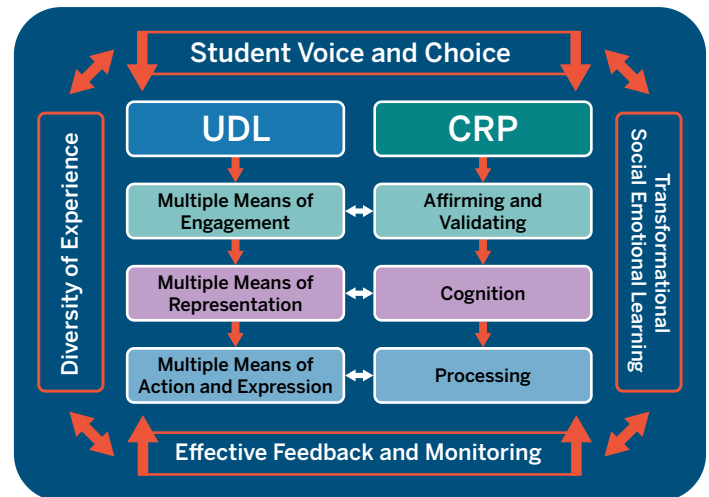
The assets students bring to their educational experiences must be analyzed. In Sonja Cherry-Paul's (2023) article on learning loss she makes the argument for using a liberatory mindset for regaining the skills students may have lost during the pandemic. Cherry-Paul warns that schools are using the "fix the child" approach to remedy learning loss rather than basing the pedagogy necessary to regain learning on the experiences and community of the students. Cherry-Paul (2023) writes of a teacher who engages her students in a persuasive writing assignment by having them write about a controversial construction project in their neighborhood. The students were engaged and learned to make written arguments and presentations on their topics to local community leaders and politicians. This demonstrates the use of a liberatory mindset using culturally responsive, relevant, and sustaining teaching (CRRST).

In the *Ways to Equity Playbook* (2020) the concept of Targeted Universalism is discussed as an approach to creating equitable schools for all students. According to the [Othering and Belonging Institute in Berkeley](#), Targeted Universalism means setting universal goals pursued by targeted processes to achieve those goals. Within a targeted universalism framework, universal goals are established for all groups concerned. The strategies developed to achieve those goals are targeted, based upon how different groups are positioned within structures, culture, and across geographies to obtain the universal goal. Targeted universalism is goal oriented, and the processes are directed in service of the explicit, universal goal. While goals are set for all students, educators should question what goals and expectations are set for students with disabilities and students of color?

## Interconnections of Universal Design for Learning, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, and Transformative Social Emotional Learning

Diagram 1 displays three strategies highlighted in the *Ways to Equity Playbook* (2020) to support achieving a Targeted Universalism goal for students with disabilities and students who are BIPOC. The strategies are Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP), Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and Transformative Social Emotional Learning.

**Diagram 1. Matrix of Universal Design for Learning, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, and Transformational Social Emotional Learning**



Created by Anna Marie Villalobos

In looking at Diagram 1, the relationship between UDL and CRP becomes apparent:

- Multiple Means of Engagement in UDL aligns with Affirming and Validating in CRP. When the instruction affirms who the student is by striving to support a sense of belonging and comfort and by building a relationship and validates the student by acknowledging the real world in which the student lives, the learning is relevant, and students are engaged.
- CRP's concept of Cognition uses existing bodies or prior knowledge as a scaffold to bridge new concepts to build deeper understandings for students. This scaffolding can be in the form of pictures, books and materials representing different and diverse people, based in culture, and the community. This aligns with UDL's Multiple Means of Representation.
- UDL stresses allowing for Multiple Means of Action and Expression which aligns with Processing in CRP. Using different talk structures and social learning opportunities. Processing can also involve utilizing culturally specific modes to help students process information such as rhythm, song, and dance.

In the diagram portion of UDL and CRP, the roles of student voice and choice are highlighted. The more the student is involved in their learning the better the engagement. Both models stress providing voice and choice for students.

The last leg of strategies discussed in the *Ways to Equity Playbook* (2020) is Transformative Social Emotional Learning (TSEL). The authors warn against social emotional learning (SEL) practices

that do not consider children who “come from diverse cultures, have lived through different experiences, and express a range of assets (not all of which are valued by our school system).” Since not all cultures relate in the same manner and with the same understandings, unintended negative consequences may occur when practicing SEL to build relationships without using a cultural lens.

By using a transformative culturally responsive approach to SEL, students are engaged and included in the building of respectful relationships. TSEL is aligned with CRP, by including students’ knowledge, culture, and experiences as meaningful and valuable in creating relationships. It aligns with UDL by allowing for student voice and choice. As a result, students are empowered and see themselves as change agents capable of addressing the inequitable systems in which they all live. This approach supports the asset based liberatory mindset Cherry-Paul (2023) speaks of in her work.

UDL, CRP and TSEL all support students with disabilities. All three strategies focus on students’ assets, their culture, and promote an instructional design that engages and empowers students. Additional, strategies that support the inclusion of students with disabilities are [High Leverage Practices](#) and [Co-teaching](#). The most proactive approach to supporting students with disabilities is to ensure that they receive the best possible instruction at Tier 1 in a multi-tiered system of support. An example of this would be to have screenings for Dyslexia in the early grades and to provide systematic instruction in reading. Recent interest in the [Science of Reading](#) has moved many states to push for structured systemic and explicit instruction in the components of reading. The science of reading examines a variety of factors that constitute the process of reading. The



body of research includes the genetic and neurological bases of reading and the components of reading: letter sound correspondence, phonological processes, synthesizing, decoding, word recognition, spelling, and comprehension. Research also examines how writing systems influence reading issues and reading instruction for struggling and non-struggling readers.

[Burk and Hasbrouck](#) in their 2023 article “explore how the science of reading is bridging the practice to research gap with a social justice lens to advance and improve student, classroom, school-wide, or system-level outcomes for children and youth.” The authors state that according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 67% of students in the United States are not reading at a proficient level and that these gaps are particularly dire for English Learners, students with disabilities and children living in poverty (Burk & Hasbrouck, 2023). Burk and Hasbrouck call for the use of the Science of Reading to decrease the long-term impacts of illiteracy in society.

### Reflection questions:

1. How are you currently ensuring that students with different cultural, linguistic, and experiential backgrounds are affirmed and validated at your site? How are students’ lived experiences used as an asset to bridge new learning?
2. How can you use TSEL to build positive relationships with students and decrease chronic absenteeism?
3. How are teachers, staff and administrators encouraged to reflect on their own culture and cultural competence when working with students with differing backgrounds?

### Resources

#### Instructional Practices

In this section several resources are listed that support research evidence based instructional practices. The list contains information on Co-teaching, Universal Design for Learning, and High Leverage Instructional Practices. Many of the resources contain videos and examples of instructional practices to support all students.

#### Websites

- California Autism Professional Training and Information Network (CAPTAIN)  
<http://www.captain.ca.gov/>
- California State University at Northridge: Center for Teaching and Learning  
<https://www.csun.edu/center-teaching-learning>
- Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST): Universal Design for Learning (UDL)  
<http://www.cast.org/>
- Co-teaching Connection (Marilyn Friend)  
[http://www.marilynfriend.com/mid\\_high.html](http://www.marilynfriend.com/mid_high.html)  
[http://coteach.com/?page\\_id=2](http://coteach.com/?page_id=2)

## Asset Based Approach

- Education.com: Learning Transcends Walls  
<https://www.education.com/>
- *High Leverage Practices (HLP) in Special Education Book*: Council for Exceptional Children & CEEDAR Center. 2017. 144 pages. ISBN 978-0-86586-526-6  
<http://pubs.cec.sped.org/p6255/>  
PDF: <https://cedar.education.ufl.edu/high-leverage-practices/>
- High Leverage Practices in Special Education: A Professional Development Guide for School Leaders  
<https://highleveragepractices.org/a-professional-development-guide-for-school-leaders/>
- International Dyslexia Association: Structured Literacy  
<https://dyslexiaida.org/what-is-structured-literacy/>
- IRIS Center Peabody College, Vanderbilt University  
<https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/>
- National Center on Improving Literacy  
<https://improvingliteracy.org/>
- Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities, Rhode Island College  
<http://www.ric.edu/sherlockcenter/>  
Adapted Literature and Lessons:  
<http://www.ric.edu/sherlockcenter/wvlist.html>
- Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS)  
[https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/InterventionReports/wwc\\_pals\\_013112.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/InterventionReports/wwc_pals_013112.pdf)
- Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Instructional Practices: Universal Design for Learning (UDL)  
<https://osepideasthatwork.org/find-a-resource/tool-kit-universal-design-learning-udl>
- TIES Center (National Center for Increasing Time, Instructional Effectiveness, Engagement, and State Support for Inclusive Practices)  
<https://tiescenter.org>
- Understood for Learning and Attention Issues  
<https://www.understood.org/en>
- What Works Clearinghouse  
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc>

### Books on Instructional Practices:

- *Classroom Instruction that Works: Research based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*  
Robert J. Marzano, Debra J. Pickering, and Jane E. Pollock. ACSD. Alexandria, VA.
- *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*  
Zaretta Hammond. Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, CA. 2017. 173 pages. ISBN 978-1-4833-0801-2
- *High Leverage Practices for Inclusive Classrooms*  
James McLeskey, Lawrence Maheady, Bonnie Billingsley, Mary T. Brownell, and Timothy J. Lewis. Routledge. New York, NY. 2019. 336 pages. ISBN 978-1-138-03918-6.

- *UDL Now: A Teacher's Guide to Applying Universal Design for Learning in Today's Classrooms*  
Katie Novak. CAST Professional Publishing. Wakefield, MA. 2016. 241 pages. Paperback ISBN 978-9305836-6-5; eBook ISBN 978-1-9305836-7-2

### YouTube Videos

- SWIFT Domains and Features at Henderson School (Inclusive Educational Practices)  
<https://swiftschools.org/talk/swift-domains-and-features-henderson-school>
- Together: A SWIFT Film on Integrated Educational Framework  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=neJp1wDdjjk&t=620s>

### Science of Reading

The resources and articles below focus on the Science of Reading and instructional practices.

### Articles:

- Burk, K. & Hasbrouck, J. (2023) Connecting the science of reading to Social Justice: Introduction to a special section.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000536>
- Matthew Burns, McKinzie Duesenberg-Marshall, Katya Sussman-Dawson, Monica Romero, David Wilson & Melinda Felten (2023) Effects of targeting reading interventions: Testing a skill-by-treatment interaction in an applied setting, Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth, DOI: [10.1080/1045988X.2023.2177982](https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988X.2023.2177982)

### Websites:

- International Dyslexia Association  
<https://www.idaontario.com/science-of-reading/>
- Institute for Multi-sensory Education (IMSE)  
<https://journal.imse.com/what-is-the-science-of-reading/>
- National Center on Improving Literacy (2022). The Science of Reading: The Basics. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Special Education Programs, National Center on Improving Literacy.  
<https://improvingliteracy.org/brief/science-reading-basics>
- Reading Rockets  
<https://www.readingrockets.org/blogs/shanahan-literacy/what-is-science-reading-2021>



# Family Engagement

Developing relationships with families and the people who make up the school community is a core equity practice. The Local Control Funding Formula provides guidance on Family Engagement, and this section expands on what it means to engage with families so that they are included in decision-making processes and community practices at various levels of school life. Families bring rich knowledge and understanding of their children, and they should be invited in as collaborators and leaders in school life. The section concludes with an expanded offering of resources for cultivating relationships with families.

## What is “Family Engagement”?

As one of the strongest predictors of student success, family engagement is an essential component of equity work at all levels of the public education system (Weiss, Bouffard, Bridglall, & Gordon, 2009). According to a 2016 report written by researchers at McREL International for the U.S. Department of Education, family engagement is:

*...about building relationships between educators and families and community members. It is an ongoing process of meaningful interaction between schools and families that involves two-way communication and a purposeful focus on supporting student learning.*

## Family Engagement & Equity

Like all equity work, engaging families requires relationship-building and integrating efforts across different domains of school life. Practices that foster family engagement emphasize bringing diverse families into decision-making processes and creating environments where all kinds of families are welcome and included as partners in processes of schooling, which is different from traditional models of parent involvement. As Weiss, et. al. (2009) point out, an equity reframe of engaging with families is “co-constructed, shared responsibility because meaningful and effective involvement includes not just parents’, caregivers’, and teachers’ behaviors, practices, attitudes, and involvement with the institutions where children learn, but also these institutions’ expectations, outreach, partnerships, and interactions with families” (p. 4).

Parent engagement should be an equity practice. That is, to the greatest extent possible, representation of families in decision-making processes should reflect the diversity of the school across categories of race and ethnicity, language, religion, gender, disabilities, gender, and sexuality. While difficult, diverse representation of voice is vital. It is therefore suggested that schools and districts choose and follow an equity-centered family engagement toolkit like the one published by the California Department of Education (see under Tools).

Connecting families to schools in meaningful ways is a complex and challenging undertaking that requires changing how we en-

vision the role of families in the life of schools, [listening](#) closely to families, and then taking action to make that vision a reality.

A mental shift from the belief that school leaders alone know what is best for students and families to one that allows families to collaborate in decision-making processes is necessary for fostering effective family engagement. Action taken to engage families must follow from the core idea that families are collaborators and co-leaders in school life. It should remain, however, that family engagement practices continue to include volunteering in the classroom, fundraising, and acting as part of Parent-Teacher Associations, School Site Council, and the like.



## Family Engagement



In addition, it is important that meetings are accessible to families with varying needs. This requires that meetings are scheduled during times that allow for families to attend and in spaces that are not only accessible but also welcoming. Child care should also be provided whenever possible, and effort should be made to bring in translators for those who need it. Even if your meetings cannot meet the needs of all families every time, showing that you are making efforts to create spaces of belonging for parents will go far in cultivating meaningful family engagement.

### Cultivating Family Engagement

The increased emphasis on building a community of learning for students and families can be seen in the recent growth and development of community schools. The need to build strong ties with families and to expand and rethink family engagement has schools and districts rethinking how they can re-engage parents and families in new and meaningful ways. In their article, *Family Engagement in the Middle: Reaching out to English Learners* (2021), the authors discuss using funds of knowledge (FOK) as a means of expanding family engagement of parents of English Learner students at the middle school level. By using a funds of knowledge approach educators can, "...position families as knowledgeable participants with strengths who contribute significantly to their adolescent's academic and overall development (Protacio, Piazza, David, p.30, 2021). The authors stress that reaching out to families of EL students is not restricted to the EL teacher but that every teacher must be responsible to provide means to family engagement. The article focuses on two-way communication with families and how the use of FOK provides a method not just for family engagement but should be integrated into the curriculum and support students in planning family events. In their article authors take an asset-based approach to family engagement,

...we would like to emphasize that educators must ensure they let go of deficit views of families and instead use a

FoK framework to see families as a resource and an asset and invite them to engage with their child's education and school community (Protacio, Piazza, David, p. 38, 2021)

Educational policy and federal law state the need for a strong family school collaboration. The need for this type of relationship is specifically called out in IDEA (2004) and in the ESSA (2015). In their 2023 article, *Cultural Considerations When Building Equitable and Trusting Relationships (BETR) With all Families*, the authors discuss the need for a strengths-based approach when building relationships with families. This is particularly important when creating trusting collaborative relationships with the families of students with disabilities, especially if they speak a different language. The article presents a two-prong method for building better relationships with families by advocating for cultural competence and using the BETR model to conduct parent teacher conferences with a cultural lens. Lindo, Kyzer, & Gershwin (2023) highlight that often the teacher parent conference is the most common method for two-way communication between parent and school. Unfortunately, the school is frequently in the position of disseminating the cultural expectations of the school without reference to the family's culture, strengths and assets that can be used in a meaningful exchange. According to the authors,

To this end, teachers must serve as cultural brokers and build competence in engaging across these differences in more affirming ways and engaging in activities that support the development of trusting relationships. This begins with awareness and recognition of culture's role in these exchanges (Lindo, Kyzer, & Gershwin, p. 3, 2023).

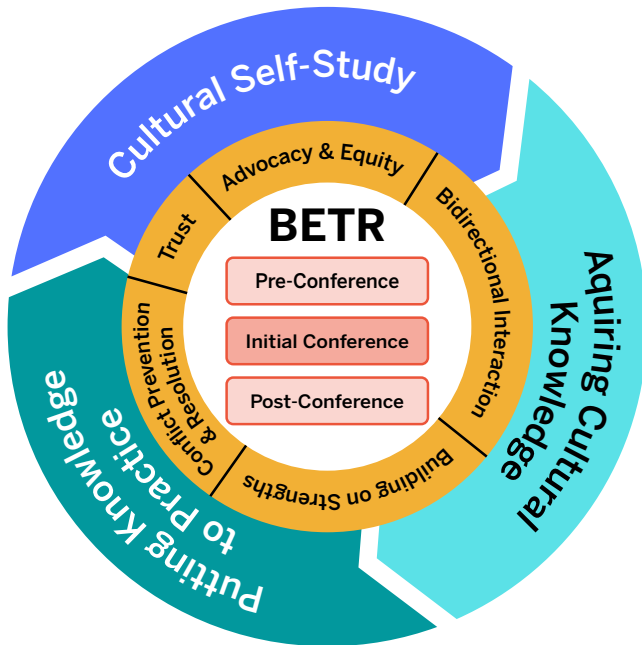
The authors based the BETR (see Diagram 2) conference model on research-based school family partnership principles with the purpose of using these principles in all family and school interactions.

The principles maintain that families and educators should:

- (a) advocate for each other and treat each other as equals,
- (b) interact in a bidirectional way,
- (c) build on each other's strengths,
- (d) prevent and resolve conflicts, and
- (e) trust each other (Gershwin & Kyzer, 2023).

The authors posit that relationship building is based upon mutual trust and respect and argue that the perception of that respect and trust is perceived through each individual's culture. If there is a lack of knowledge of one's own culture and the culture of others, then cultural non-competence will act as a barrier for building equitable and trusting relationships. The BETR conference model addresses this by incorporating cultural competency, the principals of school and family interactions, and providing a scaffold for preparing, holding, and following up with meetings (see Diagram 2).

**Diagram 2. Building Equitable Trusting Relationships Conference Model**



Lindo, Kyzer, & Gershwin (2023)

**Reflection Questions:**

1. What opportunities are there for families to be engaged in the school community?
2. How has your site built a culture of inclusion for all families, especially those families who may speak another language or have a different culture or have a student with a disability?
3. How do administrators ensure that all families understand communications that are sent home in a manner that promotes two-way engagement?
4. How do teachers ensure that all families understand communications that are sent home in a manner that promotes two-way engagement?
5. What avenues are available to receive regular input from all the families in the school community?
6. What are some family engagement activities that have been successful at your site for which you feel the proudest?

**Resources**

**Family Engagement**

In this section several resources are listed that support parent and family engagement. The list contains information on alternative dispute resolution and parent and family training and information.

**Alternative Dispute Resolution**

Alternative dispute resolution can take many forms (e.g., facilitated IEPs and mediations) and act as a pathway for better

understanding and communication between districts and families. The resources below can assist parents and districts in resolving and appreciating each party’s perspective regarding IEPs and special education services.

**Websites:**

- Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolutions in Education (CADRE) <https://www.cadeworks.org/>
- Santa Clara SELPA <https://www.sccoe.org/selpa/Pages/default.aspx>
- Southeast SELPA <https://www.mpsd.org/domain/3304>

**Community Engagement**

- California Collaborative for Educational Excellence Community Engagement Initiative <https://ccee-ca.org/community-engagement-initiative/>
- Community Engagement Initiative Part of the California Statewide System of Support <https://californiaengage.org/resources/>

**Parent and Family Training and Information**

This section lists several websites for parents and educators that can be used in parent training or as stand-alone for individuals to use for information and as a resource.

**Websites**

- Center for Parent Information and Resources <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/idea/>
- Gardner Center First Five <https://www.first5kids.org/frc/gardner-frc/>
- Key Terms to Know in Special Education <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/keyterms-specialed/>
- National Parent Center on Transition and Employment <https://www.pacer.org/transition/>





- **Office of Special Education (OSEP) Ideas That Work-Parent Tool Kit**  
<https://osepideasthatwork.org/federal-resources-stakeholders/tool-kits/parent-tool-kit>
- **Parents Helping Parents (PHP)**  
<https://www.php.com/>
- **Pacer Center**  
<https://www.pacer.org/>
- **Parent Resource Center Hub**  
<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center/>
- **Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities, Rhode Island College**  
<http://www.ric.edu/sherlockcenter/>
- **Reading Rockets**  
<http://www.readingrockets.org/>
- **Understood for Learning and Attention Issues**  
<https://www.understood.org/en>
- **Wrightslaw**  
<https://www.wrightslaw.com/>

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- Kozleski, E., Artilles, A., & Waitoller, F. (2014). Equity in inclusive education: A cultural historical comparative perspective. In L. Florian (ed.), *The Sage Handbook of Special Education* (pp. 231-250). Sage. In Pak, K., & Parsons, A. Equity gaps for students with disabilities. *Penn GSE Perspectives on Urban Education*, v17 Spr. 2020 <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1251597>
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- Lindsay Foreman-Murray, Sarah Krowka & Caitlyn E. Majeika (2022) A systematic review of the literature related to dropout for students with disabilities, *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, 66:3, 228-237, DOI: [10.1080/1045988X.2022.2037494](https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988X.2022.2037494)
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- Pak, K., & Parsons, A. Equity gaps for students with disabilities. *Penn GSE Perspectives on Urban Education*, v17 Spr. 2020 <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1251597>
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# Resources

The following are a variety of resources related to special education.

## Alternative Dispute Resolution

Alternative dispute resolution can take many forms (e.g., facilitated IEPs and mediations) and act as a pathway for better understanding and communication between districts and families. The resources below can assist parents and districts in resolving and appreciating each party's perspective regarding IEPs and special education services.

### Websites

- Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolutions in Education (CADRE)  
<https://www.cadeworks.org/>
- Santa Clara SELPA  
<https://www.sccoe.org/selpa/Pages/default.aspx>
- Southeast SELPA  
<https://www.mpsed.org/domain/3304>

## Assessment and Accountability of Students and Programs

This section contains links to access district data on students and resources on how to use data to measure student progress and program evaluation.

### Data Websites

- California School Dashboard  
<https://www.caschooldashboard.org/>
- Data Quest  
<https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>
- Data Zone  
<https://www.datazone.org/>
- Ed Data  
<https://www.ed-data.org/state/CA>

## Student and Program Assessment

- Diagnostic Center North  
<http://www.dcn-cde.ca.gov/>
- Embedded Instruction for Learning: Tools for Teachers-CA  
<https://ca.embeddedinstruction.net/>
- Solution Tree  
<https://www.solutiontree.com/>

- Stetson and Associates (2018) Assessment of school practices related to inclusive education.  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/11wdnM21BHN5oYBMua3RGMVP7phKlzD41/view>
- Stetson and Associates. (2017). Quality standards for inclusive schools' self-assessment instrument. Retrieved from: <https://inclusiveschools.org/inclusion-resources/self-assessment/>
- The Education Trust-West: Data Equity Walk  
<https://west.edtrust.org/our-resources/data-tools/>

## Books on Assessment and Data

- *Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work* (3rd ed.). Richard Dufour, Rebecca Dufour, Robert Eaker, Thomas Many, and Mike Mattos (2016) Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press (ISBN: 978-1-943874-37-8)
- *Building a Professional Learning Community at Work: A Guide to the First Year*. Parry Graham, & William Ferriter. (2010) Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press (ISBN: 978-1-935249-22-1)

## Continuous Improvement

- PACE: Supporting Continuous Improvement at Scale  
[https://edpolicyinca.org/sites/default/files/PB\\_Baron\\_1\\_June-2019.pdf](https://edpolicyinca.org/sites/default/files/PB_Baron_1_June-2019.pdf)

## Early Learning

Early Learning and early intervention are key components to positive outcomes for our students with disabilities. Listed below are resources for districts, early education providers and young children and their families.

## Frameworks and Resources

- A Science-Based Framework for Early Childhood Policy Using Evidence to Improve Outcomes in Learning, Behavior, and Health for Vulnerable Children  
[http://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Policy\\_Framework.pdf](http://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Policy_Framework.pdf)
- Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches  
[https://sehucdenver.edu/pthru3/PreK-3rd\\_Framework\\_Legal%20paper.pdf](https://sehucdenver.edu/pthru3/PreK-3rd_Framework_Legal%20paper.pdf)

## Resources

- Early Learning Communities: A Principal's Guide to Aligning the Stepping Stones to Success  
[https://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/EarlyLearningI\\_S014.pdf](https://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/EarlyLearningI_S014.pdf)
- Leading Pre-K-3 Learning Communities Competencies for Effective Principal Practice Executive Summary  
<https://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/leading-pre-k-3-learning-communities-executive-summary.pdf>
- Division of Early Childhood Practices Recommended Practices, Council of Exceptional Children  
<https://www.dec-sped.org/dec-recommended-practices>

### Websites

- Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning: Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children  
<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/>
- Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center  
<http://ectacenter.org/>
- Early Learning Online:  
<https://www.caearlychildhoodonline.org>
- Educare  
<http://www.educaresv.org/>
- Embedded Instruction for Early Learning  
<http://embeddedinstruction.net/>
- First Five  
<https://www.first5kids.org/earlylearning/quality-matters/>



- Innovations Collaborative  
<https://www.innovationscollaborative.org/>
- National Center for the Pyramid Model Innovations  
<https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/>
- San Andreas Regional Center: Early Start-Birth to 3 Years  
<https://www.sanandreasregional.org/early-start/>
- Santa Clara County: Early Learning Facilities Study  
<https://www.sccoe.org/resources/EL-facilities-study/Pages/default.aspx>
- Santa Clara County Early Learning Master Plan  
<https://www.sccoe.org/elmp2017/Pages/default.aspx>
- Santa Clara County Office of Education: Early Learning Services (Head Start and State Preschool)  
<http://headstart.sccoe.org/Pages/default.aspx>
- Santa Clara County Office of Education: Early Start Program  
<https://www.sccoe.org/depts/students/Pages/earlystart.aspx>
- Strong Start  
<http://strongstartsantacleara.org/>
- University of North Carolina: Inclusive Classroom Profile Modules  
<https://fpg.unc.edu/publications/inclusive-classroom-profile-icp-online-modules>
- Zero to Three: Early Connections Last a Lifetime-Challenging Behaviors  
<https://www.zerotothree.org/espanol/challenging-behaviors>
- Santa Clara County Office of Education: Educator Preparation Program  
<https://www.sccoe.org/educator-preparation-programs/Pages/default.aspx>

### Inclusive Leadership Practices

Listed below are websites from federal, state, and local organizations and agencies that support inclusive leadership practices. The books listed address inclusion and equity for all students.

### Websites

- California Department of Education: Family Engagement Tool Kit  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/lc/documents/family-engagement.pdf>
- Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center: National Early Childhood Indicators Initiative  
<http://ectacenter.org/topics/inclusion/indicators.asp>



## Books on Leadership and Inclusion

- *Building Equity: Policies and Practices to Empower All Learners*  
Dominique Smith, Nancy Frey, Ian Pumpian and Douglas Fisher. ACSD. Alexandria, Virginia. 2017. 215 pages. ISBN 978-1-4166-2426-4
- *Leading an Inclusive School: Access and Success for All Students*  
Richard Villa & Jacqueline S. Thousand. ACSD. Alexandria, Virginia. 2016. 200 pages. ISBN 978-1-4166-0049-7
- *Partnering with Parents to Ask the Right Questions: A Powerful Strategy for Strengthening School-Family Partnerships*  
Luz Santana, Dan Rothstein, and Agnes Bain. ACSD. Alexandria, Virginia. 2016. 233 pages. ISBN-13:978-1-4166-2267-3

## Instructional Practices

In this section several resources are listed that support evidence-based instructional practices. The list contains information on Co-teaching, Universal Design for Learning, and High Leverage Instructional Practices. Many of the resources contain videos and examples of instructional practices to support all students.

## Websites

- 2Teach, LLC (Wendy Muraski-Co-teaching)  
<https://2teachllc.com/>
- Baybridge Consortium, Inc. (Richard Villa Co-teaching)  
<https://www.ravillabayridge.com/>
- California Autism Professional Training and Information Network (CAPTAIN)  
<http://www.captain.ca.gov/>
- California State University at Northridge: Center for Teaching and Learning  
<https://www.csun.edu/center-teaching-learning>
- Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST): Universal Design for Learning (UDL)  
<http://www.cast.org/>
- Co-teaching Connection (Marilyn Friend)  
[http://www.marilynfriend.com/mid\\_high.html](http://www.marilynfriend.com/mid_high.html)  
[http://coteach.com/?page\\_id=2](http://coteach.com/?page_id=2)
- Education.com: Learning Transcends Walls  
<https://www.education.com/>

- High Leverage Practices in Special Education: A Professional Development Guide for School Leaders  
<https://highleveragepractices.org/a-professional-development-guide-for-school-leaders/>
- Inclusive Schools Network: Leadership for Inclusive Schools  
<https://inclusiveschools.org/category/resources/leadership-for-inclusive-schools/>
- Leading a Culture of Collaboration  
<http://www.allthingsplc.info/blog/view/leading-a-culture-of-collaboration/385>
- Ollibeau Institute on Disability: University of New Hampshire (Resources for educators, parents, summer institutes, and research)  
<https://ollibeau.com/inclusion/>
- Principal Leadership: Moving Towards Inclusive and High Achieving Schools for Students with Disabilities  
<https://cedar.education.ufl.edu/portfolio/principal-leadership-moving-towards-inclusive-and-high-achieving-schools-for-students-with-disabilities/>
- School Leadership for Students with Disabilities  
<http://cedar.education.ufl.edu/cems/leadership/>
- Supporting Inclusive Practices  
<https://www.sipinclusion.org/>
- Supporting Inclusive Schools for the Success of Each Child: A Guide for States on Principal Leadership  
<https://ccssoinclusiveprincipalsguide.org/about/>

## Resources

- High Leverage Practices (HLP) in Special Education  
**Book:** Council for Exceptional Children & CEEDAR Center. 2017. 144 pages. ISBN 978-0-86586-526-6  
<http://pubs.cec.sped.org/p6255/>  
**PDF:** <https://cedar.education.ufl.edu/high-leverage-practices/>
- High Leverage Practices in Special Education: A Professional Development Guide for School Leaders  
<https://highleveragepractices.org/a-professional-development-guide-for-school-leaders/>
- International Dyslexia Association: Structured Literacy  
<https://dyslexiaida.org/what-is-structured-literacy/>
- IRIS Center Peabody College, Vanderbilt University  
<https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/>
- National Center on Improving Literacy  
<https://improvingliteracy.org/>
- Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities, Rhode Island College  
<http://www.ric.edu/sherlockcenter/>  
Adapted Literature and Lessons:  
<http://www.ric.edu/sherlockcenter/wwslist.html>
- Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS)  
[https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/InterventionReports/wwc\\_pals\\_013112.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/InterventionReports/wwc_pals_013112.pdf)
- Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Instructional Practices: Universal Design for Learning (UDL)  
<https://osepideasthatwork.org/find-a-resource/tool-kit-universal-design-learning-udl>
- TIES Center (National Center for increasing Time, Instructional Effectiveness, Engagement, and State Support for inclusive practices)  
<https://tiescenter.org>
- Understood for Learning and Attention Issues  
<https://www.understood.org/en>
- What Works Clearinghouse  
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc>

### Books on Instructional Practices

- *Classroom Instruction that Works: Research based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*  
Robert J. Marzano, Debra J. Pickering, and Jane E. Pollock. ACSD. Alexandria, VA.
- *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*  
Zaretta Hammond. Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, CA. 2017. 173 pages. ISBN 978-1-4833-0801-2
- *High Leverage Practices for Inclusive Classrooms*  
James McLeskey, Lawrence Maheady, Bonnie Billingsley, Mary T. Brownell, and Timothy J. Lewis. Routledge. New York, NY. 2019. 336 pages. ISBN 978-1-138-03918-6.
- *UDL Now: A Teacher's Guide to Applying Universal Design for Learning in Today's Classrooms*  
Katie Novak. CAST Professional Publishing. Wakefield, MA. 2016. 241 pages. Paperback ISBN 978-9305836-6-5; eBook ISBN 978-1-9305836-7-2

### YouTube Videos

- SWIFT Domains and Features at Henderson School (Inclusive Educational Practices)  
<https://swiftschools.org/talk/swift-domains-and-features-henderson-school>
- Together: A SWIFT Film on Integrated Educational Framework  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=neJp1wDdjjk&t=620s>

### Multi-tiered System of Support

Contained in this section are several websites that offer materials and information to assist schools and districts in building their capacity to establish and implement with fidelity a MTSS.

### Websites

- California Department of Education: Definition of MTSS  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/mtsscomprti2.asp>
- California Department of Education: MTSS  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/index.asp>
- California's MTSS Framework  
<http://www.ocde.us/MTSS/Pages/CA-MTSS.aspx>
- Florida's Multi-Tiered System of Supports  
<http://www.florida-rti.org/>
- Hatching Results: Multi-tiered Multi-domain System of Supports  
<https://www.hatchingresults.com/videos/2018/4/multi-tiered-multi-domain-system-of-supports-mtmdss>
- Improving Performance of Students with Disabilities: A Handbook for Providing Technical Assistance to Local Education Agencies  
[https://ccsesa.org/wpfb-file/improving-performance-of-disabilities-handbook\\_updated-pdf-3/](https://ccsesa.org/wpfb-file/improving-performance-of-disabilities-handbook_updated-pdf-3/)
- Michigan Department of Education MTSS  
[https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-28753\\_65803\\_86454---,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-28753_65803_86454---,00.html)



- National Center on the Response to Intervention  
<https://intensiveintervention.org/>
- North Carolina MTSS  
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/integratedsystems/mtss/>
- RTI Action Network  
<http://www.rtinetwork.org/>
- Santa Clara County Office of Education:  
MTSS in Santa Clara County  
<https://www.sccoe.org/mtss/Pages/default.aspx>
- SWIFT  
<http://www.swiftschools.org/>

## Parent and Family Training and Information

This section lists several websites for parents and educators that can be used in parent training or as stand-alone for individuals to use for information and as a resource.

### Websites

- Center for Parent Information and Resources  
<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/idea/>
- Gardner Center First Five  
<https://www.first5kids.org/frc/gardner-frc/>
- Key Terms to Know in Special Education  
<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/keyterms-specialed/>
- National Parent Center on Transition and Employment  
<https://www.pacer.org/transition/>
- Office of Special Education (OSEP) Ideas That Work-Parent Tool Kit  
<https://osepideasthatwork.org/federal-resources-stakeholders/tool-kits/parent-tool-kit>
- Parents Helping Parents (PHP)  
<https://www.php.com/>
- Pacer Center  
<https://www.pacer.org/>
- Parent Resource Center Hub  
<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center/>
- Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities, Rhode Island College  
<http://www.ric.edu/sherlockcenter/>
- Reading Rockets  
<http://www.readingrockets.org/>
- Understood for Learning and Attention Issues  
<https://www.understood.org/en>
- Wrightslaw  
<https://www.wrightslaw.com/>



## Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

An essential part of a MTSS are positive behavior interventions and supports. Listed below are several federal, state, and local resources to assist school sites and districts in establishing and maintaining positive behavioral interventions and supports.

### Websites

- California Inclusion and Behavior Consultation Network  
<https://www.cibc-ca.org/wp/>
- Northwest PBIS Network (PBIS)  
<https://pbisnetwork.org/resources/>
- PBIS (OSEP Technical Assistance Center)  
<https://www.pbis.org/>
- Positive Environment, Network of Trainers (PENT)  
<http://www.pent.ca.gov/>
- Santa Clara County Office of Education PBIS:  
Technical Assistance  
<https://pbis.sccoe.org/home/Pages/default.aspx>
- Schott Foundation for Public Education, Restorative Practices: A Guide for Educators  
<http://schottfoundation.org/restorative-practices>

## Resources

### Science of Reading

The resources and articles below focus on the Science of Reading and instructional practices.

#### Articles

- Burk, K. & Hasbrouck, J. (2023) Connecting the science of reading to Social Justice: Introduction to a special section. <https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000536>
- Matthew Burns, McKinzie Duesenberg-Marshall, Katya Sussman-Dawson, Monica Romero, David Wilson & Melinda Felten (2023) Effects of targeting reading interventions: Testing a skill-by-treatment interaction in an applied setting, Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth, DOI: [10.1080/1045988X.2023.2177982](https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988X.2023.2177982)

#### Websites

- International Dyslexia Association <https://www.idaontario.com/science-of-reading/>
- Institute for Multi-sensory Education (IMSE) <https://journal.imse.com/what-is-the-science-of-reading/>
- National Center on Improving Literacy (2022). The Science of Reading: The Basics. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Special Education Programs, National Center on Improving Literacy. <https://improvingliteracy.org/brief/science-reading-basics>
- Reading Rockets <https://www.readingrockets.org/blogs/shanahan-literacy/what-is-science-reading-2021>



### Social Emotional Learning

The resources listed below focus on social emotional learning and provide frameworks and structure for incorporating social emotional learning into the curriculum. This can be an essential part of PBIS and a MTSS.

#### Websites

- CASEL Program Guides <https://casel.org/guide/>
- Children's Health Council (CHC) <https://www.chconline.org/>
- Measuring Social Emotional Learning (SEL) <http://measuringsel.casel.org/our-initiative/>
- University of Oregon: Institute on Violence and Destruction, Community Based Prevention, and Intervention <https://pages.uoregon.edu/ivdb/staff.html>
- Wallace Foundation Research on Social Emotional Learning [https://www.wallacefoundation.org/promos2/pages/navigating-social-and-emotional-learning.aspx?ef\\_id=XXxfdwAAAdc7cLHP:20190515185031:s](https://www.wallacefoundation.org/promos2/pages/navigating-social-and-emotional-learning.aspx?ef_id=XXxfdwAAAdc7cLHP:20190515185031:s)

### Student Voice

The resources listed below provide an essential component to understanding students in our schools and classrooms. Including student voice allows schools and districts to create systems that support all students.

#### Websites

- Hechinger Report Student Voice: How One Youth with a Disability Discovered He Was So Much More than That <https://hechingerreport.org/student-voice-one-youth-disability-discovered-much/>
- Museum of disABILITY History <https://www.museumofdisability.org/>
- Research Gate: How to Help Students Lead their IEP Meetings [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299373935\\_How\\_to\\_Help\\_Students\\_Lead\\_Their\\_IEP\\_Meetings](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299373935_How_to_Help_Students_Lead_Their_IEP_Meetings)
- Student Led IEPs (paper) <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ967458.pdf>
- Student Voice <https://www.stuvoice.org/>
- Student Voice: A Growing Movement within Education that Benefits Students and Teachers (paper) <https://centerontransition.org/publications/download.cfm?id=61>

## Books and Articles on Student Voice

- *Front of the Class: How Tourette Syndrome Made Me the Teacher I Never Had*  
Brad Cohen with Lisa Wysocky. St. Martin's Griffin, NY. 2008. 249 pages ISBN -13: 978-0-312-57139-9
- *Just a Thought: Uncensored Narratives on Teen Mental Health*  
Edited by the Children's Health Council Teen Wellness Committee. Children's Health Council, Palo Alto, CA. 2018. 84 pages. ISBN: 978-0-692-12772-8  
<https://www.chconline.org/wp-content/uploads/Just-a-Thought-Uncensored-Teen-Narratives-on-Teen-Mental-Health-CHC.pdf>
- *Student Voices: A Study of Young Adults with Learning and Attention Issues*  
<https://www.ncl.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Student-Voices-Executive-Summary.pdf>  
Website with additional information  
<https://www.ncl.org/?s=student+voice>

## Youtube

- Assessing Their Own Learning: Students as Active Participants  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYyNI\\_JUt-A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYyNI_JUt-A)
- Personalized Learning: Enabling Voice and Choice Through Projects  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCeM4IyvaAE>
- The Power of Giving Students Voice and Choice  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-3vRRot2kY>
- Why is Student Voice Important in Education?  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EMEq9EmQJks>

## General Information on Special Education at State and Federal Levels

The websites below are a source of information on federal statutes on special education and information at the state and county levels for students with disabilities.

### Websites

- California Department of Education Annual Performance Report Measures: Short summaries of special education program and student outcome data for California LEAs through 2020  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/ds/leadatarpts.asp>
- California Department of Education Compliance and Improvement Monitoring Process  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/qa/cimprocess.asp>

- California Department of Education: Special Education  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/>
- California School Dashboard  
<https://www.caschooldashboard.org/>
- Getting Down to Facts II Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE)  
<https://gettingdowntofacts.com/>
- IDEA Series, Broken Promises: The Underfunding of IDEA, National Council on Disabilities, (2017)  
[https://ncd.gov/sites/default/files/NCD\\_BrokenPromises\\_508.pdf](https://ncd.gov/sites/default/files/NCD_BrokenPromises_508.pdf)
- Office of Special Education Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act  
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/osep/index.html>
- Revisiting Finance and Governance Issues in Special Education (PACE)  
<https://gettingdowntofacts.com/publications/revisiting-finance-and-governance-issues-special-education>
- Special Education in California Schools: The Challenges and Solutions from Multiple Perspectives  
<https://www.edpolicyinca.org/publications/special-education-california>
- Training Curriculum on IDEA 2004: Part B (School-aged Children Ages 3-22)  
<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/legacy/>
- Training Curriculum on IDEA 2004: Part C (Infants and Toddlers to Third Birthday)  
<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/legacy-partc/>
- United States Department of Education IDEA: Statute and Regulations  
<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/statuteregulations/>

### Other Resources

- Adolescent Counseling Services  
<http://www.acs-teens.org/>
- California Collaborative for Educational Excellence  
<https://ccee-ca.org/resource-collection.asp>
- California State Council on Developmental Disabilities  
<https://scdd.ca.gov/>
- California Department of Education: Special Education Resources  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/sr/selinks.asp>
- Council on Exceptional Children  
<https://www.cec.sped.org/>

## Resources



- County of Santa Clara Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Affairs  
<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/lgbtq/Pages/lgbtq.aspx>
- Do2Learn  
<http://www.do2learn.com/>
- Each Mind Matters  
<https://www.eachmindmatters.org/>
- International Dyslexia Association  
<https://dyslexiaida.org/>
- Fagin, Friedman and Fulfroost LLP: Special Education Timelines in California  
[https://www.f3law.com/downloads/F3\\_015%20SPED%20Timelines%202019\\_v2\\_CMYK%20.pdf](https://www.f3law.com/downloads/F3_015%20SPED%20Timelines%202019_v2_CMYK%20.pdf)
- Museum of Disability  
<http://museumofdisability.org/>
- National Alliance on Mental Illness  
<https://www.nami.org/>
- National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)  
<https://www.nasponline.org/>

- National Association of Special Education Teachers  
<https://www.naset.org/>
- National Association of the Deaf  
<https://www.nad.org/>
- National Autism Center  
<https://www.nationalautismcenter.org/>
- National Center for Learning Disabilities  
<https://www.nclld.org/>
- National Down Syndrome Society  
<https://www.ndss.org/>
- Santa Clara County Behavioral Health Services  
<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/bhd/Pages/home.aspx>
- The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH)  
<https://tash.org>

**The following sections are categorized according to disability and contain numerous websites that provide information, resources, and support.**

### Attention Deficit

- National Institute of Mental Health  
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder  
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd/index.html>
- American Psychiatric Association  
<https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/adhd/what-is-adhd>
- Understood: ADHD  
<https://www.understood.org/en/articles/what-is-adhd>

### Autism

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Autism  
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/index.html>
- California Autism Professional Training and Information Network (CAPTAIN)  
<https://captain.ca.gov/>
- National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorder  
<https://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/>
- The National Clearing House on Autism Evidence and Practices  
<https://ncaep.fpg.unc.edu/>

## Blind/Visually Impaired

- Braille Institute  
<https://brailleinstitute.org/>
- National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled  
<https://www.loc.gov/nls/>
- Handbook of Resources and Services for Persons who are Blind or Visually Impaired  
<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/cdssweb/entres/pdf/BlindHandbook/CompleteHandbook.pdf>

## Communication/Speech/Assistive Technology and Augmented Alternative Communication

- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)  
<https://www.asha.org/>
- Association of Assistive Technology ACT Programs  
<https://ataporg.org/>
- International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication  
<https://isaac-online.org/english/home/>
- Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America  
<https://www.resna.org/>
- Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Communication Enhancement  
<https://rerc-aac.psu.edu/>

## Deaf/Hard of Hearing

- National Association for the Deaf  
<https://www.nad.org/resources/>
- Department of Social Services: Deaf Access  
<https://www.cdss.ca.gov/deaf-access>
- Hearing Loss Association of America  
<https://www.hearingloss.org/>
- California Directory of Resource Information for People Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
<https://www.dhsc.org/resources/PUB220.pdf>
- My Deaf Child  
<https://www.mydeafchild.org/resources>
- American Society for Deaf Children  
<https://www.mydeafchild.org/resources>

## Intellectual Disabilities

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
<https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/tracking/topics/DevelopmentalDisabilities.htm>

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: What is Cerebral Palsy  
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/cp/facts.html>
- Department of Developmental Services  
<https://www.dds.ca.gov/rc/>
- National Down Syndrome Society  
<https://www.ndss.org/about-down-syndrome/down-syndrome/>

## Emotionally Disturbed/Behavior Disorders

- Children's Health Council  
<https://www.chconline.org/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
<https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/symptoms.html>
- Mental Health America  
<https://www.mhanational.org/recognizing-warning-signs>
- National Alliance on Mental Illness  
<https://nami.org/Home>
- National Institute of Mental Health  
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness>
- Positive Environments, Network of Trainers (PENT)  
<https://www.pent.ca.gov/>

## Specific Learning Disability

- Eunice Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development  
<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/factsheets/learningdisabilities>
- National Center for Learning Disabilities  
<https://www.nclld.org/>
- National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities  
<https://njcld.org/>
- Understood: What are Learning Disabilities?  
<https://www.understood.org/en/articles/what-are-learning-disabilities>

# Glossary

## Acronyms and Glossary of Education Terms

<b>504</b>	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act	<b>LEA</b>	Local Education Agency
<b>AAC</b>	Augmentative and Alternative Communication	<b>LCFF</b>	Local Control Funding Formula
<b>ADA</b>	Americans with Disabilities Act	<b>LRE</b>	Least Restrictive Environment
<b>ADR</b>	Alternative Dispute Resolution	<b>MTSS</b>	Multi-tiered System of Support
<b>ALJ</b>	Administrative Law Judge	<b>NCLB</b>	No Child Left Behind
<b>AT</b>	Assistive Technology	<b>OAHA</b>	Office of Administrative Hearings
<b>CAC</b>	Community Advisory Committee on Special Education	<b>OCR</b>	U.S. Office for Civil Rights
<b>CASE</b>	Community Alliance for Special Education	<b>OEO</b>	Office of Equal Opportunity / CDE
<b>CCS</b>	California Children's Services	<b>OSEP</b>	U.S. Office of Special Education Programs / DOE
<b>CDE</b>	California Department of Education	<b>OSERS</b>	U.S. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Programs
<b>CDC</b>	California Diagnostic Centers	<b>OT</b>	Occupational Therapy
<b>DOE</b>	U.S. Department of Education	<b>PAI</b>	Protection and Advocacy, Inc.
<b>DOR</b>	Department of Rehabilitation	<b>PBIS</b>	Positive Behavior Intervention Supports
<b>DDS</b>	Department of Developmental Services	<b>PSRS</b>	Procedural Safeguards and Referral Services / CDE
<b>DREDF</b>	Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund	<b>PT</b>	Physical Therapy
<b>EL(L)</b>	English Language Learner	<b>PTI</b>	Parent Training and Information Center
<b>FAPE</b>	Free and Appropriate Public Education	<b>PWN</b>	Prior Written Notice
<b>FBA</b>	Functional Behavior Assessment	<b>RSP</b>	Resource Specialist Program
<b>FERPA</b>	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act	<b>RTI</b>	Response to Intervention (Academic and Positive Behavior Supports)
<b>IDEA</b>	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	<b>SAI</b>	Specialized Academic Instruction
<b>IEE</b>	Independent Educational Evaluation	<b>SDC</b>	Special Day Class
<b>IEP</b>	Individualized Educational Program	<b>SELPA</b>	Special Education Local Plan Area
<b>IFSP</b>	Individualized Family Service Plan	<b>SLP</b>	Speech and Language Pathologist
<b>IPP</b>	Individual Program Plan (Regional Center)		

**Accommodation**

A change in curriculum or instruction that does not substantially modify the requirements of the class or alter the content standards or benchmarks.

**Adapted Physical Education (APE)**

A diversified program of developmental activities, games, sports, and rhythms suited to the interests, capabilities and needs of students with disabilities who may not successfully engage in a regular physical education program.

**Administrative Law Judges (ALJs)**

Judges provided by OAH to conduct Due Process Hearings in a manner similar to civil court trials. They are neutral fact finders, fully independent of the agencies whose attorneys appear before them.

**Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)**

Alternative opportunities for parties to resolve disputes collaboratively and avoid litigation, typically through negotiation, mediation, or arbitration.

**Assessment**

Any systematic method of obtaining information from tests and other sources; used to draw inferences about characteristics of people, objects, or programs. An initial evaluation (or periodic re-evaluation) to determine whether a child is a child with a disability and to determine the educational needs of this child.

**Assistive Technology (AT) Device**

Any piece of equipment used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

Assistive Technology (AT) Service - Any service that directly assists an eligible individual in selecting, acquiring, or using an assistive technology device.

**California Diagnostic Center (CDC)**

California Diagnostic Centers in Fremont, Fresno and Los Angeles serve northern, central, and southern CA to provide no cost assessment and educational planning services.

Requests for services must be generated by referral from the school district.

**Compliance Complaint**

A formal assertion in writing that agreed upon services and supports in an IEP have not been delivered, or that the school district has violated IDEA mandates.

**Curriculum**

The subject matter that is to be learned, usually described in terms of scope and sequence.

**Curriculum-based Assessment**

A methodology in special education in which a child's progress in the curriculum is measured at frequent intervals.

**Due Process**

In general, a course of legal proceedings according to rules and principles established for enforcement and protection of private rights. Essential components of due process are "notice" and "a meaningful opportunity to be heard."

**Due Process Hearing**

The formal, legal procedure guaranteed by federal law to resolve disputes relating to the education of IDEA-eligible children with disabilities to ensure that each receives a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) tailored to his/her unique needs.

**Extended School Day**

A provision for a special education student to receive instruction for a period longer than the standard school day.

**Extended School Year (ESY)**

A provision for a special education student to receive instruction during ordinary school vacation periods.

**Facilitated IEP**

A group leadership process in which a trained individual helps keep the IEP discussion focused on your student and the education issues.

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

A federal law that regulates the management of student records and disclosure of information from those records, with its own administrative enforcement mechanism.

**Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**

Special education and related services are provided to students with disabilities at public expense and under public supervision and direction at no cost to the student's parents.

**Functional Analysis Assessment (FAA)**

An evaluation process to understand the purpose, motivation, and correlates of challenging behavior(s) in order to develop a positive and appropriate Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), instructional supports and services.

**Functional Curriculum (Life Skills Curriculum)**

A curriculum focused on practical life skills and usually taught in community-based settings with concrete materials that are a regular part of everyday life.

## Glossary

### **Goals and Objectives**

A written component of an IEP: skills the student is expected to reasonably achieve in one year maximum (reviewed and re-evaluated by the IEP team at least annually).

### **Inclusion [or] Inclusive Education**

A belief that every student is entitled to an instructional program that meets his or her individual needs and learning characteristics; a commitment to build and maintain an assured sense of belonging for all students, regardless of strengths or challenges.

### **Inclusive Practices**

A set of strategies, approaches, and actions that are designed to create an educational environment where all students, regardless of their background, abilities, or characteristics, feel welcome, respected, and supported in their learning journey. These practices aim to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom and school community.

### **Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)**

An independent evaluation of a student from a qualified person. Parents have the right to ask for and obtain an IEE if they disagree with the results of an assessment conducted by the school district. Any IEE must be considered at the IEP.

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

Federal law that entitles students with disabilities to special education services.

### **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

The annually written record of an eligible individual's special education and related services, describing the unique educational needs of the student and the manner in which those educational needs will be met.

### **IEP Meeting**

A gathering required at least annually under IDEA in which an IEP is developed for a student receiving special education.

### **IEP Team (Minimum Required Members)**

Parent or legal Surrogate; Student, when necessary; one general education and one special education teacher both responsible for implementing the IEP; school district representative qualified to provide/supervise provision of specialized instruction, knowledgeable about the general curriculum and the resources of the district. (CA law requires this be someone other than the child's teacher); Person(s) who conducted assessment(s) or knowledgeable enough to explain/interpret the results; People with specific expertise or knowledge of the student.

### **Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)**

A written plan for providing early intervention services to an eligible child with a disability (from birth to 3rd birthday) and to the child's family.

### **Insufficient**

Not meeting the legal requirement of IDEA by failing to provide the necessary detailed information and evidence to support a Due Process Complaint.

### **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**

A federal mandate stipulating that, to the maximum extent possible, students with disabilities be educated with their non-disabled peers.

### **Local Education Area (LEA)**

A school district.

### **Mainstreaming**

This lay term doesn't appear in law. It refers to IDEA's preference for the education of every child in the least restrictive environment (LRE); most widely refers to placement of students with disabilities in general education, rather than segregated, classrooms.

### **Mediation (Mediation-Only)**

A voluntary alternative dispute resolution (ADR) process that may be requested PRIOR to filing a Due Process Complaint. It is not a prerequisite to filing.

### **Mediation (Formal Due Process)**

A voluntary alternative dispute resolution (ADR) process that may occur AFTER a Due Process Complaint is filed. Office of Administrative Hearing (OAH) provides mediators.

### **Modification**

A change in curriculum or instruction that substantially alters the requirements of the class or its content standards or benchmarks.

### **Office for Civil Rights (OCR)**

An agency of the federal government's executive branch within the Department of Education that is charged with enforcing a number of civil rights statutes.

### **Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO)**

An office within the CA Dept. of Education to advise the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, CDE staff, and the State Board of Education on legal matters to ensure equal, fair, and meaningful access to its employment and program services.



**Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)**

An office within OSERS (see below) charged with assuring that the various states comply with IDEA.

**Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)**

An agency of the federal government's executive branch within the Department of Education (DOE).

**Parent Training and Information Center (PTI)**

The designated agency that offers workshops and training on special education rights and responsibilities in a parent's locale.

**Placement**

The unique combination of facilities, personnel, location, or equipment necessary to provide instructional services to meet the goals as specified in the student's IEP. Placement is a set of services, not a location.

**Prior Written Notice (PWN)**

A notice supplied to the other party that includes a description of the action proposed or refused by the school district or by the parent.

**Procedural Safeguards and Referral Services (PSRS)**

An office of the CA Dept. of Education (CDE) that provides technical assistance and resources about procedural safeguards and educational rights of students with disabilities, from ages 3 up to 22nd birthday. Compliance Complaints are filed here.

**Related Services**

Services required to assist an individual with disabilities to benefit from special education, including but not limited to: transportation, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language therapy, mental health services, and medical care.

**Resolution Meeting**

A meeting mandated in IDEA 2004 as part of the Due Process Complaint process where parties attempt to resolve a dispute prior to proceeding to a Due Process Hearing.

**Special Education (SPED)**

Specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of an eligible individual, including the specially designed instruction conducted in schools, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings. Special education provides a continuum of services in order to provide for the education needs of each eligible individual regardless of the nature or severity of the educational needs.

**Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA)**

A consortium of school districts, within a geographical service area, responsible for ensuring that every child eligible for special education receives appropriate services. Each SELPA's Local Plan, based on Federal and California law and regulations, describes how special education services are provided.

**Sufficiency**

Meeting the legal requirement of IDEA in providing the necessary detailed information and evidence to support a due process complaint.

**Stay Put**

The ruling that permits a student to remain in their current placement during any dispute concerning special education services.

**Transition Plan**

A plan to coordinate a set of activities that promote movement from school to post-school education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. Transition goals are determined by the IEP team beginning at least by age 16 and are based on student and family vision, preferences, and interests.

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Acronyms and Glossary adapted from: Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund

**Additional Electronic Glossaries**

- **Fagin, Friedman and Fulfroft LLP: ABCs of Special Education**  
[https://www.f3law.com/downloads/F3-001\\_ABCs%20of%20Special%20Education.pdf](https://www.f3law.com/downloads/F3-001_ABCs%20of%20Special%20Education.pdf)
- **IRIS Center: Glossary**  
<https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources/glossary/>
- **Wrightslaw: Glossary of Special Education and Legal Terms**  
<https://www.wrightslaw.com/links/glossary.sped.legal.htm>
- **Special Education Guide**  
<https://www.specialeducationguide.com/special-education-dictionary/>

# Acknowledgements

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**For Additional Resources and Tools, on the Below Listed Sections,  
Visit the [Ways 2 Equity Playbook](#):**

**African American Students**

**Students with Disabilities**

**English Learners**

**Building an Equity Team**

**Developing an Equity Communication Plan**

**Implicit Bias and Cultivating Equity Mindedness**

**Using Data to Inform and Drive Equity Work**

**Academic Achievement: The Opportunity Gap**

**Student Engagement**

**Family Engagement**



# **WAYS 2 EQUITY PLAYBOOK ENHANCEMENT**

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## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**



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