

# INCLUSION:

*We're all in this together*

District 65's Inclusion Strategic Plan  
and Supporting Documents



2011-2012

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# INTRODUCTION TO DISTRICT 65 INCLUSION PLAN

## Meet The LRE Support Team

Hello everyone,

We are excited to share the following Inclusion Strategic Plan and Supporting Documents with you! It is our hope that you reflect upon your own inclusive practices as well as the inclusive practices in your school as you read through these pages. Our goal is to provide check lists, guides and resources as well as strategies and action tips to support the inclusion goals you choose to work towards and achieve in your buildings. Remember, we're all in this together so please use your LRE Support Team as a resource! We are available for questions, meetings, presentations, etc...so please contact us:

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Possible topics for school presentations include:

Inclusion, LRE and what makes it work

Tools for Success: Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum Adaptations

Middle School Inclusion: Ideas that work

Teaming and Collaboration

Adaptations and Support Systems

Resources and Technology

RtI/PBIS/Inclusion

Looking forward to working together,  
Your LRE Support Team

# INTRODUCTION TO DISTRICT 65 INCLUSION PLAN

## Definition, Core Values, and Guiding Principles

INCLUSION embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every student and his/her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities and society. The desired results of inclusive experiences for students with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential.

### District Strategic Plan Core Values:

- o Excellence in education and high expectations for all students in all schools.
- o Neighborhood schools that support families and communities.
- o A welcoming, orderly and inclusive environment that respects individual differences.
- o The role of parents and guardians as partners in the education of their children.
- o The cognitive, emotional, physical, social and creative development of all students.
- o The treatment of every individual in an open, equitable, fair and professional manner.

### Guiding Principles for Inclusion:

1. All students with disabilities have a right to be included in naturally occurring settings and activities with their neighborhood peers, siblings, and friends.
2. All students will be given the opportunity for meaningful participation and engagement in the general education curriculum and in their school community.
3. Communities of support will be nurtured where differences are acknowledged, understood, accepted and celebrated.
4. A spirit of collaboration, active participation and support among families, administration and staff is valued and fostered.
5. A continuum of services and supports should reflect intensity of supports and not a separate place.

# SUCCESSFUL INCLUSION CHECKLIST

When	What	Who	Facilitated by	Sign + Date
Before School Begins	Central Files Transferred from Elementary to Middle Schools	Case Managers present them to Middle School Principals	Director of Special Services  Principal	
Before School Begins	Define and Identify Inclusion Team	Suggested team members: Administration, Special Education Teachers, Support Staff, Fine Arts Teacher, General Education Teacher	Principal and LRE Facilitator	
Before School Begins	Share all Triennial Evaluations and any review dates with team members	Case Managers, Support Staff	Case Manager	
Before School Begins	IEP at a Glance completed and sent to everyone on IEP Team (Fine Arts, P.E., and General Education Teachers)	Case Manager	Case Manager	
Before School Begins	Add Inclusion Teachers' names to SISK12 class lists	Special Education Teacher and General Education Teacher	Director of Special Services, Principal/IT staff	
Before School Begins	Records Day -Review all IEPs to ensure accuracy of services (minutes, providers, schedules) -Schedule Initial Contact Meeting	Special Education Teachers	Case Manager	
First Week of School	Identify when Inclusion Team will meet and how frequently	Special Ed Teachers, Administration, Support Staff, Fine Arts Teacher, Gen Ed Teacher	Principal and LRE Facilitator	
First Week of School	Chain of Command Letters Sent to Parents	Case manager	Principal	
First Week of School	Initial Inclusion Team Meeting to determine roles and responsibilities, and review helpful resources (Please see supporting documents).	Special Ed Teachers, Administration, Support Staff, Fine Arts Teacher, General Ed Teacher	Principal and LRE Facilitator	

When	What	Who	Facilitated by	Sign + Date
First Week of School	Opening Meeting: Principal reminds staff that everyone is to be aware of students' modifications and accommodations according to their IEP-at-a-Glance	All Staff	Principal	
First Inclusion Team Meeting	-Review Inclusion Goals and Strategic Plan -Develop PM Plan for Specific Students	Special Education Teachers, Administration, Support Staff, Fine Arts Teacher, Gen Ed Teacher	Principal and LRE Facilitator	
First Staff Meeting	Inclusive Practices Reflection Tool Organizer (Survey to be completed online; survey to be emailed to staff by Project Choices representative)	All Staff take Survey	Principal and LRE Facilitator	
Ongoing Inclusion Team Meetings	Continue to review inclusion goals and progress as a team to be shared with school as a whole. Principals are accountable to the Director of Special Education for assuring inclusive practices are taking place at their respective schools as documented on the District 65's Inclusion Strategic Plan and supporting documents. The District 65's Inclusion Strategic Plan and supporting documents will be completed and submitted to the Director of Special Education every quarter for review and discussion.	Inclusion Team and School	Inclusion Team and Principal	

# CLARIFYING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES/ COLLABORATIVE TEACHING DECISIONS

**P**=Primary Responsibility  
**S**=Secondary Responsibility

**E**=Equal Responsibility  
**I**=Input in Decision Making

Who will be responsible for...	Gen Ed Teacher	Special Ed Teacher	Para- professional	Other (Who?)
Identifying goals & objectives for the class?				
Developing/Updating goals & objectives for students with IEPs?				
Selecting and organizing instructional materials?				
Planning instructional activities to achieve the goals?				
Selecting and organizing instructional materials?				
Teaching specific class content?				
Teaching study skills/specific learning strategies?				
Collecting data in student progress?				
Assigning grades?				
Writing progress reports to parents?				
Establishing/Implementing grading procedures?				
Establishing/Implementing classroom management strategies?				
Modifying curriculum/materials?				
Maintaining home contact?				
Correcting papers?				
Designing tests, homework assignments, etc?				
Providing individual assistance to students?				
Facilitating daily routines (e.g. attendance, lunch count, etc)?				
Directing paraprofessionals, parent volunteers, and/or others?				
Communicating to all appropriate parties regarding students who have IEPs?				

# DEFINING MANAGEMENT STYLES

By Anne M. Moll

**Directions:** Write your response to the following statements. Base your response on the way you normally operate your classroom. Once you have completed this on your own, discuss your responses openly with your collaborative teaching partner.

## **Management Styles**

- 1) In what areas are your management styles similar?
  
- 2) In what areas do your styles differ? Is the difference small or great?
  
- 3) Discuss the major areas of difference in order to reach consensus on how you will handle them.

## **Routines and Procedures**

- 5) I usually arrive at school by
  
- 6) I like to leave school no later than
  
- 7) In the morning before students arrive I usually
  
- 8) In between class periods I
  
- 9) I collect work/homework
  
- 10) When it comes to restroom breaks and getting a drink of water
  
- 11) When students need materials or to sharpen their pencils
  
- 12) Where there are papers, reports, or activities to be evaluated



# TEAM MEETING TEMPLATE

## Inclusion/Grade-Level Meetings

**Grade:**

**Date:**

Discussion of literacy data, instruction & curriculum:

Discussion of math data, instruction & curriculum:

Discussion of PBIS data and behavioral supports:

Brainstorming interventions for specific students:

Action Items:

Questions for Principal and Assistant Principal(s):

*Washington Elementary School*

Evanston/Skokie School District 65  
Inclusion Strategic Plan and Supporting Documents  
2011-2012 School Year

# INITIAL PARENT CONTACT

**Student:**

**Parent(s)/Guardian:**

<p><b>Share the Following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Teacher contact information (General Education and Special education)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Information regarding the student's schedule</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Extra supports (Extended Day, Resource, study hall, Lunch Bunch, Social Skills Group)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Review IEP and discuss possible amendments</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Information regarding extra-curricular activities</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Information regarding homework completion (daily assignments, communication log, assignment notebook)</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Teacher Websites</li></ul>	<p><b>Parental Concerns:</b></p>
<p><b>Goals:</b></p>	<p><b>Parent Contact Information:</b></p>

# DISTRICT 65 INCLUSION STRATEGIC PLAN

## To be Completed by School's Inclusion Team

Inclusion Goal	Strategies to Try	Action Steps
<p>Goal 1: Families will be partners in the education of their children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Build rapport with families (Relationships are everything)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> List names of outside agencies providing services to D65. Make list available to D65 staff and parents.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Welcome parent to the team (via letter or phone call). Create and send home the Individual Education Plan at a glance.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide parent education and information regarding inclusion/Rtl/PBIS prior to or at the beginning of the school year. (brochure)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use PTA forums to educate community on child development issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Open door policy – families to meet with staff and tour the building prior to the beginning of any transition</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Review and revise (as needed) existing list of outside agencies provided by school social workers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Included with welcome letter, provide parents with information regarding inclusion/Rtl/PBIS</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have procedures for sharing information; provide outcome data of programs like Smart Start and Bridges program</li> </ul>
<p>Goal 2: Students with disabilities will be educated in integrated age appropriate environments that support their social and academic needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Inclusive schools make no distinction between students (general and Special education)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Parents are integral in all decisions with respect to educational setting and placement changes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Increase co-teaching opportunities and push-in services</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Related services provided in classroom settings</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate common planning time to the greatest extent possible</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Regularly scheduled meetings to problem solve</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use PBIS as a primary method of school and classroom behavior management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> IEP's will be designed with the least restrictive environment (LRE) in mind.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reallocation of staff so that no elementary teacher is responsible for more than two grade levels of curriculum</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Additional planning time to be allocated for inclusion teachers (special education and general education) See Appendix</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Special education related services connected to literacy and math curriculum</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Principals plan schedules to allow for common time.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> To facilitate common planning time, utilize district and school-based teacher substitutes to the maximum extent possible.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Consult with LRE facilitator (school psychologist) and PBIS external Coach</li> </ul>

<p>Goal 3: D65 will communicate and educate the broader school community regarding inclusion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Observe other districts that have implemented inclusion.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide professional development on inclusion for all staff members.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that both teachers' names appear on assignment notices in co-taught classrooms and are used in daily classroom conversation.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide parent meetings to answer question regarding inclusion plan.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Be prepared to answer questions on inclusion at curriculum nights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Arrange possible dates and with partnering districts and substitutes for teachers to observe other teachers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Professional development at school and district-wide levels</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> "Inclusion on a page" to be made available at office and could be distributed with other parent materials</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Work with IT to include both teachers' names in SISK12.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Arrange parent meetings and/or parent phone call at beginning of school year.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Include information on inclusion in beginning of school Welcome letter.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide information on inclusion at curriculum nights.</li> </ul>
<p>Goal 4: Priority will be given to continuity of program placement for students with disabilities, including the transition to high school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make effort to eliminate separation between special education and general education.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Define and communicate a consistent Response to Intervention (RtI) plan.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Address inclusive practices with staff on opening day</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Share information on students' Individual Education Plan with teachers and service providers before the school year begins.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Special Education students remain in LRE for majority of school day with supplemental instruction/individual support</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conduct regular team meetings to review RtI plans and data.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Include information on inclusion in welcome letters/packets</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Assure that every teacher who will be working with students with IEPs receive an IEP-at-a-Glance from the student's case manager</li> </ul>
<p>Goal 5: Priority will be given to maximize continuity of services and supports to allow families to have stability in school placement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gather baseline data to identify students by level of service needed</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Consider all options when conditions change to minimize disruption of learning and to maintain continuity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use MAP, SRI, DRA, ISAT, ISEL, etc. and progress monitoring data to determine areas of need and how the placement will reflect these needs.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Members of the IEP Team will discuss changes during an IEP Review and/or amendments.</li> </ul>

<p>Goal 6: Social inclusion practices are in place in all schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Create differentiated supports</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Include all students in school events, field trips, performances</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide disability awareness trainings for parents and staff</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Investigate lunch buddies, peer tutors, recess mentoring, so that students support one another</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Encourage school-wide projects (Pair with a PBIS Cool Tool and celebrate positive deeds/actions)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Discuss and develop disability awareness curriculum to be taught throughout the school year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Collaborate with inclusion multidisciplinary team members (Special education teacher, general education teacher, paraprofessionals, support staff, administration)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Create events and trips that do not exclude students based on their needs.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Share information, such as suggestions and strategies to try with students with disabilities (after school, newsletters, meeting, parent teacher conferences)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Implement a social group that allows students to work with one another during lunch, before school, after school, or during recess.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Recommend to the PBIS Green Team to develop a Cool Tool regarding disability awareness and acceptance. Praise students for displaying actions that show respect and acceptance. Also, talk with students regarding derogatory language as it applies to acceptance and respect.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Talk with you librarian about gathering literature on disability awareness.</li> </ul>
<p>Goal 7: Planned, purposeful and on-going professional development will be offered to all staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Within schools, provide opportunities for peer observations. Consider partnering with other schools in the district to provide opportunities for peer observations related to differentiating and co-teaching.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Schools consider requesting the opportunity for staff to visit exemplary inclusion sites in other districts. The observers should have time for discussion and debriefing after visit.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Project Choices has on-line training modules. Consider having staff form "study groups" to watch and reflect on the trainings together. <a href="http://www.projectchoices.org/courses.aspx">http://www.projectchoices.org/courses.aspx</a></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Create structures within each school to allow for time to plan for co-teaching and differentiated instruction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Consider having the observers share their observations with their building at a building meeting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Consider having staff form "study groups" during district professional development days to watch and reflect on the trainings together</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Utilize tools such as the "Defining Management Styles" (attached) worksheet to find time within the week to collaborate</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> In collaboration with the school psychologist, members of the Inclusion Multidisciplinary Team can assist as seen fit with Inclusion Coaching within their particular building</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ School psychologists within District 65 have been identified as Inclusion Coaches and have worked with Project Choices to help facilitate successful inclusion within their buildings. Utilize the school psychologist as a building inclusion coach to help teachers with differentiated instruction and planning for co-teaching. Building principals and Inclusion leaders, should continue to have time carved out to meet with Project Choices consultants to problem solve.</li> <li>❑ Consider using time at building meetings and professional development days to allow teachers to collaborate and share their inclusion successes.</li> <li>❑ Make sure each building member is using common language by talking about the importance of honoring adaptations (accommodations, modifications) for all students, but especially who have them written in their IEP at the first building meeting.</li> <li>❑ Be sure to include all members of students' educational teams (teaching assistants, specials teachers, etc.) when problem solving and participating in professional development.</li> <li>❑ The Inclusion Team should review Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) data regularly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Inclusion topics via PowerPoint presentations presented by LRE Facilitators at the request of principals or inclusion leaders</li> <li>❑ Utilize visual supports such as "Types of Adaptations" and "Accommodations v. Modifications" to help support this common language.</li> <li>❑ Consider scheduling a monthly meeting, the same day and time each month, with all team members present, to celebrate, discuss progress and problem solve.</li> </ul>
<p>Goal 8: Evidence based instructional practices will be in place to ensure access to the general education curriculum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Consider using some time at a building meeting to share the ways in which differentiated teaching materials provided by the district are being used successfully within the classroom across different grades.</li> <li>❑ Ensure that all staff has training in Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports.</li> <li>❑ Ensure that all students are being progress monitored.</li> <li>❑ Review PBIS structure and ensure that it is implemented in the way the system is intended; moving from extrinsic rewards to intrinsic rewards.</li> <li>❑ Consider using time at a building meeting to talk about evidence based instructional practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Utilize building staff with strong knowledge of PBIS (universal team leader, secondary team or tertiary team leader) to train staff that does not have availability to attend building meetings or district professional development, such as lunch/recess supervisors and paraprofessionals.</li> <li>❑ Incorporate inclusion sensitivity lessons in PBIS "Cool Tools".</li> <li>❑ Consider a book study or other Professional Learning Community activity. An example of a book that discusses evidence based instructional strategies is <u>Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement</u> by Robert J. Marzano.</li> </ul>

<p>Goal 9: A comprehensive system of evaluation with multiple measures of success will be used to assess the inclusion initiative.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use a measurement rubric of staff beliefs and attitude toward inclusion.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Observe co-teaching practices across the district to ensure effective implementation.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Increase discussion in IEP meetings regarding inclusive options for students.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conduct regular observation/walk-throughs.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Include all stakeholders in evaluation and honor all feedback.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conduct an annual parent, staff and student survey.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use multiple measures of student achievement outcomes (PM data)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Increase alternatives to suspension placements.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use measures to determine student social/emotional well being (PBIS Screening Tool, time-on-task, anxiety levels, conduct/compliance, etc.)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Increase involvement of students with disabilities in extra-curricular activities.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gather anecdotal data from IEP team regarding student's interaction with peers to inform instruction and monitor goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> At the start and end of the school year survey the staff using the Inclusive Practices Reflection Tool Organizer to develop school goals and action items.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide times during staff meetings throughout the year to discuss progress towards goals.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Monitor and adjust if necessary the progress of inclusive practices in building.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide an entry and exit slip for walk-throughs to document highlights/strategies.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Distribute the parent and student surveys at the end of the school year.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use survey results from the end of the previous school to guide discussion around goals.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Consider developing a template for student data collection including all of the possible assessments and data points to be used to analyze and determine academic and/or behavioral progress. Discuss/share with team and staff</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Inform parents about all of the extra-curricular activities that are available in the building</li> </ul>
<p>Goal 10: All students will have improved student outcomes academically, socially, and behaviorally.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Number of students with IEPs meeting standards will increase as measured by state and district assessments.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use existing Positive Behavior Intervention Support measures (time-on-task, anxiety levels, conduct/compliance, etc.) to measure behaviors of students with disabilities.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use academic, social and emotional baseline and on-going data to guide instruction and monitor outcome.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Set a regular meeting schedule with the Inclusion Team to review student data, analyze student progress and plan appropriate interventions to promote continued adequate growth.</li> </ul>

# INCLUSION GLOSSARY

**Individual Education Plan:** commonly referred to as an IEP. It is mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The IDEA requires public schools to develop an IEP for every student with a disability who is found to meet the federal and state requirements for special education. The IEP must be designed to provide the child with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least-Restrictive Environment (LRE). The IEP refers both to the educational program to be provided to a child with a disability and to the written document that describes that educational program. Key considerations in developing an IEP include assessing students in all areas related to the suspected disability(ies), considering access to the general curriculum, considering how the disability affects the student's learning, developing goals and objectives that make the biggest difference for the student, and ultimately choosing a placement in the least restrictive environment.

**Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS):** a decision making framework that guides selection, integration, and implementation of the best evidence-based academic and behavioral practices for improving important academic and behavior outcomes for all students. In general, PBIS emphasizes four integrated elements: (a) data for decision making, (b) measurable outcomes supported and evaluated by data, (c) practices with evidence that these outcomes are achievable, and (d) systems that efficiently and effectively support implementation of these practices.

**Modifications:** Usually a modification means a change in what is being taught or expected from the student. Making an assignment easier so the student is not doing the same level of work as other students is an example of a modification. A modification may change instructional level, content or performance level.

**Accommodations:** An accommodation is a change in how a student accesses or demonstrates learning. Allowing a student who has trouble writing to give his answers orally is an example of an accommodation. This student is still expected to know the same material and answer the same questions as fully as the other students, but he doesn't have to write his answers to show that he knows the information. An accommodation does not substantially change instructional level, content or performance level.

**Adaptation:** are changes made to the environment, curriculum, instruction and/or assessment practices in order for a student to be successful learner. Adaptations include accommodations and modifications. Adaptations are based on an individual student's strengths and needs.

**Differentiated Instruction:** involves providing students with different avenues to acquiring content; to processing, constructing, or making sense of ideas; and to developing teaching products so that all students within a classroom can learn effectively, regardless of differences in ability (Tomlinson, 2000). Differentiated instruction, according to Carol Ann Tomlinson (as cited by Ellis, Gable, Greg, & Rock, 2008, p. 32), is the process of "ensuring that what a student learns, how he/she learns it, and how the student demonstrates what he/she has learned is a match for that student's readiness level, interests, and preferred mode of learning". Differentiation stems from beliefs about differences among learners, how they learn, learning preferences and individual interests (Anderson, 2007).



**Response to Intervention (RTI):** Response To Intervention a method of academic intervention designed to provide early, effective assistance to children who are having difficulty learning. Response to intervention was also designed to function as a data-based process of diagnosing learning disabilities. This method can be used at the group and individual level. The RTI method has been developed by researchers as an alternative to identifying learning disabilities with the ability-achievement discrepancy model, which requires children to exhibit a severe discrepancy between their IQ and academic achievement as measured by standardized tests. (Haager, D. et al , 2007). RTI seeks to prevent academic failure through early intervention, frequent progress measurement, and increasingly intensive research-based instructional interventions for children who continue to have difficulty (Cortiella, C., 2007). These instructional levels are included in a 3-tier model described below.

### **Tier I**

In the RTI model, all students receive high quality, scientific, research-based instruction from general education teachers in the District's curriculum. The curriculum provides the foundation for instruction upon which all strategic and intensive interventions are formulated. Tier I includes all developmental domains, such as, behavioral, social, and cognitive. In Tier I, a universal screening tool is used to identify students who may be at risk of not making adequate academic progress. If instruction in Tier I is adequately differentiated and culturally responsive, approximately 80% of the students will be successful.

Universal screening for all students is conducted at least three times during a school year; fall, winter and spring. Students' performance levels are used to determine if adequate progress has been made. The problem-solving team at

Tier I consists of general education staff, with the principal as the facilitator. At Tier I grade-level teachers identify the needs of students based on data collection.

- General education curriculum is provided.
- Effective instruction/environment is created
- Universal screening is conducted 2-3 times per year.
- Early intervention is provided

An intervention plan is developed by the classroom teacher in collaboration with the grade level team that includes measurable goals for the targeted academic and behavioral needs. Students who have not met the benchmarks at Tier I will require targeted intervention. The plan is approved by the principal. This plan is then implemented and monitored for 6-12 weeks. Data is collected and reviewed during the intervention period. The number of data points/progress monitoring collected will be appropriate to the need being addressed. Data-based decisions will help determine if the intervention or intensity of the intervention need to be changed.

The process for identifying students' needs and providing interventions for low achieving students include the following:

- Review the universal screening data
- Administer diagnostic measures to plan an appropriate instructional program and sequence of lessons
- Work with support personnel to implement instructional strategies through the curriculum
- Monitor and chart student progress
- Make data-based decisions
- Adjust the intervention's intensity as needed.

If sufficient progress is made at Tier I, the intervention is discontinued.

## **Tier II**

At times, a student's need for differentiation is greater than what is practical for the teacher to provide in the general education setting. Students who are not making adequate progress with Tier I interventions will proceed to Tier II. The Tier II problem-solving team consists of general education teachers, educational specialists as appropriate, and the principal as facilitator.

Student referrals for supplemental support are based on data and are a school-wide decision (as opposed to a particular classroom). This means that the lowest performing student in a particular classroom may not receive pullout services if that student's performance is not below the 20th percentile for that grade.

Once identified, the student's data profile (universal screener, diagnostic assessments, classroom work, and teacher input) is considered. Classroom teachers will continue to maintain a differentiated plan for that student and monitor progress while s/he is in the general education setting. The plan will be as seamless as possible and function in conjunction with the Tier II intervention.

Tier II interventions include:

- Increased use of supplemental curricula and skill interventions in addition to the District's curriculum.
- Systematic use of data to identify and develop interventions.
- Problem-solving team meets to determine additional interventions, the duration and intensity of the interventions.
- Student may be receiving interventions in a small/individual grouping.
- Progress monitoring is used to determine the effectiveness of the interventions.

If sufficient progress is made using Tier II interventions, the problem solving team will determine if the interventions can be discontinued or if it needs to be adjusted. If sufficient progress is not made, then the problem solving team will determine the next appropriate step for this child.

There is no need for a student to fail in a Tier II intervention to qualify for Tier III.

When the team has determined that the data reveals that the intervention requires options found in Tier III, the student may directly enter Tier III services.

### **Tier III**

Tier III interventions for students are more intensive in nature. The function of the interventions is to accelerate a student's learning. Interventions are developed based on the individual students' needs. Tier III interventions can be for 60 minutes/day or more in addition to instruction in the general curriculum.

Tier III interventions include:

- Specific curricular interventions,
- Increased intensity in terms of frequency, duration, and monitoring of a student's progress,
- Individualized or in small group instruction.

If a student responds poorly to increased interventions or only responds when provided intense individual instruction, a lack of progress may indicate a disability. A decision for additional assessments and special education may be considered at this time.

At this level, the psychologist, Special Services supervisor, along with the principal, will serve as the primary facilitators for the problem solving team. The Tier III Problem-Solving Team consists of specialized staff and the classroom teacher. When considering special education eligibility these questions need to be part of the decision-making process:

- Is the student's rate of progress significantly less than his peers or too demanding to be implemented without special education resources?
- Is the student's performance significantly different from peers or the identified standard?
- Does the student need curriculum and instruction that is significantly different from the general education classroom?

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** The IDEA requires public schools to develop an IEP for every student with a disability who is found to meet the federal and state requirements for special education. The IEP must be designed to provide the child with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least-Restrictive Environment (LRE).

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE): The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) defines FAPE at 20 U.S.C Section 602(9): "the term 'free appropriate public education' means special education and related services that (a) have been provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge; (b) meet the standards of the State educational agency; (c) include an appropriate preschool, elementary school, or secondary school education; and (d) are provided in conformity with the individualized education program required under section 614(d)."

**Least-Restrictive Environment (LRE):** In general--To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

**504:** The “504” in “504 plans” refers to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, which specifies that no one with a disability can be excluded from participating in federally funded programs or activities, including elementary, secondary or postsecondary schooling. “Disability” in this context refers to a “physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities.” This can include physical impairments; illnesses or injuries; communicable diseases; chronic conditions like asthma, allergies and diabetes; and learning problems. A 504 plan spells out the modifications and accommodations that will be needed for these students to have an opportunity perform at the same level as their peers,

**Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA):** A functional behavioral assessment is a process for developing a useful understanding of how behavior relates to the environment. By knowing the function (or purpose) that the behavior serves for the student, one is able to develop an intervention that also serves that purpose, but does so through positive student behaviors. Intervention strategies may include effective prevention, remediation, or development of alternative behaviors (replacement behaviors). Therefore, similar behaviors should not routinely be treated with identical interventions, as the functions of the behaviors may be very different. For example, one student may fight to stop teasing by a peer; another student may fight to gain approval from a peer group.

**Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP):** takes the observations made in a Functional Behavioral Assessment and turns them into a concrete plan of action for managing a student’s behavior. A BIP may include ways to change the environment to keep behavior from starting in the first place, provide positive reinforcement to promote good behavior, employ planned ignoring to avoid reinforcing bad behavior, and provide supports needed so that the student will not be driven to act out due to frustration or fatigue. It’s important to remember that the purpose of a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) is not to outline punishments, but rather to define what the adults will do differently to better support the needs of the student.

**Progress Monitoring:** Progress monitoring is a set of assessment procedures for determining the extent to which students are benefiting from classroom instruction and for monitoring effectiveness of curriculum. A fundamental assumption of education is that students will benefit from high-quality instruction. That is, typically, students will learn and achieve the skills and content taught in the classroom. For students who are not responsive to classroom instruction, alternative interventions can be provided and again the students’ response to that instruction can be monitored. Progress monitoring is a valid and efficient tool for gauging the effectiveness of instruction, determining whether instructional modifications are necessary, and providing important information for eventual classification and placement decisions.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** The Americans with Disabilities Act gives civil rights protections to individual with disabilities that are like those provided to individuals on the basis of race, sex, national origin and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in employment, public accommodations, transportation, State and local government services, and telecommunications.