STORIES FROM THE JOURNEY: Teacher, Parent, and Student Perspectives of a Districtwide Inclusive Education Transformation

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Transformation to Inclusive Education

This session shares the stories on the *progress, pitfalls, and stages of that journey* from the perspectives of educators, parents, and students.

The impact of *student-centered planning, structural changes to organizational procedures, and collaborative teaching* on the participation and learning of students with disabilities will be shared.
WHAT is Inclusive Education?

- **PLACEMENT:** **ALL** children and youth are educated **in general education classes** 80% or more of the time

- **PARTICIPATION:** Students are **engaged** in classroom and out-of-class academic and social activities with grade-level peers

- **LEARNING:** Students are considered learners and demonstrate **growth** in academic and functional skills.

- **MEMBERSHIP:** Students have respectful and meaningful **interactions** with adults and peers
Maryland DATA

% of students included
In general education classes
80% or more of the time
Percentage of Students with Disabilities Age 6-21 in General Education 80% more of the time

2000-2001 School Year

MD LSS Average

Schools that Engaged in Systems Change Partnership with MCIE

Non-MCIE Schools
Percentage of Students with Disabilities Age 6-21 in General Education 80% of more of the time

2017-2018 School Year

MD LSS Average
School that engaged in Systems Change Partnership with MCIE
Non-MCIE Schools
HOW do we build effective inclusive school practices?
Systems Change Features

- Superintendent/Assistant Supt. support and commitment
- General education leadership in collaboration with special education leadership
- Technical assistance support (MCIE) and process
- District level staff partners for supporting school based work
- Commitment to three-year building-based change process
- Collaboration on every level
- Focus on strengths upon which to build improvements
Systems Change Features

- **District Level Planning**
  - Communicating the vision
  - Professional development (UDL, PBS, Collaborative teaching)
  - Integration of resources/services
  - Targeted practices

- **School-based Planning:**
  - Grade levels targeted for change
  - School-wide professional development
  - Targeted change in practices

- **Student-Centered Planning:**
  - Intensive 2-part team planning with family for students with extensive support needs
  - Transition planning for students moving to more inclusive participation
  - Information sharing for students who receive services
School-Based Planning

Implementation
Year 1 – Planning & Professional Development
Year 2 – Implementing target grades
Year 3 – Implementing school-wide

District-support for Sustainability
Year 4 – Planning for new students
Year 5 – Supporting ongoing needs
MAKING CHANGE: the START

- Building-based Planning Team
- Monthly Meetings
- Partnership for Technical Assistance
- School-based self-assessment
  - Quality Indicators
  - Faculty Survey (optional)
  - Student academic and behavior data
  - LRE – placement practices
- Implementation Action Planning
PLANNING AND LEARNING
# Scheduling for Natural Proportions

## CES Classes

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<td>DiBello</td>
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<td>Aliva M. (SLP)</td>
<td>Mark E.</td>
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<td>D’nai B. (SLP)</td>
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<td>Nordquist</td>
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<td>Ostazeski</td>
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<td>Heather U.</td>
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*SLP* denotes Speech Language Pathology
Collaboration/Effective Instruction

- New **roles** for teachers
- Teachers as **solution-finders** – designing supports for students to prevent problems not just react to problems
- **Teams** as joint instructional planners
- **Responsibility for ALL** students is shared by ALL teachers

*The extent of a school’s success will be directly related to the extent that the school has moved toward a collaborative model in general education.*
Families and Staff Engagement in Planning:

- Students *already included*
- Students *increasing general education participation*
- Students *coming from regional/separate special education programs*
### Educating Students
Who Need Extensive and Pervasive Supports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class &amp; School</th>
<th>ALL Students Expectations</th>
<th>Individual Student Planning for Participation &amp; Learning</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Goals</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
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<td>Math</td>
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<td>Peer/Adult Supports</td>
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## Educating Students Who Need Extensive and Pervasive Supports

### Class & School

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math – 4th grade</td>
<td>Whole group multiply a fraction by a whole number</td>
<td>Cooperative small group: ask useful questions, select assumptions, listen to others, make suggestions, use 2 of 3 class respect phrases</td>
<td>Count to 4</td>
<td>Listen to teacher and peers (look in direction of speaker)</td>
<td>Use Tobii – in coop group</td>
<td>Peer assist for eye gaze board on yes/no questions</td>
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<td>Small group</td>
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<td>Student uses large print graphs to identify “which is more”</td>
<td>Make 4 requests (ex. who to work with from menu of peer partners on Tobii page)</td>
<td>Assign group roles to peers</td>
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<td>Independent</td>
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<td>Request materials</td>
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<td>Students will create and explain a representation to show multiplication based on a word problem and graph their results. Students will critique the strategy of others.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Look at column representing larger number</td>
<td>Identify key vocabulary used in group - work on Tobii page</td>
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**Math – 4th grade**

Students will multiply a fraction by a whole number. They will participate in cooperative small groups to ask useful questions, select assumptions, listen to others, make suggestions, and use 2 of 3 class respect phrases. They will count to 4 and use large print graphs to identify “which is more.” They will listen to the teacher and peers (looking in the direction of the speaker) and make 4 requests (e.g., who to work with from the menu of peer partners on the Tobii page). They will look at the column representing the larger number and identify key vocabulary used in group work on the Tobii page. They will request materials and be assisted by peers for eye gaze board on yes/no questions. Peer supports include asking useful questions, selecting assumptions, listening to others, making suggestions, using 2 of 3 class respect phrases, counting to 4, using large print graphs to identify which is more, listening to the teacher and peers (looking in the direction of the speaker), making 4 requests (e.g., who to work with from the menu of peer partners on the Tobii page), looking at the column representing the larger number, identifying key vocabulary used in group work on the Tobii page, and requesting materials.
Teacher Perspective

“I am absolutely exhausted! New grade level, teaching all content areas, and a new student with significant needs. However, it has been so much easier than I thought it was going to be. I am thrilled with how things are falling into place!”
Teacher Perspective
Teacher Perspective
STUDENT PERSPECTIVE
FAMILY PERSPECTIVE

“Grandma shared that when F. came home and they asked her how her day was, she used her 2 fingers to make her smile really big. Grandma says this is a home sign she uses to show she is very happy. Grandma said this is the first time she's ever come home and shared that she was VERY happy. I thought you all would like to hear that! :) Grandma said whatever we are doing to keep doing it.”
FAMILY PERSPECTIVE

- My daughter is almost 7 years old and functions at a 10 to 12-month age level. She is totally dependent on adults. She cannot walk, talk or feed herself.

- She is in a class of six children who right now receive the services they need and the special attention that these kids take and deserve. *I am concerned once she has to go to her home school and in a regular education room how will she do.*

- **My child will be left behind then.** She is not in school to learn her ABCs and 1-2-3s, this she will never do, but her teachers and therapist work on what potential she has and help her to succeed in what she can. I wish that I could of gone to the special education meeting at the library, but could not make it. I doubt, however, that anything will change.
Last year, I was opposed to inclusion. I didn’t want my 8-year-old special needs daughter, who still functions at a 12-month age level and is wheelchair bound, in a class with “normal” kids. I was afraid of what those kids would do to her. Come in and spend a little time with these “normal” kids and you will see a few “fits.”

My daughter does great in her “normal” third-grade class. I do pay my taxes and have done my homework. It is against the law to deny a child with disabilities the education they are entitled to. Take a look at the “No Child Left Behind Act” or go to the Americans with Disabilities Web site. I would like to thank all the hardworking people at Thomson Estates who have made sure that my daughter is getting all that she deserves and all the preparation they did in getting the school accessible for her.
Tammy Blackwell initially fought with all her might against allowing her daughter to be placed in a regular classroom. “I didn’t think my daughter could possibly gain from it,” she said. “Now, I’ll be the first one to eat my words about inclusion,” Blackwell said. “Rhiana is using a computer program to do repetitive learning things, but more important to me, she’s become very social. She loves the kids in her class and they’re all very good to her.”

SUCCESS SEVEN YEARS IN THE MAKING
School administrators say stories like Blackwell’s are not unique, although they admit it has been a battle to change the public’s opinion of inclusion — the term school officials use to describe the special education reforms of the past seven years. As included elementary students have moved on to the middle and high schools, so, too, have those schools become integrated. Today, as many as 700 students who would have separated are fully integrated into regular classroom settings close to home.
OUTCOMES
Placement of students with disabilities

% Students age 6 - 21 served in LRE

Pre and Post MCIE Partnership
MCIE System Change Partnership
Reading Scores over time

Increased achievement
Decreased gap
90% ALL students included
County Public Schools
Students with Disabilities in General Education 80% or more of the day

Forecasting Trend Line

Percent of Students with Disabilities

Before MCIE partnership  Baseline  Initial Implementation

SAMPLE SCHOOL

Students with Disabilities in General Education 80% or more of the day

- Sept. 2017 Year 1 Baseline: 66.70%
- Sept. 2017 Year 2 Installation: 68.20%
- May 2018 Year 2 Partial Implementation: 86.00%

**Legend:**
- CES Resident Students Only
- CES With Regional Program Students
Exit Plan (sample)

- **Elementary Schools**
  - Foster inclusive early childhood programs for 3 year olds

- **Middle Schools**
  - Individualized student schedules for students with significant intellectual disabilities
  - Eliminate “community-based” instruction and group programs
  - Strengthen collaborative roles to maintain/increase natural proportions

- **High Schools**
  - Define inclusive services for students who take the alternate assessment
  - Establish work experiences in 11th and 12th grade similar to GE Students

- **District-Wide**
  - Use of Paraprofessionals Steering Committee (use Giangreco work)
Each and Every Student

Learning together to live together

Each and Every Adult

Collaborating for student success

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