Inclusive Practices: Setting the Stage for Inclusion

Session 1

PUBLIC CONSULTING GROUP

ALABAMA Achieves
ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Welcome

Take a moment to introduce yourself in the chat with the following:

- Your name
- Your role
- Your district and school
- Grade level you teach
- One emoji or word to describe how you feel coming into today's session

Meet Our Team

Ashley Quick

Colin Butler

Meredith Keedy-Merk

Ashley Quick

- Special education teacher – 10 years

- Public Consulting Group – 6 years

- Specialize in supporting inclusive practices and students with significant cognitive disabilities

Agenda

Objectives for Today

Understand

Understand the need for change in the approach to inclusive practices.

Identify

Identify critical members of an inclusive team.
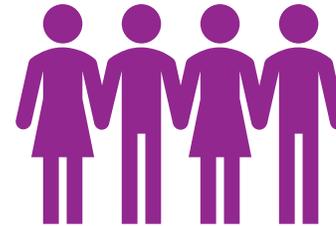
Review

Review the process for creating an inclusive school and classroom.
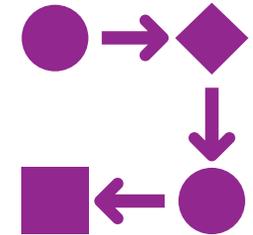
Create and share

Develop a vision for inclusive practices.

Engagement Tools

Engagement Guide

Chat Box

Resource
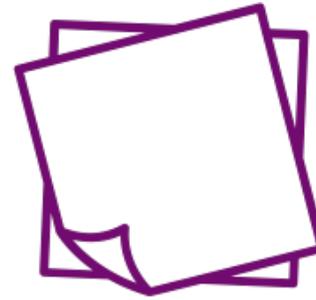
Note and Discuss
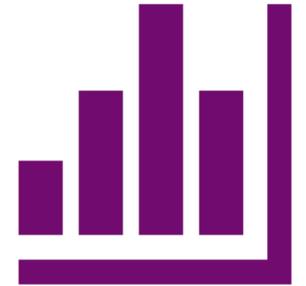
Poll

Pre-Session Activities

Complete the Inclusive Practices Self-Assessment and Review Inclusive Practices Framework

- [Inclusive Schools Self-Assessment](#)

- [Inclusive Practices Framework](#)

Pre-Activity Reflection

Were you surprised by your Self-Assessment results?

What stood out to you in your Self-Assessment results?

What area of the Inclusive Practices Framework are you interested in learning more about?

Inclusion is a mindset. It is a way of thinking. It is not a program that we run or a classroom in our school or a favor we do for someone. Inclusion is who we are. It is who we must strive to be.

– Lisa Friedman – *Removing the Stumbling Block*

Our Journey Begins

# Chat Box Discussion …

What is the difference between inclusion and inclusive practices?

The Evolution of Inclusion

Where Do You Fall on Your Inclusive Journey?

Exclusion — Segregation — Integration — Inclusion (in theory) — Inclusion (in reality)
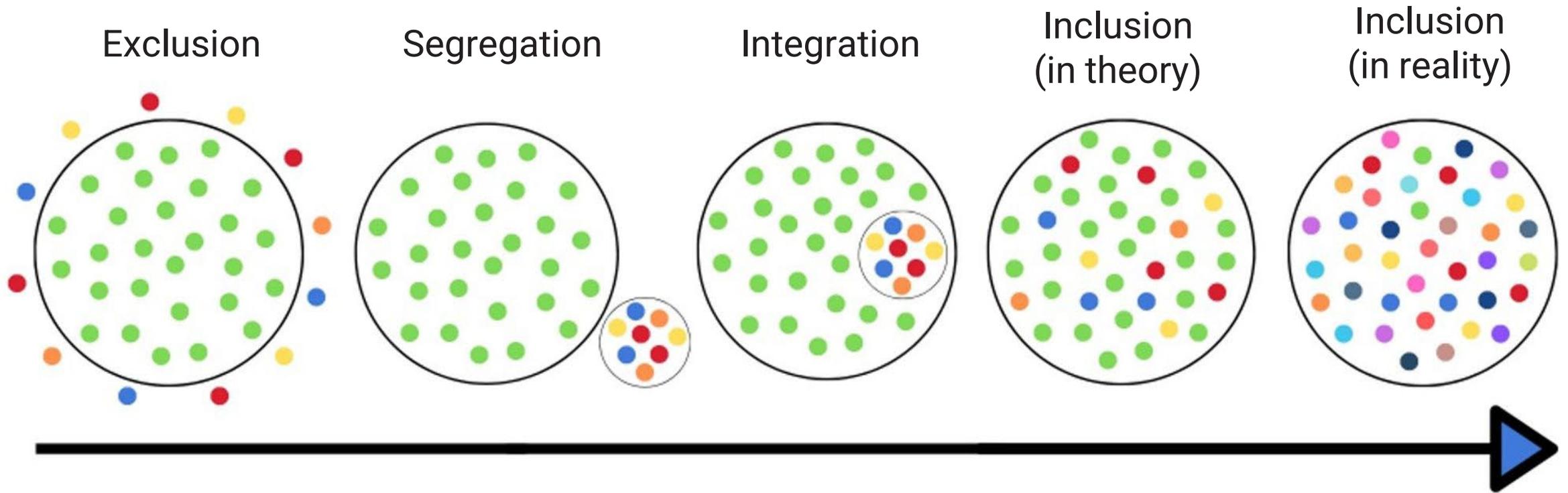
Inclusion Means... ✅	Inclusion Does Not Mean... ❌
Age-appropriate general education classrooms	Placing students with disabilities into general education classes without careful planning
Full membership within the school community	Isolating students within the general education classroom
Individualized and personalized learning	Reducing rigor for any student
Cooperative and collaborative teaching	Special education teachers become classroom assistants in the general education classroom
Building-based planning, problem-solving, and ownership	Responsibility for students with disabilities falls on individual teachers

Source: Adapted from McLeskey, J., & Waldron, N.L. (2000). *Inclusive Schools in Action*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

Benefits of Inclusive Practices

FOR STUDENTS

- Develop community and a sense of belonging
- Meaningful friendships
- Appreciation and acceptance of individual differences, positive self-image
- Prepares students for life in an inclusive society
- Greater academic outcomes
- All students' needs are met, and greater resources for all

FOR TEACHERS

- Creates high expectations for all
- Collaboration around instructional and teaching activities
- Develop teamwork and collaborative problem-solving skills
- Promotes appreciation that all students have strengths
- Creates stronger instructional practices

FOR FAMILIES

- Feel a sense of belonging for their child in school and in their community
- Seeing their children value and appreciate the diversity in others
- Creates and expands opportunities for students outside of school
- Fosters friendships in neighborhood activities and social events

Inclusive Practices Framework

What are inclusive practices?

- Purposeful design, teaching, and assessment

- Teaching that incorporates dynamic practice

- Using varied means of assessment

- Teaching that attends to student needs

- Deliberately cultivating an environment where all students are treated equitably and given what they need to access instruction
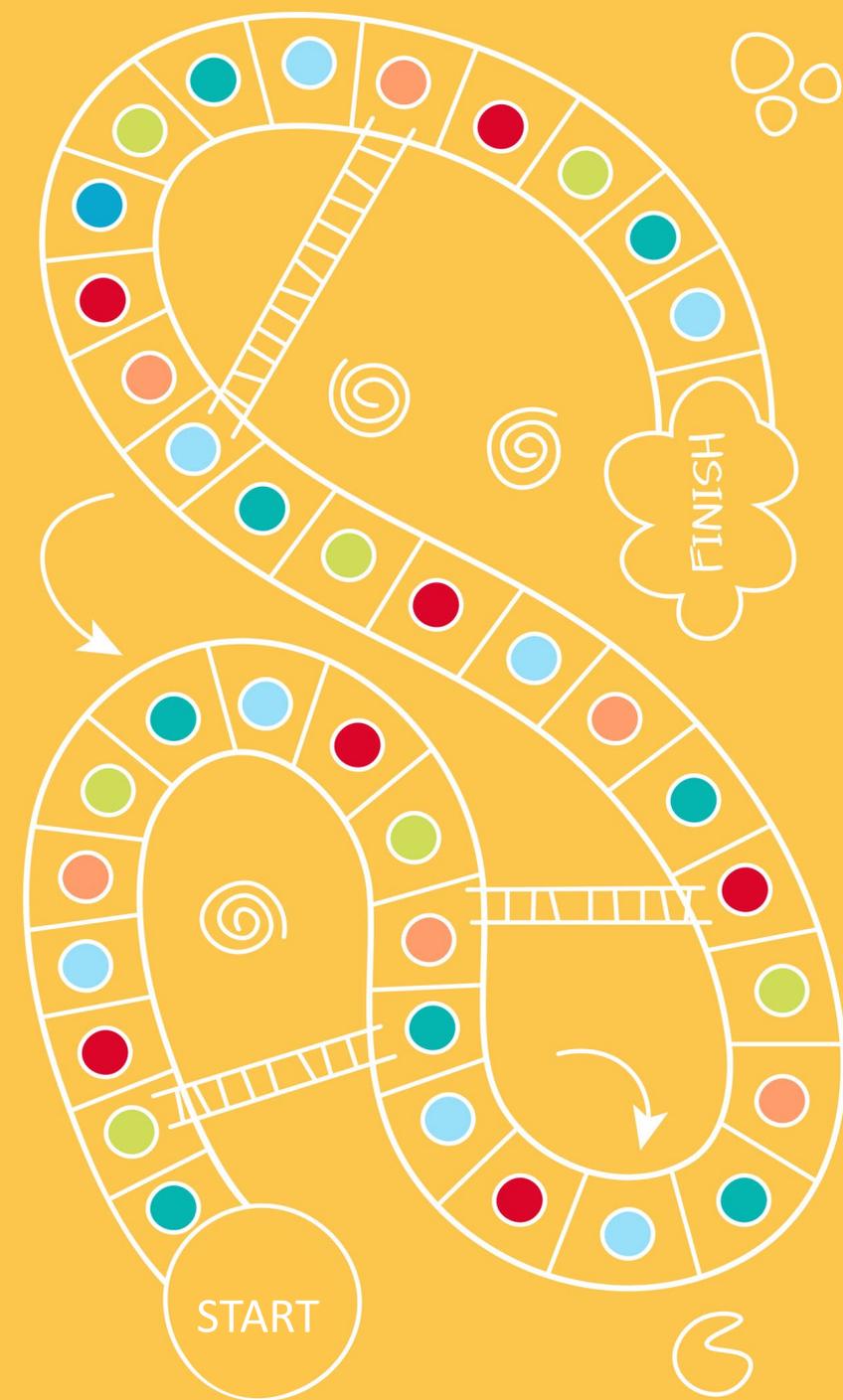
Inclusive Practices Framework

Establish Need for Change

Gather Guiding Team

Create a Vision

Share the Vision

Take Action

Secure Small Wins

Reflect, Analyze, Adjust

Set the Norm

Establish Need for Change → Gather Guiding Team → Create a Vision → Share the Vision → Take Action → Secure Small Wins → Reflect, Analyze, Adjust → Set the Norm

If you change nothing, nothing will change.

How to Establish Change

Research

Mindset

Legislation

Teamwork

Inclusive Practices

Legislation

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Every Student SUCCEEDS ACT

Endrew F. vs. The Douglas County School District

"A student offered an educational program providing 'merely more than de minimis' progress from year to year can hardly be said to have been offered an education at all."

~ Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts

IDEA

IMPORTANT!

"Under IDEA in order to make FAPE available to each child with a disability, *the child's IEP must be designed to enable the child to be **involved in** and **make progress in the general curriculum.**"*

~ Dear Colleague Letter, US Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 11/16/15

"
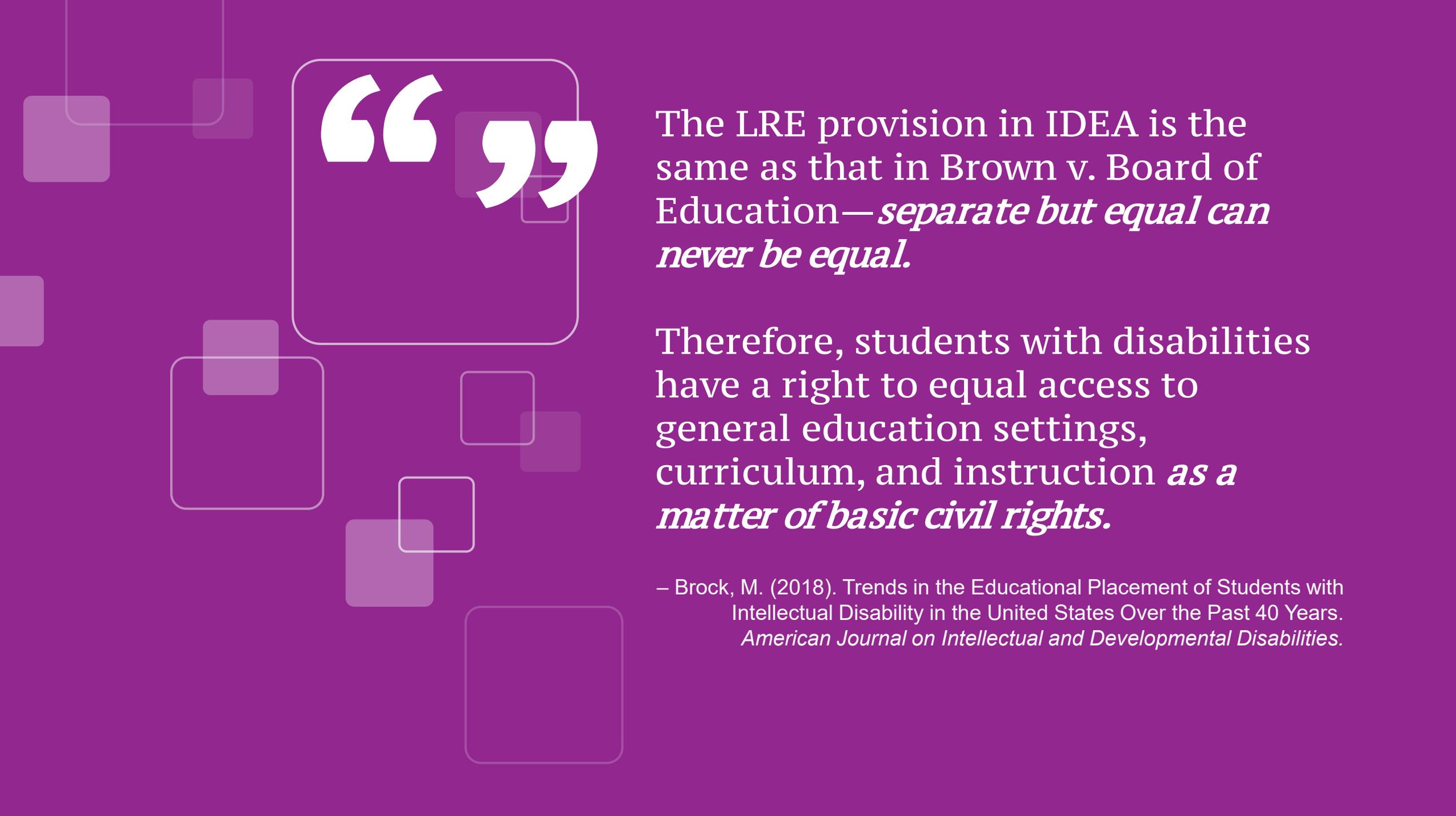
The LRE provision in IDEA is the same as that in Brown v. Board of Education—*separate but equal can never be equal.*

Therefore, students with disabilities have a right to equal access to general education settings, curriculum, and instruction *as a matter of basic civil rights.*

– Brock, M. (2018). Trends in the Educational Placement of Students with Intellectual Disability in the United States Over the Past 40 Years. *American Journal on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.*

How to Establish Change

Research

Mindset

Legislation

Teamwork

Inclusive Practices

Research Findings

Students with disabilities who participate with their general education peers:

Score higher on reading and math tests than students in less inclusive settings

Are better prepared for post-secondary education and employment

Develop stronger social skills

More Research Findings

When students with disabilities are educated with general education peers:

Instructional practices improve as all students may benefit from the accommodations and supports made available

Teachers and school administrators develop capacities to support the individual strengths and needs of every student, not just those with disabilities

Inclusive Practices Stand the Test of Time

Indiana Center on Education and Lifelong Learning:

A study released in 2019 found that students with disabilities in general education classrooms do significantly better on Indiana state assessments than their peers placed in separate special education classrooms.

Tom Hehir and Associates:

A large-scale study released in 2011 in Massachusetts found that students with disabilities with full inclusion placements outperformed similar students on state assessments who were not included to the same extent and had a higher probability of graduating high school than students placed in substantially separate settings.

On a scale of 1-10, how much does legislation and research guide or impact your daily beliefs and actions regarding inclusion?

How to Establish Change

Research

Mindset

Legislation

Teamwork

Inclusive Practices

Presumed Competence

Without conclusive evidence, teachers assume all students can participate in an age-appropriate general curriculum and form meaningful relationships.

How do we do this?

- Ensure students with disabilities participate in a meaningful way.
- Set appropriate learning goals and expect growth.
- Focus on student strengths, not just his disability.

Why does presumed competence matter?

- It leads to more opportunities both in and out of school.
- Presuming incompetence limits students, especially if the educator is wrong.

"Inclusion is more than just being in."

– Cheryl M. Jorgensen, Ph.D.

Presumed Competence

Least Dangerous Assumption

The following are the three principles of the least dangerous assumption:

- Everyone has different abilities and talents. No two people are exactly alike.

- You can't judge a person's whole future success based on one score, like an IQ score. There is much more to a person than just one test score.

- People learn best when they feel valued and have a sense of meaning in their life.

INCLUSIONEVOLUTION.COM

WHICH IS THE LEAST DANGEROUS ASSUMPTION?

We assumed he could learn, so we gave him every opportunity. And it turns out he couldn't

VS.

We assumed he could NOT learn, so we did not give him the opportunity. But it turns out he COULD learn

source: Anne Donnellan, 1984

Least Dangerous Assumption

The least dangerous assumption *is to have high expectations for all students*.

High Expectations

Why do high expectations matter?

- They help students build self-esteem.

- They support increased confidence in students.

- They improve academic performance and help drive student success.

Your students will live up to (or down from!) your expectations.

High Expectations ≠ Unreasonable Expectations

What kind of inclusion are we talking about?

Academic

Being exposed to, and supported in, grade-level content.

Physical

Social

Being in the same place as same-age peers.

Being included, and supported, in non-academic activities with same-age peers.
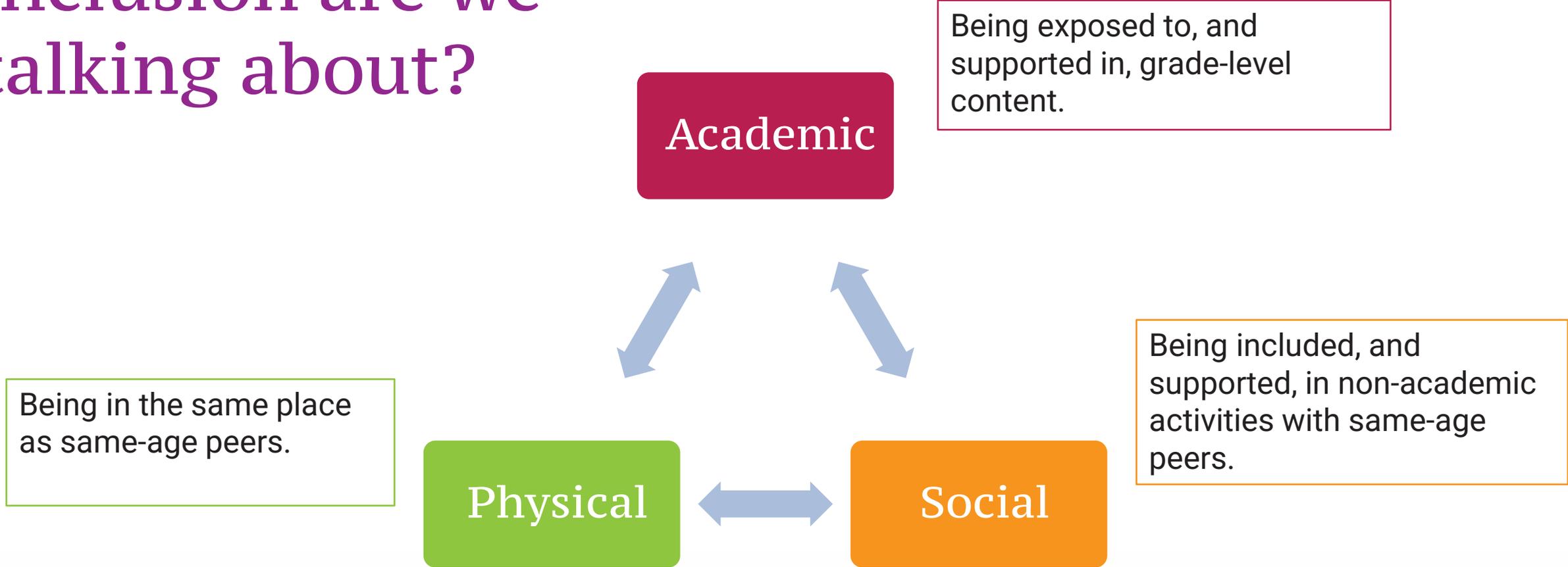
Poll Question:

Which belief will need the most intentional support and resources moving forward?

High Expectations

Least Dangerous Assumption

Presumed Competence

How to Establish Change

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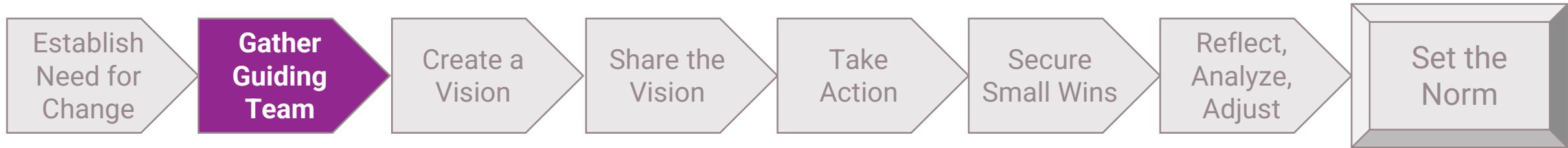
Keys to Building an Effective Team

- Variety of roles, skills, and perspectives

- Voluntary participation

- Effective interpersonal skills

- Established team norms

- Intentional, regular communication

Building an Inclusive Team Template

ALSDE Building an Inclusive Team Template (Framework Step #2)

Use the guiding questions below to help you put together your inclusive team.

Considerations	Example	Name(s)
Who knows the students best?	Special ed teacher SLP	
Who knows the academic content best?	Gen ed teacher Instructional coach	
Who can influence building schedules, procedures, etc.?	Principal Assistant principal	
Who can influence school culture if necessary?	Principal Assistant principal	
Who has expert knowledge in areas that would make education more accessible to students with disabilities?	Curriculum coordinator AT specialist SLP	
Who is already championing the idea of inclusive practices?	Special education director Other teachers	

- The template is a guide in your work in building an inclusive team.

- As a school team, begin to brainstorm answers to the guiding questions (10 minutes).

Establish Need for Change

Gather Guiding Team

Create a Vision

Share the Vision

Take Action

Secure Small Wins

Reflect, Analyze, Adjust

Set the Norm

What Is a Vision Statement?

- ✓ A **statement** … of current and future objectives

- ✓ A **guide** … to help make decisions that align with your philosophy

- ✓ A **roadmap** … to where you want to be within a certain timeframe

What's the Point?

- Supports effective long-term planning

- Provides clarity of purpose

- Aligns individual efforts toward team goals

- Sharpens focus on a forward-facing outlook

- Decreases the likelihood of being bogged down by previous challenges

Best Practices for Writing a Vision Statement

Make it clear and concise.

Make it challenging but achievable.

Make it future-oriented but timebound.

Make it visible.

[Vision Statement Template](#)

- Start to think about a vision statement for your school/district.

- Following Session 1, continue this work with your team, and plan to review this in Session 2.

Inclusive Vision Statement Template (Framework Step #3)

Create your inclusive vision statement using the guiding questions below.

What is the need for change in our school? _Step 1: Establish the Need for Change_	Who is on the team for inclusive practices? _Step 2: Gather a Guiding Team_	What do our inclusive practices currently look like? _Step 5: Take Action – Assess Current Practice_	Where would we like to be? _Step 8: Set the Norm_

Draw a picture that depicts your vision.	Jot down some descriptive words or phrases that represent your vision.

Vision Statement:

Creekland Middle School will be a world-class school with students who achieve excellence in all areas. Staff will be experts in their field who are dedicated to lifelong and student success. Families will partner with staff to help students reach their maximum potential. Students will constantly strive to improve in everything they do.

Clear and concise?

Challenging, but achievable?

Future-oriented and timebound?

We, the Bain Elementary family, consisting of staff, students, caregivers, and the community, will establish a safe and supportive environment that will maximize the potential of all students. We will provide differentiated learning experiences through authentic, engaging, and challenging instructional practices based on individual learning styles. As a family, we will foster success for all students to promote college and career readiness to equip students with skills needed for life in the 21st century.

Clear and concise?

Challenging, but achievable?

Future-oriented and timebound?

Now that you've seen some sample vision statements...

Jot down a few words or phrases that come to mind for your vision of inclusion in your school or district.

Establish Need for Change → Gather Guiding Team → Create a Vision → Share the Vision → Take Action → Secure Small Wins → Reflect, Analyze, Adjust → Set the Norm

Establish Need for Change → Gather Guiding Team → Create a Vision → Share the Vision → **Take Action** → **Secure Small Wins** → **Reflect, Analyze, Adjust** → **Set the Norm**

Session 2

Before the Session

- Complete the Building an Inclusive Team Template.

- Use the Inclusive Vision Statement Template to create your inclusive vision with your team.

Topics of Session

- Take Action (Framework Step 5)
    - Assess current practices.
    - Review inclusive strategies.
    - Create an action plan.