Inclusive Leadership and Disability

George Theoharis, Julie Causton, and Casey Woodfield

This chapter focuses on what leaders need to know and be able to do in order to create schools that meet the needs of students with disabilities. It is important to note that disability is often the first and only dimension of diversity that people associate with inclusion and issues of inclusivity. While for some readers this chapter will resonate with notions of inclusion and special education in schools, disability does not exist in a vacuum but in a world full of intersections between disability and other areas of difference. When we think about inclusive schooling, we are talking about shifting the way we see education—a paradigm shift, a sea change, a philosophy that undergirds planning and decision-making. In terms of disability, inclusive education at its core means *all* students with disabilities are learning and socializing in general education settings, and educators are providing inclusive services to meet their needs while eliminating pullout or self-contained special education programs. It is a constant effort to reject partial attempts and get beyond segregated lives, classrooms, and communities. This means we see *each and every* child, regardless of disability or need, as a fundamental and valued member and participant of the general education heterogeneous classroom community. This necessitates a team of professionals working together to adapt, modify, and differentiate for all students to get beyond a one-size-fits-all approach. This chapter focuses on inclusive leadership and disability. We begin with the current context of disability in schools, then proceed to summarize the research literature relating disability to the needs of school leaders, and finally detail what inclusive leadership around disability looks like with tools and case studies.

PART 1: THE CURRENT CONTEXT OF DISABILITY IN SCHOOLS

The provision of special education services for the 6.5 million school-aged students labeled with disabilities in the United States is driven and mediated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004). Since this federal special education law's least restrictive environment (LRE) principle ensures that "to the maximum

extent appropriate, children with disabilities . . . are educated with children who are not disabled . . . with the use of supplementary aids and services" (IDEA 2004, 20 U.S.C. §1412 (5) (B) *et seq.*), students with disabilities are increasingly being educated and provided those supports in heterogeneous general education classrooms (US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, 2011). Based on the foundation of equitable access established by these provisions, general education, with meaningful access to the academic and social aspects of schooling, is considered the preferred placement for students with disabilities to receive special education and related services.

Under IDEA 2004, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) must direct these services and supports for students with disabilities; a guiding document collaboratively designed by a multidisciplinary team that includes the student him/herself, general education teacher, special education teacher, administrative designee, psychologist, parent/guardian, and any other individuals who are knowledgeable about the student. As members and key contributors to IEP teams, school administrators can not only help to make these placement and service decisions for students with disabilities, but they also can be crucial to cultivating a school-and district-wide culture that hinges on inclusive and equity-oriented special education service delivery options. School leaders' absence from this role almost certainly precludes the development of inclusive and equity-oriented special education service delivery.

Over the past two decades many schools have shifted their service delivery to comply with the LRE requirement by unifying previously separate general and special education environments to establish cohesive services that benefit all students (Causton-Theoharis & Theoharis, 2008; Frattura & Capper, 2007). As research suggests, inclusive service delivery goes beyond implications for only students with disability labels and extend into the experiences of *all* students (McLeskey & Waldron, 2006; Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman, & Schattman, 1993). These benefits are social and academic, but also more global as students learn to live, work, and play side-by-side.

The education of students with disabilities in this country has an exclusionary past that has been, and continues to be, rewritten through the implementation of this federal legislation that holds all learners to high academic standards (Hardman & Dawson, 2008). These expectations are inherent in the accountability measures sanctioned by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). A standards-based reform, NCLB fosters educational accountability through the use of evidence-based practices; students are expected to meet grade-level benchmark standards, as measured by standardized assessments. Both this act and IDEA 2004 are united in their call for highly qualified teachers, academic goals for students with disabilities that are attached to standards, and the systematic measurement and reporting of academic progress (US Department of Education, 2007; Rosenberg, Sindelar, & Hardman, 2004). The culture of accountability established by these mandates pushes schools to move beyond just providing access for students with disabilities, holding them responsible for developing rigorous academic environments that expect and foster high achievement for all. School administrators initiate, monitor, and maintain patterns of action to build this culture.

What Do People With Disabilities Say? Voices of the Community

Of course, the high expectations that run through these accountability measures and legal provisions do not automatically translate into improvements in the education and services directed toward students with disabilities. Developing inclusive spaces based on collaboration and respect among staff and between students requires commitment at all levels—actions that should include and involve student perspectives as well. Yet the voices

of professionals and parents continue to be utilized as the primary means of interpreting students' experiences with disability and education, rather than seeking feedback from individuals with disabilities themselves (Robledo & Donnellan, 2008; Wickenden, 2009). It is not surprising, then, that this predisposition for the professional perspective is also reflected in practice (Ashby & Causton-Theoharis, 2009; Connor, 2007). Here in this chapter, and in practice, we would like to change that.

Consider feedback from students. Too many students with disabilities have stories to share of instances where inclusion was not made a priority and their accounts are often as powerfully instructive as they are disheartening. These students have much to teach us from our own—historical and current—missteps and it is our commitment as scholars and teacher educators to rely on their experiences as resources. For example, the following poetic representation of Michael's perspective, an adult labeled Learning Disabled (LD), provides a retrospective on what could have made his experience better:

> I think they should get rid of the title "special ed." . . .
> It should be just forgotten about.
> Before I got into special ed.
> I'd just sit there, playing around, lolly-gagging.
> Then in junior high school I was just falling down, so
> they was like
> *"Michael's not catching up with the class . . . "* da-da-da
> My resource room teacher said, *"Maybe you should get
> him tested."*
> Then I was tested some more, so I was being tested,
> tested, and they said,
> *"You can either get left back . . . or you gotta go to special ed."*
> I hated it.
> That's the most embarrassing thing to a kid.
> Everyone thinks you're slower than everyone else.
> When I was in there I was like *"Oh man, you have to get
> out . . . "*
>
>   (Connor, 2006, p. 15)

Like many other students with disabilities with similar educational experiences, the stigma associated with labeling and exclusion that Michael describes is real. His preoccupation with embarrassment, measuring his own performance against his peers, and "get[ting] out" of special education suggests that these feelings fostered during his junior high and high school years have stuck with him even in his adult life. Is that what school is intended to be? His critique of special education is compelling and candid: "it should just be forgotten about"; perhaps an artful, and productive, twist on his own stated feelings as a student.

In a published version of a conversation between himself and Doug Biklen (a professor), Jamie Burke, a high school student with autism who types and reads aloud his text to communicate, poses questions that breathe life to Michael's previous critique. He notes, "Segregation equals a distinction of lesser ability. Am I lesser because I get nervous about an exam? Am I deemed less intelligent because my feelings only make passing a higher stakes? I again ask you to think of who is it that has placed this way of evaluating worthiness? Have they placed their feet in my shoes? I would enjoin them to try, and to allow me to view the straightness of their path" (Biklen & Burke, 2006, p. 172). Together, Michael and Jamie's perspectives testify to the inequity of exclusion typical of segregated special education; important realities to consider as we work to determine placements and service

delivery for the students with disabilities that follow them. As Jamie goes on to note, doing so is tenuous, but critical:

> The idea of school inclusion can be as a lousy or lovely happening. It's really all in the hands of the teachers along with the permission from the big boss, the superintendent. Teachers must be willing to not just give me a desk and then leave me to fill the chair. I need to be asked questions, and given time for my thoughtful answers. Teachers need to become as a conductor, and guide me through the many places I may get lost.
>
> <div align="right">(p. 172)</div>

Informed by his own school experiences, Jamie's example not only sheds light on what it may have felt like for him to navigate an educational system not designed with him in mind, but also pushes educators and administrators to ask, "How could we do better?" As Jamie and Michael's words suggest, "inclusive" is not an acquired status, it a collaborative, ongoing, and malleable journey grounded in commitment to students. Thus, listening to these experiences of individuals whose ways of moving in and interacting with the world often in and of themselves challenge the normative expectations of the spaces and people they encounter holds much promise for movement toward more inclusive opportunities (Ferri, 2009).

PART 2: WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT DISABILITY: THE LITERATURE

In this section, we review and synthesize four key aspects of the research literature that inclusive leaders need to understand: intersections and overrepresentation, social construction of disability, efficacy of inclusive services, response to intervention, and presuming competence.

How Does Disability Relate to Other Areas of Difference? Intersections and Overrepresentation

Although our chapter focuses on disability, disability cannot be examined in isolation, since many areas of difference overlap with and in it. The over-representation of students of color in special education represents an area in which complex intersections of race, class, and ability translate into marginalization and exclusion. Due to this subjective nature of labeling, Black and Latino students are currently represented three times more frequently than their White peers in special education (Ferri & Connor, 2006; Losen & Orfield, 2002).

The over-representation of students of color in special education is confounded by the fact that students of color are more than twice as likely to be living in poverty (Macartney, Bishaw, & Fontenot, 2013) and often have less access to quality prenatal and early childhood medical care and early intervention services resulting in manifestation of developmental and cultural characteristics that can be misinterpreted as disability (Dudley-Marling & Dudley-Marling, this volume; see further Donovan & Cross, 2002) and/or be complicated by an absence of culturally relevant support (Artiles, Kozleski, Trent, Osher, & Ortiz, 2010; Blanchett, Klingner, & Harry, 2009). Moreover, the disproportionate representation of children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in special education has been a problem for over 20 years (Garcia & Ortiz, 2011).

Importantly, once students from linguistically and culturally diverse groups are labeled, they are more likely to be in segregated placements than their White classmates who carry the same disability label (Cartledge, Singh, & Gibson, 2008; National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). This over-representation of students of color often occurs in the categories of emotional and behavioral disturbances, intellectual disabilities, and learning disabilities (Parrish, 2002), and these categories are more likely to be segregated (US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, 2012). More specifically, 21.7% of Black students across disability labels and 21.8% of Asian and Pacific Islanders spend less than 40% of their day in general education, compared to 11.9% of their White counterparts (US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, 2012).

The over-representation of students of color in special education is also complicated by gender. Roughly two-thirds of students with disabilities between the ages of 6 and 17 served under the IDEA are male (US Department of Education, 2007). Within that group, the most heavily male-dominated disability categories include emotional disturbance (80% male ages 6–12; 77% male ages 13–17) and autism (83% male ages 6–12; 84% male ages 13–17). This disproportionality should not be interpreted to mean that disabilities are more common in boys than girls. Just as is the case with the overrepresentation of students of color in special education—many of whom, we can see from the data, are boys—the subjective nature of labeling must be considered as well. Behavioral expectations and ideas about normative performance are important to consider in light of these statistics, which tell us only that males tend to be labeled with disabilities more often than girls. As school leaders, what we do with these numbers, and how we move toward more equitable delivery of services, has to do first with how we conceptualize disability itself.

The Social Construction of Disability

Leaders for inclusive schooling must consider how individuals with disabilities have historically been regarded in medical, professional, educational, and general parlance. The understanding of disability, and the institutionalized responses to it, have traditionally and pervasively been associated with a medicalized, deficit-based perspective that positions disability as an inherent, negative trait within an individual. Disability, and therefore the student with a disability, has been seen as a problem to be fixed. Yet scholars in the fields of disability studies (DS) and disability studies in education (DSE) reveal other factors at play, too, in our current understandings of what disability is and whom it impacts. The notion of disability as a social construction holds that meaning is and has been made by human beings in interactions with one another and the world around them (Taylor, 2008; Shakespeare, 2010). Therefore, "disability" is a concept representative of the contextual nature of the way that individuals with impairments experience, and are marginalized by, social, structural, emotional, institutional, historical, and political aspects of the world (Garland-Thomson, 1997). Not only is this framework a key tenet of DS and DSE as academic fields, but a helpful way of thinking about disability in relation to inclusive educational opportunities and practices.

Through the lens of the social construction of disability, disability categories are not only created through a combination of medical, professional, research-based, educational, and federal governmental conceptions, but they also can and have changed over time. For example, the category of intellectual disability (or mental retardation, as it has been referred to until recently) and associated assumptions about intellectual ability and competence that accompany it have evolved and changed over time, showing that a disability category is not fixed, objective, or static (Bogdan & Taylor, 1976; Danforth, 1997). Prior to 1973, individuals with an IQ of 80 or below qualified for a label of what was then known as mental

retardation. Yet during 1973 the federal government lowered that diagnostic criteria measure to 70 or below. With the swift stroke of a pen, hundreds of thousands of individuals who went to bed one night labeled mentally retarded were essentially "cured" the very next day (Blatt, 1987).

Perhaps most significantly, once created, these disability categories are reinforced and marked by assumptions that accompany them. Simply put, people see what they are looking for. And what they are looking for is based on characteristics associated with the diagnostic criteria of a disability label. Once labeled, students with disabilities often become understood—particularly by educators—almost exclusively through the lens of their perceived deficits (Baglieri, Bejoian, Broderick, Connor, & Valle, 2011).

We see this personified in our work with schools constantly (Causton & Theoharis, 2014). For example, while observing in a third-grade classroom we noted how these negative perceptions of students labeled with disabilities translate into lived consequences for students. While the classroom was bustling with students talking as they completed art projects, the teacher shouted over the noise, "Seth, that is the last time." She walked to the chalkboard and wrote his name, on display for the rest of his classmates to see. Yet the noise in this classroom came from the combination of many students talking at the same time. From where we were sitting, Seth's behavior looked no different than his classmates'. So why was Seth—a student who carries the label of emotional disturbance—the only student whose actions were considered problematic? Could it be that the answer is as simple as, "because he was expected to be"?

As is evident in the historical revision of criteria for intellectual disability labels, as well the example of Seth's seemingly unwarranted disciplining, the "creation" of disability categories has implications for the lived realties of those so labeled; experiences over which, often, they have no control. These categories are developed, amended, and attached in relation to individuals' lives through the determinations made by external others of whether they "qualify" or not. The social construction of disability means that disability labels are not static; they are not made up of hard and fast rules that describe certain types of people. In contrast, they are merely reflections and indicators of patterns of difficulty for individuals, the meaning of which has been made by other people and throughout history. Understanding this can drive us to be more accountable for and critical of our own biases, and lead to a more individualized, assets-based rather than categorical, deficits-based approach to educating students with particular needs.

The Efficacy of Inclusive Services

Research has shown that when students with significant disabilities are educated in general, rather than special, education settings, their academic outcomes increase and instances of challenging behavior decrease (Dawson et al., 1999). Further, a review of 50 studies comparing academic performances of students with mild disabilities included in general education with those who were not indicated that students in the inclusive setting had higher average academic growth (80th percentile) than those who were segregated (50th percentile) (TASH, 2009). Research suggests that students with disabilities in inclusive settings earn better standardized assessment scores and achieve higher grades overall, as compared to their counterparts in segregated special education settings (Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002).

The academic and social benefits of inclusive education extend beyond just students with disabilities to impact those without disabilities as well (Cole, Waldron, & Majd, 2004; Fisher & Meyer, 2002; Freeman & Alkin, 2000; Kennedy, Shulka, & Fryxell, 1997; Sharpe, York, & Knight, 1994; Waldron & McLeskey, 1998). Studies have revealed increased academic performance of students without disabilities placed in inclusive classroom settings

(TASH, 2009) and found achievement for students without disabilities to be equal to or better academically when in inclusive settings (Salend & Duhaney, 1999). Research has revealed that placing students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms had no impact on amount or disruption of instruction time (Staub & Peck, 1995), an argument commonly made against inclusive schooling. In this achievement-based era of accountability, school leadership must make certain to provide all learners (particularly students with disabilities) opportunities to academically advance. Inclusive education has proven to be a vehicle of such equitable and positive outcomes.

Response to Intervention (RTI)

There has been ongoing debate, resulting in an abundance of reforms, around the best ways to educate students who receive special education services (Gersten & Dimino, 2006). Currently, schools have implemented Response to Intervention (RTI) as a mechanism for delivering services. RTI is a three-tiered model based on a student's "response to interventions" that increase in intensity at each level. At its core, RTI aims to alter contextual variables through intensity of instruction (i.e., explicit instruction, increase frequency, lengthen duration, creating homogeneous groups, remediation of skills) in an effort to remediate skills based on the perceived deficits of students considered to be "at risk" for academic failure. While the premise of providing support to students when they struggle as opposed to waiting for them to fail is promising, there are elements of the model that, in practice, work against inclusive schooling.

For instance, while Tiers I and II involve intensifying interventions within the classroom, Tier III includes the provision of individualized interventions for students who have failed to respond to previous interventions, thus suggesting that for those students, separate classroom settings are acceptable. Moreover, students of color and students who are culturally and linguistically diverse are often over-identified for RTI and, as a result, are again more segregated from their peers than White students (Artiles, Bal, & Thorius, 2010; NCCRESt, 2005).

RTI interventions, in theory, are designed to be useful for the majority of students, yet frequently steps are not taken to mold them to students' particular needs or social, cultural, personal, or classroom contexts (NCCRESt, 2005). Thus, while on its surface this model encourages advocacy and appropriate services for students with disabilities—a key element in establishing socially just schools—this generalized approach to reform threatens to perpetuate dominant ideas about segregated learning environments being suitable placements for students who fail to measure up to standardized academic and behavioral expectations. This idea feeds into the histories of segregating students, an idea and practice from which an inclusive education philosophy aims to move away (Artiles et al., 2010; Ferri, 2012). Additionally concerning is that once a student is placed into special education, further research on how progress monitoring should be conducted is not part of the RTI model (Ferri, 2012); all we know is that the student did not respond to the interventions implemented prior to their designation. As Artiles and colleagues (2010) make note: "Framing RTI as a solely technical endeavor in which oppression does not exist will ultimately exacerbate the possibilities of reproducing past inequities for the next generation" (p. 256).

We Must Assume Students CAN! Presumption of Competence

The fourth area of literature that should undergird leadership in increasingly diverse schools centers on the presumption of competence, a conviction that asserts the importance of fundamentally believing in all students' ability to learn (Biklen & Burke, 2006). For many

students, but particularly for students with significant disabilities, notions of competence and intelligence are too often called into question. Students with complex support needs pose unique challenges for educators related to the assessment, communication, and determination of their learning. The presumption of competence provides a clear response to this perceived quandary: no one can definitively know another person's thinking unless the other person can (accurately) reveal it. Given this, presuming competence can be considered what Anne Donnellan (1984) has termed the *least dangerous assumption*. It is less harmful to assume that students can learn—and support them to do so—than to expect that they cannot.

Over the course of history students with disabilities have revealed time and again that professionals have been wrong about how and what they can learn or gain from educational opportunities. We have continually been surprised by what students can communicate, learn, share, and do. And yet students with disabilities have perpetually been excluded from the educational opportunities they deserve. That we continue to be caught off guard by such realizations—that students continue to have to prove us wrong—is an unfortunate reality, as it reflects a systematic unwillingness to shift, change, and grow based on lessons learned. Presuming competence for all (students with disabilities, students who speak English as a second language, students from all races and socioeconomic status), then, pushes us not only to expect that students can and will learn, but also to place them in inclusive settings that provide challenging, interesting, age-appropriate experiences as well as opportunities, supports, and expectations for success.

In sum, inclusion is not a program to be offered to some students in some classrooms. Instead, inclusion forms an underlying philosophy or way of seeing the world. Inclusion is a way of leading schools that embraces *each and every* student as full members of the general education academic and social community. Thus, while this chapter is focused on disability, this understanding of inclusion is much broader and applies across all areas of difference. We know that it is the leaders who need to make this happen, and we now turn to the tools and strategies to make inclusion possible.

PART 3: INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN K–12 SCHOOLS

> Systemic change toward inclusive education requires **passionate visionary leaders** who are able to build consensus around the goal of providing quality education for all learners. . . . . . [Study after study found] **administrative support and vision to be the most powerful predictor** of success of moving toward full inclusion.
> —Villa and Thousand (2003, p. 13)

Villa and Thousand (2003) challenge us to realize that more than anything else, the role of school leaders is paramount to create and maintain inclusive schools. Here, we review the leader's role in including students with disabilities through a process for leaders to use in moving their schools to become more inclusive (inclusive school reform). We conclude with case study examples of a school and district engaged in this work.

Leaders' Roles in Inclusion and Disability

There are many contributing factors to inclusive schools and the benefits students with and without disabilities, staff, teachers, parents, and communities realize. However, it is the leaders who ultimately make or break efforts to be inclusive and to transcend from the

rhetoric of inclusion to the reality of embracing the full range of students with and without disabilities as members of the general education learning and social community.

This section brings together the practice of school leaders and the research examining the role leaders play in creating inclusive schools for students with disabilities (see Capper & Frattura, 2008, McLesky & Waldron, 2006, Riehl, 2000, Theoharis, 2009), and focuses on providing leaders additional tools and strategies—in the form of a *process*—to create (or recreate) more inclusive contexts for all students. We refer to this approach as inclusive school reform. Consistently, leaders who are successful at leading or moving toward fully inclusive schools do the following:

- Set a bold, clear vision of full inclusion
- Engage in collaborative planning and implementation with their staff
- Conduct an equity audit
- Map current service delivery
- Set goals based on the vision
- Realign school and staffing structure
- Build instructional teams
- Transform classroom practice
- Reduce fragmentation of initiatives
- Monitor, adjust, and celebrate

Set a Bold, Clear Vision of Full Inclusion

A strong leadership vision of inclusive schooling is vital for the successful implementation of inclusive practices. Perhaps the most difficult, but most important, of all the leadership for inclusive education strategies, leaders need to be visible and consistent in their vision to move toward fully inclusive schools. Successful inclusive leaders do not accept some segregation or partial inclusion as the goal, nor do they talk in platitudes like "all children can learn." They are specific and firm in their vision for inclusive schooling, returning to it to drive planning and to make decisions for the school. Assistant Superintendent Lisa describes the bold direction for her district:

> We know that inclusive services are best for students with and without disabilities. This requires teams of professionals working in inclusive classrooms to meet the needs of each learner in the classroom. I believe that each student in this district deserves authentic access to general education, peers, and the general education teachers. We can and will successfully include all students who come to us. We will figure out how to do this together, but we will do this.

Principal Janice also provides a powerful example of maintaining a focus on the vision during the transition to a fully inclusive model. After months of planning about how to eliminate self-contained and pullout programs and fully include students with the proper supports in general education across her K–8 school, the leadership team unveiled the service delivery plan at a Spring staff meeting. After the plan was discussed, principal Janice got up and said:

> This is where we are going. We are not going back to the segregated ways of our past. This team has worked very hard to come up with the best plan for next year. I recognize we all need support to do this. I also recognize that some of you have serious reservations about this direction. I ask that you come with us as we work to make this school a model of inclusion, but if you feel this is not a direction you can head I will

help you find a position where you can be successful. No one here will be allowed to sabotage our efforts . . . We will become a model of inclusion; if you can't be part of that, I have a stack of transfer forms right here.

In the years that followed, she worked on developing a shared vision with the staff. She also held people to that vision and was often heard asking, "How does that fit with our commitment to inclusive education?" about decisions around how to meet the needs of students. Her insistence that inclusivity for all students not get sidelined by other matters and instead drive decisions helped her maintain a bold vision at the forefront of her school.

The inclusive vision of school leaders needs to drive a collaborative process that leads toward a shared inclusive vision in the school; however, in our experience there are not many schools where there is an initial shared vision of inclusion across school staff. The leadership needs to drive the inclusive vision and build a collaborative planning process that meaningfully engages diverse stakeholders.

Engage in Collaborative Planning and Implementation

In all of the schools and districts we have studied on their journeys to creating fully inclusive services, identifying the best ways to create inclusive services was a collaborative process. The leader should facilitate the planning process in a democratic and transparent manner with a representative leadership team consisting of school administrators, general education teachers, special education teachers, and other staff members. The team should also check in and communicate with the entire staff throughout the process.

The leaders may have provided a direction, but she or he or they brought staff together—special education teachers, general education teachers, support staff, and paraprofessionals—to figure out how the people in their school could make that happen. The planning and implementation was democratic.

In one case, the district administration pushed all the schools in a more inclusive direction. Special Education Director Mike and Superintendent Carol helped support service delivery changes at all schools. For example, Principal Olivia, working with the special education administrator, created a service delivery leadership team to examine their special education service delivery. She made this team open to all who wanted to join. The team created a variety of options for using their existing human resources to become fully inclusive and eliminate self-contained and pullout services, working together to make a coherent service delivery plan for the following year. The team, not the principal, then presented it to the staff to gain broader support.

As with all new initiatives, there were bumps in the road. Principal Olivia made sure the school stayed the course after the first concerns were voiced at the beginning of implementation and a number of staff members got nervous and wanted to return to the way things used to be. Olivia brought teachers together to problem solve, but she was clear that the school was not turning back. Every January this service delivery team begins its work in planning for the following year, collaboratively looking at the projected students, needs, and grade levels for the next year. Principal Olivia makes sure this process happens, but does not control it. She has the literacy coach facilitate the service team meetings.

While many specific attributes for collaborative planning are unique to Principal Olivia's school, there are some key salient ideas for all schools. First, the staff worked together to make an implementation plan over a series of months. Second, the plan was not abandoned at the first or second or third implementation bump. And finally, given lessons learned and changes in students and staff, each year a team of staff members begins thoughtfully planning how to implement a fully inclusive philosophy for the following year.

This key component of successful inclusive services involves the collaborative planning that brought different stakeholders to the table to develop and fine-tune implementation for a school-wide plan. It is important to get buy-in but also different perspectives on an inclusive service delivery plan for the school.

Part of collaborative planning and implementing inclusive reform is creating a climate of belonging. This means working with all stakeholders at school to presume competence and value of all students, building community purposefully in each classroom throughout the year, adopting a school-wide community-building approach, and enhancing the sense of belonging for all students, staff, and families. It is essential that throughout this process inclusion is looked at broadly, keeping in mind the intersections of disability, race, class, and gender. (See the online companion website, www.routledge.com/cw/theoharis, for the belonging observational tool.)

Conduct an Equity Audit to Understand Current Realities

Equity audits are becoming a more widely used tool for school leaders to understand and gather local data about their schools. Many educators feel their school operates in an equitable manner overall, but equity audits provide concrete data to reflect operational realities and identify disproportionate areas to address. The final chapter of this text describes a comprehensive equity audit process. See the disability section and full equity audit detailed in Chapter 10 and online (www.routledge.com/cw/theoharis). Conducting an audit can achieve a number of goals, like making a case for changing service delivery, strengthening the vision of inclusion, and providing data for a collaborative planning process.

Create Service Delivery Maps

Teams examine the existing way services are provided, human resources are used, and where students receive which services. This process requires that school teams map out current service delivery and human resource distribution in efforts to meet the range of student needs. This involves creating a visual representation of the classrooms, special education service provision, general education classrooms, and how students receive their related services. An essential part of creating service maps is to indicate which staff pull students from which classrooms, which students learn in self-contained spaces, and which paraprofessionals are used where—a complete picture of how and where all staff at the school work.

Figure 2.1 provides an example of this kind of visual map of the service delivery model before inclusive school reform. The rectangles around the edge represent the general education classrooms. The ovals in the middle labeled "resource" represent resource special education teachers who worked with students with disabilities in many classrooms (as indicated by the lines) through a pullout model. The circles labeled self-contained had a multi-aged group of students with disabilities who spent the entire day together, separate from general education peers. There is one oval marked with "inclusion 20+10." This represents what was previously called an "inclusive" classroom. This room had about 20 general education students with an additional ten students with disabilities. This old service delivery plan segregated students with intense needs into certain classrooms, while other classrooms lacked students with disabilities and additional adult support. Some students were excluded and removed from the general education curriculum, instruction, and social interaction with general education peers for some or all of each school day.

We see the visual mapping of services as a key way to understand the patterns and who gets which kinds of services and where these services happen. Visual mapping of services can also allow leaders and teams to see racial and economic patterns of student composition in classes and services (see Figure 2.2). Creating service maps and identifying the race,
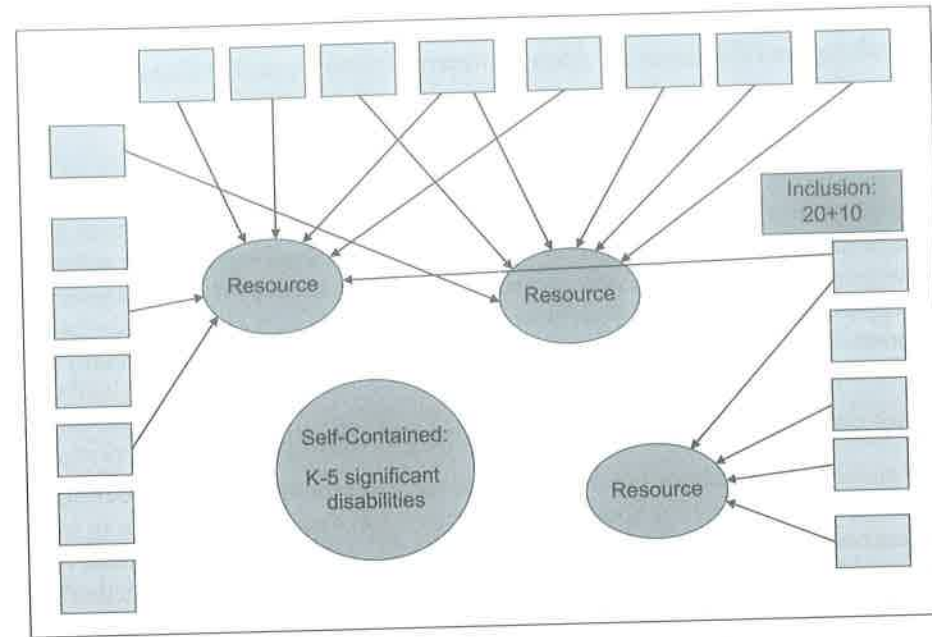
Figure 2.1 Special Education Service Delivery Prior to Inclusive Restructuring

Note: Rectangles = elementary general education classrooms K–5. Circles/ovals = special education teachers. Resource = special education teachers who pull students from their general education classroom. Inclusion 20+10 = a classroom where a general education teacher is team teaching with a special education teacher where there are 20 general education students and 10 special education students. Self-contained: K–5 significant disabilities = a special education classroom where all students who have significant disabilities receive their instruction and spend the majority of their school day.
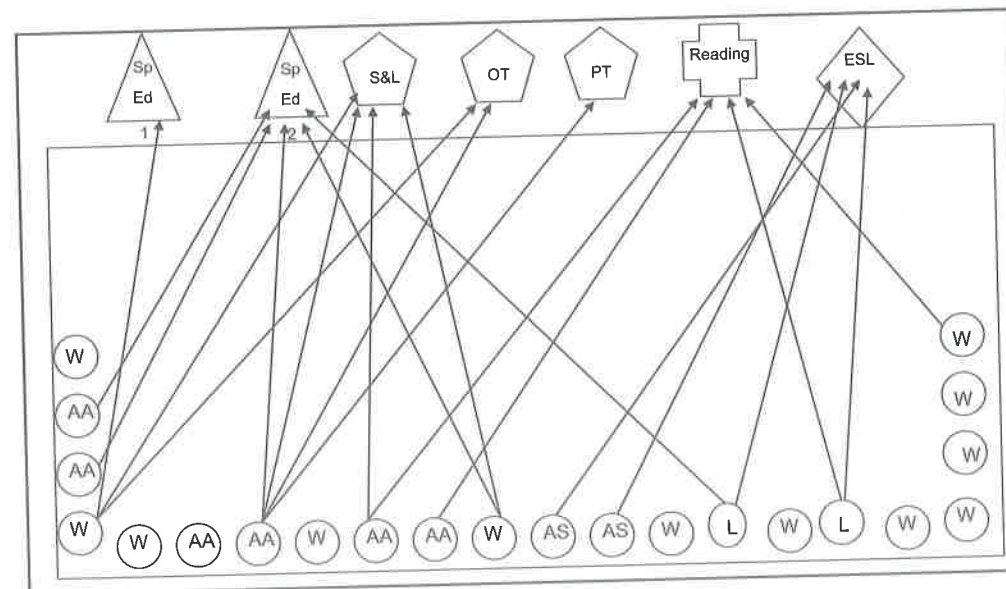

Figure 2.2 Elementary Classroom—Disrupted by the Pullout Services Provided

Note: Shapes on top represent staff members and their corresponding pullout program: Sp Ed = special ed teacher. S&L = speech & language therapist. OT = occupational therapist. PT = physical therapist. Reading = Title I reading teacher. ESL = English as a Second Language teacher. Circles on the sides and bottom represent the students; labeled by race: AA = African American, AS = Asian, L = Latino, W = white.
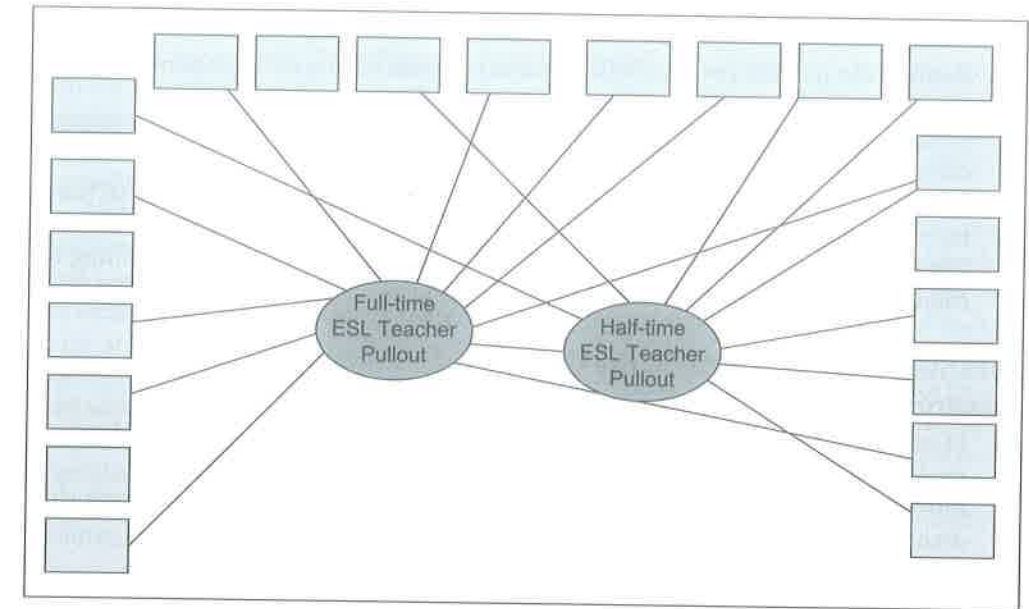

Figure 2.3 ELL Service Delivery Prior to Inclusive Restructuring

Note: Rectangles = elementary general education classrooms. Ovals = ESL teachers. Pullout = ESL teacher taking ELL students to an ESL resource room to provide instruction. Lines = the classrooms from where the ESL teachers pull students for the ESL program.

social class, gender, or language of students who are being pulled out of classrooms and the students who remain in the classroom visually shows the ways that segregating students typically marginalizes students of color, students who are linguistically diverse, low-income students, and privileged White and middle class students. These maps then allow leaders and school teams to have conversations about these inequitable patterns. For example, Figure 2.2 shows one classroom of elementary students, with the circles on the bottom representing students and the individual students who were pulled out prior to inclusive reform.

While this process for inclusive school reform was designed for inclusion of students with disabilities, we have used the same process for creating more inclusive services for students who are culturally and linguistically diverse. In those cases, the teachers of and service providers for students who are labeled English–Language Learners (ELLs) were represented on the service maps instead of special education teachers. See Figure 2.3.

Set Goals Based on the Vision

Operating with a bold vision of inclusion and an understanding of the current service delivery, the team sets goals for the school reform initiative around three areas: (1) school structure—how we arrange adults and students, (2) school climate, and 3) meeting the needs of all in the general education classroom. Below is an example of goals that a K–8 school created during the inclusive school reform work. They include:

Structure Goals (How We Arrange Adults and Students)

- Students will be placed in classrooms in natural proportions with positive role models.
- Designated person will facilitate efficient monthly communication meetings for staff to discuss various topics surrounding inclusion.

School Climate Goals

- Examine the physical structure to determine locations conducive to planning, supporting, and implementing inclusion at each grade level.
- Create a schedule that promotes consistent and common planning time for ongoing communication and dialogue.
- Develop and implement approaches and procedures that promote a professional learning community (collaboration, consensus, agree to disagree respectfully).
- Purposefully build a classroom and school climate that is warm and welcoming for children and staff and fosters active/engaging learning.

Meeting the Needs of All in the General Education Classroom Goals

- Have planned opportunities for vertical communication to provide continuity between grade levels.
- Provide child-centered, differentiated, research-based instruction that challenges children of all abilities, supported by targeted staff development.

Align School Structures

This step involves rethinking structures and the use of staff to create teams of professionals to serve all students inclusively; in other words, creating a new service delivery map. The staff develops a new inclusive service delivery plan by redeploying staff to make balanced and heterogeneous classrooms where all students are included. Figure 2.4 provides
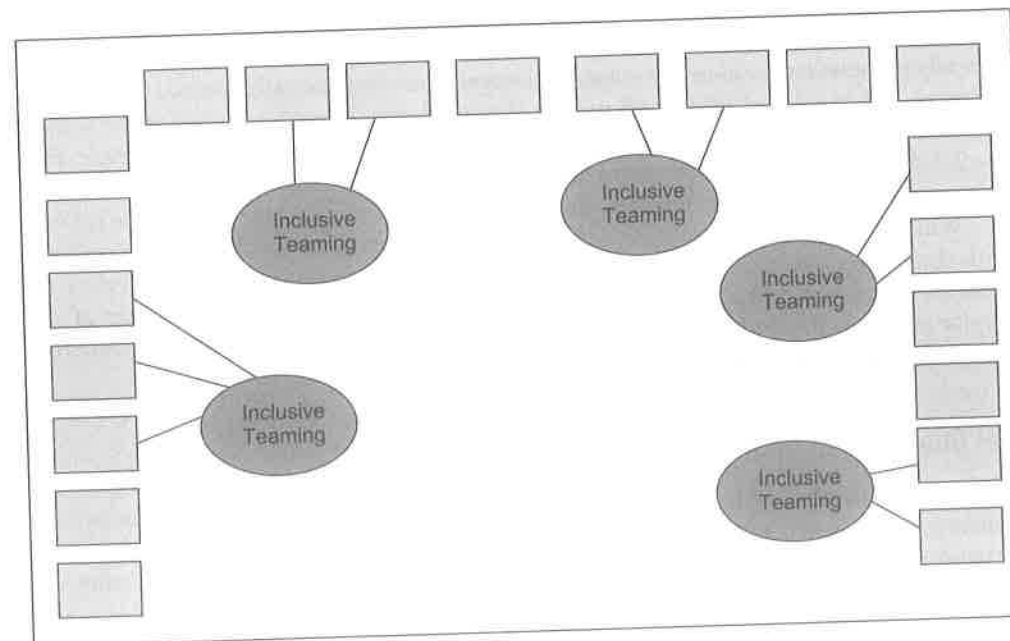

Figure 2.4 Inclusive Service Delivery—Post-Reform

Note: Rectangles = elementary general education classrooms. Circles/ovals = special education teachers. Inclusive teaming = a special education teacher teaming with two to three regular education teachers to meet the range of student needs within the classroom. Each team has one paraprofessional assigned as well.

an example of inclusive service delivery, where teachers and administrators reconfigured the current use of staff (from Figure 2.1) to form teams of specialists and general education teachers to create inclusive teams that collaboratively plan and deliver instruction to heterogeneous student groups (seen in Figure 2.4). In this example the school chose to pair special education teachers as part of inclusive teams with two to three general education classrooms and teachers.

This was not about "dumping" students with needs into a particular classroom, it was about creating heterogeneous spaces. This necessitated focusing each year on creating heterogeneous classrooms that balanced student need across all rooms or sections, and kept the natural proportion front and center. Natural proportions means that if 13% of the students at the school have disabilities, then the student placement process should mirror that density of students with disabilities in each classroom. Classrooms should not be created such that students with disabilities (and thus a need for additional support) are highly concentrated in some spaces and not in others. Part of creating classes at any level is to not segregate students with special education needs into one room or section. Using natural proportions as a guide, it is important to strive for balanced/heterogeneous classes that mix abilities, achievement, behavior, and other learning needs.

Build Instructional Teams

Re-thinking staff involves creating teams of general education teachers, specialists (i.e., special education teachers, ELL teachers, etc.), and paraprofessionals to serve all students inclusively. In the example in Figures 2.1 and 2.4, the special education teacher who was formerly a teacher in the self-contained classroom (Figure 2.1) is now part of a teaching team and co-plans and co-delivers instruction with two general education teachers (Figure 2.4) and a paraprofessional. An essential component of this step is placing students into classrooms using the school's natural proportions of students with special education needs or other needs (like ELL) as a guide as previously defined.

Leaders of inclusive schools develop instructional teams of specialists and generalists. These teams are the ones who provide services, teach, and carry out the plan described in the previous section. Developing teams takes on different forms, but at its core involves bringing together professionals who will share responsibility to work together to inclusively meet the needs of the range of learners under their joint care. This requires revising the roles many professionals have previously played in their schools and building trust between those members. It is essential that in addition to developing teams the leader supports those teams and provides them common planning time.

In an effort to develop instructional teams at her high school, Principal Natalie assigned special education teachers to be content-area special education teachers. This change meant her school no longer provided classes of specific content areas that were only for students in special education and no longer maintained self-contained special education programs. Now, all special education staff support students in general education by co-planning and co-delivering instruction. It is important to note that at this school and others described in this chapter, co-teaching or team teaching was not the goal. Too often co-teaching leads to segregating students with disabilities into one classroom. The goal at Principal Natalie's school (and the others in this chapter) was for shared ownership of students and teachers co-planning and increasing their capacity with and from one another. Principal Natalie ensured special education teachers had common planning time with the content teachers with whom they were working and she treated those special education teachers as part of the content team. She provided time for each special education teacher over the summer to meet with, get to know, and become familiar with the content teachers and the yearly

curriculum. Principal Natalie found funds to pay her staff for this time. As time passed, the special education teachers became integral parts of many content-area teams.

Middle School Principal Tim provided support and common planning time as well. During this process he made sure staffing was such that all students with disabilities are in general education, eliminating sections of pullout classes for special education students or self-contained special education programs. He utilized general and special education staff to provide teams who would co-plan and co-deliver instruction. He spread his special education support across enough rooms so students with disabilities are not over-represented into one section, and balanced that with a reasonable number of general education teachers for his special education staff to plan with. He gathered feedback from his staff to drive this process. He carefully worked the schedule and staffing plan, creating common planning time for grade-level teams and, perhaps more importantly, for smaller instructional teams of special and general educators.

Additionally, we have seen a number of leaders who brought in outside expertise to help develop instructional teams. Tracy wrote a grant to provide a 1/3-time collaboration facilitator who met with teams helping them learn to work together, use planning time efficiently, and become a more effective team. Other leaders offered team development workshops led by collaboration experts over the summer to help develop teams for the following year. Some provided ongoing collaboration courses for professional development credit. Others worked with local universities to tap into courses being offered. Some worked with district or regional professional developers to offer similar professional development. Regardless of approach, each inclusive school leader realized that adults must work together in profoundly new ways and that most are not well equipped to do this. Thus, the leaders' work developing teams and providing support plays a key role in the success of inclusive schools.

Transform Classroom Practices

It is important to transform the daily classroom practices supported by teaching teams. This involves creating and carrying out a professional development plan for teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators. Schools are recommended to consider topics such as collaboration, team teaching, differentiated instruction, working with challenging behavior, inquiry-based instruction, ELL methods, and literacy, among others. In our experience, all the schools that have become more inclusive through this process have spent significant professional development time and energy learning about collaboration, teaching teams, and differentiation.

Certainly an important component of transforming classroom practices and the professional development required to do that involves school leaders setting expectations and providing feedback to their staff. We have created a number of tools to assist school leaders with providing this feedback.

See the online companion website (www.routledge.com/cw/theoharis) for tools to assist leaders during walk-throughs and observation in providing feedback to their staff. These include forms focusing on teaching teams, classroom environment, behavior, and belonging. These tools provide a framework for leaders to employ when in classrooms to address key components of effective inclusive classrooms.

Reduce Fragmentation of Initiatives

Previously we stated that inclusion is not a program, but a guiding philosophy for making decisions about where and how we educate students. Thus, when schools move toward fully including all students, this decision cannot be separate from other changes and

programs of the school. Leadership is important in two ways in reducing fragmentation of initiatives. First, leaders act as gatekeepers knowing that they could not ask their teachers to do too many new things at once. As they move toward fully inclusive services, they reduce the other new initiatives or programs that are rolled out in their school. This means that the district- and school-level leaders are careful about not initiating other changes during the early years of fully inclusive services. In order to sustain the move toward inclusive education, leaders make sure that as new staff members join the school they understand the philosophy and the inclusive expectations.

Second, successful leaders of inclusive practice reduce fragmentation of initiatives by making sure their commitments to inclusion are part of everything at their school, from new curriculum and instructional approaches to extra-curricular activities and programs. For example, when a new math series was adopted at Principal Steve's high school, he made sure the special education teachers who were co-planning and co-delivering instruction in math attended training about the new math series with the other math teachers. He also made sure they all had teacher manuals and enough materials (calculators, etc.) to be used in large- and small-group inclusive instruction.

In the midst of many state changes and mandates, Superintendent Carol ensured that her district did not lose sight of its inclusive direction, stating: "Our primary focus this year and next is collaboration to support our inclusive services. Teacher time and energy for change is a finite quantity. So, of course, we are working toward the new common core math, but to be honest we have to be cognizant of that finite reality and so we are doing much less with that math change as we have to say focused."

In addition to ensuring inclusion is central to improving teaching and learning, successful leaders make sure inclusion is infused into extra-curricular activities as well. At Principal Meg's elementary school, the district brought in a local non-profit to run after-school programming. Meg would not accept the non-profit organization's hesitance to serve students with significant disabilities and worked with them to ensure students with disabilities had access to the program. She also insisted on, and provided guidance around, students with disabilities being seen as authentic members of the after-school program, being treated as such, and not being separated from their peers.

These leaders provide examples of how reducing fragmentation allows the inclusive philosophy to blossom in their schools and across districts. In so doing, educators view inclusion not as a program that will come and go, or a service for only some students, or a plan that is thrown out when a new initiative comes along. Instead, inclusive education forms the core of a collaboratively developed plan that reflects "the way we do things around here."

Monitor, Adjust, and Celebrate

The next component of the inclusive reform process is to monitor and adjust the plan with attention to obtaining feedback from all staff, students, and families, but without abandoning the plan at the first moment of struggle or resistance. During the summer and into the first few weeks of the year it is important to iron out logistics and adjust teaching schedules as needed. This often means that the leadership team begins to plan for the following year midway through each school year. Additionally, this component involves making time to honor the hard work of school reform—specifically, the new roles and responsibilities that teaching teams have had to adopt—and celebrating successes along the way. Schools going through this process have created a variety of activities to this end: mid-Fall celebrations for staff to keep momentum, banner-raising celebrations to declare a commitment to this effort while inviting local officials and the press, and end-of-year celebrations to end the year on a positive note.

Case Studies

This final section features case studies. The first is about two schools and the final one is about a district. All of the case studies focus on the work and experience of leading inclusive reform.

School Case Studies

This section of the chapter highlights two schools, located in Central New York, that have created more inclusive services for their students with disabilities.[1] Summer Heights (a K–6 school) and River View (a PreK–8 school) both used an inclusive school reform process similar to that described previously. Adopting this inclusive school reform and getting the commitment from staff and administration to move in this direction took a year of planning. This process began with helping the school staff to learn about the philosophy and practice of inclusion, forming a leadership team, examining the current service delivery model, comparing the service delivery model with inclusive philosophy, incorporating changes into a new service delivery model, implementing the model, and monitoring and adjusting annually. At both schools, 23% of the student body are students labeled with disabilities; this group consists of students with mild, moderate, and significant disabilities. We organize these cases around a few of the steps in the 10-step inclusive school process.

Collaborative Planning Process

An essential component of the inclusive reform of both schools was the planning process and examining the existing data. Each school mapped out its current service delivery models and their use of human resources in an effort to meet the range of student needs, just as described previously. At Summer Heights, the leadership team created and presented this visual so all staff could see and understand the birds-eye view of how human resources were being utilized.

The staff then examined these maps with the focus on creating more inclusive services and, their goals in mind, aiming to identify ways to redeploy staff to create balanced classrooms of students where all students were included. At Summer Heights, teams of teachers created drafts of how to rearrange staff, create new teaching teams, and rethink student placements to enhance inclusion and belonging. These drafts were then shared and the leadership team used them in developing a final plan (like Figure 2.4). Following the service delivery changes, a teacher from Summer Heights shared her beliefs that reject the physical removal of students for separate related services: "With this new model I no longer have the students with the most significant needs missing the most instruction . . . wasting so much time in transition, missing valuable core curriculum. Now these services are brought into the classroom seamlessly and everybody benefits . . . let's not forget the social stigma associated with pullout programs. These kids now finally belong somewhere . . . all day long."

Creating Instructional Teams: New Roles and New Skills

All teachers in both schools now have new roles and responsibilities. Special education teachers no longer pull students out into resource rooms. They are expected to co-plan and co-teach with general educators. General education teachers are no longer only responsible for general education students. Instead, Riverview and Summer Heights sought to create a more unified education system where all teachers are responsible for all students. Teachers

received extensive professional development on creating inclusive communities, effective adult collaboration, delivering instruction with multiple adults, differentiation of curriculum, and adaptations to the general education curriculum. This professional development is essential to helping teachers make these changes.

All Students Can Achieve More

Reviewing and monitoring data on student outcomes has been an on-going process for each school. Both witnessed basically no change in achievement after the first year of implementation while changing service delivery, having adults take on new roles, and including students with significant and mild disabilities. Since then, however, both schools have seen improvement in student achievement (see Tables 2.1 and 2.2).

At these schools, including the students with the most significant needs in general education has resulted in a more effective education for all. As one of the teachers involved summarized, "While not everybody loves the way we are doing this new inclusion, it has made us better teachers. In thinking about the students with the greatest challenges, we

Table 2.1 Literacy Achievement—Percent at or Above Grade Level

Students	Before	2 years later
Summer Heights 4th grade—all students	50%	58%
Summer Heights 4th grade—students with disabilities	20%	42%
Summer Heights 5th grade—all students	44%	58%
Summer Heights 5th grade—students with disabilities	20%	30%
Summer Heights 6th grade—all students	50%	72%
Summer Heights 6th grade—students with disabilities	25%	35%

Table 2.2 Math Achievement—Percent at or Above Grade Level

Students	Before	2 years later
River View 5th grade—all students	55%	66%
River View 5th grade—students with disabilities	18%	43%
River View 6th grade—all students	54%	72%
River View 6th grade—students with disabilities	18%	53%
River View 7th grade—all students	56%	78%
River View 7th grade—students with disabilities	29%	70%
River View 8th grade—all students	48%	62%
River View 8th grade—students with disabilities	8%	40%

Note: The data reported in both Tables 2.2 and 2.3 follow the same student cohorts. While both schools have made gains on NCLB measures (i.e., comparing one fifth-grade class to the next fifth-grade class), the teachers at Summer Heights and River View felt the most important data required comparing the same group of students to itself as the students progress through the grades.

are doing a better job challenging everybody. It's tough work, but in the end it is the right work."

District Case Study

The ten steps toward inclusive school reform discussed previously provide a framework for creating inclusive schooling at the building level; however, many district administrators inquire about how to create an entirely inclusive district. Some district administrators engage in the ten-step inclusive school reform process a school-by-school basis, while others undergo a large-scale approach. Figure 2.5 outlines some guidelines and identifies common pitfalls to avoid when moving an entire district to become more inclusive.

In Wisconsin, the Homesfield district began working toward creating an authentically inclusive district during the 2008–09 school year. They started with an equity audit and quickly realized that their students with disabilities were facing a variety of inequities in achievement, opportunities for participation, and the breadth of school activities. They focused on revising their service delivery by involving the entire administrative team as well as special education and general education teachers. By the Fall of the 2009–10 school year, they had eliminated the self-contained special education rooms and were moving rapidly away from pullout services. Using the teacher mantra of "do it afraid—there is no manual," they redeployed teachers to eliminate the former special education rooms. Their focus on service delivery positioned teams of adults to take on new roles together. This meant recreating classroom environments that met the range of students' needs.

This commitment took many forms, not the least of which were structural district-wide changes to eliminate barriers that kept special education and students with disabilities separate. They combined the teaching and learning (or curriculum decisions) department with the special education department. The learning of students with disabilities became inherently connected to the teaching and curriculum across the district. They also eliminated a significant number of special education paraprofessionals. Using those same funds they hired certified special education teachers (three to four teachers for every ten aides). This allowed for greater teacher collaboration and reduced caseloads for special education teachers.

The Assistant Superintendent, Donna Hooper, believes, "We are not perfect and we have work to do, but we are at a much deeper place than we were four years ago. We are working now on how to co-teach better and how to differentiate better. We are no longer worrying about if this student or that student should be here. People know and expect all of our students to be in general education." She also points to their data. In 2008, students with disabilities started elementary school performing better than their peers across the state, but by the time they were through middle school they lagged behind their peers. After four years, this is no longer true. Students with disabilities achieve at higher rates than the state average.

The following guidelines are for administrators to use when making student placement decisions and policies. While not exhaustive, they represent a range of key decisions that can foster inclusion, belonging and learning.

These guidelines can be used to avoid common administrative pitfalls that set up structures impeding achievement and creating seclusion. They are not meant to be a recipe, but are intended to help put structures and policies in place to create truly inclusive schools.

Home District: All students are educated within their school district.

No students (including students with significant disabilities, students with challenging behaviors, students with autism, etc.) are sent to other districts or cooperative programs outside of the home school district.

Home School: All students attend the schools and classrooms they would attend regardless of ability/disability or native language.

There are no schools within the district set aside for students with disabilities.

General Education Member: All students are placed in chronologically age-appropriate *general education classrooms*.

This is a legal entitlement, not based on staff preference or comfort level. Each classroom represents a heterogeneous group of students. Special education is a service, not a place. No programs, schools-within-a-school or classrooms are set aside for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are not slotted into predetermined programs, schools, or classrooms. Particular classrooms are not designated, as inclusive classrooms while others are not.

Density Check: Strive for classroom sections that represent *natural proportions* of the school building.

Natural proportions refer to the percentage of students with disabilities as compared to the entire student body. If you have 10 students with disabilities and 100 students in the school, that natural proportion is 10 percent. The national average of students with disabilities is 12 percent.

Special Education Teacher's Caseloads: Assignment of students with disabilities balances the intensity of student need and case-management responsibility.

This moves away from certain special educators being the "inclusive," "resource," "self-contained" or "emotionally disturbed" to all special educators having similar roles and case loads. Students with disabilities with similar labels are not clustered together.

Team Arrangements: All teachers (general education, special education, ELL, reading, etc.) are assigned to instructional teams on the basis of shared students.

Special education teachers are assigned to collaborate with 2-3 classroom sections or teachers to promote collaboration, communication and co-planning. Creating effective teams of adults who work with the same students is essential; consider grouping compatible adult team members as well as building capacity in all staff members to work with all students. Professional development is needed for adults to embrace these new roles, collaborate well and effectively use meeting time.

Related Services: Related services are portable services that come to the student.

Therefore, related service teachers consult with classroom teams, demonstrate skills and techniques and provide instruction/support within the context of general education. Related service providers need to be a part of the placement of students into general education classrooms process and the daily general education planning and program.

Daily Schedule: Use the schedule to support instructional blocks, time for collaborative planning and problem solving and daily direction and training for paraprofessionals.

The master schedule is used as a tool to leverage the vision of collaborative inclusion. Creating sacred planning time for teams of general educators and special educators is essential.

Service Delivery Teams: District and school-level teams meet regularly to reconfigure resources and to revise service delivery on an annual basis.

Schools engage in an ongoing process to plan for the specific needs of their students. This involves re-examining the current way staff are used, how teams are created, the class placement process and the master schedule.

Figure 2.5 District/School Guidelines for Inclusive Student Placement

Table 2.3 Misguided Practices Inclusive Schools Work to Avoid

Practice That Undermines Inclusion and Student Success	Problematic Issues With This Practice
Pullout programs	• Students miss important content. • Social stigma and social isolation. • Over-identification of African American and low-income students in pullout programs.
Self-contained programs	• Very limited access to general education peers, curriculum, or teachers. • Tend to be used for students with the most complex needs. • Do not employ special methods or individualization. • Result in higher teacher burnout rates. • Result in low post-secondary employment rates and independent living. • Have an over-representation of students of color and low-income students. • Rely on an increased use of physical restraint on students.
Dense clustering of students with needs	• Indicate an effort to create "inclusive" classrooms, but the proportions are unnatural. • Disproportionate amount of needs can make these classrooms very much like special education classrooms.
One-on-one support	• Often the least trained and expected to work with students with the most significant needs. • Results in less direct teacher involvement. • Unnecessary dependence. • Interference with peer interaction. • Loss of personal control. • Provocation of negative behaviors.
Age-inappropriate placements	• Performing at grade level is not a requirement to receive modification at an age-appropriate curriculum. • Risk of students being seen as perpetual young children and not developing students with complex emotions and desires. • Lose opportunities to develop an authentic community where students progress through the grades together, learning from and with one another.
Tracking	• Not authentic and meaningful inclusion. • Results in dense clustering of student needs. • Curriculum is usually slower paced, thus getting through less of the general curriculum. • Contributes to lower learning and future possibilities.

Important Lessons From These Case Studies

When it comes to working toward inclusive education, we see that many schools and districts engage in well-intentioned, but arguably misguided, practices. Table 2.3 briefly illustrates six common practices that undermine inclusion and student success that Summer Heights and River View schools, as well as the Homesfield district, worked to avoid. Awareness of these potential pitfalls, as well as implementation of the strategies we have laid out previously, can help to shape more intentional, effective, and productive approaches for leaders to model when implementing inclusive school reform. We believe that a combination of learning from others' trials and triumphs, as well as having the right tools to chart their own paths, sets the stage for ongoing problem-solving, development, and collaboration as we work toward more inclusive contexts for all.

CONCLUSION

Given the current contexts of schools, school leaders need to not only spend time and energy on issues relating to disability, but they also must have a vision of how to serve inclusively all students, and in particular students with disabilities. Inclusive school reform is a pivotal endeavor, one in which administrators play the critical role to inclusive school success. This inclusive leadership requires both an understanding of and ability to lead a ten-step inclusive leadership process. Throughout this chapter, we have set the stage by describing the present educational conditions and provided a ten-step process with tools and examples of how to implement inclusive school reform in all schools and districts.

NOTE

1 Pseudonyms are used throughout this chapter to protect the privacy of these schools.

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CHAPTER 3

Inclusive Leadership and Poverty

Curt Dudley-Marling and Anne Dudley-Marling

It's such a Bore Being always Poor.

(Hughes, n.d.)

PART 1: THE CURRENT CONTEXT OF POVERTY IN SCHOOLS

As the Langston Hughes quote reminds us, it isn't easy being poor. For the 46.5 million Americans living below the poverty thresholds established by the US Census Bureau (2013),[1] 16 million of whom are children, living in poverty means living with less. But the effects of being poor go well beyond the inability to purchase the small luxuries that most Americans take for granted. There are serious consequences of living in poverty, especially for children. Books (2004) notes that

> Poor children bear the brunt of almost every imaginable social ill. In disproportionate numbers, they suffer hunger and homelessness; untreated sickness and chronic conditions such as asthma, ear infections, and tooth decay; lead poisoning and other forms of environmental pollution; and a sometimes debilitating level of stress created by crowded, run-down living spaces, family incomes that fall short of family needs, and ongoing threats of street violence and family dissolution.
>
> (p. 5)

Adverse experiences in early childhood, including poverty, have even been shown to have a lasting impact on children's developing brains, including the capacity to learn new skills, the ability to regulate stress, and the ability to make healthy adaptations to future adverse situations (Juster, McEwen, & Lupien, 2010; Shonkoff & Garner, 2012).

Given the material effects of "being always poor" it should surprise no one that children living in poverty are at a much higher risk for school failure than their more affluent peers. According to the most recent data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress