

**Evaluation of Delaware's State improvement Grant:  
Delaware Inclusive Schools' Study**

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## **Delaware Inclusive Schools' Study**

The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) contracted with the University of Delaware's Education Research and Development Center (R & D Center) to help evaluate the Delaware State Improvement Grant's Inclusive Schools' Initiative (ISI). As part of this evaluation effort, an Inclusive Schools' (IS) document review was completed for the first time in 2007. In addition, numerous faculty members from two IS schools were interviewed in order to collect their perceptions of the current state of inclusive efforts in their school. This baseline data provides a view of the current status of inclusive efforts within the Delaware inclusive schools.

### **Document Review**

During the fall of 2006, a two-part study was devised to compile data that speaks to the inclusive efforts in Delaware schools. The first part, a document review, encompassed a review of documents selected by the DDOE inclusive schools' program co-coordinators. These documents were chosen for review because they represent a wide range of evidence of inclusive activities including student placement data, school climate data, and efforts to inform families.

The scoring rubric used to guide the reviews was developed by the DDOE inclusive schools' program co-coordinators and two staff members from the R & D Center. Next year, the product review rubric will be revised based on feedback from this data collection effort and made available to all participating schools. The inclusive schools will be encouraged to use the product review rubric as part of their own self evaluation and continued professional development. See Appendix A for the complete document list and scoring rubric.

### **Interviews**

The second part of this evaluation effort consisted of interviews with administrators and staff members from two inclusive schools. At each school, a building administrator, three Building Leadership Team (BLT) members and three randomly selected staff members were interviewed using protocols developed by the DDOE inclusive schools' program co-coordinators and two staff members from the R&D Center. All interview respondents were informed of the voluntary nature of their participation, the confidentiality of their answers, their anonymity and the purpose of the study.

Next year, the protocols will be revised based on feedback from this data collection effort to capture data at a deeper level of inquiry. The inclusive schools will be encouraged to use the

results of these interviews as part of their own self evaluation and continued professional development. In addition, IS program developers may use information from both parts of this inquiry to provide additional feedback to the schools concerning areas where additional training or clarification may help their inclusive efforts.

### **Part One: 2007 Inclusive Schools' Document Review**

#### **Sample**

Schools in Delaware participating in the Inclusive schools' initiative were asked to provide data for a product review. Ten schools representing 5 districts provided partial data for this evaluation. Documents were provided by IS schools with a combined demographic makeup that included total student enrollment ranging from 350 to 1500 students, low income eligible students ranging from 27% to 72% and schools that serve students in pre-k through 12<sup>th</sup> grade in several different configurations. Evidence of inclusive trainings was received from 10 schools and 9 of those schools provided additional documents for review. The document reviews were conducted during March 2007. Data collected and/or provided to the R & D Center through August 2007 is represented in this report.

This Inclusive Schools' document review examined several areas: the inclusive efforts' priority in the school improvement plan, the action plan goals, inclusive checklist data, disaggregated student assessment data, student placement data, Building Leadership Team (BLT) meeting minutes, BLT members, how families are informed, school climate, and attendance at training modules.

#### **Inclusive Efforts' Priority**

One area identified as important to aid the successful implementation of this initiative is whether the school's improvement plan (SIP) has "improving inclusion" as a way to increase academic achievement for all students listed as a priority. Information from the DDOE website describes the purpose of the SIP as follows:

The purpose of School Improvement is to build each school's capacity for continuous advancement toward the goal of all students meeting or exceeding challenging Delaware State Standards.<sup>1</sup>

Further, SIPs:

identify specific goals and targets with the improvement plan and the administrator's direct influence or control over the achievement of those goals and targets (Pg IV-3)<sup>2</sup>.

Of the nine inclusive schools that provided documents for review:

- one school (11%) provided evidence that inclusion was listed in its school's improvement plan as one of its top five priorities

- six schools (67%) did not mention inclusion in their SIP
- two schools (22%) had data that was not able to be scored using the developed rubric because the priorities of the activities listed in the SIP could not be determined based on the data provided.

### **Action Plan Goals**

A second area reviewed in the document examination was whether the school had an action plan with specific goals and dates related to inclusive practices. According to IS training materials and the DDOE website,

Action plans are based on prior knowledge to achieve an expected end result. The plan breaks down the end goal into small objectives. The Action Plan is the map that gets you from where you start to your identified ending point. It can help you find your way if you get off track, or rethink your path. All the members of the team have this map; it creates points of agreement and coherence<sup>3</sup>.

Eight of the nine (89%) schools that provided data for this evaluation had an action plan. One-third of these schools (33%) had a current action plan available for review. Further, information submitted from three other schools confirmed:

- two schools provided an action plan that was between 1 and 2 years old
- one school did not provide an action plan for review

Additionally, three schools had plans that could not be scored using the rubric:

- one school reported “use school improvement plan”
- two schools had action plans that were not dated

### **Inclusive School Checklist**

A third document reviewed was the Inclusive School (IS) checklist. According to the inclusive schools’ training and the DDOE website,

the goal of the IS checklist is to provide a quick overview of inclusive environments, to identify current status, and help focus activities to address needs for action planning in the schools.

The IS checklist provides an opportunity for school personnel to rate their inclusive efforts in the following categories: Leadership, School/Classroom Climate, Collaboration, Environment (Setting/Physical/Ecological), and Instruction Technology. Each school was given the opportunity to complete the survey from their school-wide perspective with a rating for each item as either “in place, partially in place, or not in place.” Upon completion of the survey, the school was instructed

to choose 3 items to make a priority for further improvement. For complete list of items on the IS checklist, see the IS checklist template in Appendix B.

Of the 9 schools that provided data for this product review:

- eight schools (89%) provided baseline IS checklist data (data was scored as baseline if only one year of data was provided, regardless of the date)
- it was unclear if one school had checklist data because no information was provided.

### **Disaggregating Student Data**

A review of a school's student achievement data was conducted. This information was relevant to review because at least two training academies were offered by DDOE that guided participants in the use of data including *Mining Meaningful Data* and *Mining School Improvement Data*. Based on the rubric, student achievement data disaggregated by disability and placement categories A, B, and C were rated the highest. These three placement categories are: A= inside the regular class > 80% of day, B= inside regular class < 79% of day and > 40% of the day, C= inside regular class < 40% of day. A mid-level rating consisted of school achievement data disaggregated by disability in one or two of the placement categories. Finally, a school did not receive credit for having student achievement data if it was not disaggregated by disability and placement in at least one placement category.

No school had student achievement data disaggregated by disability by placement in all three placement categories. However, here is how the student assessment data looked:

- two schools (22%) had student achievement data disaggregated by disability in 1 or 2 placement categories,
- five schools (56%) had student achievement data but it was not disaggregated by disability by placement in any category.

One school had data that could not be scored using the rubric (i.e. information provided stated, "in school improvement plan") and one school did not provide any student assessment data.

### **Placement Data**

Schools use placement data to examine the percentage of the population placed in general education classrooms. Placement data was scored according to whether or not the school had the data (i.e., yes or no) and if so, whether it was current (dated for the current school year, 2006-2007) or one or two years old.

- All 9 inclusive schools (100%) that provided data for this document review had current placement data.

### **Inclusive Schools Meeting Minutes**

The IS Project coordinator wanted to know if the minutes from the Building Leadership Team meetings (or the team that is in charge of inclusion) were recorded. Recording meeting minutes helps to inform faculty and encourage data driven decision making. Of the nine schools that provided documents for review:

- one school provided meeting minutes from 6 or more meetings held within the last 12 months
- three schools (33%) provided minutes from fewer than 6 meetings held within the last 12 months
- four schools (44%) provided no meeting minutes
- one school's minutes could not be scored (e.g., minutes were older than 12 months)

### **Informed Families**

Another area important to investigate is whether or not families are informed of the school's inclusive efforts. According to information retrieved from the DDOE website:

It is the belief of the Department of Education that parent and community involvement is imperative for student success.<sup>4</sup>

Any documents the school deemed as evidence they have informed families about inclusive efforts were reviewed. From the documents reviewed:

- In two (22%) of the nine schools, it was clear from the data provided that families were informed of the school's inclusive efforts
- however, in six schools (67%), no evidence was provided that suggested families were informed of their inclusive efforts.

In addition, one school did not provide documents from which a clear "yes or no" determination could be made. For example, they provided school newsletters that included these quotes:

Our reading anthology theme is called [name of theme]. It teaches us to celebrate the unique differences that we bring to our classrooms.

As the holiday season approaches, the [school's name] community strives to makes sure all children feel comfortable in school.

All the first graders will be mixed up so that each group has children from every first grade class in it.

A good physical education program in the elementary school involves active participation by all students.

This school is obviously providing information to its families regarding school activities and their emphasis on “all” is apparent; however, due to definitional variations to the term “inclusive” and to the fact that no rubric was developed that specifically describes what consists of informing families about inclusive efforts, the representations could not be definitively scored using the current rubric.

### **School Climate**

The final set of documents reviewed were school climate data for teachers, parents, and students. Although, recording school climate data was optional; its use was encouraged by the IS program. A Delaware School Climate Survey was developed by the Positive Behavior Support Initiative, under a collaborative effort between the Delaware Department of Education and the Center for Disabilities Studies at the University of Delaware; this school climate survey provides schools with a valid instrument for program development and evaluation. However, schools in the program were welcome to use any climate survey of their choice. Of the nine inclusive schools that provided documents for review:

- 6 schools (67%) provided school climate survey data for *teachers*; 3 schools did not provide this data
- 5 schools (56%) provided school climate survey data for *parents*; 4 schools did not provide this data
- 5 schools (56%) provided school climate survey data for *students*; 4 schools did not provide this data

### **Team Members**

Each school was asked to provide a list of their IS team members; eight of the nine schools provided a list of their team members. According to the DDOE Inclusive Schools’ training, a Building Leadership Team (BLT) should encompass from 6-12 participants representative of the school. The representatives to be considered include general education teachers, special education teachers, specialists, guidance counselor(s), a nurse, and parents. In addition, grade level or department representation of the school should be taken into consideration. In addition,

a building administrator's membership is mandatory. Of the 8 schools that provided this document for review:

- One schools has a BLT team that meet all the suggested membership criteria
- All (8) have an *administrator* on the team
- All (8) have at least *6-12 team members*
- All have *general education* and *special education teacher* representation on the team
- Three schools have a *parent* representative on the team
- Five schools have *grade level* or department representation
- Five schools have a *Guidance* representative on the team
- Four schools have a *Nurse* on the team

### **Training Modules**

Each IS school was asked to provide a list of the IS trainings in which their BLT and whole school staff members had participated. Two clusters of IS training modules have been offered for staff professional development since 2004. One cluster was designed for the BLT. The second cluster was designed to train the entire school staff. For this review, schools were given credit for any IS training module in which they had participated in the past three years. The inclusive trainings offered by DDOE and other providers encompassed a wide range of topics. A list of training modules and the percentages of IS schools that participated in each training can be found in Appendix C. Some schools self-directed portions of their trainings by electing to participate in additional trainings. These trainings are also included in Appendix C. Of the 10 schools that provided training data for review:

- All schools (100%) participated in two school-wide IS trainings including *Understanding Inclusion* and *Exploring Inclusive Practices in School*
- All BLTs (100%) participated in the *Leading Change* and *Gauging your Systemic Change Efforts* training
- The majority of BLTs (90%) attended *Aligning School Goals and School Work*, *Mining Meaningful Data*, *Mining School Improvement Data*, *Identifying School-wide Patterns of Student Performance* and *Looking to Student Work to Target Instruction* trainings

### **Conclusions**

This data reflects a baseline compilation of information that may help guide and improve inclusive activities at the school and state level. Reviewing these documents on a regular basis may provide an unambiguous picture of areas where schools are succeeding with their inclusive

efforts and areas where efforts to improve can be directed. For example, areas where documents show inclusive efforts are promising include:

- All of the schools (100%) provided current placement data;
- Many of the schools (67%) provided school climate survey data for teachers
- All of the schools (100%) participated in two school-wide IS trainings including *Understanding Inclusion* and *Exploring Inclusive Practices in Schools*.
- All BLTs (100%) participated in the *Leading Change* and *Gauging your Systemic Change Efforts* training.

Further, areas where documents show improvement in the schools' inclusive efforts may be needed include:

- 67% of the schools did not mention inclusion in their School Improvement Plan.
- 67% of the schools did not provide evidence that suggested that families were informed of their inclusive efforts.
- 89% of the schools provided 6 or fewer meeting minutes in the last twelve months
- no school had student achievement data disaggregated by disability by placement in all categories

Overall, schools can begin to self evaluate their inclusive efforts by monitoring and improving the quality of their inclusive documents; this should enable them to further develop their inclusive efforts.

### **Part Two: Inclusive Schools' Interviews**

In addition to the information obtained from the Inclusive Schools document review, two schools chosen by the DDOE Inclusive Schools' project coordinator were designated for further study. Faculties in both of these schools completed DDOE's (ISI) training(s) and were implementing inclusive practices. Interview protocols were developed by the DDOE project coordinator in collaboration with the Positive Behavior coordinator and two staff members from the R&D Center. Individuals targeted for interview in each school were a building administrator, three teachers from the Building Leadership Team (BLT) including the team leader, and three randomly selected staff members. See Appendix D for complete interview protocols.

Interviews were conducted in March 2007 by two R&D Center staff members. All interview respondents were informed of the voluntary nature of their participation, the confidentiality of their answers, their anonymity and the purpose of the study. To help ensure

confidentiality, these interview findings are reported at the state level. Therefore, the results from both schools are pooled, or when applicable, are reported in such a way as to ensure the anonymity of the respondent. The interviews of the building administrators are reported first, followed by those of the BLT and then the randomly selected staff members. In addition, the cohesiveness of the responses within each group as well as the degree of difference in responses among those groups will be reported.

### **Administrators' Interview**

#### **Goals**

The first question asked of each administrator was, "What is the goal of your inclusive efforts?" In one school, the goal was stated as having everyone involved in the process including students, parents and community. In the other school the goal was stated as twofold: to expand services in a co-teaching setting and for special education students to have access to the general education curriculum.

#### **Inclusive Team**

Both administrators replied, "yes" to the following questions, "Do you have a team that addresses school-wide inclusion?", "Has the team reviewed the action plan this year?", and "Is your school-wide team representative of your school staff." In addition, both administrators named their team leader(s)/facilitator(s) and their respective position.

When asked if the team provided updates to faculty on activities and data summaries regarding the schools' inclusion efforts, one administrator said yes, updates were provided in a number of ways including providing minutes in faculty and staff mailboxes and via communication during scheduled staff meetings. The other stated that BLT members were relied upon to get information out to the grade level teachers. In fact, it was indicated that this was "the area with the greatest room for improvement." When asked if the principal or another administrator was on the team, both administrators said yes.

In responding to how often the team meets, one administrator replied that it is "being addressed." The other replied the team is scheduled to meet every month, and there are additional impromptu meetings as needed. The next question asked how often the administrator attended the team meetings. One replied, "[I attend] every one," while the other expressed, "It's not working too well," but attempts are being made to intervene, implying this is an area that needs improvement.

## **Support for Inclusive Efforts**

Both principals indicated they had an out-of-school liaison in the state or district to support them with their inclusive efforts; however, while one named support people from the Delaware Department of Education, the other indicated a wide variety of support people were available for assistance, adding, “We know who to go to.”

## **Inclusive Planning**

Regarding inclusive planning, the administrators were asked, “If you are using your school improvement team as a leadership team for inclusion planning, how often do you discuss inclusion activities?” One administrator indicated there was “always something inclusive” being discussed, their “way of life is inclusive,” and the faculty employ “an inclusive way of thinking”. The other administrator indicated that the grade level teachers hold meetings every week and “they set their own agenda” and inclusion activities were discussed “for some curriculum” meetings with some faculty.”

## **Inclusive Professional Development**

Both administrators indicated they had attended inclusion professional development trainings and easily named several trainings representing a wide variety of inclusive topics: *Opening Doors*, *Differentiated Instruction (DI)*, *Person-Centered Planning*, and *Collaborative Planning*. Both named trainings from sources both inside and outside of Delaware.

## **BLT Members’ Interview**

Three BLT members from each building, including a team leader from each school, were targeted for interviews for a total of six respondents. All team members interviewed were teachers. The number of years employed at their present school ranged from 7 to 9 years and the total number of years teaching ranged from 7 to 19, with an average of 9 years. All six team members interviewed were able to name their team leader(s)/facilitator(s) and their positions.

## **Using Data**

The first question asked was, “How the team used data to make placement decisions?” The responses varied among the six team members. Two team members reported using end of the year student data including reading achievement tests such as Gates-Miginity, the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), the Delaware State Testing Program (DSTP) scores, and reading series placement tests. In addition, they reported the team considered student demographics and input from teachers. One team member commented they wanted to “even things out.” Further, one team member stated student demographics were taken into

consideration and behavior data were used to set goals for PBS. Another team member stated she wasn't sure what data was used but student were grouped by teachers at the end of the year by placing students into either a high, medium, or low group and these groups took student demographics into consideration. Also, she added they considered student behavior and tried to make all the groups "even". Another member said that decisions were made according to teacher input, DSTP scores and the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), and further indicated the BLT had learned how to use placement data in their training.

Other team members gave relatively different responses. One team member believed no data was used, but decisions were made based on getting students into general education classes that meet their needs. He/She also commented that more teacher and student input was needed. A sixth team member indicated they had "no opportunity" to use data.

While no specific question was asked regarding implementation of data based decision making, a number of comments emerged concerning this issue including one team member stating, "[We're] not clear of [our] charge" and "I don't know what we need to do." but then added emphatically, "Everyone worked hard." Another team member commented. "[We] learned how to use data."

### **Action Plan**

When asked if the team had reviewed the school's action plan with staff this year, five of the six members (83%) said yes, while one team member said no. The comments following the responses indicated various perspectives. One said their action plan, which was a working document, was shared early in the year. Another responded it was reviewed "all the time." Another stated that it was "emailed to all staff." Another team member indicated faculty meetings were devoted to reviewing the action plan. One team member replied, "Yes and no, everyone has the action plan and they are expected to review it on their own."

### **Updated Action Plan**

In answer to the question, "How often is the action plan updated?", four team members indicated it was updated yearly with comments including "once per year, formally," and informally, "constantly updated, ongoing." One team member said it was updated two times per year. Another said that is was "too new to update" and there was "not a chance to" update it.

### **Improving Inclusive Efforts**

A variety of answers were given in response to the question regarding the team's number one goal for improving inclusive efforts. These included:

- “Making sure all students are included”
- “Addressing problems and concerns. I don’t know if we ever discussed a number one goal”
- “Awareness of importance of the concept... training and professional development to staff...to make the process easier”
- “Training, teacher attitude, accepting change”
- “Co-teaching”
- “Student achievement, not just on standardize tests... we want all students to succeed... friendships...[between] high and low level, ...[student] behavior”

### **Most Important Concept**

Six different responses were also given to the question, “What is the most important concept from the inclusive schools training that has enhanced *your* instructional practice?”

Responses were:

- “Circle of Friends”
- “Making every effort to include those children in regular education as much as possible”
- “None”
- “Personal growth. [It’s] rewarding”
- “The [inclusive schools] concept”
- “Universal Design for Learning (UDL)...PATH<sup>5</sup>”

### **Empowerment**

Two questions dealt with the dynamics of the team; one was regarding the empowerment of the team, and the other was whether each member believed his/her expertise was valued. In responding to the question, “Do you feel that your team is empowered to make changes regarding inclusion?”, five of the six team members (83%) said yes. In reference to whether or not they believed everyone’s expertise and opinions are respected by team members, all 6 team members said yes. One team member articulated his/her opinion regarding the positive aspects of the team by stating, “Negative people don’t want to be on a team that promotes positive issues.” Another said, “Yeah, that’s the kind of people that are on the team.”

### **Family Involvement**

All six team members (100%) agreed that families (parents, students) should participate in the development and implementation of the school’s plan for inclusion. Five of the six (83%)

referred to IEPs. Responses affirmed that parents were involved both formally and informally. Comments included, “We have parents on our BLT”, “Parents attend... PTA meetings” and parents are “members of a...task force.” Another member said, “Parents are invited to all IEP meetings and at times so are students.” BLTs in both schools reported that students are included in IEP meetings. One team member spoke of a young special education student whose self awareness led her to give significant input into her own IEP.

### **Student Involvement**

While no specific questions were asked regarding student involvement, it was apparent based on comments provided by team members that student involvement was customary. Team members discussed specific instances of student involvement including that:

- students were involved in IEP meetings
- teachers often use the “buddy system with students” and the buddy system was very “student centered.”
- “students have their roles for involvement”

In addition, one team member expressed that the “Camaraderie among students is greatly improved.”

### **Staff Members’ Interview**

Six randomly selected staff members, representing two schools, were targeted for interviews to provide another perspective of the current state of inclusive efforts in their school. All six staff members were teachers with the number of years employed at their present school ranging from 1 to 7 years. The total number of years each had been teaching ranged from 5 to 30 years, with an average of 19 years. Further, all six randomly selected staff members were non-BLT team members. Staff interviews consisted of five questions investigating their knowledge of the inclusive efforts in their school.

### **Inclusive Team**

When asked if the school had a school-wide team that addresses inclusive efforts, four of the six (67%) said yes and two (33%) said no. Of all the respondents, none used the term BLT, however, two used the term “inclusive school team.”

In response to the question, “Are you kept informed of the teams’ activities?” four staff members (67%) said yes, one (17%) said no. In addition, one staff response was tentative, “I don’t know if we have one [inclusive team].”

When asked how they were informed of the team’s activities, three choices were provided: faculty meetings, department/grade level meetings, and/or written/electronic updates. Staff responses can be seen in Figure 1.

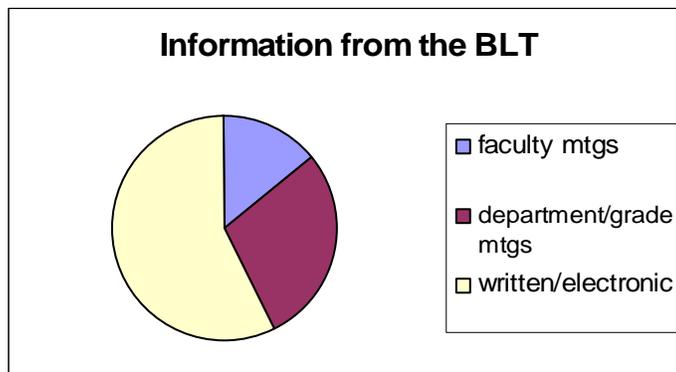


Figure 1. Staff responses to how they are informed of BLT activities.

One of the six staff members interviewed (17%) chose faculty meetings; two of the six (33%) chose department meeting/grade level meetings. Written and/or electronic updates comprised the method respondents said was used most often to communicate the team’s activities.

### **Team and Staff Responses to corresponding Questions**

The responses to the following questions allow comparisons between BLT team and staff member’s perceptions of inclusive efforts. This side by side reporting is intended to underscore the similarities and differences between each group.

#### **Collaborative Planning**

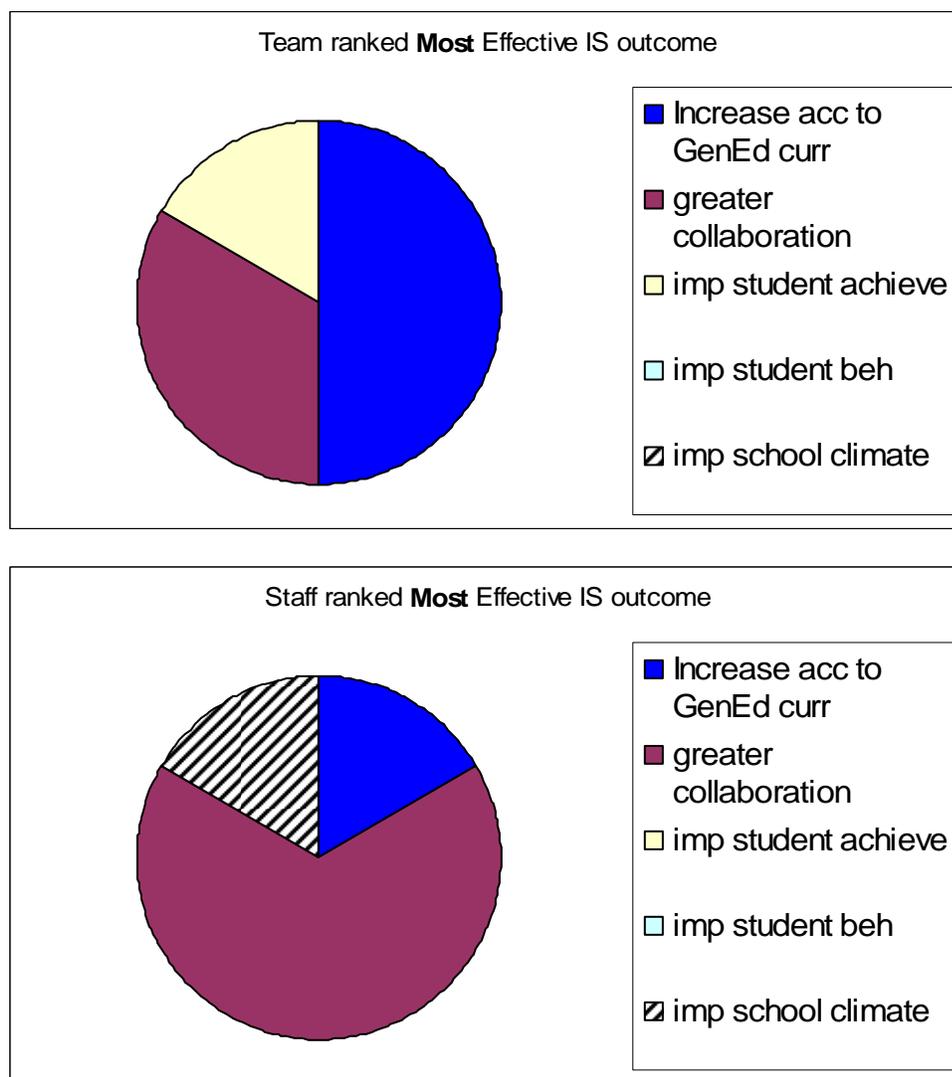
Several identical questions were presented to both the BLT members and randomly selected staff, such as, “In a typical work day, how many minutes do you collaborate with peers to plan for student learning?” The team’s answers ranged from 30 minutes to 120 minutes, while the staff’s responses ranged from 0 to 30 minutes. In other words, the team’s perception of their least amount of time spent in collaborative planning, 30 minutes, was the greatest amount of collaborative planning time reported by the staff members.

Another matching question was, “Who is responsible for the goal attainment of student with an IEP?” Most team members, four of the six (67%) reported that everyone was responsible. Of the remaining two team members, one said, “the teacher who is also their case manager [is responsible],” and another said, “the whole IEP team including the student [is responsible].” In comparison, when the randomly selected staff members were asked the same

question, only 33% said everyone was responsible. Most staff members (67%) said the teacher was responsible for the goal attainment of students with an IEP.

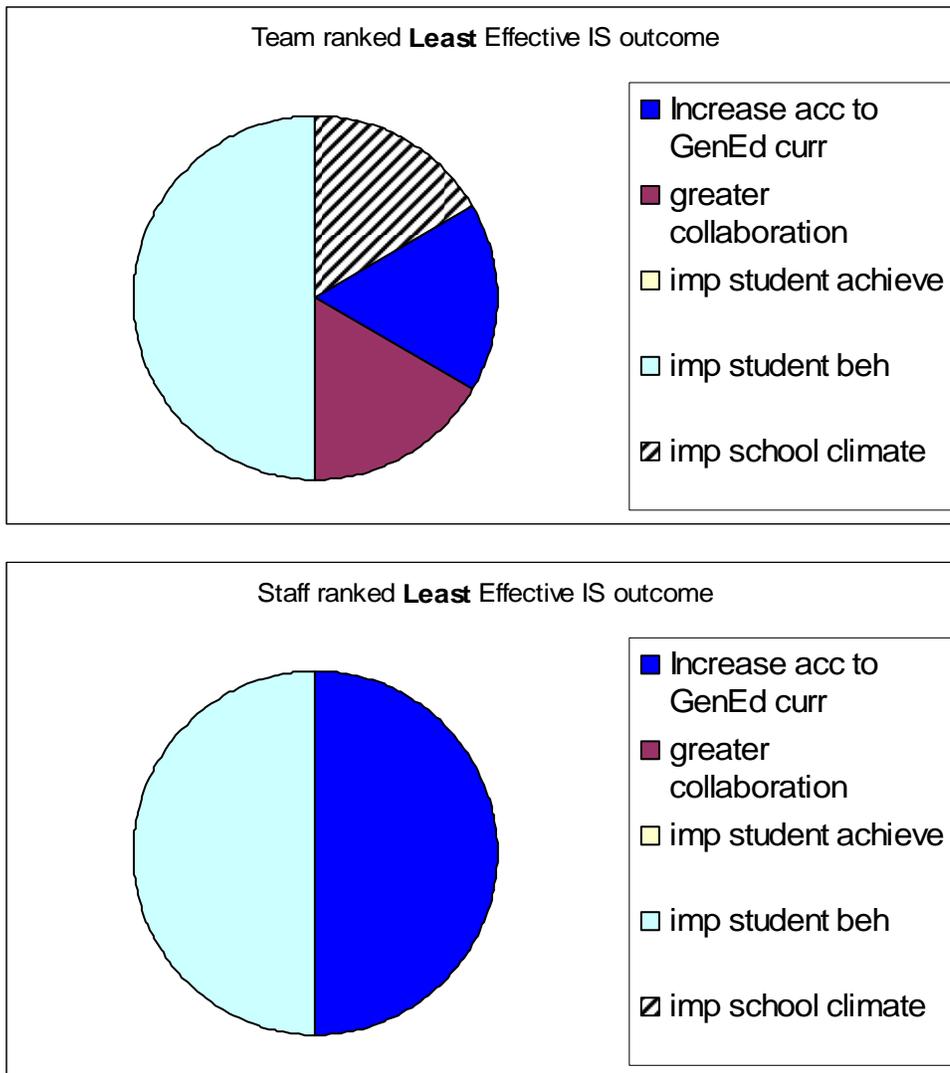
### Effective Outcomes

Both team and randomly selected staff members were asked to list in rank order inclusive outcomes from most effective to date to least effective to date in their school. The items to be ranked were increased access to the general education curriculum, greater collaboration with shared goals and planning, improved student achievement, improved student behavior, and improved school climate. A comparison of the team and staff most effective IS outcome rankings is illustrated in Figures 2 and 3.



*Figures 2 and 3. Most effective IS outcomes.*

Of the six team respondents, three (50%) listed increased access to general education as the most effective outcome of inclusive school initiative, with 33% citing greater collaboration as their choice for most effective outcome. When the same choices were ranked by staff members, greater collaboration was named by four of the six (67%) participants as the most effective outcome of the inclusive schools initiative. A comparison of the team and staff least effective IS outcome rankings is seen in Figures 4 and 5.



Figures 4 and 5. Least effective IS outcomes.

Of the six team respondents, 50% named improved student behavior as the least effective, while other member's responses varied. When the same choices were ranked by staff, the least effective outcome was split with 3 of the 6 (50%) naming improved student behavior as

the least effective outcome and the other 3 (50%) staff members naming increased access to the general education curriculum as least effective.

### **Discussion**

In many cases, respondents gave additional information that added depth to the overall picture of inclusive efforts in each school. These responses were examined for common themes. This discussion interprets the common responses from the administrators, the BLT, and staff members as well as the differences in responses among the three groups.

#### **Inclusive Environment**

While no specific questions were asked regarding perception of change in the school's climate, it was apparent from anecdotal responses that changes were indeed happening. In both schools, clear outcomes of inclusive efforts were identifiable. One team member said "personal growth" was an outcome of inclusion and it [inclusion] was "rewarding." Another staff member clearly articulated, "Inclusion means ALL kids and ALL teachers." In addition, an administrator stated, "Inclusion means everyone, not just students" and ".....want staff and adults to be inclusive.....just everybody."

#### **Differences between the BLT and Staff**

Some notable differences were found between the groups including:

- team members reported a great deal more time spent in collaborative planning as compared to staff members.
- most team members believe that everyone is responsible for IEP goal attainment; while most staff members believe it is up to the individual teacher.
- increased access to the general education curriculum was ranked as the most effective IS outcome by the team as compared to least effective IS outcome of the staff.

Responses such as these suggest either the team or the staff did not view the same things in the same way or there was more than one story regarding the implementation of inclusive practices within each setting.

#### **Differences within Schools**

In both schools, the responses of the principal and the BLT members were aligned, but the responses of the randomly selected staff did not concur with their statements. One team member stated the BLT team and non-team members work together. Another stated the team worked as a "liaison" in the school. Conversely, several staff members indicated they had an

inclusive team but did not know the name of the team. In addition, two staff members misnamed the team. And finally, one staff member did not know if his/her school had an inclusive team.

### **Conclusion**

In both schools active steps are being taken to promote inclusiveness as part of the overall function and operation of the school. There is an awareness of collaboration and shared responsibility. This data reflects a baseline compilation of information that will help guide and improve inclusive activities at the school and state level. Interview data reveal areas where schools are succeeding with their inclusive efforts and areas where efforts to improve can be directed.

## **Overall Recommendations**

### **Instrumentation**

- Revision of protocols

The protocols used for these interviews should be re-evaluated for future use. Triangulation of data, where the same information is examined in different ways from at least three sources, provides a stronger research base upon which to make decisions. In this way, common themes in the training and implementation of inclusive practices within each setting, as well as a stronger thread among inclusive practices from all sources, can be more thoroughly examined.

- Increased collaboration

Schools will be using instruments for self monitoring in the future; therefore, greater input from stakeholders from all participant groups including DDOE, district and building administration, BLTs, staff, and community should be considered to encourage ownership of meaningful evaluations which measure inclusive efforts and can be used to drive change.

### **Statewide Efforts**

In order to obtain further information regarding inclusive efforts throughout the state of Delaware, DDOE may consider collecting input from Delaware schools not participating in DDOE training but that perceive their programs as successfully inclusive as well as collecting information from county-wide forums.

Schools with similar needs should continue to unite to arrive at common solutions to areas of concern such as co-teaching, allocation of resources, increased communication, and

staffing issues including personnel assignments, caseload management, and scheduling of special education teachers and educational diagnosticians.

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<sup>1</sup> Delaware Department of Education, Retrieved May 2007

<http://www.doe.k12.de.us/SchoolImprovement/>

<sup>2</sup> Delaware Department of Education, Retrieved May 2007

[http://saelp.doe.k12.de.us/projects/dpas/pdfs/dpas\\_imprv\\_plan.pdf](http://saelp.doe.k12.de.us/projects/dpas/pdfs/dpas_imprv_plan.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Delaware Department of Education, Retrieved May 2007

[http://www.doe.k12.de.us/files/pdf/de\\_isimod1\\_manual.pdf](http://www.doe.k12.de.us/files/pdf/de_isimod1_manual.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Delaware Department of Education, Retrieved May 2007

<http://www.doe.k12.de.us/SchoolImprovement/Parent%20Involvement/parentcommunity.htm>

<sup>5</sup> Planning for Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH), ISI Module “Planning Change”

[http://www.doe.k12.de.us/files/ppt/de\\_isimod1-2\\_lecture2.ppt](http://www.doe.k12.de.us/files/ppt/de_isimod1-2_lecture2.ppt) - 351.0KB Retrieved 5-21-2007

## Appendix A: Inclusive Schools Initiative Product Review

### Products to Review:

- 1) School Improvement Plan
- 2) PATH or Action Plan, with dates
- 3) Inclusive Schools Checklist, with dates
- 4) School achievement data disaggregated by disability and placement
- 5) Placement data
- 6) Meeting minutes
- 7) Information shared with families (newsletters, school programs, etc.)
- 8) School Climate Survey (district or through DOE)

### Products to Collect:

- 9) List of Team Members/Position including family or community members
  - 10) Professional Development Checklist
- 

1. Does the school improvement plan list “improving inclusion” as a way to increase academic achievement for all students’ systems?

(0= no; 1= 6th or lower priority; 2 = 1<sup>st</sup>-5th priority)

2. Does the school have an action plan with specific goals related to inclusive practices? (0 = no action plan; 1 = action plan that is between one to 2 years old; 2 = current)

3. Does the school have Inclusive Schools’ checklist data?

(0 = no checklist data; 1 = data is baseline data; 2 = comparison data)

4. Does the school have placement data?

(0 = no placement data; 1 = data is between one to years old; 2 = current)

5. How is the school’s achievement data disaggregated?

(0 = not disaggregated by disability by placement;

1 = disaggregated by disability in 1 to 2 categories;

2 = disaggregated by disability by placement in categories A, B, and C)

6. Are there minutes from Building Leadership Team meetings (or team that is in charge of inclusion) in the last 12 months?

(0 = no minutes; 1 = less than 6 meeting minutes; 2 = 6 or more meeting minutes)

7. Is there documentation that families are informed of the school’s inclusive efforts?

(0 = no; 2 = yes)

8. Is there school climate data that includes teacher, parent, and student surveys?

(0 = no; 2 = yes for Teacher(s)

(0 = no; 2 = yes for parent(s)

(0 = no; 2 = yes for student(s)

## Appendix B: Inclusive Schools' Checklist

# Inclusive Schools Checklist

The goal of this checklist is to provide a quick overview of inclusive environments, to identify current status, and help focus activities to address needs for action planning in the schools. Please select one answer per question and complete the survey from the school-wide perspective.

After you have completed the survey, please circle the number of 3 items that you would like to see your school make a priority.

<b>Status</b>			<b>Leadership</b>
In Place	Partially In Place	Not In Place	
			1. Administration* actively participates in problem solving and supports the development of an inclusive environment.
			2. Administration facilitates communication and collaboration between regular and special educators by creating common planning time and professional development opportunities.
			3. Administration facilitates and monitors supervision of teachers and paraeducators (e.g. assesses productivity of planning time, training, and classroom instruction).
			4. Administration monitors staff and student participation in inclusive activities.
			5. Family members are valued as part of the school leadership team.
			6. Building leadership** uses data and research to guide decision-making.
			7. Building leadership creates an inclusive climate by showing respect, being willing to work together, and building community.
<b>Status</b>			<b>School/Classroom Climate</b>
In Place	Partially In Place	Not In Place	
			8. The atmosphere of the school/classroom is inviting and welcoming toward all members of the school community and visitors.
			9. There is a proactive and positive approach to school-wide behavior and discipline.
			10. Instruction on social skills, character education and conflict resolution are offered to all and these skills are demonstrated in the school community (e.g. caring, supportive relationships, etc.).
			11. Diversity is appreciated and celebrated by staff and students through embracing a variety of cultural

			traditions and languages.
			12. Everyone has a voice and a sense of belonging.
			13. All participate and are recognized for their expertise in the school (including students, general and special education teachers, parents, paraeducators).
			14. Students understand that others will be working on a different path to achieve the same goal.
			15. Students have a high level of responsibility for creating their learning community.

\* Administration refers to your school building's administrative team

\*\* Building leadership refers to school level teams

<b>Status</b>			<b>Collaboration</b>
In Place	Partially In Place	Not In Place	
			16. There is regular, positive communication between family and school.
			17. Families, staff and students encourage high expectations for all students' positive behavior and academics.
			18. Parents and community members are in schools and classrooms frequently and are working on meaningful instructional activities.
			19. Problem-solving occurs as a team including participation of educators, family, and students.
			20. School collaborates with the community and agencies to provide a full range of services for all students.
			21. General and special educators are all seen as essential resources to one another and collaborate to develop instructional plans (plan for diversity upfront).
			22. Cross-disciplinary and related services staff facilitate shared implementation of services in classrooms and across all settings.
			23. All students have the regular opportunity to coach their peers within the classroom and other settings, using their personal strengths.
<b>Status</b>			<b>Environment (Setting/Physical/Ecological)</b>
In Place	Partially In Place	Not In Place	
			24. The community school and regular classroom is the first placement considered.

			25. If students require additional supports, the majority of school day is still spent in an age appropriate regular classroom.
			26. Students with disabilities have the same calendar and hours as their regular education peers. (e.g. 8:00a.m. – 3:00 p.m.)
			27. School settings are age appropriate and provide a continuum of services to meet the students' specific needs.
			28. Accommodations are made for students with sensory limitations (e.g., hearing, vision, etc.).
			29. Furniture is comfortable and arrangement is conducive to interactive work.
			30. Classroom design is conducive to easy listening for students and educators alike.
			31. The school is physically accessible to all students.
			32. Faculty lounge is warm and comfortable.

<b>Status</b>			<b>Instruction</b>
In Place	Partially In Place	Not In Place	
			33. Staff incorporate a variety of research and data-based methods and materials to teach the curriculum.
			34. Staff incorporate a variety of methods that allow all students to demonstrate what they have learned.
			35. Instruction is differentiated based on a variety of assessment results and provides a learning environment with flexible curriculum and instruction so all students can participate in school and classroom activities.
			36. Teaching and learning are assessed daily.
			37. Instruction is motivational and engaging and promotes active learning.
			38. All students work toward same overall standards with possible differences in level of outcomes achieved based on the needs of the individual student.
			39. Educators design instruction with the goal of student independence.
			40. Instruction is related to social and community issues to increase relevance for all students.

			41. Student social interactions occur throughout the day that relate to curricular expectations.
<b>Status</b>			<b>Technology</b>
In Place	Partially In Place	Not In Place	
			42. Technology is current and sufficiently powerful for instructional purposes.
			43. Technology is in working order.
			44. Students have been taught skills needed to use technology effectively.
			45. Technical support is readily available to staff.
			46. The use of technology is closely aligned with instructional goals.
			47. All students have access to the technology they need to meet their learning goals.
			48. Each student has access to the appropriate technology to meet his/her needs.
			49. Accommodations are made for students who experience communication difficulties due to ability or language limitations.
			50. All adults can access any communication device used/needed by their students.

**Please remember to select 3 statement areas by circling the numbers that you would like to see your school make a priority when action planning.  
Thank you for your time!**

## Appendix C: DDOE ISI Training Modules

	Module description	% of IS school participating
<b>ISI Required Modules</b>		
<b>School Leadership Team</b>		
<b>Building Level Team</b>		
Academy 1: Leading Change	<b>Academy 1: Building Leadership Teams: Leading Change</b> focuses on two essential elements of change: (1) the process of change and its impact on students, faculty and staff and families and (2) the function and purpose of building leadership teams in leading change processes.	100%
Academy 2: Gauging your Systemic Change Efforts	<b>Academy 2: Gauging your Systemic Change Efforts</b> helps BLT's to use a validated needs assessment, to gather, analyze and develop plans for systemic change within a school.	100%
Academy 3: Aligning School Goals and School Work	<b>Academy 3: Aligning School Goals and School Work</b> focuses on using district and individual school goals and outcomes, to provide a process for accomplishing action plans by targeting monthly change.	90%
<b>Mining Data</b>		
Academy 1: Mining Meaningful Data	<b>Academy 1: Mining Meaningful Data</b> outlines the tools for tracking change over time for students and faculty.	90%
Academy 2: Mining School Improvement Data	<b>Academy 2: Identifying School-wide Patterns of Student Performance</b> helps participants develop their skills to analyze data over time and to adjust and improve their strategies for instructional improvement.	90%
Academy 3: Looking at Student Work to Target Instruction	<b>Academy 3: Looking at Student Work to Target Instruction</b> helps participants learn to examine student work samples, to target instruction and link aggregated student work data to make changes school-wide.	90%
<b>Person Centered Planning</b>		
Academy 1: Person-Centered Planning	<b>Person-Centered Planning</b> is a philosophy and practice that utilizes a set of tools to effectively include all children in their schools and to build connections between school, families and the school community participants.	50%
Academy 2: MAPS	<b>MAPs</b> is a collaborative process that facilitates the collection of information about the student and family. It is an action planning tool designed to help individuals, schools, and families figure out how to move into the future creatively and effectively.	50%

Academy 3: PATH	<b>PATH</b> is an eight-step action planning process to assist schools in planning a way through complex situations toward a valued future for students and families. PATH is also used as an organizational planning tool.	20%
<b>Entire School Staff</b>		
<b>Opening Doors to Inclusive Practices</b>		
Academy 1: Understanding Inclusion	<b>Understanding Inclusion</b> defines inclusive schooling practices for all students, including a strength-based awareness of individuals with disabilities.	100%
Academy 2: Exploring Inclusive Practices in Schools	<b>Exploring Inclusive Practices in Schools</b> examines inclusive practices in classrooms and buildings K-12. It offers shifts in practice that assist staff in focusing on what learners need and how they will learn through supports, teaming and curriculum innovations. Awareness of strengths, areas of need, and classroom strategies for students with different challenges are explored.	100%
Academy 3: Exploring Inclusive Practices in Classrooms	<b>Exploring Inclusive Practices in Classrooms</b> examines inclusive practices in classrooms K-12. Examples of person-centered planning techniques, accommodations and variations in instruction, and levels of support are given.	80%
<b>Universal Design for Learning</b>		
Academy 1: Understanding UDL	<b>Understanding Universal Design for Learning</b> explores accessibility to the general education curriculum (both physical and cognitive) for students with varied backgrounds, learning styles, abilities and disabilities.	30%
Academy 2: Differentiated Instruction	<b>Differentiated Instruction</b> is explored as to how to deliver instruction regarding content, process and product using the readiness, interests and learning styles of diverse learners.	40%
Academy 3: Differentiated Instruction	<b>Differentiated Instruction</b> provides models for differentiating instruction and assessment at elementary, middle and secondary levels.	20%
<b>Collaboration</b>		
Academy 1: Collaborative Teaming	<b>Collaborative Teaming</b> guides educators in the development of their team's operation structure, in addition to effective problem-solving, communication, conflict resolution, and service delivery skills.	50%
Academy 2: Co-Teaching	<b>Co-Teaching</b> engages the participants in a review of the research behind co-teaching, analyzes co-teaching approaches and their impact on students/classroom, and explores applying the approaches within a standards-based instructional setting.	50%
Academy 3: Co-Planning For Instruction	<b>Co-Planning For Instruction</b> explores practices of co-teaching teams on how to plan for instruction and assessment strategies across content areas.	30%
<b>Assessing and Reporting Student Progress</b>		
Academy 1: Classroom Assessment Practices	<b>Classroom Assessment Practices</b> explores the use of curriculum based assessment and classroom assessment for all students pre-K to grade 12. Information will be presented to differentiate between assessment of and for learning. Emphasis is placed on the use of differentiated assessment to accurately measure the knowledge and abilities of all students.	10%
Academy 2: Developing and Using Various	<b>Developing and using various types of assessments</b> explores the different types of assessment tools, including the advantages and disadvantages of each. Special attention will be focused on designing assessments to accurately obtain the evidence of student learning outcomes.	10%
Academy 3: Reporting Student Progress	<b>Reporting Student Progress</b> stresses the involvement of all students in discussion about their	10%

	performance in school and in engaging the families in that process. Grading, portfolios and report cards will be discussed.	
<b>Elective Choices: (1 elective module is required)</b>		
<b>Culturally Responsive Classrooms</b>	See below for complete description	
Academy 1: Culturally Responsive Classrooms		20%
Academy 2: Culturally Responsive Classrooms		20%
Academy 3: Culturally Responsive Classrooms		0%
<b>Classroom Management</b>	See below for complete description	
Academy 1: Classroom Management		20%
Academy 2: Classroom Management		20%
<b>Accommodations</b>	See below for complete description	
Academy 1: Accommodations		0%
Academy 2: Accommodations		0%
<b>Tiered Literacy</b>		
SSSR		14%
IMPACT		14%
CRISS		29%
<b>Other Related Trainings</b>		
DE Reading Project		14%
PBS		14%
NWEA		29%
Differentiating by readiness/ MAP reports		14%
Arts Across Curriculum - ISI workgroup presentation		14%
United Streaming/ Differentiating Instruction		14%
DE Writing Project		14%
DI		29%
Understanding Poverty		29%
Writing Workshop		29%
IEP		29%
Reading First		14%
Strategies/ Accommodations for Accessing the General Curriculum (Intervention--at-risk)		14%
Diversity Training		57%
Closing the Achievement Gap		14%
CRISS		14%
Instructional Support Team		14%
Web Quests in Silo Based Curriculums		
Technology		14%
Modification to Kagan Training		14%
Stetson PD1		14%
Stetson PD2		14%
Stetson PD3		14%
Stetson PD4		14%
Stetson PD5		14%

Stetson PD6		14%
Stetson PD7		14%
Formative Assessment1		14%
Formative Assessment2		
Formative Assessment3		
Equity/ Antiracism		14%
Breakthrough to Literacy		14%
AbeCeDarien		14%
Scott Foresman Social Studies		14%
District Standards Based Report Card System		14%
Book Study: Mosaic of Thought		14%
Book Study: The Fluent Reader		14%
Reading ASSIST		14%
TERC		14%

### **Optional Modules**

#### **Culturally Responsive Classrooms:**

Developing programs and providing supports that reflect cultural competency is important for school teams to consider. In order to be “culturally competent” individuals must first recognize their own cultural frame of reference. Individuals can begin to examine how families and students in their school may view different aspects of the classroom, services or the school at large and to use these multiple perspectives to inform their program development, family involvement, teaching strategies, and individual student support strategies. In the Culturally Responsive Classrooms training, participants engage in experiential activities that help them to:

- Identify how perceptions, biases, etc impact instruction and the climate in the classroom.
- Foster an environment where students of all cultures, ethnicities, abilities, and backgrounds prosper academically, socially, and emotionally.
- Celebrate the similarities and differences of all in the classroom.
- Review their classroom instruction and assessment to meet the needs of all their students.
- Respond to acts of discrimination, hatred, disrespect, etc and to teach the same to their students.
- Develop a plan to make embracing cultural diversity a “way of life” in their classrooms

#### **Classroom Management:**

The classroom management workshop identifies elements of effective classroom and instructional management that support teachers in providing a classroom environment conducive to academic success and develop tools to gauge their classroom management success.

Participants will be able to:

- Design a physical space conducive to learning
- Develop a functional schedule
- Establish behavioral expectations and methods for teaching expectations
- Learn techniques for managing consequences
- Develop skills to work with more challenging students

- Acquire tools to structure and provide quality instruction

### **Accommodations**

The Delaware Accommodations training module is based on a nationally recognized manual and professional development guide developed in collaboration with members of the Professional Development and Communications Study Group of the Assessing Special Education Students (ASES) and the State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS).

Participants learn how to selecting, administering, and evaluating the use of Accommodations for the Instruction and Assessment of students with disabilities. Types of accommodations allowed by state and national assessment guidelines are reviewed. Participants engage in activities designed to help them:

- Expect students with disabilities to achieve grade level academic content standards
- Learn about accommodations for instruction and assessment
- Select accommodations for individual students
- Administer accommodations during instruction and assessment
- Evaluate and improve accommodations used

### **Family School Collaboration:**

Participants learn strategies for improving collaboration with families. The training presents a model for developing productive family school relationships as part of a school-wide process.

Participants of the training will learn:

- The systems concepts of wholeness and patterns of interaction.
- Elements and beliefs associated with the CORE model of family-school collaboration.
- Use of communication skills (e.g., empathic responding, reframing, blocking blame) in effectively engaging all families.
- School-wide strategies for engaging families (e.g., examining the physical plant; modifying written communications; conducting needs assessment).

Participants will also be asked to follow up by practicing the skills that they have learned and by keeping a reflection journal.

## **Appendix D: Interview Protocols**

### **Administrator Interview Questions**

- 1) What is the goal of your inclusive school efforts?
- 2) Do you have a team that addresses school-wide inclusion?
- 3) Has the team reviewed the action plan with staff this year?
- 4) Is your school-wide team representative of your school staff?
- 5) Are you or another administrator on the team?
- 6) How often does the team meet?
- 7) How often do you attend team meetings?
- 8) If you have a designated administrator assigned to the team, how often does he/she attend meetings?
- 9) If you are not on the team, how are you kept informed of team decisions?
- 10) If you are using your school improvement team as a leadership team for inclusion planning, how often do you discuss inclusion activities?
- 11) Who is your team leader/facilitator?
- 12) Do you have an out-of-school liaison in the state or district to support you with your inclusive efforts? If yes, who?
- 13) Does the team provide updates to faculty on activities & data summaries regarding the school inclusion efforts? If yes, how often?
- 14) Have you participated in any inclusion professional development training(s)? If yes, which training(s)?

### **Team Member Interview Questions**

- 1) How does your team use data to make placement decisions?
- 2) Has your team reviewed the school's action plan with staff this year?
- 3) Who is the team leader/facilitator?
- 4) How often is the action plan updated?
- 5) What is the team's number one goal for improving inclusive efforts?
- 6) Do you feel that your team is empowered to make changes regarding inclusion?
- 7) Do you feel that everyone's expertise and opinions are respected by team members?

- 8) In a typical work day, how many minutes do you collaborate with peers to plan for student learning?
- 9) Who is responsible for the goal attainment of students with an IEP?
- 10) What is the most important concept from the inclusive schools training that has enhanced your instructional practice?
- 11) Please rank order these statements from 1 to 5 with  
1= *most effective* outcome in my school's inclusive efforts *to date*  
and  
5= *least effective* outcome in my school's inclusive efforts *to date*.  
\_\_\_\_ Increased access to the general ed curriculum  
\_\_\_\_ Greater collaboration with shared goals and planning  
\_\_\_\_ Improved student achievement  
\_\_\_\_ Improved student behavior  
\_\_\_\_ Improved school climate
- 12) Do families (parents, students) participate in the development and implementation of the school's plans for inclusion?

### Staff Interview Questions

- 1) Do you have a school-wide team that addresses inclusive efforts?
- 2) Are you kept informed of the team's activities? If yes, you're informed most often via:  
\_\_\_\_ faculty meetings  
\_\_\_\_ department/grade level meetings  
\_\_\_\_ written and/or electronic updates
- 3) Who is responsible for the goal attainment of students with an IEP?
- 4) In a typical work day, how many minutes do you collaborate with peers to plan for student learning?
- 5) Please rank order these statements from 1 to 5 with:  
1= *most effective* outcome in my school's inclusive efforts *to date*  
and  
5= *least effective* outcome in my school's inclusive efforts *to date*.  
\_\_\_\_ Increased access to the general ed curriculum  
\_\_\_\_ Greater collaboration with shared goals and planning  
\_\_\_\_ Improved student achievement  
\_\_\_\_ Improved student behavior  
\_\_\_\_ Improved school climate