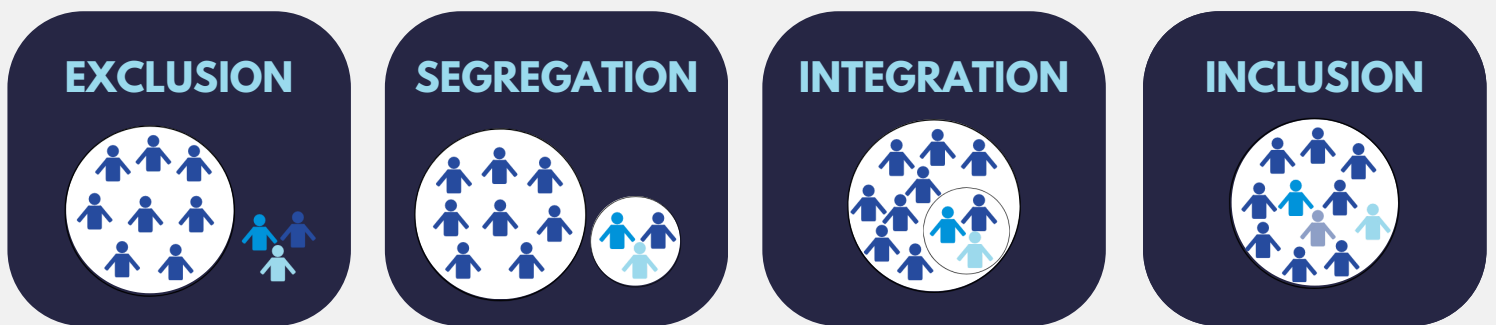


What is Inclusive Education?

OVERVIEW

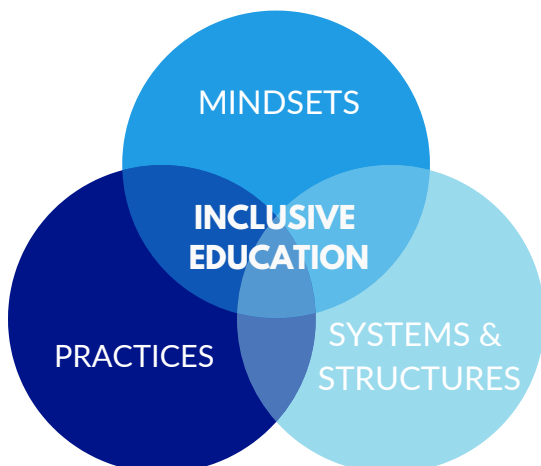
Parents send their children to schools every day with hopes and dreams of belonging to a community that allows each child to reach their full potential. At the same time, educators and school leaders walk into schools and classrooms everyday with the hopes of helping every child achieve their dreams. However, historical data and trends tell us that for certain groups of students, especially students with disabilities, these dreams and goals remain unfulfilled. Throughout history, schools have reckoned with how to meaningfully include students with disabilities into buildings and classrooms, uphold high expectations for them, and ensure they are fully equipped to engage as active members of their communities.



Traditional approaches to inclusion have largely resulted in moving from exclusion to either segregation or integration and not true inclusivity, due to flawed ideas about what it means for students with disabilities to belong and a fundamental misunderstanding about the changes that must occur in service of this. Inclusive Education offers a reimagined approach to ensuring every single student, every single day, engages in the full breadth of community and learning opportunities that schools offer.

WHAT IS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION?

When Inclusive Education is present in school communities, the instruction, relationships and wrap-around services are designed to meet the needs and enhance the strengths of every learner. Inclusive education brings together three critical elements that shape school culture:



Together, these three elements create school environment that meet the needs of all learners, including those with disabilities.



What is Inclusive Education?

CASE STUDY

Ralston Public Schools

The Power of Innovative Leadership

When Ralston Public Schools first partnered with us on district-wide inclusion training, the results were mixed—some staff were energized while others wanted more concrete support. But Assistant Superintendent Dr. Harley and Blumfield Elementary Principal Mr. Knight saw an opportunity. **What if they asked staff what they needed?** Through an inventory process, teachers identified their real concerns: only about half felt confident collaboratively planning lessons, using data effectively, or ensuring all students could access grade-level content.

Armed with these honest insights, we worked together with Mr. Knight and designed five sessions that directly addressed what teachers said they needed. Teachers weren't just sitting through another professional development; they were getting practical tools for challenges they'd named themselves. The difference showed immediately, with **94%** of participants reporting that sessions genuinely improved their ability to support diverse learners.

But the real proof came months later when staff completed the same inventory again. Confidence levels had jumped to **85-95%** across every area—some categories saw growth of more than **65%**. Mr. Knight noticed it in everyday moments too:

“Our collaboration has been better and more focused. Our conversations are healthier even when they've been difficult.”

By listening first and responding with targeted support, Blumfield created lasting change that teachers could feel in their daily practice.

Inclusive Education is:

- A school community where all students feel a sense of belonging
- Are provided the highest quality instruction that meets their individual needs and enhances their strengths in the setting that is most appropriate.
- A school community where every adult is invested in the success of every student and the responsibility of supporting students is distributed and shared across teams and staff.
- A team-based process is used for all instructional, behavioral and social-emotional decision making driven by an understanding of student needs and strengths grounded in collected data.
- Equipping all educators and support staff with the skills and knowledge to support unique student needs and the enhancement of strengths.

Inclusive Education is not:

- Eliminating any aspect of the LRE continuum (e.g., removing all self-contained classrooms or resource rooms).
- The use of “inclusion teachers” who take sole responsibility for the learning of students with identified disabilities.
- The use of a unilateral decision-making process regarding student placements or instructional accommodations/modifications.
- Placing students with disabilities into general education settings without a clear transition plan regarding the support they need to access learning and the training needed for educators to address learner divergence.