

The School District  
of  
Palm Beach County, Florida

Draft Inclusion Plan

5-25-06

(with Revisions 12/06\*)

\*Revised with recommended language based upon a general review from LRP Publications and a legal review by the School District's Office of the General Counsel. Revisions are noted as follows: new language in bold and underscored or deleted language stricken-through.

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# INCLUSION COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT

~~To create a plan that provides all students,~~ The mission of the Inclusion Committee was to develop a plan to provide all students for whom inclusion is appropriate and necessary, including those with significant disabilities, the opportunities to receive educational benefit and effective educational services with the needed supplementary aids and support services, in age-appropriate general education classrooms in their neighborhood schools, to prepare them for productive lives as full members of society.

# INTRODUCTION

On May 24, 2004, the School Board of Palm Beach County, Florida conducted a workshop regarding inclusive practices in the school district. In addition to a presentation by the Department of Exceptional Student Education, speakers representing parents' and principals' perspectives provided input.

~~"What I would like to see come out of this would be some kind of a plan for the Board to assist us as principals ... to better manage what we have to get the most out of these kids."  
(Mike Riley, Principal, Lantana Elementary School)~~

~~"We are asking the School Board today to direct the Superintendent to create a three year plan in which we will end up with most of our students with disabilities included in the regular classroom at the end of three years."  
(Sue Davis Killian, President, Gold Coast Down Syndrome Organization)~~

Inclusion is not just about least restrictive environment (LRE) and it is not about mainstreaming. It is neither mandated by federal law nor the courts. It does not mean that all disabled students will spend all of their school day in the regular classroom. It should not be mandated to improve statistics. Inclusion is a facilitation with an array of practices of providing opportunities for student with disabilities to receive some or all of their education in the regular classroom and to participate with non-disabled peers in school and extra-curricular activities. Educating children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment is mandated by law and if an IEP for a child states that inclusion is necessary than that is the placement that must be determined.

Inclusion is not mainstreaming; therefore, students do not have to be "ready" to be included. Rather, the classroom and school environment have to be "ready" to include the student. This means that appropriate supports are not only in place, but are implemented. It also means that when the supports are in place and implemented, and the student is not achieving educational benefit, the district must have other program options available.

There are various models for inclusion. There may be a second teacher in the general education classroom; there may be a paraprofessional assisting the students in the general education classroom; students may be assisting students; or there may be indirect or intermittent support provided to the classroom teacher while implementing the student's IEP in the general education classroom. To include students successfully, one's belief system must change from viewing the student as one with disabilities to one with abilities.

While the district is committed to the inclusion of students with disabilities, it is also committed to compliance with the LRE provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Therefore, one size does not fit all. The purpose of IDEA is to provide individualized education for children with disabilities which means inclusion is not necessarily appropriate for every child.

The primary features that demonstrate successful inclusion in a school are: a belief that all of the students belong to the school community; access to the total school environment for all students; educational progress for all students; and decisions that are based upon individual student needs, rather than disability eligibility.

## GOALS and ACTION STEPS

The Inclusion Plan Goals and Action Steps follow on pages ~~5-9~~ 6-12. After each Goal, the Action Steps necessary to accomplish the goal are listed. Below the Action Steps is a breakdown of tasks, responsible people, and schedules.

**GOAL #1 - By June 2009, all Palm Beach County Schools will be designed programmatically to support the inclusion of all students with disabilities for whom inclusion is appropriate. Indian Ridge and Royal Palm Schools will be exempted from this goal.**

### **SCHOOL-BASED STEP(S) TO ACCOMPLISH GOAL #1**

1. All schools in the district (except Royal Palm and Indian Ridge which are schools designed for specific populations, i.e., Indian Ridge is a school for the severely emotionally handicapped and Royal Palm is a school for cognitively and medically involved students) will be scheduled to participate in the conversion to an Inclusive model by June 2009. (Charter schools can request to participate in all phases of the Inclusion process, including planning, training, and on-site assistance.) The conversion to an Inclusive model will consist of steps 2-5 6.
2. The Principal and staff will meet with at least one member of the District Inclusion Team to assess the needs of the school in converting the current special education program to an inclusive model. Needs might include, but are not limited to staff development, scheduling, resources, and an assessment of individual student needs in order to successfully include the students into the general education classes.
3. School staff consisting of (at a minimum) the Principal or designee, School-based Inclusion Facilitator, General Education Teacher, ESE Teacher, and ESE Contact will attend Inclusion training. Training includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. Philosophy of and reason for Inclusion
  - b. The legal requirements of IDEA as it applies to *Least Restrictive Environment*
  - c. Curriculum modifications and accommodations
  - d. The provision of supplementary aids and services in the general education classroom
  - e. Basic behavior modification techniques
  - f. Differentiated instruction
  - g. ESE/Regular Ed Teacher Collaboration
  - h. The inclusion of students with significant disabilities, including EMH, Autism, TMH, & PMH
  - i. Allocation of Resources for Inclusion
  - j. The transition process (middle and high schools only)
  - k. Placement Determination Process, including the Infused Skills Grid
4. Schools will allocate their ESE resources in a manner that ensures that all supplementary aids and support services (such as ESE resource teacher, OT, etc.) will be available in the general education classroom for students who are included, in accordance with their the IEPs.

5. The assignment of a "School-based Inclusion Facilitator" role. This should be a person who has an interest in attending on-going trainings to become the school's inclusion expert. This person should be skilled in training other staff members in the school. Schools will receive funding for .5 person to fulfill this role.
  
6. In the year following the conversion to the Inclusive model, schools will use an Inclusion Best Practices Checklist developed by the District Inclusion Team to self-assess their progress.

<b>Goal 1 - School-based Tasks</b>	<b>People Responsible</b>	<b>Schedule</b>
Scheduling of Schools	Area Superintendents	End of each school year
Training of School Staff	State and district FIN staff	1/3 of schools during each of these school years: 2006/2007, 2007/2008, 2008/2009
Allocate ESE resources for inclusion	Principals	
School-based Inclusion Facilitator chosen	Principals	
Inclusion Checklist completed	Principals	December following training



## DISTRICT-BASED STEP(S) TO ACCOMPLISH GOAL #1

7. A letter will be sent to all ESE Contacts each year reminding them to invite a home school representative to the IEP meetings of students not attending their home school, to help the IEP team determine if how the student can be successfully educated in the home school. This applies only to students who have been placed in a non-home school ESE program by the IEP team.
8. The Inclusion Committee will track the status of the school training to ensure that all schools will be trained in the specified time frame.
9. A Placement Determination Guideline package will be culled from existing IEP materials, in order to be emphasized in IEP Trainings, with principals, and in other training venues. The guidelines will include a decision flowchart, a list of example services and supports to be considered in the general education classroom, and the use of the Infused Skills Grid.
10. The grading of students with disabilities is a significant issue, but beyond the scope of the Inclusion Committee. Therefore, the Inclusion Committee will ask the Palm Beach County ESE Advisory Committee to create a position statement regarding the grading of students with disabilities in inclusive settings.
11. The ESE Executive Director and district FIN staff will meet and/or communicate with the corresponding staff from Miami/Dade School District and other comparable school districts both in Florida and in other states to gather information from their successful inclusive models.
12. The district will allocate instructional resources to the schools such that students with significant disabilities obtain the necessary supports, regardless of their placement.

13. The district will offer 5 inclusion trainings per year for parents.

<b>Goal 1 - District-based Tasks</b>	<b>People Responsible</b>	<b>Schedule</b>
Letter sent to ESE Contacts	ESE Executive Director	February of each year
Report status of School Training	ESE Executive Director	Quarterly
Evaluate school training status and take any necessary corrective action.	Inclusion Committee	Quarterly
Placement Determination Guidelines culled	ESE Executive Director	September 1, 2006
Review and Approval of Placement Determination Guidelines	Inclusion Committee	November 1, 2006
Distribution of Placement Guidelines in principals' packets.	ESE Executive Director	November 15, 2006
Create Grading Position statement	ESE Advisory Committee	June 2009
<u>Meetings/communication with Miami/Dade or other comparable-sized district staff</u>	ESE Executive Director and FIN Staff	January 2007
Resource Allocation formula developed	ESE Budget Analyst	December 1, 2006
Schedule & advertise Parent trainings	FIN staff	5 times each year

**GOAL #2 - By August 2006, the new teacher training will include information about Palm Beach County's philosophy on inclusion.**

**STEP(S) TO ACCOMPLISH GOAL #2**

A training module will be developed that explains the School District philosophy on inclusion, the legal requirements of Least Restrictive Environment, and the Inclusion Plan mission statement. This will be added to the New Teacher Orientation (TeacherFest).

<b>Goal 2 Tasks</b>	<b>People Responsible</b>	<b>Schedule</b>
Create Training materials	Inclusion Committee and FIN staff	July 30, 2006
Add to NTO training materials	FIN staff	August 8, 2006

**GOAL #3 - All personnel who recruit for the Palm Beach County School District will be trained/inserviced in Palm Beach County's philosophy on inclusion.**

**STEP(S) TO ACCOMPLISH GOAL #3**

<b>Goal 3 Tasks</b>	<b>People Responsible</b>	<b>Schedule</b>
Create Training materials	FIN staff	July 30, 2006
Train permanent recruiters	FIN staff	December 1, 2006

**GOAL #4 - Between April 2006 and April 2007, the IEP Teams responsible for Pre-K to Kindergarten transitions will be trained in the Least Restrictive Environment provision of IDEA and in the use of the Infused Skills Grid.**

**STEP(S) TO ACCOMPLISH GOAL #4**

All Pre-K IEP teams will be trained in the following subjects:

1. Philosophy of and reason for Inclusion.
2. The legal requirements of IDEA as it applies to LRE.
3. The use of the Infused Skills grid to help determine placement.
4. The benefits of including students at the youngest possible age.
5. The inclusion of students with significant disabilities, including students with significant cognitive disabilities

<b>Goal 4 Tasks</b>	<b>People Responsible</b>	<b>Schedule</b>
Schedule Pre-K IEP Teams	ESE Executive Director	June 1, 2006
Train all Pre-K IEP Teams	FIN Staff	April 1, 2007

**GOAL #5 - As of Fall 2007, each new school that opens will meet the criterion of Goal #1.**

**STEP(S) TO ACCOMPLISH GOAL #5**

Before opening, all new schools will participate in the actions for GOAL #1 - Actions Step #1.

<b>Goal 5 Tasks</b>	<b>People Responsible</b>	<b>Schedule</b>
Identify new schools	ESE Executive Director	February of each year
Complete initial training of school staff	State and District FIN staff and new school principals	May 31st of each year
Allocate ESE resources for inclusion	Principals of new schools	May 31st of each year
Assign School-based Inclusion Facilitator	Principals of new schools	May 31st of each year
Inclusion Checklist completed	Principals	December following training

**GOAL #6 - By following the Action Steps in this Inclusion Plan, it is anticipated that the district's will reach an inclusion level ("Regular Classroom" placement) of 75% by August 2010 inclusion rate will increase annually. Data for each exceptionality will be calculated yearly and is expected to continue to show increases in the time spent with non-disabled peers across all exceptionalities. Special attention shall be paid to the percentage of students with significant disabilities and their yearly inclusion increases. (Note: As all placements must be determined on an individualized basis by each student's IEP team, the District cannot mandate that a specific percentage of students with disabilities must be included in regular education classrooms. Therefore, attainment of this goal is not to be construed as a mandate; rather, it should be considered as a level of achievement.)**

**STEP(S) TO ACCOMPLISH GOAL #6**

The rates of inclusion will be tracked, as detailed in the Measurement section of this plan. At least once a year, the Inclusion Committee will examine the data and its alignment or non-alignment with the Inclusion Plan goals. If the data shows that the goals are not likely to be met, the Inclusion Committee will suggest changes that need to be implemented.

<b>Goal 6 Tasks</b>	<b>People Responsible</b>	<b>Schedule</b>
Gather measurements	ESE Budget Analyst	December of each year
Evaluate Inclusion Plan effectiveness and suggest plan changes	Inclusion Committee	January of each year

# MEASUREMENT OF INCLUSION PLAN SUCCESS

Each December, the ESE Budget Analyst will report the following six measurements:

1. ESE Service Delivery by Primary Exceptionality
2. ESE Service Delivery Percentages by Primary Exceptionality
3. ESE Service Delivery by Race
4. ESE Service Delivery Percentages by Race
5. The percentage of students with disabilities earning a passing score on the FCAT
6. The percentage of students with disabilities participating in the FCAT

In order to track the success of the Inclusion Plan Action Steps, these six measurements will be reported for the following groups of schools:

- A. The school district as a whole
- B. The schools that have participated in Goal 1 - Steps 2-5 (School Inclusion training/conversion)
- C. Each Administrative Area (data reported just to Area Superintendents)

This data shows the time with non-disabled peers and placement categories of all students with disabilities. The Inclusion Committee will review the annual data and determine if the school district is making adequate progress toward the Inclusion Plan goal of increasing the percentage having at least 75% of students with disabilities have in a "Regular Classroom" placement by August 2010. If the Inclusion Committee feels that the district is not making adequate progress, it will make recommendations for changes to the content or implementation of the Inclusion Plan. However, as all placements must be determined on a individual basis by each student's IEP team, the District cannot mandate that a specific percentage of students with disabilities are included in regular education classrooms. The purpose of the District Inclusion Plan is to achieve a higher level of inclusion for all students by implementing the steps contained in this document and not by mandating specific placements.

# ACCOUNTABILITY

The Area Superintendents will be responsible for tracking their schools' compliance with the Inclusion Plan. This will include monitoring the following:

1. The participation by each existing and new school in Inclusion Training by June 2010.
2. Each school's completion of the items in the "School Checklist of Activities" in Appendix A.
3. Inclusion statistics to ensure that area schools are making gains toward Inclusion Plan Goals. (Statistics will be provided annually by the ESE Budget Analyst)
4. Participation by all Pre-K IEP Teams in LRE training by April 2007.

The Area Superintendents will report their area's progress annually to the District Inclusion Committee.

The District Inclusion Committee will report district progress toward Inclusion Plan goals annually to the Superintendent and the School Board. If necessary, the Inclusion Committee will recommend changes to the content or implementation of the plan.

# APPENDIX A - SCHOOL CHECKLIST OF ACTIVITIES

\_\_\_ School has been scheduled for training on \_\_\_\_\_(date).

\_\_\_ School has assigned the role of School-Based Inclusion Facilitator.

The person assigned is: \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_ School personnel have attended initial CPT Inclusion Training.

\_\_\_ Principal / Principal designee

\_\_\_ School Based Inclusion Facilitator

\_\_\_ General Education Teacher

\_\_\_ ESE Teacher

\_\_\_ ESE Contact

\_\_\_ ESE Resources have been allocated in a manner that ensures that ESE services are available in the general education classroom.

\_\_\_ In the year after moving to the Inclusive Model, the school used an Inclusive Best Practices checklist to self-assess ~~their~~ its progress.



## APPENDIX B - ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to the Palm Beach County District Inclusion Committee for their hard work and dedication in developing this Inclusion Plan. The following people were instrumental in developing this plan and have given the plan their approval:

Dave Cantley	Chair
Janice Berryman	North Area ESE Coordinator
Sue Davis-Killian	Parent
Darlene Foster	Parent
Randee Gabriel	Program Director, Parent to Parent
Terri Harmon	Executive Director, Gold Coast Down Syndrome Organization
Leslie Menendez	Assistant Principal, Palm Beach Central High School
Gail Pasterczyk	Principal, Elbridge Gale Elementary School
Gail Rappaport	Teacher, Alamanda Elementary School
Ian Saltzman	Principal, Palm Beach Central High School
Jack Thompson	Principal, Boca Raton Middle School
Aiasha Walker	Representative, Classroom Teachers Association; Teacher, Village Academy

Additional thanks to the following district employees who contributed to the plan:

Andy Binns	ESE Budget Analyst
Russ Feldman	Executive Director, Exceptional Student Education
Marilyn Schiavo	Inclusion Specialist

# APPENDIX C - BUDGET

Most of the items in the inclusion plan require no additional funding over current spending levels. The items that do require funding are explained below.

## 1. District Inclusion Facilitators

- a. There are currently four District Inclusion Facilitators. They are funded through the Florida Inclusion Network grant and IDEA funds.
- b. Four District Inclusion Facilitators can provide Inclusion training and follow-up support to all schools in five years.
- c. In order to train and support all schools in three years, four additional District Inclusion Facilitators would be needed.
- d. The Executive Director of the Florida Inclusion Network (FIN) has committed state FIN personnel to co-teach with our four District Inclusion Facilitators during initial training of all Palm Beach County Schools. This essentially doubles our inclusion training capacity. It does not, however, double our capacity to provide on-going support to schools. These extra personnel from state FIN has not been taken into account in the budget proposed.

## 2. School-based Inclusion Facilitators

- a. Schools will be given a .5 position to staff the School-based Inclusion Facilitator Role. This additional .5 position will last for three years.
- b. After the three year period, schools will receive a \$6,000 stipend for two additional years to facilitate inclusion.
- c. After five years, schools are assumed to be proficient in Inclusion and no longer need additional ~~resources~~ Inclusion Facilitators. Nevertheless, it is recognized that other factors could impact the need for on-going training, support and resources.

The Inclusion Committee is presenting two Inclusion Plan budget options. The first option implements the Inclusion Plan over a three year period and the second option implements the Inclusion Plan over a five year period. The following two pages contain detailed budgets for the three-year and five-year options.

## INCLUSION PLAN BUDGET – 3 YEAR OPTION

### Three Year Budget Assumptions:

1. Four additional District Inclusion Facilitators will be required to train and support all 161 school in three years.
2. Schools will require initial training, followed by on-going support for a total of three years.
3. Schools will receive funding for a School-Based Inclusion Facilitator Role when they start the Transition to Inclusion.
  - The funding will be for a half-time position for three years, followed by a \$6,000 stipend for two years.

	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
4 Additional District Inclusion Facilitators (\$62,000 per person per year)	\$248,000	\$248,000	\$248,000	\$0	\$0		
<b>Half-time School-based Inclusion Facilitators</b>							
1/3 of schools 1 <sup>st</sup> year	\$ 1,663,667						
2/3 of schools 2 <sup>nd</sup> year		\$3,327,333					
All schools 3 <sup>rd</sup> year			\$4,991,000				
2/3 of schools 4 <sup>th</sup> year				\$3,327,333			
1/3 of schools 5 <sup>th</sup> year					\$1,663,667		
<b>Stipend for School-based Inclusion Facilitator</b>							
1/3 of schools 4 <sup>th</sup> year				\$322,000			
2/3 of schools 5 <sup>th</sup> year					\$644,000		
2/3 of schools 6 <sup>th</sup> year						\$644,000	
1/3 of schools 7 <sup>th</sup> year							\$322,000
<b>TOTAL COSTS BY YEAR</b>	<b>\$1,911,667</b>	<b>\$3,575,333</b>	<b>\$5,239,000</b>	<b>\$3,649,333</b>	<b>\$2,307,667</b>	<b>\$644,000</b>	<b>\$322,000</b>
<b>TOTAL COSTS OVER 7 YEARS:</b>	<b>\$17,649,000</b>						

## INCLUSION PLAN BUDGET - 5 YEAR OPTION

### Five Year Budget Assumptions:

1. The current four District Inclusion Facilitators can train all 161 school in five years.
2. Schools will require initial training, followed by on-going support for a total of three years.
3. Schools will receive funding for a School-Based Inclusion Facilitator Role when they start the Transition to Inclusion
  - The funding will be for a half-time position for three years, followed by a \$6,000 stipend for two years.

	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
<b>Half-time School-based Inclusion Facilitator</b>									
1/5 of schools 1st year	\$ 998,200								
2/5 of schools 2nd year		\$1,996,400							
3/5 of schools 3rd year			\$2,994,600						
3/5 of schools 4th year				\$2,994,600					
3/5 of schools 5th year					\$2,994,600				
2/5 of schools 6th year						\$1,996,400			
1/5 of school 7th year							\$998,200		
<b>Stipend for School-based Inclusion Facilitator</b>									
1/5 of schools 4th year				\$193,200					
2/5 of schools 5th year					\$386,400				
2/5 of schools 6th year						\$386,400			
2/5 of schools 7th year							\$386,400		
2/5 of schools 8th year								\$386,400	
1/5 of schools 9th year									\$193,200
<b>COSTS BY YEAR</b>	<b>\$998,200</b>	<b>\$1,996,400</b>	<b>\$2,994,600</b>	<b>\$3,187,800</b>	<b>\$3,381,000</b>	<b>\$2,382,800</b>	<b>\$1,384,600</b>	<b>\$386,400</b>	<b>\$193,200</b>
<b>TOTAL COST OVER 9 YEARS:</b>	<b>\$16,905,000</b>								