Virginia Inclusive Schools Planning Guide

School: _____

Date: _____

Planning Members:

Name	Position

Inclusive Practices in Successful Schools: Assessing Progress and Future Steps

1. A Clear and Consistent Vision and Vocabulary for Inclusive Schools

Without a system-wide understanding of the district's vision for and plans to achieve inclusion for diverse students, success is limited and progress is difficult. In addition, without a clear vision and set of expectations for every school, school districts risk a lack of consistency from school to school and the potential for inequitable opportunities for students. Where noted, your school can reference the results from an annually administered Faculty Survey.

Practice	Current Status			Action Steps	Start	End	Evidence of Success
	In Place & Successful	Must be Improved	Not in Place				
1.1 A clear and consistent vision for services for students with disabilities in inclusive settings exists for the district.							
1.2 Our school faculty has met to review the district vision and we have aligned our school vision and practices to it. OR We have developed our own vision for inclusive practices in the absence of a district vision statement. (Survey Q1. >90%)							
1.3 We share a common vocabulary re: services for students with disabilities and inclusive practices throughout the entire school. (Survey Q2. >90%)							
1.4 Our school has a continuum of service options to meet student needs with a preference for services provided in the general education classroom, whenever appropriate. (Survey Q3. >90%)							
1.5 Leadership and faculty articulate the main points of the school's vision and commitment to all students.							
1.6 Faculty members feel a strong sense of shared responsibility for all students. (Survey Q4. >90%)							
1.7 The organizational structure for our school reflects shared ownership (e.g. there are no silos, no separate special education department, separate wings, etc.).							

2. Legislative and Accountability Standards

Every state receiving funds for serving students with disabilities (all do) must submit and be measured against established standards. The Virginia DOE standards for accountability regarding implementation of inclusive practices for students with disabilities are as follows. Use this section to determine your school's status with regard to these standards.

Practice	Current Status			Action Steps	Start	End	Evidence of Success
	In Place & Successful	Must be Improved	Not in Place				
2.1 Our school is the home (neighborhood) school for students with disabilities receiving their education here.							
2.2 The percentage of students receiving special education services in your school mirrors state and federal statistics (Generally agreed upon as 8-12% per 2016 Annual Report to Congress re: Implementation of IDEA).							
2.3 Our school meets the VA state target of **70%** of students spending 80% OR MORE of the day in general education. (5A, State actual = 67.60.0%)							
2.4 Our school meets the VA state standard of LESS THAN **8%** of students with disabilities spending less than 40% of their time in the general education setting. (5B. State actual = 9.30%) Our school meets the VA state standard of less than 20% of students with disabilities in separate school, residential facilities, or homebound/hospital placements. (5C. State actual = 4.39%)							
2.5 More than 32% of students aged 3-5 with IEPs receive the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program. (6A. State actual = 34.48%)							
2.6 Facilities used by students with disabilities (when specialized services are required) are not stigmatizing with regard to location, appearance or design.							

3. Strong Tier One Instruction

Instruction in every general education classroom must offer rich, engaging and evidence-based instruction focused on on-grade level standards. If this is not present, students are more likely to experience difficulties in school and be referred for special education services. We must not find students eligible for and in need of special education services in response to poor instruction in the general education classroom. Tier 1 is arguably the most critical state in a Multi-Tiered System of Supports.

Practice	Current Status			Action Steps	Start	End	Evidence of Success
	In Place & Successful	Must be Improved	Not in Place				
3.1 Instruction in my classroom differentiated and effective for mixed-ability groups of students. (Survey Q5. >90%)							
3.2 I use instructional scaffolds to accommodate diverse learner needs. (Survey Q6. >90%)							
3.3 Pre-assessment is conducted prior to each new unit of instruction and guides teacher selection of instructional strategies.							
3.4 Teachers identify student interests and learning characteristics early in the school year and integrate this information in their instructional lessons.							
3.5 Flexible grouping is in use in every classroom, thus whole group instruction (or lecture) is not the predominant method of instructional delivery.							
3.6 A school-wide behavioral support system is in place and results in a positive and respectful learning environment for all students.							

4. Student-Centered Decisions/Staffing and Scheduling

The standard for making decisions about a student with disabilities follows the same continuum from least to most segregated settings and we use a clear model for ensuring that each decision is based on the needs and capabilities of the student.

Practice	Current Status			Action Steps	Start	End	Evidence of Success
	In Place & Successful	Must be Improved	Not in Place				
4.1 Staffing and scheduling decisions are based solely on the needs of individual students. Decisions are not made on the basis of labels, places or available services or space.							
4.2 Our school uses an objective, student-centered process for determining staffing that is consistent across grade levels/departments. (Survey Q7. >90%)							
4.3 No single approach (co-teaching, support facilitation, resource etc.) is the only service delivery option for special needs students in our school.							
4.4 Scheduling for special needs students is determined *before* the master schedule is prepared.							
4.5 Special education teachers recognize they may serve multiple roles throughout the day on the basis of student needs. Their roles are not defined by place or disability category. On the basis of student needs, a special teacher may provide both in-class support and support in a specialized setting.							

5. Effective Use of Resources

Many educators believe that inclusive practices are more costly than traditional services offered in 'pull-out' settings. Actually, when staffing and other costs are determined on the basis of student needs, staffing requirements typically decrease.

Practice	Current Status			Action Steps	Start	End	Evidence of Success
	In Place & Successful	Must be Improved	Not in Place				
5.1 During interviews for new faculty, the expectation of inclusive practices by all teachers and staff is clearly stated.							
5.2 Practices are in place to recruit and retain highly qualified educators who are skilled in implementing effective services for students with disabilities.							
5.3 All teachers, including teachers of students with disabilities, have access to grade level Teacher's Editions, all relevant materials and to professional development relative to the district curriculum and effective practices. (Survey Q8. >90%)							
5.4 The master scheduling process begins with the needs of students with disabilities.							
5.5 The times when required or popular subjects are scheduled (such as reading/language arts, Algebra 1, etc.) are varied throughout the day to maximize the availability of special education teachers and other specialized personnel.							
5.6 Training for paraprofessionals is provided to enable them to assume their instructional support roles with competence. (Survey Q9. >90%)							
5.7 Create clear and objective criteria for providing one-to-one paraprofessional-student services. This practice should be used only when the health, safety, or participation of the student requires it.							
5.8 Protected planning time is provided to coordinate planning, information sharing and service delivery for students with disabilities. (Survey Q10. >90%)							

6. Collaboration Among Educators

Effective collaboration among general and special educators, related service personnel, and parents represents the hallmark of inclusive schools. Time and support must be provided to increase the success of inclusion.

Practice	Current Status			Action Steps	Start	End	Evidence of Success
	In Place & Successful	Must be Improved	Not in Place				
6.1 Special education teachers are members of grade level or department teams and share planning times, professional development, and responsibility for all students.							
6.2 Common planning time is provided to support quality collaboration. (Survey Q11. >90%)							
6.3 General and special education co-teachers use a variety of instructional strategies and collaborative teaching approaches and equally share roles and responsibilities as appropriate. (Survey Q12. >90%)							
6.4 Special education teachers are welcomed in general education classrooms and are recognized as professionals of equal status.							
6.5 Teachers debrief successes and areas of concern in their practice on a regular basis.							

7. Specialized Support

In truly inclusive schools the needs of each student determine the setting in which he or she is educated. While there is a strong emphasis on providing the supports needed to enable each student to be successful in the general education classroom, if all options have been explored and services need to be provided outside of the general education classroom for part or all of the day, those services must meet quality standards.

Practice	Current Status			Action Steps	Start	End	Evidence of Success
	In Place & Successful	Must be Improved	Not in Place				
7.1 Individual decisions about specialized support reflect student needs rather than what is available on the campus.							
7.2 The services provided in specialized settings are specially designed to meet the student's individual needs that cannot be met *at this time* in the general education classroom.							
7.3 The general education curriculum is the standard for each student. Unique or non-standard curricula are used only when necessary for the student.							
7.4 Specialized support settings provide instruction to small groups of students who are working on the same, or very closely related, learner objectives at any given time.							
7.5 Research-based instructional practices are used to support learning and improve academic achievement, functional outcomes, and post-school success.							
7.6 Instructional time is not wasted or students left idle. Inappropriate materials or activities are not used in the specialized setting. The requirement for well-used academic learning time is met in all classes – including in specialized support settings.							
7.7 The special and general education teachers routinely communicate with one another and coordinate efforts to align the work in the special education classroom with the general education classroom. (Survey Q13. >90%)							
7.8 Community-based instruction, when appropriate for the student, especially for transition-aged students, is provided and the community is viewed as an inclusive setting.							
7.9 The need for services outside of the general education classroom is reviewed often and objectively and when appropriate, students with disabilities are returned to the general education. It is the team's responsibility to identify and address whatever deficit(s) is preventing the student from accessing the general classroom setting.							

8. Social Inclusion

While physical and academic inclusion are critical for the success of students with disabilities, each school must also focus on providing social inclusion opportunities with same-age peers. This addresses the needs of the 'whole child' and has a significant impact on well being, academic achievement, and post-school success.

Practice	Current Status			Action Steps	Start	End	Evidence of Success
	In Place & Successful	Must be Improved	Not in Place				
8.1 Regular and frequent opportunities are planned and provided for adults and youth to work together to solve problems and learn together.							
8.2 School staff provides high-quality opportunities for same-age students with and without intellectual disabilities to work together for the benefit of all. (Survey Q14. >90%)							
8.3 Physical barriers are eliminated and ensure a learning environment that is physically accessible, safe and supportive for all.							
8.4 Our faculty members create opportunities for building relationships developed in classrooms and in social and after-school settings. (Survey Q15. >90%)							
8.5 Students with disabilities, including those with cognitive and emotional disabilities, have opportunities to serve in leadership roles in the school.							

9. Family and Community Engagement

As families, educators and community members recognize the importance of inclusive practices, new and authentic partnerships must be formed.

Practice	Current Status			Action Steps	Start	End	Evidence of Success
	In Place & Successful	Must be Improved	Not in Place				
9.1 Family members are included as active members of team making decisions about their child. (Survey Q16. >90%)							
9.2 School/district routinely builds relationships between families and schools through two-way communication, off-campus outreach, non-threatening fun activities, and a positive school climate.							
9.3 Students encourage family involvement through active participation in school programs/events and parent communication.							
9.4 Parents are provided information and training regarding inclusive practices and the ways that they can support success for their child.							
9.5 School/district provides opportunities for community involvement at the school, recognizing when appropriate, the community learning and work sites and their contributions to student success.							

10. Sustaining Inclusive Success

The following practices are essential to the success of inclusive practices, closing the achievement gap and creating a sharp focus on the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders. Planning for sustainability should be incorporated into the earliest stages of planning and implementation.

Practice	Current Status			Action Steps	Start	End	Evidence of Success
	In Place & Successful	Must be Improved	Not in Place				
10.1 Inclusive education is recognized as a district-wide priority, not the priority of a single department. (Survey Q17. >90%)							
10.2 Leadership sessions are conducted periodically with key personnel to ensure the vocabulary and rationale regarding inclusion are uniformly understood and communicated.							
10.3 The district produces district and school-specific data snapshots to maintain the expectation of improvement and change.							
10.4 Model sites are identified and featured for school personnel and parents to visit and expand their knowledge of inclusive practices.							