



Supporting Inclusive Education Worldwide

Inclusive Schools Network News

December 2008

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Inclusive Schools Network

"Supporting Inclusive Education Worldwide"

The Inclusive Schools Network (ISN) is a web-based resource for families, schools, and communities interested in the topic of inclusive education. This network has grown out of Inclusive Schools Week™, an internationally-recognized, annual event sponsored by Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC). During the 2008-2009 school year, ISN will be expanding in capacity to offer new products, conferences, online events, and social networking opportunities.



Inclusive Schools Network News is your source for updates and information about the Inclusive Schools Network, Inclusive Schools Week, and other resources and events related to building more welcoming and supportive schools and communities. Click below to subscribe:

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)



ISN Events:

Inclusive Schools Week is Here!

December 1-5, 2008

The Inclusive Schools Network is hosting the 8th Annual Inclusive Schools Week this December 1-5, on the theme, **"Together We Learn Better: Inclusive Schools Benefit All Children"**. Please share your Celebration Plans for the Week by submitting a short description of any activities and events you have planned to the ISN email box: inclusiveschools@edc.org.

Go to the [ISN Celebration Plans webpage](http://www.inclusiveschools.org/Celebration_Plans) now to read about how some schools and communities around the world are celebrating the Week this year:

http://www.inclusiveschools.org/Celebration_Plans

ISN Discussion Forum is Now Online!

"Supporting Inclusive Education Worldwide"

The Inclusive Schools Network is proud to announce that the ISN Discussion Forum is **now online!** This new feature on the ISN website enables educators and families around the world to network with each other and discuss topics related to inclusive education. The launch of this Discussion Forum coincides with the 8th Annual Inclusive Schools Week, and ISN Associate Director Kristen Layton will be moderating discussion and answering questions about schools' and communities' Celebration Plans throughout this Week. You are invited to join the discussion at:

<http://www.inclusiveschools.org/forum>

Math Webinar - Sign Up NOW!

December 3, 2008, 3:00-4:30 pm EST

Online Registration for the December 3rd Webinar: **"Reflecting Upon the NCTM Focal Points and the Role of the Special Educator in Today's Mathematics Classroom"**, with Drs. Hank Kepner and Lisa Dieker, will continue through Tuesday, December 2nd. Space is limited, so [SIGN UP NOW!](#)

For more information, and to register online for this event, go to:

http://www.inclusiveschools.org/Events_Registration

Other Events:

AFT Contest: "Best Ideas for Inclusive Schools"

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) hosted a contest in celebration of Inclusive Schools Week to highlight effective inclusion models in elementary, middle and high schools around the United States. Winners of the "[Best Ideas for Inclusive Schools](#)" contest have been selected and their names will be **posted on the AFT and ISN websites this week!** Look for more information about the winning teams and their effective inclusion models at:

www.inclusiveschools.org

Resources:

Improving Education: The Promise of Inclusive Schooling

Now Available on the ISN Website!

Improving Education: The Promise of Inclusive Schooling is an excellent resource for educators looking to improve and expand inclusive educational practices in their schools. This document was developed by the National Institute for Urban School Improvement, a project funded by the United States Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), and it includes examples of inclusive educational environments, assessment and observation tools, and guidelines for supporting inclusive practices. Download *Improving Education: The Promise of Inclusive Schooling* from the ISN website at:

http://www.inclusiveschools.org/Improving_Education

Tip of the Month:

"Together We Learn Better: Inclusive Schools Benefit All Children"

The journey to becoming an Inclusive School may be long and challenging at times, but ultimately this journey can strengthen a school community and benefit **ALL** children. "Inclusion" does not simply mean the placement of students with disabilities in general education classes. This process must incorporate fundamental change in the way a school community supports and addresses the individual needs of each child. As such, effective models of inclusive education not only benefit students with disabilities, but also create an environment in which every student, including those who do not have disabilities, has the opportunity to flourish.

The 2008 Inclusive Schools Week is focused on this theme: "**Together We Learn Better: Inclusive Schools Benefit All Children**". Here are some ways in which inclusive educational practices build a school's capacity to educate all learners effectively:

Differentiated instruction increases student engagement. One of the most important principles of inclusive education is that no two learners are alike, and so inclusive schools place great importance on creating opportunities for students to learn and be assessed in a variety of ways. Teachers in inclusive schools therefore must consider a wide range of learning modalities (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, etc.) in designing instruction. Certainly this enhances the way in which educators provide supports and accommodations for students with disabilities, but it also diversifies the educational experience of all students.

Academic supports help each student access the full curriculum. In this age of accountability and high-stakes testing, it is important for educators to ensure that every student is addressing the appropriate standards and objectives across the curriculum. As such, inclusive schools provide academic supports (flexible pacing and grouping, reading and literacy specialists, tutoring, etc.) that create a supportive environment for all learners. It is immediately clear how these supports help students with disabilities and English Language Learners, but inclusive schools can also better challenge and engage gifted and talented learners by building a more responsive learning environment.

Behavioral supports help maintain a positive learning environment for everyone. Another important factor in effective inclusive education is the implementation of consistent behavioral supports throughout the learning environment. This consistency is essential for the success of students with emotional or behavioral disabilities in the general education environment, but school-wide behavioral supports also help to establish high expectations throughout the school community as a whole.

Respect for diversity creates a welcoming environment for all. Inclusive education for students with disabilities can only be successful when those students feel that they are truly a part of the school community. This requires open and honest discussion about difference, and an institutional respect for people of all backgrounds and abilities. In inclusive schools, the establishment of such a climate benefits everyone by fostering an environment where students and their families are valued for who they are.

Inclusive practices make effective use of a school's resources. In the past, special education often involved the segregation of students with disabilities for the purpose of specialized instruction. Not only does that model of special education in a separate setting deprive students with disabilities of interaction with their peers and full access to the curriculum, it can also involve duplicate systems and resources that are costly for schools to maintain. Inclusive education can make more efficient use of a school's resources by maximizing the availability of staff and materials for all students.

To read more about benefits of inclusive education for all students, check out *Improving Education: The Promise of Inclusive Education* on the ISN website at:

http://www.inclusiveschools.org/Improving_Education

Visit the Tip of the Month section of the Inclusive Schools website to view past Tips, at:

<http://www.inclusiveschools.org/tips>

Inclusive Practices Around the World:

International Day of Persons with Disabilities: December 3, 2008

"Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:
Dignity and justice for all of us"

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The United Nations (UN) is observing this milestone with the theme for this year's International Day of Persons with Disabilities: "Dignity and justice for all of us". Article 25 of the UDHR provides that each person has "the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age, or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control", and the implementation of the UN's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities this past May reinforces these important principles. Please join the Inclusive Schools Network and the world community in observing the International Day of Persons with Disabilities this December 3rd as part of your school or community's Inclusive Schools Week celebration.

More information on this event is available at the UN Enable website:
<http://un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=109>.

Increased Opportunity for Inclusive Education for Blind Students in India

With the implementation of the itinerant teaching model, The National Association for the Blind in Karnataka, India, with support from Sightsavers International, is enabling blind children in India to access inclusive education.

Ninety percent of Indian people live in rural and deprived villages. Itinerant teaching brings the classroom to the child so that the child does not have to leave his or her family to attend a special school. In a society where disability carries a heavy stigma, itinerant teaching allows the blind and the sighted to become integrated which simultaneously empowers the blind and makes society more understanding and accepting of people with this type of disability.

To learn more about this initiative, check out the following article in the Guardian News:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/journalismcompetition/blind-children>.

Support Inclusive Schools Network and Inclusive Schools Week!

Here's how YOU can make a difference:

Your purchase of products or tax-deductible contribution supports the work we are doing to support families, schools, and communities around the world to create awareness, build knowledge, and encourage systems change toward more inclusive educational opportunities for all children. We are a nonprofit, 501 (c) (3) organization, and we are extremely grateful for your support!

2008 ISN products are now available for purchase! Use these items, including Celebration Kits, posters, pencils and much more, to promote your 2008 Inclusive Schools Week celebration and to raise awareness about inclusive educational practices throughout the year. This year, ISN is delighted to be collaborating with the Federation for Children with Special Needs, who will host the official online store for ISN products. To view the 2008 products, order online, or download a PDF order form, please visit our new **[Products Page and Secure Online Order Form](#)**:

<https://fcsn.org/inclusiveschools/orderform.html>

Click here to **[download a contribution form](#)** and make a donation today:

<http://www.inclusiveschools.org/files/Contribution%20Form.pdf>

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