



# Celebration Guide

Inclusive Schools Week  
December 5-9, 2016

# Inclusive Schools Week

Celebration Guide 2016

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## Introduction

The Inclusive Schools Week Celebration Guide contains the information, tools and resources you will need to plan a successful Inclusive Schools Week celebration and to help your school move forward from awareness to action.

### ***What is Inclusive Schools Week?***

*Inclusive Schools Week* is an annual international event celebrated the first week in December. It's a time designated to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of teachers, administrators, students, and parents in making their schools more inclusive and, thereby, significantly contributing to the development of a more inclusive society.

*The Week* offers a significant opportunity for educators, students and parents to engage in dialogue about inclusive education and to plan for the future. It is a time when schools and communities can begin or continue the journey toward providing a quality education to all children regardless of differences in ability, gender, ethnicity, language and health status.

Since the inaugural celebration in 2001, Inclusive Schools Week has been celebrated by tens of thousands of students, families, and educators in schools and communities in every state in the United States as well as communities across the globe. The Week is proudly sponsored by the Inclusive Schools Network and Stetson & Associates, Inc.

### ***What are the goals of Inclusive Schools Week?***

- Celebrate the progress of schools in educating an increasingly diverse student population
- Acknowledge the hard work and commitment of schools, families and communities in creating inclusive opportunities for all children regardless of disability, gender, ethnicity, language, health status, etc.
- Encourage reflection on how culture, policies and practices in schools can promote inclusive education
- Promote action to increase the capacity of schools and communities to meet the needs of all learners.

### ***Why is Inclusive Schools Week important?***

Inclusive Schools Week advances an international dialogue on the importance of building inclusive schools and communities, where all students have full access to educational opportunities.

Celebrating is important because it creates an awareness of the benefits and challenges inclusive schools face. It brings the school community together in good spirit for a common purpose. It provides us a pause in our busy lives to reflect on where we are and where we are going. But celebrating is only the beginning. Reflection, planning and action are the elements necessary to understand the potential of inclusive education and realize its promise.

#### ***2016 Inclusive Schools Week Theme:***

### ***Champions of Inclusion: POWERful Things Happen in Inclusive Schools***

This year's theme ***Champions of Inclusion: POWERful Things Happen in Inclusive Schools*** continues the dialogue started during the *previous* celebrations about how schools can make progress on their journey toward excellence by following a path of reflection, planning and action. This year you will find a host of new resources to plan a successful *Inclusive Schools Week* celebration and new tools aimed at supporting schools in the process of becoming more inclusive.

## Highlights of the 2016 Inclusive Schools Week Celebration:

- **Champions of Inclusion: POWERful Things Happen in Inclusive Schools**  
This year you will find more feature activities including self-assessments, planning guides, group activities, ideas and resources aimed at helping schools to get organized, motivated and ready to implement policies and practices that will support their move toward being more inclusive. The new activities will be available on the Inclusive Schools Network website (<http://inclusiveschools.org/inclusive-schools-week>) and will build upon the awareness level activities from last year bringing schools closer to taking action and creating sustainable change.
  
- **Celebration Events:** Visit our ISN website ([www.inclusiveschools.org](http://www.inclusiveschools.org)), Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/inclusiveschoolsnetwork](http://www.facebook.com/inclusiveschoolsnetwork)) and Twitter feed ([www.twitter.com/ISchoolsNetwork](http://www.twitter.com/ISchoolsNetwork)) frequently in the months leading up to Inclusive Schools Week to find out about events happening online or in your area. If your school or community is hosting an Inclusive Schools Week event please send us an email with the details and we will post it on our website.
  
- **Celebration Ideas:** Fun and educational ideas for promoting inclusive strategies in the classroom, school and community at tiered levels of implementation.
  
- **Think Global:** Web-based resources for learning about and connecting with inclusive schools across the globe.
  
- **Inclusive Education Resources:** Web-based resources aimed at promoting inclusive practices.
  
- **Media Kit:** The tools you will need to promote this Inclusive Schools Week in your community.
  
- **Celebration Tools:** Use these tools to plan your Inclusive Schools Week Celebration.
  
- **Product order forms:** Send these forms home with your students to get a discount on your Inclusive Schools Week product orders.

## Planning for Inclusive Schools Week

### *Getting Started*

There are many ways to get your school involved in Inclusive Schools Week. Here are some ideas to get your started:

- **Convene** a planning team of faculty, students and family members. See the Planning Materials in the Celebration Activities & Lessons section for ideas.
  - **Create** excitement by hosting poster and essay contests, hanging a banner in your school lobby
  - **Promote** the week in your school and community by sending out a press release, announcing your celebration in local media outlets, posting updates on your school website, etc. See our Media Kit in the Celebration Basics Download section for examples.
  - **Utilize** the following resources and materials to support your celebration and continuous efforts to promote and develop practices in your community.
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- ***Inclusive Schools Network website*** has a wealth of innovative resources. It is the home of the Inclusive Schools Network and the place to find updated information about Inclusive Schools Week and to order ISW products. Leading up to the ISW Celebration there will be weekly postings of ideas, events, and resources to support schools in planning their ISW activities at <http://inclusiveschools.org/inclusive-schools-week>.
  - ***Inclusive Schools Network News***, our electronic newsletter, will keep you informed and up-to-date on all of the activities and events planned for the Week. Sign up here: <http://bit.ly/1EuvyUx>
  - ***Celebration Activities for ISW***, available at <http://inclusiveschools.org/inclusive-schools-week/isw-activities-and-lessons>, this booklet contains hundreds of ideas for activities that promote inclusive practices during Inclusive Schools Week and throughout the year.
  - ***Promotional Items***: New products including ISW posters, t-shirts, a school banner and some of our student favorites: stickers, pencils, pens, ribbons, bookmarks and other materials to help you promote your celebration of the Week can be purchased here: <http://inclusiveschools.org/shop-2>. The purchase of these items assists in underwriting the costs of supporting the Week as an annual event.

## ***Guiding Principles***

In order to get the most out of your ISW celebration we suggest developing a set of guiding principles to help focus your planning efforts. Here are some suggestions:

- Involve families, school faculty and students in the planning of ISW activities.
- Make certain ISW activities are inclusive and accessible to all. See the following section on Inclusive Celebrations for ideas.  
(<http://inclusiveschools.org/inclusive-schools-week/isw-activities-and-lessons>)
- Reaffirm your school's commitment to providing a quality education to all children.

## ***Impact of a Well-Planned Inclusive Schools Week***

A successful Inclusive Schools Week can motivate your school community. Faculty, families and students should feel empowered by their role in supporting the participation of all students in schooling.

### **Celebrating Inclusive Schools Week:**

- Sends a message to the community that your school is serious about inclusive education.
- Jump-starts plans for initiating or improving inclusive educational practices in your school.
- Makes a positive impact on the overall environment in the school including more tolerance and acceptance of differences.
- Propels your school to new levels of inclusion.
- Solidifies your commitment to quality education for all students.
- Highlights your schools accomplishments and plans for the future.

## ***Inclusive Celebrations***

Inclusive Schools Week offers a remarkable opportunity to spread the word about the benefits of inclusive schools. As you prepare for district, school, and classroom celebrations, it is important to ensure that the materials and activities are accessible to all members of the school and community. You may want to encourage faculty members trained in special education and/or bilingual education to participate in the planning process to help make suggestions for providing access and accommodations. Examples of adapting materials and events include:

- Interpreter services for programs and events
- Printed material available in languages spoken in the community and in Braille
- Wheelchair accessibility to all events
- Assistive technology devices available
- Peer support or other support providers for people with disabilities who need physical and/or other kinds of assistance in order to participate.
- Schedule of events to coincide when working parents can attend.
- Culturally responsive events, activities and materials.

The ideas and activities included in the Celebration Kit can be adapted for use with a diverse group of participants. For additional information on adapting curriculum, please consult the resources section.

## Resources

Find all of our resources on our Inclusive Schools Week page:  
<http://inclusiveschools.org/inclusive-schools-week/>

## We Welcome You to Join Us!

It's never too early or too late to plan an Inclusive Schools Week Celebration. Check out our website regularly for resources, updates and postings from like-minded professionals across the globe who will be celebrating ISW too.

Send us your plans for your school or community Inclusive Schools Week Celebration and we will post it on our website! Use this form to submit your celebration:  
<http://tinyurl.com/hjxgfyv>