



ISW Media Kit

Inclusive Schools Week

December 5-9, 2016

MEDIA KIT

Inclusive Schools Week offers a remarkable opportunity to spread the word about the benefits of inclusive schools. As you plan your celebrations and engage in meaningful activities with students, families and colleagues we encourage you to share your experience with the broader community.

The Inclusive Schools Week Media Kit includes resources to help you write a letter to the editor of your local paper, campaign for your city or state to proclaim Inclusive Schools Week as a civic event, or simply send out a press release to local media outlets.

Here are some tools to get you started:

- **Inclusive Schools Week Boilerplates:** Use these 50-100+ word paragraphs to describe Inclusive Schools Week within your own media
- **Inclusive Schools Week Press Release:** Share this press release with media outlets, organizations and civic entities in your local community.
- **Inclusive Schools Week Media Blurb:** Use this short paragraph in your school newspaper or local community media to create awareness of Inclusive Schools Week.
- **Sample Proclamation:** Encourage your local or state government to declare Inclusive Schools Week as a civic event. Use this sample as a guide.
- **Tips and Sample Letters to the Editor:** Submit a letter to your local, metro or regional newspaper drawing community attention to Inclusive Schools Week.

Inclusive Schools Week Boilerplates

50 Words Boilerplate

Inclusive Schools Week™ is celebrated annually the first week in December by families, schools and organizations in the U.S. and abroad. The *Week* highlights and celebrates the progress that schools have made in implementing inclusive practices to ensure a quality education for an increasingly diverse student population. Learn more at www.inclusiveschools.org.

100+ Words Boilerplate

Inclusive Schools Week™ is celebrated annually the first week in December by families, schools and organizations around the world. The *Week* highlights and celebrates the progress that schools have made in implementing inclusive practices to ensure a quality education for an increasingly diverse student population.

The *Week* provides an important opportunity for educators, students, and parents to discuss what else needs to be done in order to ensure that their schools continue to improve their ability to successfully educate all children. It is an occasion 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.

Inclusive Schools Week™ is celebrated by thousands of school districts in every state in the U.S. and internationally. In addition, more than 50 educational and cultural associations and media outlets support the *Week*. Inclusive Schools Week™ is organized by the Inclusive Schools Network at Stetson & Associates, Inc.

Inclusive Schools Week Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Inclusive Schools Week 2016

The Inclusive Schools Network is pleased to announce the 16th Annual Inclusive Schools Week will be celebrated December 5-9, 2016, in classrooms, schools, and communities throughout the world. Inclusive Schools WeekTM (ISW) highlights and celebrates the progress schools have made in providing a supportive and quality education to all students, including those who are marginalized due to disability, gender, ethnicity, geography and language. It also provides an important opportunity for educators, students, and families to discuss what else needs to be done to ensure that schools continue to improve their ability to successfully educate all children. ISW is sponsored by the Inclusive Schools Network at Stetson & Associates, Inc.

This week celebrates how schools can make progress on their journey from “Awareness to Action” following a path of reflection, planning and action. This year’s Celebration Kit contains updated resources to plan a successful Inclusive Schools WeekTM celebration and includes new tools aimed at supporting schools in the process of becoming more inclusive.

The Celebration Kit is available for download at the extensive Inclusive Schools Network website at <http://inclusiveschools.org>. You may also purchase the Celebration Kit along with several other resources on a USB drive at the Inclusive Schools Network Shop- <http://inclusiveschools.org/shop-2>.

Inclusiveschools.org has a fresh look and 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 new 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.

For more information about the Inclusive Schools Network and Inclusive Schools Week, please visit <http://inclusiveschools.org> or email support@inclusiveschools.org.

Be sure to sign up for the Inclusive Schools Network newsletter for regular updates as well as other news and information related to building schools and communities that are welcoming of all children and youth.



Sample Proclamation

*Sample generated from Boston Public Schools Proclamation of 2007

WHEREAS; The Inclusive Schools Network and Schools around the world have designated the week of December 5-9, 2016

As

INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS WEEK;

And

WHEREAS;

NAME OF SCHOOL is committed to providing an education in schools and classrooms that are welcoming and capable of educating all children; and,

WHEREAS;

The EDUCATORS of NAME OF SCHOOL recognize that EACH CHILD is UNIQUE, LEARNS DIFFERENTLY, and, therefore, LEARNS BETTER if teaching is TAILORED TO THEIR ABILITIES and INTERESTS; and,

WHEREAS;

The EDUCATORS and FAMILIES of NAME OF SCHOOL have been working hard to ensure that our classrooms and schools are characterized as being high performing and inclusive; and,

WHEREAS;

By their efforts to make our schools and classrooms high performing and inclusive, the EDUCATORS and FAMILIES of NAME OF SCHOOL have contributed significantly to building a stronger and more inclusive community; and,

WHEREAS;

The EDUCATORS and FAMILIES of NAME OF SCHOOL deserve to celebrate their successes and wish to reflect on how they might even further improve; **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:** That NAME OF SCHOOL join with the Inclusive Schools Network, EDC, and schools, districts, and communities around the world in declaring the **week of December 5-9, 2016**, as INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS WEEK™ and encourage schools and classrooms across the NAME OF STATE, COUNTY OR TOWN to sponsor appropriate learning and community-building activities in its recognition.

Tips and Sample Letters to the Editor

Tips

The following are sample letters to the editor that will help you in drafting and submitting letters in your own community to draw attention to Inclusive Schools Week. We urge you to submit a letter to your local, metro or regional newspaper. Please refer to the following tips when doing so:

- Word counts. Most newspapers have a word count limit (around 200-250 words) for letters to the editor-it is best to stay within the allotted word count. We have honored word count limites here while also providing you some room to add your own content.
- Make it personal. Newspapers prefer when they can integrate local flavor to a national issue. Use the [] as placeholders for locally relevant information like a personal anecdote, recent test results, student achievement data, education funding controversy, or news coverage.
- Include the <http://inclusiveschools.org> website on a signature line.
- Submit your letter early. Some publications require a significant lead time prior to publication. The more time you give a newspaper or especially a magazine, the greater the likelihood that your letter will be published.
- Share the news. Please be sure to share with us any news coverage you receive as a result of your letter to the editor by emailing support@inclusiveschools.org.

Sample Letter 1

To the Editor:

Stories appear daily about the state of our schools and their failure to meet the educational needs of our children [e.g., **Date - article name, page**]. While there is much to be done, we have made progress toward including more children into the nation's academic agenda. Not that long ago, many of our children were excluded from our classrooms, with children left out due to race, language, economic status, or mental or physical challenges. In the past 20 years, our schools have worked toward access for ALL to public education. Children who were once isolated and marginalized are now thriving, productive members of a larger school community. Children who were routinely denied educational opportunities are now discovering, exploring, and, most importantly, achieving. Schools that were once homogeneous are servicing a rich array of students, and while these inclusive practices have been, at times, difficult to implement, their positive impact is clearly demonstrated through each individual success. These successes will be celebrated during Inclusive Schools Week, December 5-9, 2016. While noting that there is so much more to be done, let's applaud the progress being made every day toward building more inclusive schools and communities. To celebrate, please visit <http://inclusiveschools.org>.

Sample Letter 2

To the Editor:

December 5-9, 2016 marks the 16th anniversary of Inclusive Schools Week™. The Week calls attention to the work our schools are doing to realize academic success for ALL students. For example, **[insert a specific local example of success]**. Recent data **[date, article name page]** highlight some real challenges facing our schools. The most important challenge is the significant gap in achievement for minority students, students who are economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities. While many schools are making inroads in narrowing this gap, others face seemingly insurmountable obstacles in meeting the improvement goals for these students.

Inclusive Schools Week™ not only challenges all of these schools to examine their school environments and teaching practices, but also offers tools and resources to help them adopt more inclusive teaching practices I challenge each school in **[insert the name of your school district, county, or state]** to join me in celebrating Inclusive Schools Week™ and recognizing those teachers who are already making curriculum relevant for **ALL**. To celebrate, please visit <http://inclusiveschools.org>.

Sample Letter 3

To the Editor:

December 5-9, 2016 marks the 16th anniversary of Inclusive Schools Week™. During this Week, school districts across the country are working to educate their staff, students, and parents about what it means to be inclusive. Inclusive is not about being politically correct. It is about making sure that our country's educational system works for all students including students with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students of low socio-economic status, and students with disabilities. Research has consistently demonstrated that inclusive teaching practices are not about teaching to the lowest common denominator but rather ensuring that the classroom offers opportunities for **ALL** children to succeed.

Inclusive teaching means presenting information in ways that are relevant and meaningful to each and every student. Discussion, hands-on learning experiences, and inquiry-based projects are all examples of inclusive teaching practices that have, again and again, been shown to improve academic achievement for all students. I challenge each school in **[insert the name of your school district, county, or state]** and across the nation and globe to join me in celebrating Inclusive Schools Week™ and recognizing those teachers who are already making their curriculum relevant for each and every child. To celebrate, please visit <http://www.inclusiveschools.org>.

Tips for Spreading the Message of Inclusive Schools

Inclusive Schools Week™ is an excellent opportunity to highlight the work your school or district has done to create an inclusive community that celebrates the achievements of diverse learners. During the Week you might hold events that warrant media attention. Below are some tips to help make the most of these opportunities.

Messengers

Anyone can spread the message of inclusive schools. When reporters come to your school or you send out a press release don't forget the voices of all the members of the school community:

- Students
- Parents
- Teachers
- Principals
- Counselors
- Paraprofessionals
- Community partners
- District administrators

Ways to Spread the Message

- Press releases
- Interviews
- Newspaper guest columns
- Letters to the editor
- Newsletters to parents and others
- Telephone voice mail greetings
- On-hold messages
- Website
- Slogans
- Posters, stickers and other Inclusive Schools Network products
(available online at <http://inclusiveschools.org/shop-2>)
- Flyers
- Facebook
- Twitter

*Adapted from the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform's Leadership Curriculum Module, *Advocacy for Middle-Grades Reform*.

Talking with Reporters: Tips for Media Interviews

1. Give yourself time to prepare. If you get an unexpected call from the media, find out the reporter's deadline and ask if you can call back. Even if you think you know the answers, it is always necessary to prepare.
2. Ask about the nature of the story and what the reporter is interested in. If you don't think you are the right person for the interview let the reporter know and if possible direct them to someone else more suitable.
3. Prepare talking points. Even if you have done similar interviews many times before, take a moment to write down 2-3 points you want to be sure you make.
4. Return media calls as soon as possible. It is important to call back quickly before the reporter's deadline and before he or she has gone to another source for the information.
5. Find out when the story is expected to appear. This will allow you to locate and save the article or record the broadcast.
6. Use everyday language. Remember that the reporter and his or her audience may not be familiar with acronyms, technical terms, or key issues in your field. Try to avoid jargon and instead use language that can be easily understood by the general public.
7. Be flexible during the interview. Don't feel that you must only answer a reporter's specific questions. Steer any answers to your key messages. If the reporter asks, "Do you want to add anything else?", take the opportunity to mention or reiterate a key point.
8. Identify yourself as you would like your name to appear in print or on the air. Provide your full name and title and spell them. Ask the reporter to repeat the information to be sure it is correct. Avoid too many identifications as it can cause confusion.
9. Offer additional resources, including a web site if you have one.
10. Notify support@inclusiveschools.org so the story can be posted on the ISN website.

*These tips were adapted from a piece designed for Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) employees by the EDC Communications Department.