

## DEMO SITE NEWSLETTER September 2021

### DEMO SITE HIGHLIGHT

[Inclusion Is a Right, Not a Privilege](#) - Ruby Bridges Elementary is the newest Elementary School in the Northshore school district. Ruby Bridges virtually opened their doors in the fall of 2020. This week, they will welcome students back in person. Read more of the UW article featuring a demonstration site that was built from the ground up. In principal Cathi Davis' words, "We wanted to disrupt the idea that it's the job of the student to get ready, or that they have to be qualified to access the educational environment," says Davis. "We wanted to create a space where the environment is ready for the student, where everyone's in. We brought this mindset to the community, when talking with parents about their hopes and dreams and with staff interested in applying. We're asking what strategies provide our students the most opportunity to experience belonging and dignity and how do we surmount those that don't? This involves the structures, community, mission, vision and values to try to live that out in our process and provide support to other schools on the journey."

Welcome back and looking ahead. Welcome back to the 2021-2022 school year. We are excited to continue our partnerships with all of you as you serve as examples to WA state educators, leadership, and families about what it means to be an inclusive school. We are thinking about all of you and hopefully have connected with you by this time to wish you well as students return full time to classrooms across WA state.

Looking ahead: As we enter into years 3 and 4 of the IPP Demonstration Sites project, we will continue to partner with demo sites to highlight their exemplary practices in inclusive education and partner with them as they work on their continuous improvement plans to support inclusive education. An additional priority for years 3-4 is working on scale and building capacity district wide in those districts that host our demonstration site schools. The Haring Center IPP Demonstration Sites team is ready to help our demonstration sites districts with Professional development, connections to resources from our other IPP partners, and to serve as thought partners and collaborators on how to effectively disseminate information and build coalitions to help districts scale and learn from our demonstration sites.

Our goals moving forward align with the priorities of the larger statewide inclusionary practices professional development project goals: Centering racial equity and intersectionality with disability, engaging families as decision makers and co-designers, and including student voice and opportunities for self-advocacy. We will also be making more deliberate plans with school/districts to prioritize the inclusion of students with significant disabilities to truly realize our goal of including each and every student. Additionally, it is important to note that we are taking the feedback from our IPP Demonstration sites from the satisfaction survey data we collected at the end of last year where demonstration sites reported wanting more opportunities to engage in professional networking with one another. Based on that feedback, we will be providing opportunities for our demonstration sites to come together as larger groups, or as smaller affinity groups, and/or through school to school connections to strengthen our statewide inclusionary practices and continue professional learning and growth. This will also provide IPP demonstration sites with more information about who to refer a school to that might be at a similar place in their journey or could benefit from the story, artifacts, or experiences of a colleague at another demonstration site.

In conclusion, in years 3-4 we are expanding our focus beyond the implementation of inclusionary practices to what relationships, instruction, and

equitable structures need to be in place to create an inclusive school culture. With that in mind, when thinking about a culture of belonging in your school consider the following guiding questions that we will be thinking about when examining how a school culture facilitates and realizes a sense of belonging for each and every student.

**Sense of belonging:** How does the school's mission and vision hold a place for each and every student and are all students reflected in their core practices, policies, and environments in their school? For example, where do students eat lunch? How are classrooms arranged? Who is reflected in photographs and other artifacts around the school? How are we checking in with families to understand what belonging means to them and how it looks like and is defined in partnership with school and community? How are we continuing to engage in conversations to address shifting and changing needs in terms of a sense of belonging for students and families?

## PROJECT NEWS AND UPDATES

### **UW Haring Center Inclusion Specialist Spotlight**

**Christina Nowak** is an inclusion specialist and second year doctoral student. Christina has a passion for the development and implementation of inclusive practices. Most recently she was integral in the founding of WISH Academy, a fully inclusive high school in Los Angeles, modeled after the CHIME Institute. Christina has been integral in collaborating with demonstration and visiting sites to increase the inclusionary practices of co-teaching, co-planning, and universal design for learning. Additionally, Christina is passionate in developing systems and strategies to assist schools in creating more inclusive environments and programs for individuals with significant disabilities. Her partnerships focus on our project goals to build capacity and provide equitable

educational experiences for all students. Please feel free to reach out to Christina as a resource. [cnowak@uw.edu](mailto:cnowak@uw.edu)

## RESOURCE CORNER



Washington Office of Superintendent of  
**PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**  
Center for the Improvement of  
Student Learning

## **MTSS FRAMEWORK FOR A BETTER & EQUITABLE SCHOOL WEBINAR**

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Dr. George Sugai will be presenting on MTSS during a free webinar hosted by Seattle Pacific University.

- **Date:** September 16, 2021
- **Time:** 4:00-5:30pm
- Please see the [MTSS Framework Webinar flyer](#) for more information.

### **ALL STUDENTS PREPARED FOR POST-SECONDARY PATHWAYS, CAREERS, AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.**

Led by State Superintendent Chris Reykdal, OSPI oversees K-12 public education in Washington state. Our mission is to provide funding, resources, tools, data and technical assistance that enable educators to ensure students succeed in our public schools, are prepared to access post-secondary training and education, and are equipped to thrive in their careers and lives

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**Comprehensive Inclusive Education** As part of the Inclusionary practices project, UW, TIES and Lake Washington school district, are in partnership to support focus schools and scaling up within the district. In our collaboration to provide inclusive services, a question often posed by educators and parents was how to support IEP goals in addition to instruction on grade level content. There began our more in depth view of inclusive IEP goals and from our collaboration, a **Comprehensive Inclusive Education Process** was created. This process acknowledges (1) each child is a general education student, (2) the general education curriculum and routines and the Individual Education Program (IEP) comprise a student's full educational program and (3) the IEP for a student qualifying for special education services is not the student's curriculum.

**Professional Networking:** As we approach year 3 of our project we are responding to the survey data from our IPP demonstration sites about increased opportunities to connect with fellow IPP demonstration sites. Inclusion specialist, Jessica Flaherty, spent some time over the summer examining our professional networking data to see how IPP Demonstration Sites Schools are collaborating with one another. Please see a snippet of the findings below.

[A Growing Network of Educators: A professional learning community working towards inclusionary change](#)

**Overview:**

**IPP Demonstration Sites Project Goal:** provide WA educators opportunities to observe inclusionary practices in action, connect with school teams, access resources, and learn about how to implement inclusionary practices in different school contexts.

**Some main actionable initiatives:**

- Showcase demonstration site schools in a way that disseminates IP info to other WA educators. Aim for schools to be seen and understood.
- Done by way of virtual events: webinars, deep dives, and virtual visits.
- That broadcasting aims to connect demo sites and WA schools in a way that promotes collaboration and yields actionable inclusion change.

**Long-Term Objective:** strengthen the PLC in a way that allows it to keep growing and evolving long after the IPP project ends.

**Research Questions:**

In theory, engagement in a diverse educational PLC should increase your social network and allow you to reflect on and experiment with instructional approaches. That got me wondering: if the project is meeting its goals of connecting educators and strengthening the community - are the educators feeling the proposed benefits of it?

How is the network of Washington educators changing during a statewide inclusion initiative? • *Hypothesis:* increased and more diverse connections and ties

**Baseline**  
**End of Year**

Data shows that even in a pandemic year of physical quarantine and virtual learning, provided state resources, an educational community can connect and collaborate in a way that centers inclusion and educator learning. You can find the entirety of your school's PN Data in your Demo Sites Folder.

## **WHAT ARE WE READING**

While efforts to achieve equity in education are prominent in school districts across this country, the effective implementation that results in meaningful change remains elusive. Even with access to compelling theories and approaches such as multicultural education, culturally responsive teaching, culturally relevant instruction, culturally sustaining pedagogy, schools still struggle to implement equitable change that reshapes the academic experiences of students marginalized by the prevailing history, culture, and traditions in public education. Instead of getting it right with equity implementation, many schools and districts remain trapped in a cycle of equity dysfunction.

In *Belonging through a Culture of Dignity*, Cobb and Krownapple argue that the cause of these struggles are largely based on the failure of educators to consider the foundational elements upon which educational equity is based, belonging and dignity. Through this work, the authors make these concepts accessible and explain their importance in the implementation of educational equity initiatives. [www.bookshop.org](http://www.bookshop.org)



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## FAMILY FOCUS

**October is Disability History Month!** For help with language around the State findings on recognition of Disability History Month, please visit the [State Legislative webpage](#). In addition, there are many ideas and resources online on how to incorporate awareness activities and content into curriculum, including the [One Out of Five files and documents from the WA State Office of the Education Ombuds](#).

Family Engagement Collaborative IPP Cadre Partners, Roots of Inclusion will be hosting Webinars and Workshop Series. **Featuring Dr. Mona Delahooke**  
<https://monadelahooke.com/>

- **September 23rd** "Looking Beyond Behaviors to Support Children's Social and Emotional Development"
- **October 8th** 3 hour Professional Development workshop
- **October 20th** Free Family Focused Webinar including Q&A with Dr. Delahooke

Please share the information to your colleagues, families and community members

See link for more details and to register for free webinars. <https://www.rootsofinclusion.org/>

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## WELLNESS CORNER

### **Managing Covid Anxiety from Glennon Doyle's Podcast, We Can Do Hard Things:**

*“So my dear friend, Allison, who was helping produce this podcast right now, recently told me about this cool thing that she and her friends started during COVID every Friday afternoon. She and her friends would meet on a path and they would take a long walk together. And each friend would bring the hardest thing she was facing that week, whether it was in her life or marriage or friendships or work or world, whatever. And they'd talk about it as they walked and nobody had any answers, just time, just honesty, just solidarity. And Allison said that as a result of these walks, this little group of friends had become tighter than ever. And she had started to feel less alone than ever. And she suspected that this was because they had been friends for so long, but they'd never gotten so real with each other before. They'd never brought to each other, the real heavy stuff that as friends, they were meant to help each other carry. And COVID kind of forced them to share this hard, which turned out to be exactly what their friend group had always needed.”*

**Find a friend or a group that you can be real with because we are all in this together.**

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For more information on our project, visit: <http://ippdemosites.org/>

## CHECK OUT

- > Schedule a [Virtual Visit](#) with a Demo Site
- > Inclusionary Practices [Tip Sheets & Videos](#)
- > Calendar of [Events](#)

## IPP Demo States Across the State

We are honored to highlight the inclusionary work of the 12 K-12 Demo Sites and 4 Preschool Sites.

**Demo Sites K-12**

**Demo Sites Preschool**

