

IPP FAMILY ENGAGEMENT COLLABORATIVE

Inclusive Education and Family Engagement: Successes and Lessons Learned in Selected IPP Demonstration Sites

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About Education Northwest

Equity is at the heart of our work as an organization. Founded as a nonprofit corporation in 1966, Education Northwest builds capacity in schools, families, and communities through applied research and development. We take a collaborative, culturally responsive approach to every project so we can help our partners identify and adopt inclusive, responsive policies and practices. We achieve this using a range of tools, including research and data analysis, practitioner knowledge and experience, family and community engagement, research-practice partnerships, and other forms of cross-sector collaboration. Education Northwest recognizes that the effort to advance equity is a journey and must reflect the values and worldviews of all members of the school community. For this reason, our approach emphasizes deep, meaningful engagement with parents and caregivers, educators, staff members, and students. Their participation will ensure that our questions, measures, and findings are interpreted from multiple perspectives and draw on ways of knowing that stand outside traditional research and evaluation paradigms.

This report describes how two Inclusionary Practices Project (IPP) demonstration sites have implemented inclusive education and family engagement. The IPP Family Engagement Collaborative requested this case study to document the knowledge and lived experiences of parents, educators, students, and technical assistance providers related to partnering with families to provide meaningful, inclusive education for students. The two IPP demonstration sites—Chase Middle School in Spokane Public Schools and the Kodiak Cubs Preschool in Cascade School District—are committed to establishing a culture of inclusive education in their settings. Both sites receive technical assistance from the University of Washington Haring Center for Inclusive Education.

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Executive summary

The Inclusionary Practices Project Family Engagement Collaborative (IPP FEC) is committed to strengthening family-school partnerships to support culturally responsive approaches that center the experiences of students with disabilities and their families, particularly students of color and groups who have traditionally been denied a voice in decision making. The IPP FEC is a partnership of four nonprofit organizations committed to establishing school cultures that affirm the value of including students with disabilities in general education settings. These organizations include Partnerships for Action, Voices for Empowerment (PAVE); Open Doors for Multicultural Families (ODMF); Roots of Inclusion; and Education Northwest. Together, they work to strengthen family-school partnerships and promote inclusive, culturally responsive practices across Washington state.

The benefits of inclusive education for all students are clear. Students with disabilities achieve better academic, attendance, and social outcomes. All students, regardless of their special education designation, gain a sense of belonging, learn relationship-building skills, and receive differentiated instruction that values their strengths and supports their specific learning needs. Despite these benefits, schools with a culture of inclusion remain the exception and not the norm in Washington state and across the United States. The IPP FEC values authentic family engagement and believes establishing a sustained system of inclusive education will require a shift in how schools choose to partner with families.

This report describes how two IPP demonstration sites, Kodiak Cubs Preschool in Cascade School District and Chase Middle School in Spokane Public Schools, approached family engagement and inclusive education. The administrators at both sites established vision, values, and guiding principles that communicated their commitment to inclusive education and family engagement. However, each site used different strategies to ensure implementation reflected their local context, strengths, and needs.

For the Kodiak Cubs Preschool, family engagement is a key strategy for establishing an inclusive educational program that aligns with community values and priorities. The district leveraged the collective knowledge and wisdom of families, early learning educators, and special education teachers to design and continuously improve the program. Engaging families and communities fosters collaborative relationships that are essential for realizing high-quality inclusive instruction in which “all means all” students.

Chase Middle School prioritized co-teaching as a way to ensure that students with disabilities had access to general education settings and grade level content. Implementing co-teaching required collaboration, co-planning, and shared learning for general education and special education teachers. The shift towards co-teaching required engaging families of students with disabilities in conversations on how and why Chase was creating inclusive classrooms for their children.

At its core, inclusion means students with disabilities will have access to all aspects of their school—including social relationships, general education classes, core content, and extracurricular activities. For the two sites featured in this report, family engagement was essential to building a culture of inclusive education. The families who participated in this study identified the following strategies for strengthening inclusion and family engagement.

- Focus leadership on establishing a shared vision, values, and the staff buy-in needed to achieve inclusive education.
- Prioritize strategies to combat ableism for equity, inclusion, and ensuring every student feels safe and valued in their school community.
- Identify and remove barriers to meaningful family engagement and/or mistrust of inclusion efforts.
- Recognize families as experts in their children's education.
- Ensure administrators, educators, and school staff members establish transparent, two-way communication with families through multiple venues and languages.

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In addition, we are deeply grateful to the families, IPP cadre members, and educators who shared their time and insights on inclusive education in Kodiak Cubs Preschool and Chase Middle School. We are thankful to the dedicated University of Washington Haring Center inclusion specialist team, and in particular Dr. RinaMarie Leon-Guerrero, for sharing their knowledge and partnership in coordinating services to demonstration sites.

Finally, thank you to our colleagues for their thoughtful comments that improved the content of this report, Eric Gold for copy editing, and Valerie Brodnikova who helped with design to improve our work and learning.

Chapter 1. Introduction

The Inclusionary Practices Professional Development Project, Family Engagement Collaborative (IPP FEC) is committed to strengthening family-school partnerships. These partnerships are essential to authentically inclusive education in which students with and without disabilities learn together, become friends, and appreciate the value that each student brings to the school community. Research has demonstrated that inclusion can lead to positive outcomes for students with and without disabilities. Students with disabilities benefit in many ways from learning alongside their peers in general education classes. This includes achieving higher-level reading and math skills, having better attendance, and experiencing more social gains than students who have not been included.¹ For students without disabilities, inclusion increases relationship-building skills while having mostly neutral or positive effects on academic learning.² Inclusive settings help students with and without disabilities feel a sense of belonging and social connection with their school and peers.³ Additionally, administrators and teachers who support students with disabilities in general education settings often improve their capacity to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of each student regardless of their designation to receive special education services.⁴ Despite these benefits, schools with a culture of inclusion remain the exception in Washington state and across the United States. The IPP FEC believes creating a culture of family engagement and leveraging school-family partnerships are essential to establishing a sustained system of inclusive education.

The IPP FEC is a partnership of four nonprofit organizations committed to establishing school cultures that affirm the value of including students with disabilities in general education settings. These organizations include Partnerships for Action, Voices for Empowerment (PAVE); Open Doors for Multicultural Families (ODMF); Roots of Inclusion; and Education Northwest. Together, the collaborative works to strengthen family-school partnerships and promote inclusive, culturally responsive practices across Washington state.

Inclusive education through family engagement

The IPP FEC is part of the statewide Inclusionary Practices Professional Development Project initiative that provides training, coaching, and resources to build a sustainable inclusive education system across Washington schools.⁵ In 2019, only 57 percent of students with disabilities in the state were included in general education settings for 80 to 100 percent of the school day—making Washington 44th out of 50 states for this metric.⁶ By the end of 2020, the percentage of students who had access to general education for 80 to 100 percent of their school day had increased by 11 percentage points.⁷ Washington's definition of inclusion, which communicates expectations related to beliefs, outcomes, and systems change, is as follows:

“Inclusion is the belief that all students have a right to meaningfully participate in the general education setting, both academically and socially. Inclusion is realized when all students, regardless of their designation to receive special education services, are provided with targeted services, supports, and accommodations, allowing them to learn in the general education classroom, interact with peers, and engage the core curriculum. Inclusive instruction rebukes the problematic perspective that students receiving special education services need to ‘fit in’ or ‘earn their way’ into general education classes. The belief that general education instruction is not malleable and that students should be making adaptations to be included in the general education setting has contributed to the continuation of two parallel systems of education in which students receiving special education services are marginalized and devalued because of their environmental segregation.”

– Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Inclusive education values the whole student and views diversity in ability, race, and cultural identities as an asset that benefits everyone’s learning. Effective inclusionary practices build students’ confidence in their identities as lifelong learners and prepare them for success in postsecondary education, employment, relationships, and civic engagement. Authentic family engagement practices are integral to achieving meaningful inclusion of students in general education instruction. Such practices include building the capacity of families and schools to form partnerships based on trust and mutual respect, ensure authentic family engagement in setting goals, celebrate successes, discuss concerns, and make decisions. To achieve this, the beliefs, practices, and culture of school communities must shift away from an approach to parent involvement in which the school tells parents the school’s educational goals for their children and how the parent can be involved. Instead, schools must establish collaborative structures and practices for meaningful family engagement. Engagement activities must include healing and relationship building within a dual-capacity building framework, along with multilevel system alignment to improve the outcomes of students with disabilities in Washington state.⁸ This engagement also must include both families of children with and without disabilities.

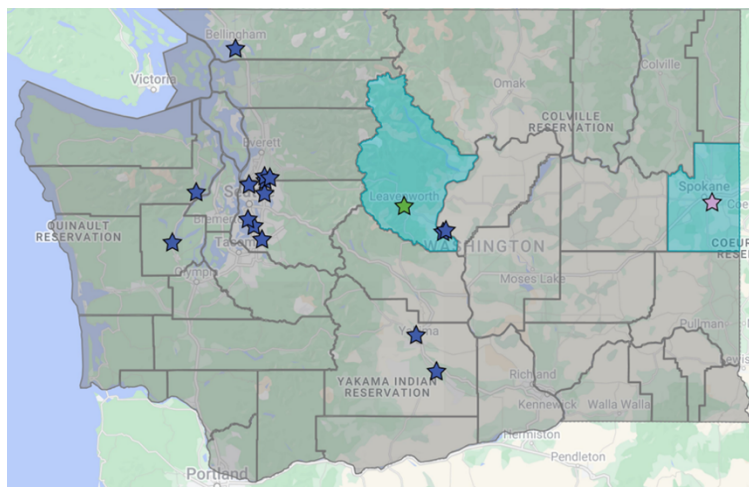
What we did to learn more

The IPP FEC directed Education Northwest to conduct case studies to document inclusive education in IPP demonstration sites that received technical assistance from University of Washington Haring Center. In this report, we describe inclusive education and family engagement practices in two IPP demonstration sites—Kodiak Cubs Preschool and Chase Middle School. In 2022, we described the practices in four IPP other demonstration schools (one elementary school, one rural K–8 school, and two high schools). The evaluation questions are:

1. What practices have selected IPP demonstration sites implemented to strengthen the inclusive education system in their setting?
2. How have these demonstration sites engaged families to strengthen inclusive education?
3. How do the families, educators, and inclusion specialists (technical assistance providers) view the benefits and challenges of inclusive education?
4. What recommendations do families, educators, and inclusion specialists have to establish a culture of inclusive education through family engagement?

Education Northwest partnered with the Haring Center and IPP FEC partners to select two case study sites that served different grade levels and used different inclusionary education practices. In figure 1, the stars indicate the two sites featured in this report and the red dots show the IPP demonstration sites affiliated with the Haring Center.

Figure 1. Location of IPP demonstration sites supported by the University of Washington Haring Center, 2023



Note: Green star refers to Kodiak Cubs Preschool; gray star refers to Chase Middle School, and blues stars are other IPP demonstration sites.

Source: University of Washington Haring Center, Inclusionary Practices webpage.

The evaluation design includes multiple data sources, participants, and measures. For this report, the evaluation team reviewed relevant inclusive education documents and conducted interviews with Haring Center inclusion specialists and building administrators, teachers, and families. We also interviewed families of students with disabilities about their experiences with inclusive education and family engagement. Appendix A contains a more detailed description of methods and measures.

We would be remiss in reporting on inclusive education without acknowledging the enormous challenges and sheer physical and emotional exhaustion that educators experienced this past year. Many of these challenges are due to COVID-19 and the demand to conduct contact tracing, communicate with families, and ensure classroom instruction continues despite higher than usual teacher absences and limited substitute resources. School administrators believe that COVID-19 disrupted and changed educational structures and routines, including some that support inclusive education. Despite this, the case study sites' commitment to inclusive education remains strong, as evidenced in their implementation of inclusive education in the 2022–23 school year.

How this report is organized

The remainder of this report provides information on inclusive education and family engagement practices. For each demonstration site, we describe the student demographics, locale, and context; explain the site's approach to inclusive education and family engagement; and report how families, educators, administrators, and inclusion specialists view the benefits and implementation challenges of inclusion. Although we use person-first language in this report (children or students with disabilities), we acknowledge and respect that some individuals prefer disability/identity-first language (disabled children or students).

Chapter 2. Inclusive education through family-school partnerships

The FEC's goal is to increase the capacity of families and schools to form effective partnerships that will lead to sustainable inclusionary practices in schools and communities. Federal and state legislation establishes inclusion of students with disabilities in general education settings as a fundamental right, not an aspirational goal.^{9,10} The value of inclusive education to everyone in the school community is clear. Students with disabilities who are included in general education achieve higher reading and math skills, have better attendance, and experience more social gains than students who have not been included.^{11,12} For students without disabilities, inclusion increases relationship-building skills while having mostly neutral or positive effects on academic learning.¹³ Inclusive settings help students with and without disabilities feel a sense of belonging and social connection with their school and peers.¹⁴ Administrators and teachers who support students with disabilities in general education settings often improve their capacity to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of each student regardless of their designation to receive special education services.¹⁵

Given the clear evidence supporting inclusionary practices, the Washington state legislature directed the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to organize a cadre of technical assistance providers to help schools build inclusive school climates for students with disabilities. This group included professional education associations, institutions of higher education, and national technical assistance providers who work directly with districts and schools. The following year, OSPI funded the FEC, which provides resources and support to parents and families of students with disabilities. Interview findings indicate most cadre members view inclusion as a cultural shift in philosophy and practice related to the way students, families, and educators within a school community engage, teach, and learn. Schools that accomplish this level of systemic change educate the entire school community on what it means to have an inclusive culture and engage families in meaningful ways.

IPP cadre members believe a shift from family involvement to engagement is necessary. Establishing inclusive learning environments requires family-school partnerships and a cultural shift toward equitable family engagement. Some members believe that achieving this shift in practice will require a shared vision of family engagement across all levels of the state's education system and clear guidelines on how to achieve this goal.

“We need to engage families very early on about what you’ll expect us to be doing. I mean, I always wanted to be the Nordstrom’s of education and say, ‘Tell me what you need, and I’ll try to figure out what that is and how we can deliver that.’ And I think that’s the shift that we have to look at, is how do we work together to get to where the families and the student want to get to? And that looks very different for every family.”

– IPP cadre member

All cadre members agreed that family engagement was important and that they needed to engage families more intentionally in their inclusionary practices. Cadre members recognized that families could communicate more authentically about the positive impact that an inclusionary culture can have on students’ lives and well-being. Each cadre member also noted that their inclusionary practices needed to focus on supporting all students, not just students with disabilities. As such, they felt it was important to engage all stakeholders, including families of students with disabilities.

“Families are the core of everything that happens positively for students, and sometimes negatively. So they have to be part of inclusionary practices. I always look at education as a three-legged stool, where there’s the educator, there’s the student, and there’s the family. And if one of those pieces is missing, it can’t stand up. We need to engage families at a much higher level ... That’s always in the primary focus of what we’re thinking about, is how do we engage families, how do we look at culturally responsive activities, how do we help teachers understand that families are an important component.”

– IPP cadre member

The remainder of this chapter provides an overview of research-based inclusive education and family engagement practices used in the two case study schools.

Inclusionary practices

The inclusive education practices implemented by the case study sites included committed leadership, co-planning and teaching among general and special education teachers, a master schedule, and family engagement that prioritizes inclusion. A brief literature summary of these inclusive education practices follows.

Co-teaching. In the co-teaching model, general education and special education teachers collaborate to jointly lead a classroom and provide instructional support for students with disabilities in general education classes.¹⁶ The OSPI “Inclusionary Practices Handbook” defines co-teaching as a shared responsibility encompassing various aspects such as classroom ownership, instructional planning, adaptations, grading, assessments, and overall outcomes for all students.¹⁷

Co-teaching can be implemented in different ways, including the general and special education teachers co-planning the lesson to ensure instructional strategies are differentiated to meet the needs of every student. Co-teaching may also involve jointly teaching a class in which one teacher delivers the lesson while the other observes students, or dividing the class into smaller groups and having each teacher instruct one of them.¹⁸ In these inclusive classrooms, paraeducators also play a role by providing services and specialized instruction under the guidance of the general and special education teachers.

Empirical evidence points to moderate gains in student performance in co-teaching classrooms,^{19,20} but scholars contend additional research is necessary to provide more conclusive evidence.²¹ There is a limited amount of research focusing on such measurable outcomes as student achievement.²²

Several themes emerge as crucial factors in the implementation of co-teaching. These include teacher preparation and voluntary participation, effective planning and collaboration, and support from the school or district. Common barriers to successful implementation include the lack of a shared vision for co-teaching, a lack of co-teaching planning time, a lack of effective instructional supervision and clear expectations, and insufficient opportunities for professional development.²³ Adequate support is necessary for coordinated and effective implementation of the co-teaching model.

Master schedules. Master schedules coordinate classes, instructional time, student groupings, teacher assignments, and classroom locations.²⁴ They play a crucial role in facilitating the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms by effectively coordinating and arranging necessary services and support—such as speech services, occupational therapy, and physical therapy—to align with the students’ needs.²⁵

Master schedules reflect a school’s values, culture, and priorities. They play a pivotal role in either hindering or facilitating equity and access for students. To support the creation and sustainability of an inclusive learning culture, the Massachusetts Department of Education offers the [Inclusive Practice Tool: Master Schedule Review](#).²⁶

Key reflection questions include:

- To what degree are we using our schedule to promote, develop, and sustain an inclusive learning culture?
- Does the master schedule support collaboration among special educators, English as a second language specialists, and general educators?

School-family partnerships

Inclusive schools recognize the vital role of school-family partnerships. Families contribute valuable insights and experiences that enable schools to prioritize the needs of students with disabilities and their families, particularly students from diverse backgrounds and historically marginalized groups. When families, community members, and educators from different backgrounds collaborate, share their perspectives, and learn from one another, communities can initiate a transformative process to create more inclusive educational environments.²⁷ Meaningful school-family partnerships:

- Value relationships built on trust and mutual respect
- Co-design shared values and priorities among families, students, and educators
- Establish collaborative structures and practices to support two-way conversations to set goals, discuss concerns, and make decisions
- Use multiple ways to increase understanding of students' and families' strengths, interests, and cultural identities
- Co-design ways to make general education more inclusive
- Presume competence, set high expectations, and tell each student they can succeed²⁸

The Washington Family Engagement Framework Workgroup, created in 2020, defines family engagement as, “a full and equitable partnership among families, educators, providers, and communities to support learners’ development from birth through college and career.”²⁹ The workgroup’s four values include shared power and responsibility, relationships built on trust and communication, honoring families’ strengths, and recognizing that family engagement promotes equity and success for all families.

The Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships, developed by Mapp and Kuttner in 2013, provides a comprehensive approach to strengthening collaboration between families and schools.³⁰ The framework emphasizes that both families and schools possess valuable knowledge, experiences, and resources that can contribute to student success. It aims to build and enhance the capacity of staff members and families in the “4 C” areas: capabilities, connections, cognition, and confidence. Ultimately, effective school-family partnerships support student achievement and school improvement.

Summary

The IPP's goal is to increase inclusion through implementation of evidence-based approaches to inclusive education and family engagement. To this end, OSPI organized a cadre of technical assistance providers to advance inclusion across the state. Schools, families, and cadre members view inclusion as a cultural shift in philosophy and practice and believe meaningful inclusion involves changes in the way a school community's students, families, and educators engage, teach, and learn. To achieve this level of systemic change, it is necessary to educate the entire school community on what it means to have an inclusive culture and engage families in meaningful ways.

"Families are the core of everything that happens positively for students, and sometimes negatively. So they have to be part of inclusionary practices. I always look at education as a three-legged stool, where there's the educator, there's the student, and there's the family. And if one of those pieces is missing, it can't stand up. We need to engage families at a much higher level ... That's always in the primary focus of what we're thinking about, is how do we engage families, how do we look at culturally responsive activities, how do we help teachers understand that families are an important component."

– IPP cadre member

Chapter 3. Kodiak Cubs Preschool

The Kodiak Cubs Preschool program serves children ages 3–5 in Cascade School District in Leavenworth, Washington, a rural town in Chelan County. Geographically, this district is one of the largest in the state, serving the communities of Dryden, Peshastin, Lake Wenatchee, Leavenworth, Plain, Lower Blewett, and Winton. In 2023, the district enrolled 1,263 students in grades K–12, 65 percent of whom identified as white, 31 percent as Hispanic/Latino, and 4 percent as American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, or multiracial.³¹ The district provided 10 percent of its students with English language learner services, 11 percent with special education services, and 5 percent with Section 504 accommodations.³²

In addition to the Kodiak Cubs Preschool program, the district operates a transitional kindergarten program (children aged 4 years old), three elementary schools (grades K–2, 3–5, and K–5), one middle school (grades 6–8), and one high school (grades 9–12). The district also offers two alternative learning experiences (grades K–8 and K–12). The district’s vision and values prioritize making learning “personal to each and every student,” embracing equity, access, and diversity; and maintaining positive relationships among school communities.³³

Vision and values

The district’s vision statement and values emphasize the importance of focusing on the whole child and inclusive diversity.

Vision. In Cascade School District, we strive to cultivate your children and our students’ full potential for lifelong success. We are driven by a passion for growing whole students and guided by the knowledge that when we grow as an individual, we grow strong, vibrant communities and a more connected world.”³⁴

- **Every student.** We treat each person as an individual so that learning is personal to each and every student.
- **Connected relationships.** We care about family, our communities and each other. At the root of our success is our ability to develop and maintain powerful, positive relationships.
- **Inclusive diversity.** We include everyone, honor diversity, and embrace different cultures and various socio-economic realities. We seek to create equity, access, and understanding in all we do.
- **Artful creativity.** We engage in the arts as learners and performers to innovate, create and inspire the human spirit, inspired by the world around us.

- **Quality education.** We prepare people for the future with a system of high quality education that makes learning relevant and useful, delivered by caring learning professionals in a technology-rich environment.
- **The outdoors.** We engage in the beauty and diversity of our natural environment to learn, stay fit, and how we impact the world around us.³⁵

The district website provides users the opportunity to view information in over 115 languages and includes accessibility features such as alternative text for photos and images, tags within PDFs, and consistent page structures. The website provides a description of the district’s policy of allowing families to select which public school their child will attend as well as home school options. The website also includes information about special education and other services for students and families who may require assistance.³⁶

Early learning options

Families who live in Cascade School District have several early learning options. These options include Kodiak Cubs Preschool, the district’s preschool and pre-k program, which is housed at Icicle River Middle School. TK Cubs is a transitional kindergarten program serving four-year old children and located at Peshastin-Dryden Elementary School. Additionally, Head Start programs are available through Chelan-Douglas Child Services Association in Peshastin and Mountain Sprouts in Leavenworth.

Table 1. Early learning options available to Cascade School District children

Kodiak Cubs Preschool	TK Cubs	Chelan-Douglas Child Services Association	Mountain Sprouts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serves children ages 3–5 • Preschool and pre-kindergarten program • Morning and afternoon sessions; four-day week • Play-based learning • Sliding fee scale • Transportation • “Big kid” role models through partnership with high school child development class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serves children aged 4 • Transitional kindergarten • Full-day, full-week program • Kindergarten preparation • Eligibility based on screening process • No fee for qualifying students • Transportation provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serves children ages 0–5 • Part- and full-day Head Start classes • Full-day Early Head Start classes for infants and toddlers • Home-based education services for infants, toddlers, and pregnant mothers • Eligibility based on family income • Year-round program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serves children ages 3–7 years old • Full-day, four-days-per-week preschool • Full-day, two-days-per-week transitional kindergarten • Play-based learning • Outdoor time for health and fun • State childcare subsidy accepted • Tuition assistance • Scheduling options

Source: Cascade School District website.

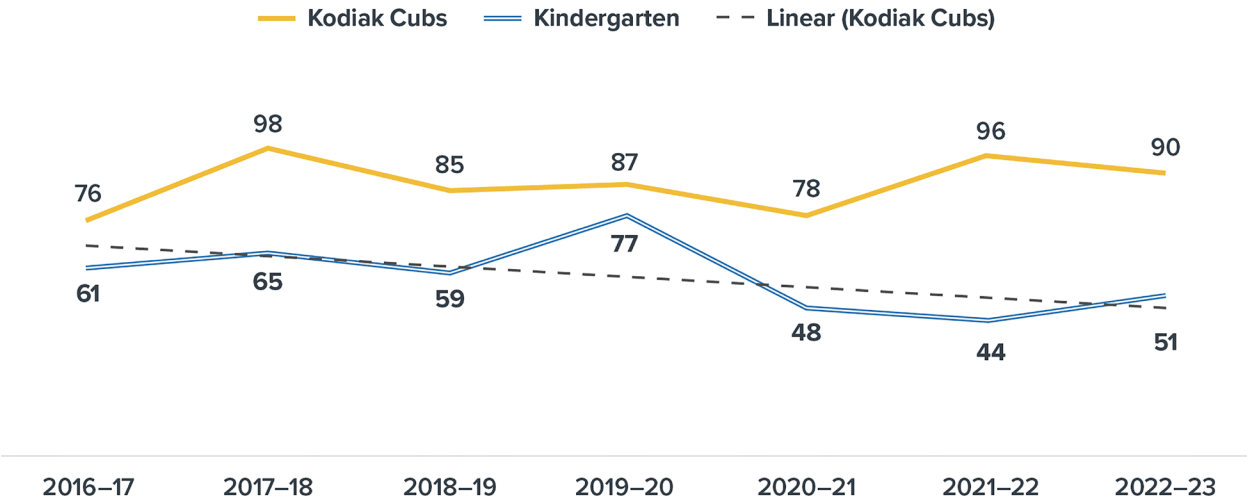
Kodiak Cubs Preschool

Providing high-quality and rigorous early learning to children is a priority of the Kodiak Cubs Preschool program. The program has a highly qualified team and high school volunteers to support services for children and families. The lead teacher of Kodiak Cubs has extensive experience as an elementary and kindergarten teacher. As a long-term, respected member of the community, she has trusting, long-term relationships with families, colleagues, and community members. The classroom assistant has a bachelor’s degree in a related field and is knowledgeable about supporting children who receive special education services. Students receive high school credit for leading children’s learning activities as part of their child development class. Consistent with research on quality preschools, the highly qualified program staff members create learning environments that promote social and emotional learning, critical thinking, problem-solving, language development, and literacy.³⁷ The program staff members also use child-centered teaching practices and encourage each child’s developmental progression.³⁸

ENROLLMENT AND EARLY LEARNING PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

During the 2022–23 school year, the Kodiak Cubs Preschool served 51 children and the district’s kindergarten program served 90 students (figure 2). During the switch to distance learning, enrollment in the Kodiak Preschool Program declined from 77 children in 2019–20 to 48 children the following year. During the same period, kindergarten enrollment declined from 87 to 78 students.

Figure 2. Kodiak Cubs Preschool enrollment declined slightly but kindergarten enrollment increased from 2017–18 to 2022–23



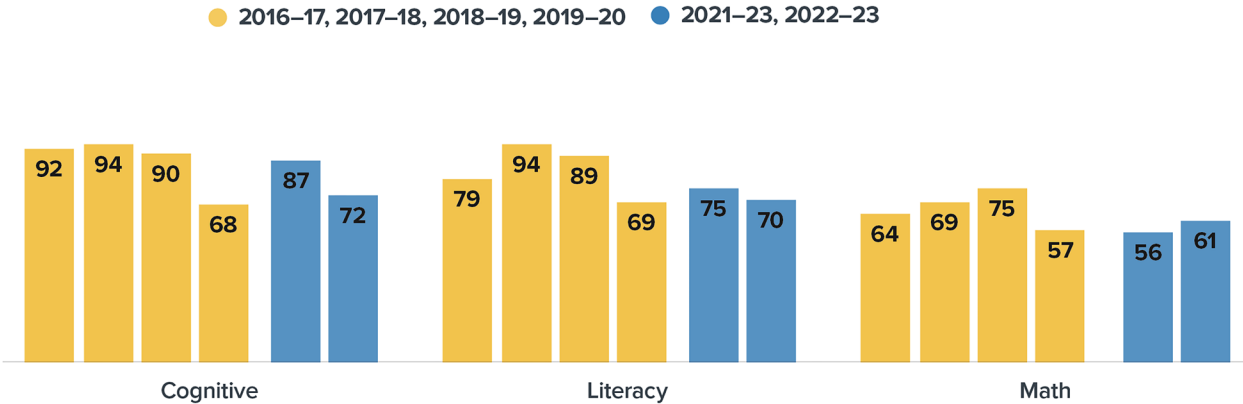
Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction report card data, 2016–17 to 2022–23 and Cascade School District enrollment data, 2022–23.

WAKIDS ASSESSMENT DATA

School performance indicators are lacking for early learning programs. However, trends in kindergarten readiness before and during distance learning, and after return to in-person instruction, provide information on the learning strengths and needs of young children in Cascade School District. The Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) assessment measures six developmental areas: cognitive, literacy, math, physical, social emotional, and language. However, the relationship between WaKIDS scores and participation in the Kodiak Cubs Preschool is difficult to ascertain due to the inability to identify the WaKIDS scores of children who attended the Kodiak Cubs Preschool versus other early learning programs.

Prior to distance learning, the percentage of kindergarteners who met or exceeded benchmarks ranged between 90 and 92 percent on the cognitive scale and between 69 and 94 percent on the literacy scale (figure 3). Since the return to in-person learning in 2020, the percentage of students who met or exceeded benchmarks was 87 percent and 72 percent for cognitive skills and 75 and 70 percent for literacy skills. The percentage of kindergarteners who met or exceeded benchmarks was lower in math, ranging between 57 and 69 percent before the switch to distance learning. After the return to in-person instruction, the percentage of kindergarteners who met or exceeded math benchmarks was 56 and 61 percent. Note, in 2020–21, WaKIDS assessments were not administered due to COVID-19.

Figure 3. The percentage of students who met or exceeded benchmarks on the WaKIDS cognitive, literacy, and math scales, 2016–17 to 2022–23

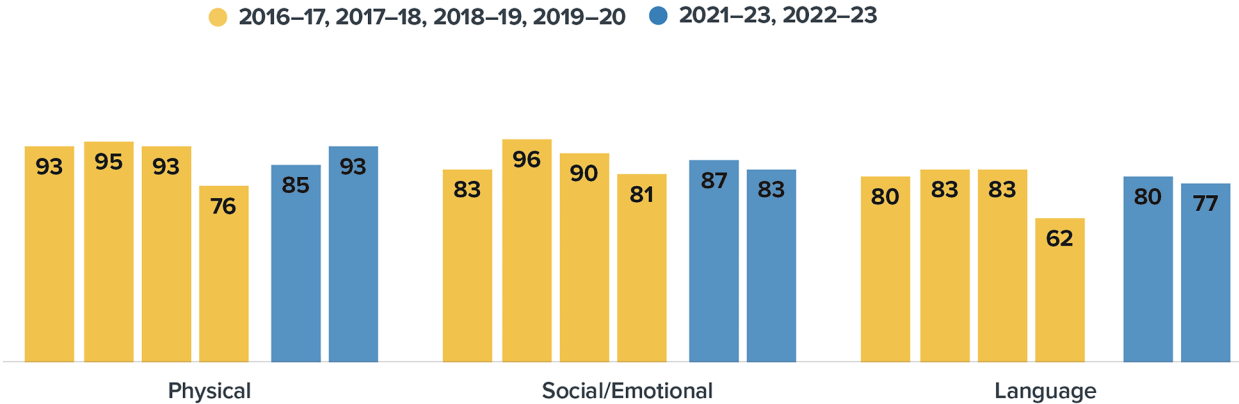


Note: Yellow columns indicate years before the distance learning years and blue columns indicate years after returning to in-person learning. Data are percentages of kindergarteners who met or exceeded benchmark on the WaKIDS assessment. In 2020–21, WaKIDS testing was cancelled due to COVID-19.

Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction report card data, 2016–17 to 2022–23.

Before the switch to distance learning, the percentage of kindergarteners who met or exceeded benchmarks ranged between 76 and 95 percent in physical development and between 81 and 96 percent on the social emotional scale (figure 4). After the return to in-person learning, the percentage of students who met or exceeded benchmark was 85 percent and 93 percent in physical development and 87 and 83 percent in social emotional skills. The percentage of kindergarteners who met or exceeded benchmarks was slightly lower in language development ranging between 62 and 83 percent before distance learning. The percentage of kindergarteners who met or exceeded benchmarks in language was 80 and 77 percent after the return to in-person instruction.

Figure 4. The percentage of students who met or exceeded benchmarks on the WaKIDS physical, social emotional, and language scales, 2016–17 to 2022–23



Note: Yellow columns indicate years before the distance learning years and blue columns indicate years after returning to in-person learning. Data are percentages of children students who met or exceeded benchmark on the WaKIDS assessment. In 2020–21, WaKIDS testing was cancelled due to COVID-19.

Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction report card data, 2016–17 to 2022–23.

Family engagement and inclusive education

This section describes how educators and families view family engagement and inclusion in Cascade School District.

Family engagement

Engaging families in decisions impacting their child’s education is a priority for Cascade School District. At the district level, families have multiple ways to engage in their child’s education. They may join traditional parent-teacher organizations; site councils; or athletic, choir and band booster clubs. The district convenes superintendent’s and multilingual parent councils to discuss district concerns, parent or family member requests, concerns, and appreciation. For example, the superintendent asked parents to review

the district improvement plan and provide feedback on its relevance to their needs and goals. The superintendent also wanted to know if the plan was understandable to families or too overladen with educational jargon. The district seeks to have two-way conversations in which the families tell the district their goals for their child's education and the district shares progress toward achieving these goals.

“Our parents, for example, have been advocating for years to have more of an advanced learning portfolio since we're a rural school district. It's really important not only to expand that, but also to communicate what's already happening. A lot of times, our parents don't even know what we have available because they're thinking about when they were students.”

– Superintendent

Families were engaged in the design of the Kodiak Cubs Preschool. The lead teacher met with families to discuss their priorities and goals for their child's preschool. For example, families shared that they wanted preschool children to attend two days a week and pre-kindergarten children three days a week. The families also wanted their children to attend a part-day versus a full-day program.

In response to this family feedback, Kodiak Cubs Preschool program provides two separate programs for families: preschool and pre-kindergarten. The preschool program provides half-day classes to children ages 3–4 on Thursdays and Fridays. The pre-kindergarten program provides half-day classes to children ages 4–5 on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. Based on family and community conversations, the district decided to make a distinction between three- and five-year olds due to differences in skill and developmental levels. In this way, preschool for younger children focuses on getting used to being at school, playing with others, and gaining social and emotional learning. The pre-kindergarten program then focuses on learning routines and practicing social and emotional learning skills that children will use in kindergarten.

“Our preschool classes are solely focused on social-emotional learning. We do activities and things, but it's all based on we just want them to love being here and love being with each other. And we're just playing. It's a lot less structured. Pre-k still has some of those components, but it's a lot more structured, and we mimic what a kindergarten day might look like or at least what the morning in a kindergarten might look like.”

– Lead teacher

The lead teacher also asked families about barriers that might prevent enrollment of their children. Barriers parents mentioned included lack of transportation and the expectation that children are toilet trained prior to enrollment. For this reason, the district provides transportation and serves children who are not yet toilet trained.

Kodiak Cubs Preschool prioritizes partnership with families as an essential program feature. The lead teacher embeds collaboration, two-way communication, and the maintenance of trusting relationships with families in the program's operating procedures. She provides an annual family orientation to share information about the program, learn more about families' cultural backgrounds, and discuss families' goals and dreams for their children's education. For each family, program staff members also find out the best way to communicate (e.g., telephone, text, email, in person) and how the program can best serve their needs. During the year, the program communicates with families in multiple ways. These include posting information regularly on the district webpage, using a platform that allows parents to see what is happening in the classroom, sending notes and children's work home daily, checking in with parents when children arrive and leave for the day, and holding parent conference days. As needed, the lead teacher also meets with parents in person or virtually to address concerns and ensure children experience belonging and positive connections to their school.

"I have student learning objectives for the program. That is a given. But then I also have the goals and dreams and hopes and wishes of every single family for their child. And so basically I think that what we've tried to do, what I've tried to do is the whole idea of an IEP for every kid ... that idea that you sit down with families and create. You ask about strengths and you have those conversations with them. What are you hoping for your child? What are your hopes for preschool? What are you wanting to accomplish? What is your family need? And then we go from there."

– Lead teacher

Inclusive education

The district's website identifies inclusion of "children of all abilities" as one of five reasons that all families should enroll their child in the Kodiak Cubs Preschool.³⁹ The program has been intentional in its efforts to have children mirror the community.

"And so, I think it's really important to educate the peers about differences in learning abilities. And the kids are so great at this age with playing together and understanding that the kids have different needs and they adapt their play. It's just a beautiful thing to witness. And that's really important for me is to have students with special needs feel part of the classroom, part of the community, part of the students."

– Parent

Although not yet in place, the superintendent is laying the foundation for expanding inclusionary practices in the upper grades. For example, she is coaching staff members on having similar expectations and communication processes for parents of students with and without disabilities. She also emphasizes that educators need to be open to partnering with families to continually learn, listen, and identify how to improve education for each student. For example, she ensures that general education and special education teachers use the same platform to share information about their courses so that each family has access to information about all courses and activities in their school.

“I also think that it’s really important for families to understand not only what’s going on in their child’s classroom, but across the school so that they understand that their children are welcome in all the areas. They are welcome at the choir concert, on the soccer team, and all the different things. It’s really important not to silo special education.”

– Superintendent

The district has been intentional in its efforts to build a system that supports inclusion at Kodiak Cubs Preschool. Because the special education teacher is located in a different building than the program, co-teaching and other inclusionary practices are not feasible. However, co-planning leverages the program staff members’ expertise and the special education teacher has been helpful in developing individualized strategies for children.

The goal of Kodiak Cubs Preschool is to serve the best interests of both children and families. The lead teacher believes families of students with disabilities appreciate opportunities for their children that other families may take for granted. She also recognizes that inclusion requires many people to learn different ways to think about special and general education. To start, the lead teacher reviews the Washington State Early Development guidelines with each family to discuss how the program can help. From there, the program builds strengths-based goals and strategies individualized for each child’s learning preferences.

“It’s really, really based on building relationships and servant leadership, it’s about how can I help you? It’s not I’m here, I’m the expert, and I’m here to tell you everything that you’re doing wrong and what you need to fix at home so that this kid will be fine at school ... it’s not just about your child doing well at school; it’s about your family being healthy and well all the way around. And your child doing well at school is just part of that.”

– Lead teacher

Kodiak Cubs Preschool incorporates evidence-based practices that promote an equitable and inclusive learning environment. Every student is viewed as competent, capable, and a valued learner by staff members and peers. Evaluators used the [IBESTT Classroom Checklist](#), a synthesis of evidence-based universal supports within a culturally responsive, inclusive environment. The IBESTT Classroom Checklist findings are summarized below:

- **Room arranged so all can be seen and to promote engagement.** Quality early learning programs must have physical environments that meet the specific needs of young children. For example, programs should provide bathrooms that are located near activity areas, use non-slip and waterproof flooring that is easy to clean, and install sinks and faucets at heights that are appropriate for young children. Learning areas, eating areas, and play spaces need to be separate from older students and equipped with furniture and equipment that is safe and developmentally appropriate for young children. The preschool classroom must also provide a separate work area for teachers and staff members. The Kodiak Cubs Preschool meets all these criteria. The program has two separate classroom spaces, an office for program staff, and access to restrooms and play areas that are separate from older children.
- **Classroom expectations, routines, and materials reflect children’s language and culture.** The classroom setting includes books and artwork of people from diverse cultural backgrounds. The classroom expectations and routines are positively stated, displayed visually using words and pictures, and many are in English, Spanish, and American Sign Language.
- **Classroom routines, transitions, and active supervision are used.** The classroom has posted, positively stated expectations and transitions routines. Staff members review expectations with the children throughout the day, especially when transitioning between different activities. The classroom consistently uses the same song as a visual and auditory transition signal to engage children and help them focus. The program has routines for lining up, turning in work, hand washing, cleaning up activity areas, and asking for help. Children receive specific feedback for following the expectations or routines. The classroom schedule is well organized and provides opportunities to engage in whole-class, small-group, and independent activities. Children have choices during these activities and opportunities to practice social and emotional learning skills. If difficulties arise, children receiving coaching to engage in social and emotional learning such as self-regulation, problem-solving, or sharing.

Successes and challenges

Interview and focus group participants from Cascade School District were candid about successes and challenges of implementing inclusive practices. Families appreciated the program's focus on social and emotional learning and making sure each child has positive learning experiences. The families said their children really enjoyed school and that they learned how to be a "better parent." They also praised the open communication, via multiple means, between the program and parents.

"You can tell that somebody's paying attention to your kid, but also not giving them more or less attention than any other kid. She's just very good at being aware of who needs what."

– Parent

Families believed the inclusion of students was a benefit to their children. For some, it was the reason they chose the Kodiak Cubs Preschool program.

"It's one of the reasons that we chose it is because it is more inclusive and it is more representative of the community here. It just seemed like a great opportunity for our girls, and, us to get to know a lot of the people in the community and that they'd be going to school with here for their whole entire journey hopefully."

– Parent

"It's important that my kids get to know all types of kids and people, and learn how to get along and work together with all types of kids and people because that is real life."

– Parent

Parents said the program helped improve their access to and the quality of the special education services provided for their children. They believed providing special education in the classroom with other children improved their child's learning.

"So actually the benefits that we have found in the classroom have been our child's able to get help and learn skills within the Kodiak Cubs classroom that are very relevant to what he would be learning. So that's been really beneficial to have access in that classroom with kids his age."

– Parent

The families believed the program provides their children with a great experience that prepares them for success in kindergarten. They reported that their children loved school and often didn't want to leave to go home. Program staff members believe that children in the inclusion model have friends and love coming to school. The families agreed that their children loved the program and that the program was preparing them for success in kindergarten.

“They both have just had a great experience. They ask to go to school all the time and are always happy to jump out of the car and go. Never fight me on heading to school. Most of the time they don't want to leave, so that's always a good sign. I think that they do a really great job of balancing structured learning with just creative individual play and imaginative play.”

– Parent

“She's now in kindergarten. During the kindergarten screening, they were impressed with how well prepared she was with things like colors and counting, sorting, patterns, even numbers and letters. Yeah, so I think that it definitely helps set her up for success in kindergarten.”

– Parent

Challenges

When asked about challenges to implementing inclusive education, the district and Kodiak Cubs Preschool staff members alike said they would like to have more resources for training to strengthen staff buy-in and competence in inclusive education. In addition to general information on inclusive education practices, training on specific topics such as serving students with significant health needs, autism, and challenging behaviors would also be helpful. They also identified a need for increased staffing to deepen inclusive practices in the district. For the Kodiak Cubs Preschool, expansion would require finding space suitable for young children.

Summary

Kodiak Cubs Preschool exemplifies the successful engagement of families to establish an inclusive educational program aligned with community values and priorities. Leveraging the collective knowledge and wisdom of families, early learning educators, and special education teachers lays the foundation for high-quality instruction and continuous program improvement for every student. Moreover, this approach fosters the collaborative relationships that are essential for realizing inclusive education in which “all means all” students.

Chapter 4. Chase Middle School

Chase Middle School is one of nine middle schools in Spokane Public Schools, the second-largest district in Washington state with nearly 30,000 students enrolled. Chase serves grade 7 and 8 students in the southeast corner of the district.

Vision and values

The Spokane Public Schools strategic plan is built upon five guiding principles: equity, being student-centered, inclusion, innovation, and trust and collaboration. The strategic plan identifies four priorities which each have a set of initiatives:⁴⁰

Priority 1. Connected and caring school community	Priority 2. Strong foundations	Priority 3. Student supports and transitions	Priority 4. 21st century learning and career pathways
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Priority 1 includes the following initiative related to family engagement: “Foster relationships, involvement, and support for all staff, students and families.” Priority 3 includes the following initiative related to inclusionary practices: “Increase access and inclusion for students receiving Special Education and English Language Development services.”

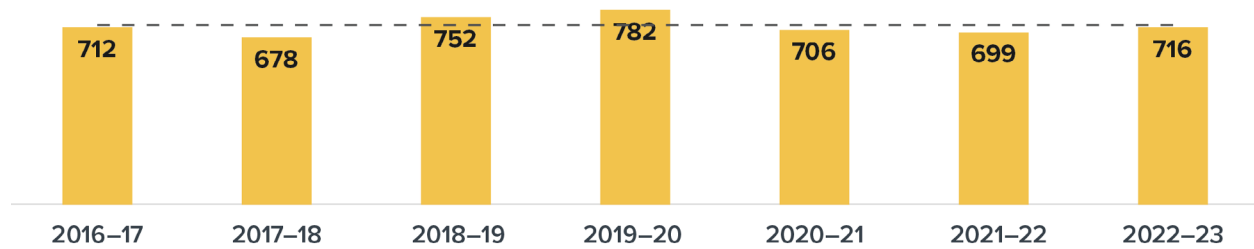
The Chase Middle School website is hosted by Spokane School District and provides translation in over 30 languages.⁴¹ The website includes an accessibility statement indicating it was developed with the collaboration of educators, staff members, and families, and complies with World Wide Web Consortium’s Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 level AA. There is also an email address for users to contact if they are unable to access content or have questions about accessibility.⁴² The district website provides information about district-level special education services, including a link to a page with information about parent involvement and resources for families.⁴³ This page includes information about the district’s special education parent advisory council.

Enrollment and school performance indicators

In the 2022–23 school year, Chase enrolled 716 students, with 66 percent identifying as white, 13 percent as multiracial, 11 percent as Hispanic/Latino, 4 percent as Asian, 3 percent as Black/African American, and 3 percent as American Indian/Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander. The school provided 7 percent of its students with English language learner services, 15 percent with special education services, and 1 percent with Section 504 accommodations. Chase saw a slight increase in enrollment from

the previous two years but remained well below pre-pandemic enrollment levels (see figure 5). During these same years, the percentage of students who received special education services varied between 14 and 18 percent, with the highest percentage in 2018–19.⁴⁴

Figure 5. Student enrollment at Chase Middle School from 2016–17 to 2022–23

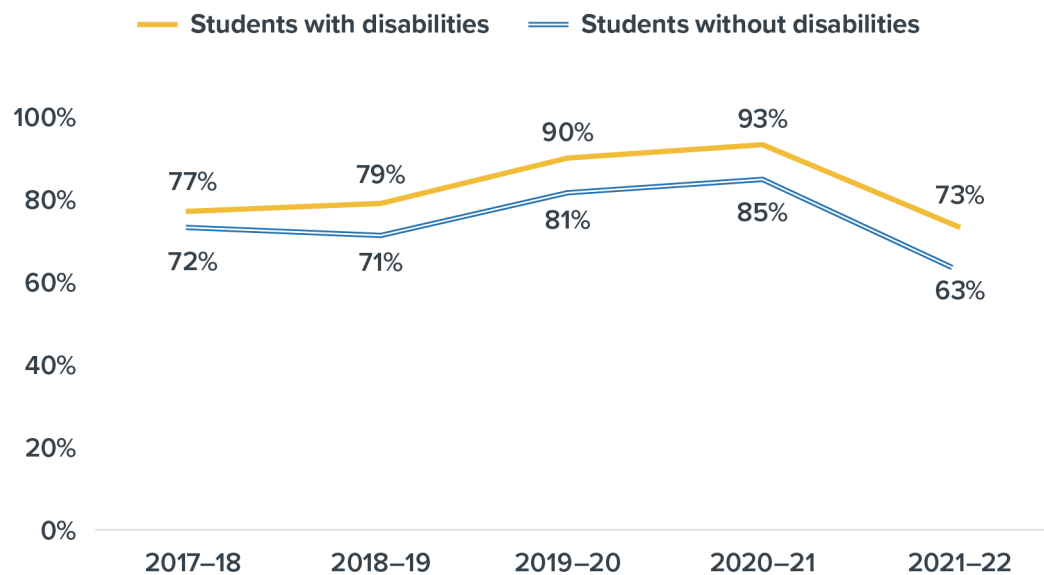


Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction report card data, 2016–17 to 2022–23.

Attendance

Students are designated regular attenders if they have, on average, fewer than two absences per month. Attendance data from 2017–18 to 2021–22 show an overall increase in attendance for both students with and without disabilities through 2020–21 followed by a steep decline for 2021–22 (see figure 6).

Figure 6. Percentage of students with fewer than two absences per month from 2017–18 through 2021–22 for students with and without disabilities

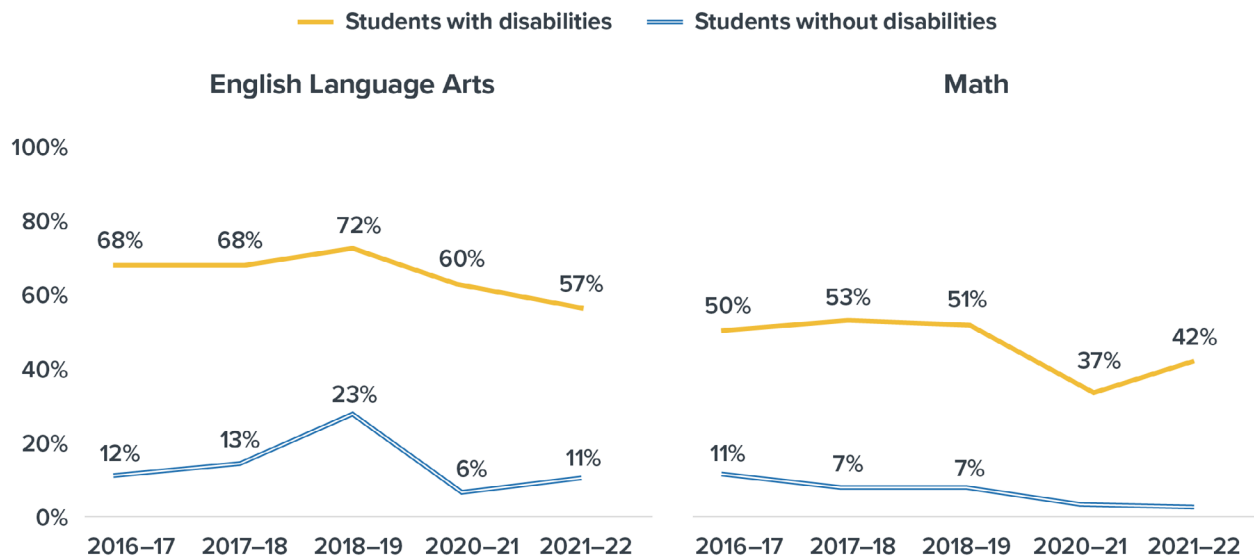


Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction report card data, 2017–18 to 2021–22.

Assessment data

Assessment data are available for English language arts and math using the Smarter Balanced Assessment. Figure 7 shows the percentage of students who met grade-level standards for each content area separated by disability status. For English language arts, both students with and without disabilities increased between the 2016–17 and 2018–19 school years, but scores increased more for students with disabilities. Both groups saw scores decline over the 2020–21 school year. In 2021–22, students with disabilities' scores are beginning to increase while students without disabilities continue to decrease. In math, students with disabilities have seen a decrease in scores for most years, other than 2018–19.

Figure 7. Percent of students with and without disabilities meeting grade level standards in English language arts and math from 2016–17 through 2021–22

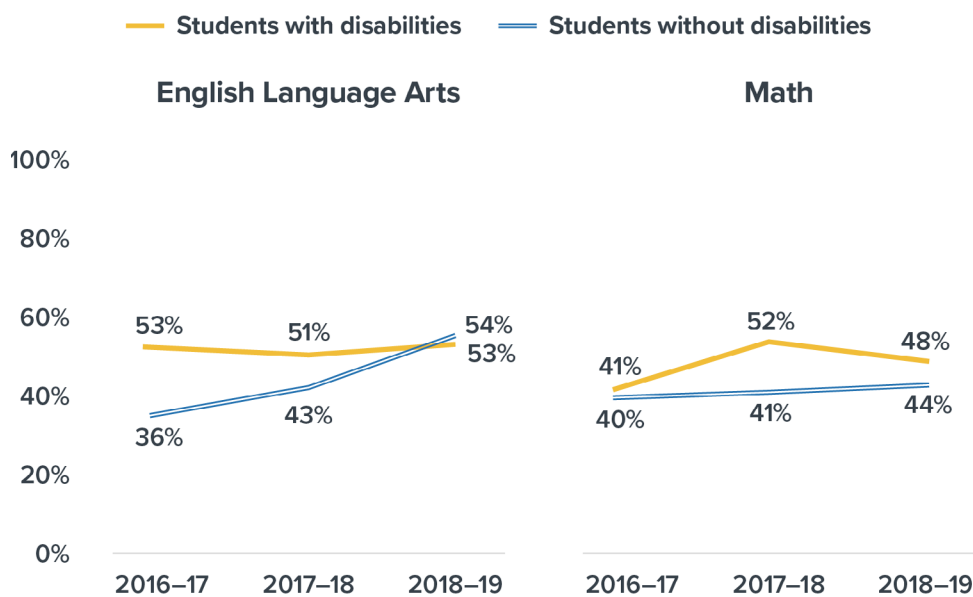


Note: In 2019–20, statewide academic testing was cancelled due to COVID-19.

Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction report card data, 2016–17 to 2021–22.

Limited years of student growth data are available for Chase Middle School. These data show that prior to 2018–19, students with disabilities showed less growth than students without disabilities. However, this gap closed in 2018–19. Data are not available after 2018–19 but this suggests a promising trend for students with disabilities (see figure 8).

Figure 8. Percentage of students with and without disabilities showing growth in English Language Arts and Math from 2016–17 to 2018–19



Note: In 2019–20, statewide academic testing was cancelled due to COVID-19.

Source: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction report card data, 2016–17 to 2018–19.

Inclusive education and family engagement practices

We interviewed the Chase Middle School principal, special education department lead, teachers (both special education and general education), professional development providers (including Haring Center coaches), and others for this case study. The principal has been at Chase Middle School since the 2017–18 school year. The teachers had teaching tenures at Chase ranging from one to sixteen years.

Chase Middle School’s mission is to be “a place where all belong, all learn, and all lead.” All participants referred to this guiding principle when discussing their approach to and rationale for engaging in work to strengthen inclusive education and family engagement.

Inclusive education

Chase Middle School began to focus on strengthening its approach to inclusive education in the 2018–19 school year in response to 2017–18 data showing that children with disabilities were not showing satisfactory growth compared to their peers without disabilities. At the time, students were pulled out of their classes to receive additional support and as a result might go a full day without exposure to general education in core subjects.

Based on these data, Chase administration prioritized ensuring that every student was exposed to grade-level curriculum. First, the principal worked with special education teachers to increase their focus on common core standards and teaching grade-level standards to every student. Second, the principal changed school practices so that students were not pulled out of core classes. At the end of 2018–19, data showed students with disabilities had more growth than previous years (see figure 8 above).

The success of these early efforts led the principal to expand the school’s approach to inclusive education in 2019–20 and to begin to implement co-teaching. To phase this in, general education and special education teachers paired for three periods a day. These classes included a mix of students with and without individualized education programs (IEPs) so that special education teachers learn how to teach core content from content specialists. The special education teacher then teaches one class with students who are more than three years behind grade-level standards, focusing on grade-level content knowledge and strategies from the co-taught classes. This became the foundation of Chase Middle Schools approach to inclusionary practices, which revolves around ensuring every student has access to a general education setting with grade-level content.

“It’s making sure that [students with disabilities] can be in all the classrooms that their peers can be in, that they’re not pulled out into a different part, a different classroom, a different place... at Chase, our big mission is all belong. We’re all in the same school, we’re all in the same community, and we should all be supporting each other and make sure that everyone feels that they belong in this place... It doesn’t matter if you have an IEP, you should still be getting that general ed curriculum, grade level curriculum from a content specialist just like all your peers.”

– Administrator

To support the co-teaching approach, Chase Middle School also engages in additional inclusionary practices including co-planning, use of a master schedule, regular reviews of assessment data, and professional development such as the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework.

Co-planning is a key component of Chase’s strategy because limited resources make co-teaching in every class impossible. Co-planning helps ensure that all general education teachers have access to information about accommodations and supports and special education teachers have access to information about teaching grade-level standards.

“We have the co-teaching support or we have teachers that are co-planning. And so, maybe a student has an IEP, but they’re not in a co-taught class, they’re just in a class with just that content specialist. But those teachers have planned together so that the supports are already in place for that classroom.”

– Administrator

The master schedule ensures that co-teachers have a common planning period. The UDL resources support both the general education and special education teachers in thinking through how to remove barriers for all students. This approach reduces silos and increases collaboration and problem solving around the shared class.

“For us [teachers], [an essential strategy] is definitely the schedule that [the principal] creates. We have a common prep as seventh grade math teachers in this building. We are constantly exchanging strategies and ideas that would be inclusive scenario practices. You’re trying to include all kids in the learning of the mathematics ... we all plan together, so we’re all thinking of how are we going to benefit all of the kids.”

– Teacher

Another key strategy mentioned by the principal and teachers was the regular use of data to understand student trends at the school, classroom, and individual level. Various participants talked about how they use data to understand whether certain strategies are working or where they need to provide additional support. Others shared how they use data to monitor individual progress and identify students who might need to develop new goals. Educators also look carefully at data for incoming students to determine the classroom that will be the best fit.

Finally, educators have had access to various professional development opportunities over the transition to co-teaching. Some of these include:

- The “Co-Teaching in 90 days” training, which provided resources around co-teaching strategies (e.g., parallel teaching, team teaching), co-planning, co-assessing, and shifting mindsets to help both teachers see the entire class as their students
- Resources and support from the Haring Center, including information about professional development opportunities and other resources
- Universal Design for Learning with a Novak Education consultant
- Grading for Equity
- Learning communities with the special education lead at Chase including book studies (e.g., “Two Teachers in the Room”)⁴⁵

Although teachers appreciated having learning opportunities around inclusionary practices, some mentioned that the professional development was very focused on buy-in and the big picture of why inclusionary practices and co-teaching are important. Teachers wished for more concrete examples of how to implement lesson plans, and some requested a staff person to develop lesson plans or model lesson plans to use as a guide.

“A lot of the training is big picture inspirational. And as one of the social studies teachers says, ‘I’ve drunk the Kool-Aid, I need to know how to do it now’ And I think we need model lesson plans in all areas. We need to see some of those examples to really implement it because that’s the hard part, because it takes a lot of time to develop a unit that is truly modified and uses UDL strategies. And I think that’s where people need the most support.”

– Teacher

Family engagement

Chase Middle School focuses much of its family engagement work on incoming students, with events designed to support students and families in the transition from elementary to middle school. All families are invited to a Welcome Night where they learn about the curriculum, activities, and supports available at the school.

At the start of the school year, every incoming student and their family visits the school to receive their schedule and computer, walk through the schedule, and meet their advisory teacher. The school also holds events for families to come to the school (e.g., a harvest fair). Prior to the pandemic the school had a parent teacher group, but it was paused and has not yet restarted due to the challenge of finding parent volunteers. Teachers also mentioned that they reach out regularly to all families with both positive feedback and concerns, send postcards home, and attend sporting events and other student activities to meet families.

After implementing co-teaching, educators found that families of students with disabilities were coming from elementary schools where their children were educated in separate spaces and were concerned about them being a part of a general education class for the first time. Some families worried that their child would not receive adequate services. In recognition of these concerns, the school began to hold a second welcome night for incoming families of students with disabilities. During this meeting, the school shares information about the continuum of services and shows them the various schedule options that a student might have based on their academic needs.

“Our feeder schools are doing pullout. And so I get a lot of questions, so I get a lot of phone calls at the start of the year saying, ‘My student’s not getting services in this model.’ So I mean, we have a special ed info night, we’re going to do that this week. So people can come in and see what the model looks like. Not everybody comes, but they really feel when they’re walking in that they’re not getting services. So it takes a little bit of time to get used to the fact that the services are built in to the day. And then once we’re there, that’s what everybody wants. They want that model.”

– Teacher

After the incoming student events, families of students with disabilities are invited to IEP meetings once a year. Educators also try to meet more frequently if families are interested. They have found that the best strategy for engaging families during the IEP meeting is to ask them what they see for their child's future, and collaborate to support the child in reaching those goals. Chase educators also try to gather student input about how they learn so teachers can make accommodations using the UDL framework.

Finally, Chase has a community and school coordinator who works closely with a caseload of students and their families. Some of the students have IEPs, but the coordinator focuses on high-need students regardless of their disability status.

Successes and challenges

Some participants reported that the welcome night for students with disabilities was successful based on turnout and subsequent family engagement. Educators said they received more phone calls and emails with questions and were able to begin building relationships with families before their students were enrolled. A coach working with the school noted how the responsive approach to understanding and addressing families' concerns built a lot of trust:

"Families are coming in and they have been told for the whole time their child has been in the school system that a segregated classroom is where their child will learn best. And then they come into middle school and then they're being told a different message, And so that can lead to confusion, mistrust ... Families and students thought there were an error in their child's schedule and students said there's a mistake, I can't be in seventh grade ELA. I'm supposed to be in a resource class, that's what I've done in elementary. And so that leadership really took time to sit down with families and own that and say, yes, you were told this, but this is not what our data and research kind of tells us. It's where students learn best. So she's worked hard to build a lot of trust with families and students."

– Inclusion specialist

When reflecting on the successes of their shift to focus on inclusionary practices, many participants shared that they saw a difference in data, showing more growth of students with disabilities, and in school culture. They noted that students feel like they belong. Some teachers also found that they have fewer or less severe behavior issues because students have more support and teachers have more strategies to support them.

"And I feel like there's less behaviors with those students that maybe you would see if we had stuck with our pullout model ... I think you see less and less severity of behaviors because there's always somebody there to help them engage, to find something that they can access so they feel successful."

– Teacher

General education teachers also talked about how they felt more supported and confident in their ability to work with students at a range of levels, while special education teachers expressed the same benefits for content areas that might have previously been challenging for them.

“In the co-taught classes, it seems like the gen ed teachers know and are more aware of IEPs and accommodations and modifying.”

– Teacher

Teachers also noted that inclusion in the general education setting builds confidence in students and helps them fully engage in middle school and approach the transition to high school with a stronger sense of their own abilities.

“I think inclusion lets us have high expectations of every student, and it respects students who maybe haven’t had high expectations before. And it can be daunting that suddenly you’re expected to do what everyone else does. But at the same time, their creativity and their strengths are accentuated because of inclusion. They’re expected to be seventh graders and eighth graders and nothing is really dumbed down for them. And I think that they feel that, and I think that they feel better for that.”

– Teacher

Challenges

BUY-IN

One of the biggest challenges Chase encountered was in shifting the culture around academic instruction for students with disabilities. Buy-in has been a challenge with special education teachers, general education teachers, and families alike. The school has developed two key strategies for addressing these challenges. The first is continuing to review and share data to show what factors impact students. The second is becoming a demonstration site with the Haring Center and having staff members from other schools come to learn from Chase about their practices.

“When we first joined the Haring Center and we were able to share our story with other schools, and my teachers get to talk about what they’re doing and how their students are doing, I think it was so validating for my teachers to have that. The kudos of, ‘Hey, I’m doing something that’s making a difference and I see it in my classroom every day, but now other people are coming and they’re seeing it and they’re recognizing that what I’m doing.’”

– Administrator

TEACHER TURNOVER

For co-teaching, teacher turnover was one of the biggest challenges educators noted. The consistency and shared learning of paired teaching was a huge part of the success, and educators who had to work with a new person each year often felt like they were starting over. They noted that the first two years involved a significant learning curve, especially for the new teacher, which can create a training burden for the experienced teacher to ensure that their partner is able to be successful.

DISTRICT ALIGNMENT AND FUNDING

Participants across sessions talked about challenges with lack of alignment between the district and the school's approach to inclusive education. One challenge is that trainings provided or shared by the Haring Center are not eligible for district Professional Enrichment Responsibility Time. Another issue was lack of alignment with elementary schools, which meant that students and families experienced a disconnect at the transition points, making the first quarter of the academic year a challenge. They noted that the high schools do provide co-teaching, which families and students appreciate.

Funding was another common challenge and participants noted a need for general education teachers to have more access to professional development around accommodations and the need to increase the number staff members in the building to provide more co-teaching opportunities.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

The biggest challenges participants noted was in reaching families who are less engaged. Some also noted that IEPs are dry and jargony and it can be challenging for families to understand the language. Some educators note that they try to engage those families in other ways, such as through phone calls.

“Listening to those parents who really don’t know how to support that at all. And so just trying to understand what tools are doable, given time constraints, given financial constraints, and try to come up with some kind of a plan. I’m not saying I’m there yet, but I’m just listening to what the issues are that they have and what the barriers are.”

– Teacher

Summary

Chase Middle School highlights how the strategic and regular review of student data and strong school leadership can spark a shift in values and strategies around inclusive education and family engagement. After recognizing that students with disabilities were not receiving the necessary supports to thrive in school, Chase Middle School prioritized co-teaching as a way to ensure that students with disabilities have access to general education settings and grade level content, and to create an environment of collaboration and shared learning for general education and special education teachers. This shift in the school's approach was accompanied by a renewed focus on engaging families of students with disabilities to ensure that they understood how and why Chase was creating inclusive classrooms for their children.

Chapter 5. Next steps

The Washington legislature and state leaders have prioritized inclusive education. Family members and many educators we interviewed expressed that family-school partnerships are essential to successful inclusion of students with disabilities. To build and maintain a schoolwide inclusive culture, a school community must have a common language, expectations, and a safe space to work together on inclusion, which is the shared responsibility of all students, families, educators, and other community members.

An exclusionary culture divides responsibilities among general education teachers, special education teachers and others—inclusion requires all staff members and families to collaborate on comprehensive, inclusive education. The inclusion of all community partners connected to a school helps ensure that inclusionary practices are equitable and accessible. Learning opportunities for educators and families are critical for partnerships and systems change around inclusive education to be successful. This chapter summarizes the recommendations that families believe are essential for establishing and sustaining a culture of inclusive education and authentic school and family partnerships that benefit every student.

Recommendations

Committed leadership that instills a shared vision, values, and the staff buy-in needed to achieve inclusive education. Ensure every student feels a sense of belonging and value as full members of the school community. Every student entering school must be seen as competent, capable, and a valued learner. They must be afforded meaningful access to and involvement in academic and social opportunities while receiving additional support when needed. It is important to challenge beliefs about negative outcomes for students with and without disabilities when they are educated in inclusive settings. Begin by emphasizing evidence-based best practices for inclusive education and write IEP goals tied to general education curriculum, grade-level standards, and the environment.ⁱ

Prioritize strategies to combat ableism for equity, inclusion, and ensuring every student feels safe and valued in their school community. Meaningful inclusion requires a recognition that ableism exists, causes harm, and requires intentional efforts to eliminate. One parent explained the importance of having a strong message and a workforce that includes disabled adults to combat ableist stereotypes and the harm they cause disabled students and adults.

“So, if we think about all the work that we’re doing around anti-racism, we also want to combine that with anti-ableist work so that I kind of stop it really quickly and say, ‘If this was any other minority, would we even have this conversation? If you had a family who doesn’t want Black kids in their classroom or who doesn’t want to have gay kids in their classroom, would you even allow that conversation?’”

– Family member

An IPP FEC information brief, *Understanding disability justice as a guiding framework for inclusionary practice in K–12 education*, outlines strategies to combat ableism including:

- Training staff members and teachers on the importance of using language that is not ableist inside and out of the classroom, in addition to understanding the difference between person-first and identify-first language.
- Having conversations in all classrooms about societal barriers to participation for disabled people. This could include implementing classroom activities that look at physical accessibility and teaching students about universal design.
- Emphasizing that disability exists on a spectrum and that its meaning is fluid and socially constructed.
- Normalizing disability as a natural part of society and human experience. This would call for a regular focus on disability in the classroom through positive stories and affirming examples of disabled people in lessons.
- Centering disabled people’s experiences and not shying away from conversations about IEPs, par-aeducators, and special education classrooms (while preserving confidentiality and rights of self-disclosure).

Identify and remove barriers to meaningful family engagement and/or mistrust of inclusion efforts. Shifting family involvement from passive reception of information to meaningful engagement requires understanding the communities that are most disadvantaged and the barriers preventing their engagement in school. These could include logistical barriers (e.g., transportation, language access, limited knowledge of the school system) as well as bias in the system.

“When you look at the demographics in special education classrooms and it’s all the black kids or the families with a language barrier that have students concentrated in the self-contained classroom. You start to understand very quickly that it has nothing to do with the kids’ learning profile.”

– Family member

Some family members are reluctant to engage in school or to support inclusion efforts due to their own negative school experiences or lack of trust in the system. Families with children in special education may be told that their child will receive the best education services in a segregated classroom. Thus, hearing a different message—that inclusion in a general education classroom is better for their child’s learning—may create confusion and mistrust. This is particularly true if families receive little information about the inclusionary practices at their child’s school.

Lack of information and communication may also influence how families of children without disabilities view inclusion. For example, families may not understand the range of learner differences in their child's general education classroom or how collaboration between special education and general education teachers may improve instruction for every student. Instead, they may view inclusion as detrimental to their child's education.

"There's a lack of understanding about learner variability and differences. And so, there's this misperception that it's going to take away from students without disabilities too. If that child, and this is, I'm quoting, one dad said, okay, I don't really understand this. And he said, if a child is having a hard time in the classroom and the teacher has to stop teaching to support that child, that means my son is missing out on learning too."

– Family member

Recognize families as experts in their children's education. Inclusion is simply not possible if parents or family members are not involved in decision making, planning, and co-designing inclusive education for their children. Family input and involvement should be used to inform decision making and build the relationships and understanding needed for system change work to be successful. Inclusive education should focus on intersectional inclusion and understanding the experiences of families who have diverse, layered identities. This may include training opportunities for educators on the lived experience of their most impacted students, continued investigation into intersectional student data, and investment in advocacy support for students and families willing to share their stories. It's critical to engage families before, during, and after implementation of inclusionary practices.

"I do think that there is a lot of lip service to family engagement. And it's often like check the box, fill out the survey where we [educators] have made the questions ... Instead, we need family members who have decision-making power in building decisions and in district decisions because, otherwise, it's like the families' participation is not meaningful."

– Family member

Conduct resource mapping to strengthen collaboration and efficient delivery of high-quality services. Often, inclusion requires adults to shift roles and use new or different skills. For example, general education teachers need to become drivers of the education of every student in their classroom and learn how to differentiate instruction to accommodate the needs of all students. At the school level, resource mapping may remove barriers to inclusion, change allocation of resources, and shift adults' roles and teaching practices. This practice can also enable building and district leaders to allocate or reallocate time and resources for inclusionary practices such as co-planning, teaching, professional learning, and supporting adjustment to new roles. Special education teachers may need to change their relationship with "their students" and teaching in their own classroom. Both special education and general education

teachers may give up some autonomy in their own classroom and learn how to collaborate, co-plan, and/or co-teach their students. Mapping out the roles and resources of the system and the adults involved will enable schools to organize resources, plan professional development to address identified learning needs, and allocate additional support to adults as needed.

“But I have been in other buildings where once you start having the conversation about resource mapping and how they could use their staff more effectively, then all of a sudden, you get people and principals and the special educators on board.”

– Family member

Administrators, educators, and school staff members must establish transparent, two-way communication with families through multiple venues and languages. Communication with families is essential to leveraging their expertise to improve education for every student. All too often, schools talk with families only when they are ready to implement changes in the district and school practices. Families also report being excluded from decisions about their child’s education, such as placement in special education versus general education classroom settings. Failure to involve families early in the decision making process creates mistrust and frustration. Families may become dissatisfied if they are not informed of, or involved in, decisions that they feel do not align with their best interests. Educators may become frustrated because families are asking for changes to plans they view as complete.

“Clearly, you want the families be involved, but also want the families be involved to be empowered and informed. And I think that’s often where the rub is why families aren’t involved because they don’t really know what’s going on because the district hasn’t actually communicated what the work is.”

– Family member

Summary

At its core, inclusion means students with disabilities will have access to all aspects of their school—including social relationships, general education classes, core content, and extracurricular activities. Establishing a culture of inclusive education requires significant shifts in current education systems and adult practices. It also requires systems that will ensure safe spaces for educators, families, and students to build trusting relationships and collaborate to ensure students experience success school in school and in their transitions to adult life.

Appendix A. Methods

This appendix describes the participants, quantitative and qualitative data sources, and data analysis procedures used to conduct this report. The case study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What practices have selected IPP demonstration sites implemented to strengthen the inclusive education system in their setting?
2. How have these demonstration sites engaged families to strengthen inclusive education?
3. How do the families, educators, and inclusion specialists (technical assistance providers) view the benefits and challenges of inclusive education?
4. What recommendations do families, educators, and inclusion specialists have to establish a culture of inclusive education through family engagement?

Participants

Education Northwest collaborated with the IPP FEC and the University of Washington Haring Center to identify a list of potential demonstration sites. In addition to the 2022 case study sites, we invited a middle school and two preschools with innovative family engagement practices to participate. Ultimately, two sites located in eastern Washington—Kodiak Cubs Preschool and Chase Middle School—agreed to participate. The Kodiak Cubs Preschool program is operated by Cascade School District, a rural district located in Leavenworth, Washington. Chase Middle School is part of Spokane Public Schools, an urban district located in Spokane, Washington.

Data sources and analysis

This case study used multiple methods and data sources to describe the leadership and organizational changes that the two demonstration sites implemented to improve inclusive education and family engagement practices.

Archival documents and data

The Education Northwest evaluation team reviewed archival documents related to each school's approach, including their vision and mission statements, current strategic plan, family engagement information, and any inclusive education practices posted on their website. We also collected and reported administrative data available on the state education website.

Interviews and focus group data

After receiving approval from the Education Northwest Institutional Review Board, we completed in-depth interviews with six participants including building administrators, inclusion specialists at each site, and families of children with disabilities who also work in the field of inclusive education. For the preschool site, we also conducted interviews with the teacher and instructional assistant.

We conducted focus groups with 8 general and special education teachers and assistants in Chase Middle School and with XX families of students attending the Kodiak Cubs Preschool. All participants received a gift card as a small token of our appreciation for their participation.

The evaluation team used a semi-structured protocol with a predetermined set of questions to collect the following information: the respondent's background, a description of the inclusive education and family engagement practices, and how they view the benefits and recommendations of these practices for their site and district. The interview and focus group protocols are included below. We used content analysis procedures to identify common themes and differences across the interview and focus group data.

Administrative data

The evaluation team used administrative data from 2016–17 through 2021–22 to report five-year trends in enrollment, attendance, and statewide test scores for all students and for students with disabilities. Due to disruptions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, some data for 2019–20 were unavailable for this report.

Administrators and educators

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this 45–60-minute conversation about inclusive education at your school. My name is (Name) and I work for Education Northwest. The Inclusionary Practices Project Family Engagement Collaborative (IPP FEC) has asked us to collect information from key stakeholders on inclusion of students receiving special education in general education classes. We hope to learn how you view the essential elements of inclusive education and how it benefits school communities. We are also interested in your views on its challenges and recommendations for effective implementation of inclusive education in your school or district.

We anticipate no risks to your participation, nor will there be any repercussions for you if you choose not to participate. We believe the information you share will provide important insights about implementing and sustaining inclusive education practices. As a small token of appreciation for your help, we would like to give you a \$25.00 gift card. We want you to know that the interview is voluntary, and you can skip any questions that you do not want to answer. Just let me know if you do not want to answer a question or would like to end the interview at any time.

All the information you share is confidential and will be reported as common themes across all participants. Your interview data will be stored on a secure server that is only accessible to the evaluation team. In the written report, we will not include any information that would make it possible to identify you.

To record accurately the information, you will share during the group, we would like your permission to record the zoom meeting in addition to taking written notes. We will use the zoom recording, transcriptions, and written notes for this evaluation only. All recordings and notes will be destroyed when the report is finalized. If you have any questions about the focus group or this information, please feel free to contact Vicki Nishioka at vicki.nishioka@educationnorthwest.org or at 503-275-9498. Is it okay for me to record this zoom meeting (or audio record the interview)? If you do not agree to the audio-recording, then we will use written notes only.

Do you agree to participate and, if so, may I record the interview?

Do you have any questions before we begin?

QUESTIONS

1. Please tell us about yourself and your school's involvement with the UW (University of Washington) Haring Center. (For example, the person's position, length of time in current position, role in the IPP project, and frequency/type of TA services provided by the Haring Center.)
2. If successful, what does inclusive education look and feel like to students with disabilities? Families? Educators? For you?
3. Is January 2021 the date that (school) became an IPP demonstration site (If not, please record corrected date/time). We want to understand inclusive education in your school before it became an IPP demonstration school.
 - a. What types of professional development did your school or district provide to staff members on inclusive education practices? Was (school) receiving coaching or mentoring services from other TA providers? If so, please describe.
 - b. What was your school doing well related to effective inclusive education before you started TA services? What challenges did your school have?
4. What are (school)'s goals for inclusive education? How were these goals identified for your school? How do these goals align with (school's) vision and mission (especially in relation to equity)?
5. What are the essential strategies of your approach to inclusive education in (school/district) (probe for specific examples of changes in policy/procedures, staff organization, scheduling, communication, professional development/coaching)? How do you think these strategies have or will achieve your goals for inclusive education? For each strategy, please answer the following questions (probe for specific examples):

- a. How did (school) implement (strategy)?
 - b. What are/were the benefits of the strategy?
 - c. What challenges did the (school) have and how did (school) address these challenges?
 - d. Please describe Haring Center’s TA services. What was most helpful?
6. The FEC identifies family engagement and promoting family-school partnerships as an important part of inclusive education. In your opinion, what does successful family engagement look, sound, and feel like to students? Families? Educators? School communities?
7. Please describe the level of family engagement in your school before (school) became a demonstration site for families of students with disabilities? For families of typically developing students?
8. What are essential strategies for increasing engagement of families with students with disabilities? Which strategies did (school) implement? For each strategy, please answer the following questions (probe for specific examples):
 - a. How did (school) implement (strategy)?
 - b. What are/were the benefits of the strategy?
 - c. What challenges did the (school) have and how did (school) address these challenges?
 - d. Please describe Haring Center’s TA services. What was most helpful?
9. Overall, how has inclusive education benefited the school community e.g., students with disabilities, students without a disability, families? How has inclusive education benefited special and general education teachers? Other education support professionals?
10. What are your next steps related to inclusive education? What professional development or TA services do you need?
11. What additional information would you like to share about inclusive settings?

Inclusion specialist

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this 60–75 minute conversation about inclusive education at (demonstration site). My name is (Name) and I work for Education Northwest. The Inclusionary Practices Project Family Engagement Collaborative (IPP FEC) has asked us to collect information from key stakeholders on inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classes. We hope to learn how you view the essential elements of inclusive education and how it benefits school communities. We are also interested in your views on its challenges and recommendations for effective implementation of inclusive education in (school/district name).

We anticipate no risks to your participation, nor will there be any repercussions for you if you choose not to participate. We believe the information you share will provide important insights about implementing and sustaining inclusive education practices. As a small token of appreciation for your help, we would like to give you a \$25.00 gift card. We want you to know that the interview is voluntary, and you can skip any questions that you do not want to answer. Just let me know if you do not want to answer a question or would like to end the interview at any time.

All the information you share is confidential and will be reported as common themes across all participants. Your interview data will be stored on a secure server that is only accessible to the evaluation team. In the written report, we will not include any information that would make it possible to identify you.

To record accurately the information, you will share during the group, we would like your permission to record the zoom meeting in addition to taking written notes. We will use the zoom recording, transcriptions, and written notes for this evaluation only. All recordings and notes will be destroyed when the report is finalized. If you have any questions about the focus group or this information, please feel free to contact Vicki Nishioka at vicki.nishioka@educationnorthwest.org or at 503-275-9498. Is it okay for me to record this zoom meeting (or audio record the interview)?

If you do not agree to the audio-recording, then we will use written notes only.

Do you agree to participate and, if so, may I record the interview?

Do you have any questions before we begin?

QUESTIONS

1. Please tell us about yourself and your involvement with inclusive education at Sehome HS. (For example, the technical assistance (TA) provider's experience/school background; how long they or others from Haring have provided TA to the school; frequency, and type of TA/training services they provide)
2. If successful, what does inclusive education look, sound, and feel like to students with disabilities? Families? Educators? Inclusion specialists like yourself?
3. Is (month/year) the date that Sehome became an IPP demonstration site (If not, please record corrected date/time). We want to understand inclusive education in Sehome before it became an IPP demonstration school.
 - a. What types of professional development activities did Sehome provide to staff members on inclusive education practices? Was Sehome receiving coaching or mentoring services from other TA providers? If so, please describe.
 - b. What was the school doing well related to effective inclusive education before you started TA services? What challenges did they have?

4. What are the goals of the TA services you provide to Sehome? How were these goals identified for Sehome? How do these goals align with (school's) vision and mission (especially in relation to equity)?
 - a. District level work
5. What are the essential elements of your TA approach in Sehome? How do you think these elements will achieve your TA goals?
 - a. Please describe professional development that you provide (probe for specific examples of professional development provided to the principal, special education teachers, general education teachers, other education support professionals)?
 - b. Please describe the coaching and/or mentoring services you provide (probe for specific examples of coaching/mentoring provided to the principal, special education teachers, general education teachers, other education support professionals)?
6. What are the essential strategies that Sehome implemented to improve inclusive education after it became an IPP demonstration site (probe for specific examples e.g., changes in policy/procedures, staff organization, scheduling, communication, professional development/coaching, etc.)? How do you think these strategies helped or Sehome achieve or progress toward its goals for inclusive education? For each strategy, please answer the following questions:
 - a. How did Sehome implement (strategy)? (Probe for specific examples)
 - b. What are/were the benefits of the strategy?
 - c. What challenges did the Sehome have and how did Sehome address these challenges?
7. The FEC identifies family engagement and promoting family-school partnerships as essential to inclusive education. In your opinion, what does successful family engagement look, sound, and feel like to students? Families? Educators? School communities? Inclusion specialists like yourself?
8. Overall, how has inclusive education benefited the school community (probe for examples of successes for students with disabilities, students without a disability, families)? How has inclusive education benefited special and general education teachers? Other education support professionals?
9. How do the TA services that you and/or the Haring Center provide address family engagement or family-school partnerships? How have family and school relationships changed after Sehome became a demonstration site? (Probe for changes in attitudes, communication, parent engagement opportunities for families of students with disabilities and families of typically developing students)?
 - a. Please describe the school's philosophy and strategies for partnering with families before Sehome became a demonstration site (e.g., values, communication, engagement of

families in decision-making)? What strategies increase the engagement of families with students with disabilities? each strategy, please answer the following questions (probe for specific examples): How did Sehome implement (strategy)?

- b.** What are/were the benefits of the strategy?
 - c.** What challenges did Sehome have and how did Sehome address these challenges?
- 10.** What are the next steps for inclusive education in Sehome? What professional development or TA could help?
- 11.** What additional information would you like to share about inclusive settings?

Family member protocol

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this 75- to 90-minute focus group. My name is (name) and I work for Education Northwest. The Inclusionary Practices Project Family Engagement Collaborative, including PAVE, Open Doors for Multicultural Families (ODMF), and Roots of Inclusion has asked us to conduct focus groups to learn more about the inclusion of your children/youth in general education settings. We hope to learn your opinions on the benefits and challenges of inclusive education, and recommendations for improving inclusion at your child's school. We want to assure you that the focus group is completely confidential. Because protecting your privacy is very important, we are asking that each of you keep our discussion confidential—please do not share anything that is said in the focus group with others. In the written report, we will not include any information that would make it possible to identify you. We also want you to know that the focus group is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationship with your child's school or district. Please let us know if you do not want to answer a question or would like to leave the focus group. To record all the information shared during the group discussion accurately, we would like your permission to audio record the group in addition to taking written notes. The audio recording may be sent to a third party for transcription purposes only. Any information that Education Northwest obtains in connection with this evaluation will remain confidential and will only be used for this evaluation. All audio recordings and written notes will be stored in a secure online cloud storage managed by Education Northwest and will be accessible only to evaluation staff and will be destroyed after the report is finalized. If you, as a group, do not agree to the audio recording then we will use written notes only.

Before I start, do you have any questions for us? We welcome your participation, but if you have decided not to participate, you are free to leave. If you agree to participate, do you agree to the audio recording?

QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS OF STUDENTS RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

1. Please share your the grade level and general education classes or other general education activities that your child attends?
2. What is your understanding (purpose, goals) of the state’s Inclusionary Practices Professional Development Project (IPP)? (Explain the goal of the IPP project is to provide professional development to administrators, educators, parents/guardians, and others on strategies to increase inclusion of students with disabilities in general education settings)
3. How do you feel about your child being included in general education classes or activities? What benefits do you think inclusion provides your child (e.g. academic, socially, behaviorally, emotionally, etc.?)
4. During the past two years, what were your experiences related to planning inclusion of your child in general education settings (please identify the setting e.g., classroom, extracurricular activities, nonacademic settings)?
 - a. Do you believe students receiving special education are welcome members of the school community? Why or why not?
 - b. What strategies are in place to make your child feel welcome and supported in their school and/or classroom? Previous in-person instruction?
 - c. Does the school have a plan for increasing positive student-to-student relationships for your child? Previous in-person instruction?
 - d. What types of support were available for your child in general education classrooms (e.g., co-teaching, teacher’s assistant, adaptive equipment, use of peers, etc.)?
 - e. Do teachers use a variety of teaching strategies to engage your child (e.g., cooperative learning, activity-based instruction, multi-level instruction?)
5. As a parent or guardian, do you feel welcome and valued partners at the school? Why or why not?
 - a. How has your child’s placement in an inclusion classroom affected your child? You?
 - b. What training or additional information would you like to have about inclusion and your child’s education?
6. Regarding inclusion, what barriers have you experienced with your child’s school? What has been most frustrating to you as a parent?
7. What ways could the school or district better support inclusion of your child in general education settings? How can they strengthen their partnership with parents?
8. Is there anything else you would like to share about inclusion?

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