



PATHWAY TO INCLUSION:



A Centralia Middle School Story

BACKGROUND

Centralia Middle School joined the Inclusionary Practices Technical Network (IPTN) as a Demonstration Site during the 2024–2025 school year. The school’s inclusive journey began with a courageous look at long-standing practices and a collective decision to do better for students. Staff recognized that restraint and isolation were not only ineffective but also traumatic—for students, educators, and families alike. Change was necessary to truly meet students’ needs and ensure every learner could access the full range of opportunities the school has to offer.

Today, Centralia Middle School’s work centers on building a culture of schoolwide inclusion—where all students, including those receiving special education services, have equitable access to general education settings. Through intentional practices such as co-teaching, differentiated instruction, and push-in support, the school is creating learning environments grounded in belonging, collaboration, and high expectations. Each step of the journey reflects a deep belief that every student deserves access, support, and the same opportunities we would want for our own children.

MISSION & VISION

Centralia Middle School’s mission centers on equity, inclusion, and belonging for all learners. The staff believes every student deserves to learn alongside their peers and access the full range of academic and social opportunities the school offers. Guided by the understanding that students learn best together, the team’s “why” is rooted in providing the same opportunities they would want for their own children and recognizing that teacher beliefs directly impact student success.



CENTRALIA MIDDLE SCHOOL

Strong Minds, Brave Hearts, Bright Futures

TIMELINE OF INTENTIONAL MOVES

Centralia Middle School’s inclusive journey began with an intentional review of practices around restraint and isolation. In the 2022–2023 school year, the staff took a significant step by removing isolation booths, eliminating exclusionary and trauma-inducing environments, and signaling a renewed commitment to belonging for all students. Building on that momentum, the 2023–2024 school year marked a major shift as all students with IEPs began spending most of their day in general education classes.

To support this transition, the team developed a master schedule that prioritized access for students receiving special education and multilingual supports, ensuring every learner could participate in the full range of classes. Staff engaged in targeted professional development focused on de-escalation, inclusionary practices, and co-teaching, deepening their collective skill set and confidence. Collaboration became a cornerstone of the work, with common planning time, PLCs, and cross-disciplinary teamwork aligning supports and expectations across the school.

These intentional moves established a strong foundation for continued growth, shared accountability, and the belief that inclusion benefits every learner in the Centralia Middle School community.



CENTRALIA MIDDLE SCHOOL'S TIMELINE

2022-23

Removed isolation booths

2023-24

Focus on reducing LRE

Schedule prioritized learners with additional support needs & adult collaboration

Staff PD on de-escalation & Inclusionary Practices.

2024-25

Continue reducing LRE

Push-in support experimented with co-teaching

2025-26

72% of students w/IEPs LRE 1

96% of students w/IEPs LRE1 & 2

INCLUSIVE PRACTICE: INTENTIONAL SCHEDULES

Ensuring meaningful access to general education settings for all students remains a core inclusive practice at our school. Currently, 100% of students with IEPs participate in at least two general education classes alongside their peers, including students with significant support needs. Nearly half of resource students (48%) spend their entire day—seven out of seven periods—in general education. An additional 24% of students access general education for six periods, having only one resource class, while 17% have two resource classes. Only 11% of students require three or more resource classes.

Viewed through a Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) lens, 72% of students with IEPs are classified as LRE 1. Eighty-nine percent of resource students participate in at least five general education classes out of seven (LRE 2), and 96% access general education for a minimum of four periods each day. Overall, all resource students have at least four out of seven classes in general education settings.

INCLUSIVE PRACTICE: SPECIALIST PUSH-IN

In the 2024–2025 school year, Centralia Middle School's special education team began implementing a push-in model designed to provide services and support within general education classrooms. Almost immediately, teachers observed the benefits of having two educators working side by side, including increased student engagement, improved access to instructional support, and a stronger sense of belonging for all learners.

Throughout the 2024–2025 school year, each special education teacher spent five class periods per day providing support in inclusive general education settings, teaching only one resource class. In addition, nearly all special education paraprofessional support was delivered within general education classrooms. This intentional staffing structure strengthens collaboration between educators, enhances instructional quality, and reduces stigma by ensuring that support is embedded within the general education environment rather than delivered in isolation.

INCLUSIVE PRACTICE: DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Differentiated instruction at Centralia Middle School is rooted in the intentional design and delivery of learning experiences that meet the diverse needs of all students. Teachers plan lessons that allow multiple entry points for understanding—such as providing options to read independently or listen to a text being read aloud—ensuring that every learner can access content in a way that works best for them.

Differentiation also extends to how students demonstrate what they know. Learners are encouraged to show their understanding through various modes—writing an essay, creating a presentation, or verbally explaining their thinking—each option reflecting both rigor and flexibility.

As the school continues to refine its practice, professional learning will focus on deepening staff confidence and skill in designing differentiated lessons and assessments. This is an area with great potential to elevate instructional practices schoolwide. With time, collaboration, and continued learning, differentiation will become an even more robust part of daily instruction. The goal is to ensure teachers feel clear about what adaptations are appropriate while maintaining high expectations and supporting all students in mastering the Washington State Academic Standards.

INCLUSIVE PRACTICE: SCHOOLWIDE BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Centralia Middle School has established consistent, schoolwide behavior expectations designed to foster a positive, inclusive, and supportive learning environment. The CHAMPS framework guides classroom practices across the building, providing clear structures that help students understand what success looks like in different learning settings. When behavioral challenges arise, the school emphasizes restoration and reflection rather than punishment. Restorative conversations are used when a student is removed from class, allowing students to process their actions and repair relationships before returning to the learning environment.

Family partnerships are central to this approach. When students struggle, staff work closely with families to reinforce expectations at home and at school. Students have even taken the lead in creating videos to model and practice schoolwide expectations, strengthening ownership and community connection. For more serious incidents resulting in removal from school, families meet with the superintendent, and students engage in a meaningful service project as part of their re-entry process—turning accountability into learning.

Celebrating positive behavior is also a key part of Centralia's culture. Students are recognized for meeting expectations through "Reward Days," which have included activities such as movie outings, bowling, and roller-skating events that build community and pride.

NEXT STEPS:

Centralia Middle School remains deeply committed to sustaining and expanding inclusive practices. The next phase of work will focus on strengthening instructional and behavioral systems, so all students continue to learn and thrive in supportive, engaging environments. Ongoing professional learning in Universal Design for Learning (UDL), co-teaching, and differentiation will build staff capacity to design accessible, high-quality instruction aligned to grade-level standards.

The school will continue refining instructional systems to ensure students receive specially designed instruction within general education settings when appropriate, while regularly reviewing IEPs to promote student growth, independence, and the thoughtful reduction of supports over time. Collaboration between general and special education staff remains a priority, supported through continued co-teaching training and shared planning.

Looking ahead, Centralia Middle School will expand and refine Tier 2 and Tier 3 behavioral supports, deepen partnerships with families through education and support sessions, and maintain a strong focus on student voice. Through shared vision, collaboration, and a steadfast belief that every child belongs, Centralia Middle School continues to model an inclusive community where all students are valued, supported, and empowered to succeed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information about Centralia Middle School's journey or to schedule a visit, please scan the QR code to the right or visit www.ippdemosites.org

