



# PATHWAY TO INCLUSION:



## A Seattle Public School District and Gatewood Elementary School Story

### BACKGROUND



Gatewood Elementary (Seattle Public Schools) joined as an IPTN Demonstration Site District in 2024, with a focus on strengthening schoolwide inclusion to ensure every student has access, support, and a strong sense of belonging. Core strategies include professional learning, sensory tools and flexible seating, and an Inclusionary Steering Committee, supported by intentional master scheduling and staffing designed to better meet student needs in general education classrooms and expand effective co-teaching. Gatewood Elementary serves 432 students, including 4.6% multilingual learners, 13% students qualifying for special education, and 0.7% students identified under McKinney-Vento. The school's staffing model supports inclusion through dedicated resource and extended resource teachers, instructional aides, and targeted reading intervention services funded through LAP.

### MISSION & VISION

Gatewood's inclusive vision centers on celebrating diversity, rejecting the idea of a "typical" student, and recognizing that every child is a whole, capable individual. The school's belief is that *all children belong in community*. Gatewood strives to ensure all students have access to all learning spaces, all teachers serve all students, and all staff collaborate to meet diverse learning and behavioral needs. This shared commitment to inclusion extends beyond the school day to family engagement, community events, and broader advocacy for inclusive education across Seattle Public Schools.



### TIMELINE AND INTENTIONAL MOVES

#### 2017

- Separate SEL pathways for K-2 and 3-5 students led to challenges such as high restraint data, disproportionality, and staff turnover
- Inclusion work begins

#### 2019-2022

- Students in SEL programs showed improved performance in virtual learning environments

#### 2022-2023

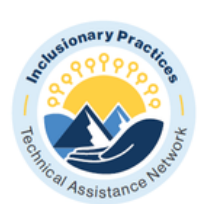
- Prepare to close SEL pathways
- Begins partnership with Novak Educational Consulting
- Focus on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) & Restorative Practices

#### 2023-2024

- Launched Extended Resource Program
- Formalized Inclusionary Steering Committee
- Expanded professional learning and community partnerships

#### 2025-2026

- Further development of:
- co-teaching
  - building staff capacity
  - eliminating restraint and isolation through collaboration and reflection



## **INCLUSIVE PRACTICE : MASTER SCHEDULING AND STAFFING**

Using intentional schoolwide systems for scheduling and staffing, Gatewood works to align structures with student needs and inclusive instructional practices. This work includes:

- Prioritizing Specially Designed Instruction (SDI): Adjusting master scheduling processes to ensure students' SDI needs are met within general education settings when possible.
- Strengthening Collaboration Structures: Creating systems that more closely tether special education teachers to grade-level bands, making collaboration with general education teachers more consistent and instructionally focused.
- Building Access to Tiered Instruction: Working toward the creation of dedicated intervention blocks at all grade levels, allowing students to access Tier 1, Tier 2, and additional supports as needed without removing them from core instruction.

## **INCLUSIVE PRACTICE: SENSORY TOOLS & FLEXIBLE SEATING**



- PTA-funded initiative ensuring every classroom has sensory and regulation tools (noise-canceling headphones, light covers, fidgets)
- Flexible seating options in all learning spaces (wobble stools, wiggle seats, couches)
- Break areas in every classroom, and a school-wide sensory break area
- Explicit instruction for all students on how to use these tools effectively

## **INCLUSIVE PRACTICE: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**



Using professional learning cycles with planned release days for each grade/specialist, staff at Gatewood engage in developing deeper knowledge of the following:

- Co-Teaching: defining models and planning for staffing/scheduling
- Collaborative Problem Solving: using Dr. Ross Greene's model for skill building and feedback
- Universal Design for Learning: firm goals, flexible means, inclusive mindsets
- Professional "doing" as professional learning: allowing dedicated time for teacher teams to plan for expected variance in student skillsets in upcoming units of study.

## **INCLUSIVE PRACTICE: INCLUSIONARY STEERING COMMITTEE**

- A monthly volunteer group of teachers, staff, parents, and community members
- Created a shared vision statement for inclusionary practices
- Establishes measurable goals and monitors progress toward inclusive outcomes

## **NEXT STEPS**

Gatewood continues to advance its inclusionary work through expanded co-planning and co-teaching opportunities, increased professional learning, and alignment with districtwide goals for reducing restraint and isolation. The school aims to strengthen staffing structures, deepen collaboration, and celebrate the progress of a more representative and inclusive school community.

To learn more about Gatewood Elementary Demo Site, see below:

