School-Wide Inclusive Education Best Practice Indicators: Self-Rating Survey

This document reflects a set of inclusive education best-practice indicators that can be used as a framework to guide inclusive programming and school improvement. It was adapted from the Best Practices guide authored by Jorgensen, McSheehan, and Sonnenmeier; and from the Kentucky Alternate Assessment Portfolio Teacher's Guide. The Best Practice Indicators are divided into twelve areas that impact effective inclusive education for students with disabilities.

Instructions for completing the document:

Read and consider each indicator carefully. Rate the degree to which your ***team/school*** currently practices each indicator using the following scale - No evidence (NE), Minimal evidence (ME), Some evidence (SE), etc. in the columns headed "Progress."

At this time, don't mark anything in the column labeled "Total," the shaded columns titled "Planning."

Most of the indicators use the singular form *"The student…"* Rate the indicators according to whether they are in evidence for *most* students with disabilities on your team/in your school.

Key:

Progress	**NE**	No evidence (numerical rating of 1)
	ME	Minimal evidence (numerical rating of 2)
	SE	Some evidence (numerical rating of 3)
	AE	Adequate evidence (numerical rating of 4)
	EE	Exemplary evidence (numerical rating of 5)

Please check your role/job title:

☐ General Education Teacher

☐ Special Education Teacher

☐ Administrator

INCLUSIVE BEST PRACTICE INDICATORS	Progress						Planning	
	NE	ME	SE	AE	EE	Total	TI	Priority
1. **High Expectations and Least Dangerous Assumptions**	1	2	3	4	5		check	**1,2,3**
The inherent value and dignity of students with significant disabilities is respected. All students with significant disabilities pursue the same learner outcomes as students without disabilities. When students do not currently demonstrate content knowledge or skills, the least dangerous assumption principle applies, and all aspects of their educational programs continue to reflect high expectations.								
1.1 "Person First" language is used.								
1.2 Language regarding the student's functioning or developmental level is not used; rather, descriptions of the student focus on abilities and needs.								
1.3 Annual goals on the student's IEP reflect content standards from the general education curriculum.								
1.4 Predictions are not made that the student will "never" acquire certain knowledge or skills.								
1.5 People speak directly to the student rather than through a paraprofessional or other person.								
1.6 People use age-appropriate vocabulary and inflection when talking to the student.								
1.7 In order to respect privacy, staff discuss the student's personal care, medical needs, and other sensitive issues out of earshot of other students, and only with those who need to know.								
1.8 Students with disabilities work on the same grade level content standards as typical peers with appropriate supports.								
1.9 Student's individual discipline and behavior intervention plans rely on teaching appropriate skills (punishers or aversives are not used).								

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		NE	ME	SE	AE	EE	Total	TI	Priority
2.	**General Education Class Membership and Full Participation**	1	2	3	4	5		check	**1,2,3**
	Students with significant disabilities are members of age-appropriate general education classes in their neighborhood schools. There are no programs or rooms just for students with disabilities and these students have access to the full range of learning experiences and environments offered to students without disabilities.								
2.1	The student is on the roster of and formally a member of an age-appropriate general education class.								
2.12	The student attends the school he/she would attend if he/she didn't have a disability.								
2.13	The student progresses through the grades according to the same pattern as students without disabilities.								
2.14	The student marches at graduation at the average age at which other classmates without disabilities graduate.								
2.15	The student receives a diploma upon discharge from special education.								
2.2	The student learns in outside-of-school, age-appropriate, and inclusive environments after the age of 18 and before he/she receives a high school diploma or is discharged from special education.								
2.21	The student is not pulled out of general education classes for instruction.								
2.22	Related services are delivered primarily consultation in the classroom.								
2.23	Related services are delivered in typical, inclusive environments.								
2.3	There are no places or programs just for students with disabilities.								
2.31	Students with disabilities are proportionally represented in classes, courses, clubs, and extracurricular activities.								
2.32	The student's name is on all class lists, lists of groups put on the board, job lists, etc.								
2.4	The student receives the same materials as students without disabilities, with supports (i.e., accommodations and adaptations) provided as necessary.								
2.5	The student participates in classroom and school routines in typical locations, such as the Pledge of Allegiance, lunch count, jobs, errands,								

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2.	**General Education Class Membership and Full Participation**	1	2	3	4	5		check	**1,2,3**
	eating lunch in the cafeteria, etc.								
2.6	The student rides the same school bus as his/her peers without disabilities.								
2.61	The student attends classes with other students, arriving and leaving at the same time.								
2.62	The student participates in classroom instruction in similar ways as students without disabilities; for example: whole class discussions, at the board, in small groups, when called on by the teacher.								
2.7	The student participates in school plays, field trips, and community service activities.								
2.8	The school is physically accessible.								
2.9	The school accommodates the student's sensory needs.								
2.91	The student's individual behavioral goals are aligned with the school-wide behavioral rules.								
2.92	The student's individual behavior supports and interventions are similar to ways that students without disabilities are supported								

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3.	**Quality Augmentative and Alternative Communication**	1	2	3	4	5		check	**1,2,3**
	Students with disabilities who are not able to communicate academic and social messages in a way that is commensurate with same-age, non-disabled classmates are provided with accurate and reliable augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) supports and services.								
3.1	The student has a means to communicate at all times.								
3.11	The student has a means to communicate for a variety of purposes.								
3.12	Although the student may have multiple ways of communicating, a primary means of communication is identified. The student's communication system is programmed with messages to demonstrate learning of age-appropriate core academics, commensurate with his/her age-appropriate classmates.								
3.2	AAC systems are provided to enable the student to communicate for the purposes of self-determination and futures planning.								
3.21	Supports are provided to enable the student to communicate for the purpose of self-determination and futures planning.								
3.3	The student, his/her family members, and classmates without disabilities participate in the selection of messages programmed into the AAC system.								
3.31	When acting as a facilitator, people clearly engage in a support role, not actively participating in the content of the interaction between the student using AAC and his/her conversational partners.								
3.32	When conversing with the student as a conversational partner, classmates and adults utilize information provided by facilitators to converse directly with the student, not with the facilitator.								
3.4	Training and support to use the AAC system is provided to the student in the contexts and routines in which the student will communicate.								
3.41	Training and support to use the AAC system is provided to the team, including classmates, in the contexts and routines in which the student will communicate.								
3.5	AAC supports take into consideration the communicative functions of								

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3.	**Quality Augmentative and Alternative Communication**	1	2	3	4	5		check	**1,2,3**
	challenging behavior.								
3.6	A variety of funding sources and streams (Medicaid, Medicare, private insurance, school funding, etc.) are utilized to acquire and maintain assistive technology and AAC systems, and to support training of the student, his/her family, classmates, and support personnel.								

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4.	**Curriculum, Instruction, and Support**	1	2	3	4	5		check	**1,2,3**
	Curriculum and instruction are designed to accommodate the full range of student diversity. Individualized supports are provided to students with significant disabilities to enable them to fully participate and make progress within the general education curriculum. Students learn functional or life skills within typical routines in the general education classroom or other inclusive activities and environments.								
	Curriculum is …								
4.1	Based on common content standards for all students.								
4.11	Presented in a variety of accessible formats including written information at appropriate reading levels, and in formats as indicated on the student support plan (e.g., video, picture/symbols, actual objects, demonstrations, orally, etc.).								
4.12	Individualized through the development of personalized performance demonstrations for some students.								
	Instruction...								
4.2	Reflects principles of Universal Design for Learning (CAST): • To support recognition learning, provide multiple, flexible methods of presentation • To support strategic learning, provide multiple, flexible methods of expression and apprenticeship. • To support affective learning, provide multiple, flexible options for engagement.								
4.21	Reflects the learning styles of all students in the class by the use of visual, tactile, and kinesthetic materials and experiences.								

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4.	**Curriculum, Instruction, and Support**	1	2	3	4	5		check	**1,2,3**
4.22	Prioritizes the use of research-based strategies for increasing student achievement, such as: • Identifying similarities and differences • Summarizing and note taking • Reinforcing effort and providing recognition • Homework and practice • Nonlinguistic representations • Cooperative learning • Setting objectives and providing feedback • Generating and testing hypotheses • Questions, cues, and advance organizers • Using technology in presentation of content and to support students' demonstration of learning								
4.23	Is provided in multiple formats such as individual, pairs, small groups, and whole class.								
	Instructional Supports…								
4.3	Are provided within the general education class and other typical environments to enable the student to participate in and benefit from the general education curriculum and other inclusive learning opportunities and activities.								
4.31	Are defined by a specific student support plan, and may include: physical, emotional, and sensory supports; adapted materials; assistive technology and augmentative communication; personalized performance demonstrations; personalized instruction; and individualized grading and evaluation plans.								
	Behavior Supports…								
4.4	Are consistent with a school wide positive behavior interventions and support philosophy.								
4.41	[For an individual student's challenging behavior] are designed *after* completion of a functional behavioral assessment.								

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4.	**Curriculum, Instruction, and Support**	1	2	3	4	5		check	**1,2,3**
4.42	[For an individual student's challenging behavior] focus on teaching a new skill that replaces the function of an inappropriate behavior.								
4.43	[For an individual student's challenging behavior] take into consideration the student's sensory needs.								
	Evaluation and Grading...								
4.5	Includes criteria for judging success that reflects general education curriculum standards and individualized IEP goals and objectives.								
4.51	Reflects benchmarks similar to those of students without disabilities.								
4.52	Reflects evaluation methods similar to those of students without disabilities.								
4.53	Allows the student to receive grades that reflect "personal best" achievement and improvement.								

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5.	**Ongoing Authentic Assessment**	1	2	3	4	5		check	1,2,3
	Authentic, performance-based assessments are conducted within typical activities in inclusive environments for the purpose of identifying students' learning and communication styles, preferences and interests, academic strengths and weaknesses, and need for support.								
5.1	Present level of performance statements on the IEP reflect the: • student's talents, abilities, skills • students' learning styles • student's preferences • supports that the student needs to learn well								
5.2	Assessment reports reflect the student's abilities and needs rather than deficits and weaknesses.								
5.3	If the student has difficulty communicating, assessment tools and strategies are chosen accordingly.								
5.4	Teachers and related service providers use ongoing dynamic assessments instead of discrete, one-time assessment tools.								

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6. **Family-School Partnerships**	1	2	3	4	5		Check	1,2,3
Families and schools are engaged in partnership to create quality inclusive educational experiences for students with significant disabilities. Families are connected to resources for developing their own leadership and advocacy skills.								
6.1 Family priorities are reflected in annual goals on the student's IEP.								
6.2 Families acknowledge teachers' efforts on behalf of their child.								
6.3 Families know about resources for building their own leadership and advocacy skills relative to their child's education.								
6.4 Families attend case-management meetings or planning meetings on a regular basis.								
6.5 Families have input and receive regular information about their child's social behavior.								
6.6 Individual behavioral interventions reflect the family's cultural practices.								

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7.	**Team Collaboration**	1	2	3	4	5		check	1,2,3
	General and special education teachers and related service providers demonstrate shared responsibility by collaborating in the design, implementation, and evaluation of students' educational programs and their IEPs.								
7.1	The roles and responsibilities of all teachers and staff reflect the commitment and skills needed to teach and support all students, including those with disabilities.								
7.2	Special education staff work within the general education classroom as co-teachers, team-teachers, small group instructors, or one-on-one support teachers for all students in the class.								
7.3	The roles and responsibilities of special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and related service providers reflect the provision of supports and services to students to enable them to participate in and benefit from the general education curriculum and to teachers to enable them to effectively teach heterogeneous classes.								
7.4	There is collaborative planning time during the day for general and special education teachers, and related service providers to ensure all parties are familiar with the lesson content and appropriate supports are provided for the student.								
7.5	Teams use formal processes for conducting meetings, problem-solving, making decisions, and evaluating their own effectiveness.								
7.6	There is a team in place for teachers to discuss and problem-solve learning and behavioral concerns for individual students.								
7.7	A special educator is designated as an "Inclusion Facilitator" for students with more significant developmental disabilities, including autism, intellectual disability, and multiple disabilities. That special educator/s does not have a classroom of students, per se, but provides leadership to students' educational team members around the design and implementation of supports that enable the student to fully participate in general education instruction in the general education classroom and in typical, inclusive social activities.								

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8.	**Social Relationships and Natural Supports**	1	2	3	4	5			1,2,3
	The first essential condition for friendship is full inclusion. When students with disabilities are kept apart from the mainstream of school life there are few opportunities for friendships to develop between students with and without disabilities. Going to recess, eating in the cafeteria, and access to extracurricular activities are recognized as key ingredients to the formation of friendships. Students who experience significant disabilities should be on sports teams, perform in band and choral groups, perform in school plays, and so forth. Accessible transportation and staff support are provided when necessary to enable students to participate successfully.								
8.1	The student with disabilities has the same variety of social networks as students without disabilities: close friends, acquaintances, kids they share activities with, etc.								
8.2	The student with disabilities participates in the same variety of inclusive and typical extracurricular activities as students without disabilities.								
8.3	When needed, adults facilitate the building of social networks for the student.								
8.4	When ever possible, physical, emotional, and instructional supports are provided by non-special educators -- by classroom teachers, librarians, classmates, office personnel, volunteers.								
8.5	The student has the opportunity to provide support and assistance to others as well as to receive it.								

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9. **Futures Planning**	1	2	3	4	5		check	1,2,3
Students with disabilities develop a four-year plan of study with their guidance counselor just like students without disabilities. Their course selection is based on regular graduation requirements. They attend college fairs and are encouraged to apply for post-secondary education.								
9.1 The student has a graduation plan, not simply a transition plan, developed using the principles of person-centered planning.								
9.2 The student has a graduation plan, not simply a transition plan, developed using the principles of person-centered planning.								
9.3 Graduation planning includes choices of postsecondary education, work, community living, leisure and recreation.								
9.4 When chosen by the student and his/her parents/guardians, the school supports his or education in non-school, age-appropriate learning environments after the age of 18 and before special education services are discontinued.								
9.5 Structures are in place for students transitioning between grades to ensure that supports and educational programs are passed between receiving and sending schools.								
9.6 Structures are in place for students transitioning between preschool to elementary, elementary to middle, and middle to high school involving families, teachers and support staff to ensure that supports and educational programs are passed between receiving and sending schools.								

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10.	**Self-Determination**	1	2	3	4	5		check	1,2,3
	Self-determination includes personal attitudes and abilities that facilitate an individual's identification and pursuit of meaningful and self-identified goals. It is reflected in personal attitudes of empowerment, active participation in decision-making, and self-directed action to achieve personally valued goals. Within the school curriculum there are opportunities for students with disabilities to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and to begin to advocate for the accommodations they need with teachers and employers. All students with disabilities attend their own IEP meetings, are supported to join organizations that promote self-determination, and to design a post-graduation "futures plan" that has as its goal a fully inclusive life in the community.								
10.1	The student with significant disabilities communicates his or her own thoughts, needs, opinions, and wishes, with support from augmentative communication, friends, family, and educators.								
10.2	The student actively participates in a process of academic goal setting, monitoring, and evaluation of performance and uses the results to improve overall performance.								
10.3	The student with disabilities participates in IEP meetings from junior high through graduation.								

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11.	**School Leadership**	1	2	3	4	5		check	1,2,3
	Administrators provide leadership to align general and special education reform and improvement with respect to the creation of a community of learners that is inclusive of students with significant disabilities.								
11.1	The values of diversity and inclusion are evident in the school's mission statement.								
11.2	General and special education administrators promote the values and benefits of inclusive education at meetings, in school improvement plans or annual reports, in school newsletters or Web sites, and in conversations.								
11.3	General and special education personnel participate together in school wide improvement and reform efforts that benefit students with and without disabilities.								
11.4	General and special education administrators serve on a building leadership team together, making collaborative decisions about all school policy and practices.								

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12.	**Professional Development**	1	2	3	4	5		check	1,2,3
	Professional development for general and special education staff is linked to improved educational outcomes for students with significant disabilities.								
12.1	Teams use reflective practice strategies and structures to engage in job-embedded learning and professional growth.								
12.2	General and special education staff attend professional development events together.								
12.3	General education staff identifies learning about students with disabilities in their professional development plans.								
12.4	Special education staff identifies learning about general education curriculum in their professional development plans.								
12.5	Regular review of student learning data informs the content and format of district, school, and individual professional development plans.								
12.6	Professional development includes topics related to practices that facilitate the learning of all students, including those with the most significant disabilities.								

References:

Jorgensen, C., McSheehan, M., & Sonnenmeier, R. (2002). Essential Best Practices in Inclusive Schools. UNH Institute on Disability/UCED December, 2002

Kentucky Alternate Portfolio Teacher's Guide, 2004