

The Importance of Inclusion for our Schools and our Children and our Youth

RADFORD UNIVERSITY

Virginia Inclusive Practices Center



Virginia Board for
People with Disabilities

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(<https://www.vaboard.org/>)

For more information on the Inclusive Practices Center, go to www.radford.edu/vipc



The 3 Big Questions for Today

What is Inclusive Education?

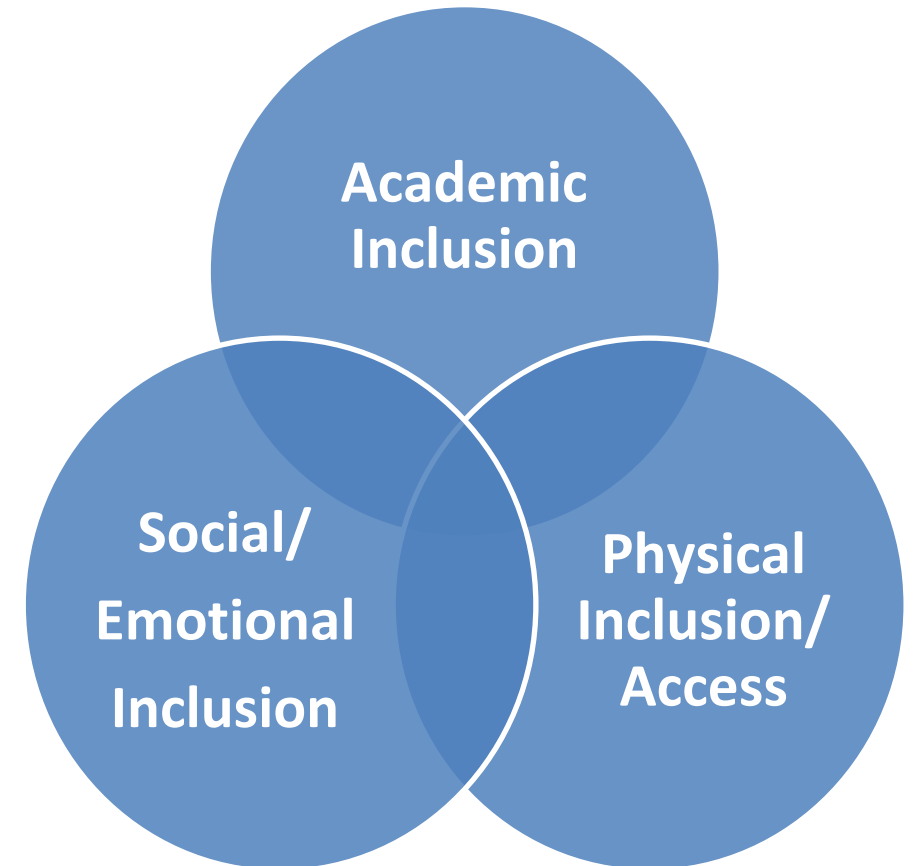
Why is it important for our school?

Why do we need to take action now?



What is Inclusive Education?

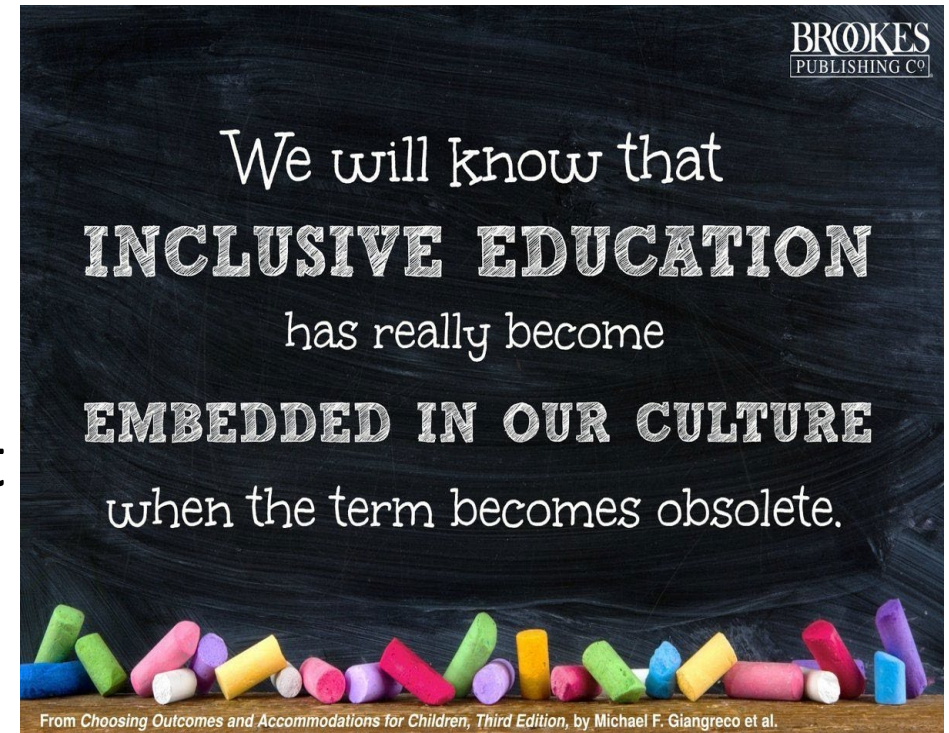
- ✓ ALL Students are **Competent and Capable** of Learning
- ✓ **FULL Participation** in General Education Setting
- ✓ **REQUIRES Access, Belonging,** and High Quality **Teaching**



Best Practice Recommendations - Inclusive Education for ALL Students with Disabilities

90% of students with IEPs should have the general education classroom as their primary placement.

80% of students with IEPs should be receiving instruction in core academic content in the general education classroom with special education support through co-planning and co-teaching (Villa & Thousand, 2016).





Where are we now?

The statewide averages in Virginia for inclusion of students with disabilities (IDEA Indicator 5):

- Only **65% are included** 80% or more of the school day
- 10% are included less than 40%
- 4.3% are in a separate school for students with disabilities
- Only **59% of students** with disabilities graduated with a regular **diploma**; 1.7% drop out of school (last data available 2017-2018)

How does our division measure up?

Disruption of Special Education Services and the Social Isolation Caused by the Pandemic Makes Inclusion an “Economic and Moral imperative.”

The United Nations UNESCO declared last year at the height of the pandemic that “inclusive education should be a ‘non negotiable’ right for all children.” [Universal, inclusive education 'non-negotiable' | UN News](#)

In a new report- [The Disparate Impacts of COVID-19 on America's Students](#) - The US Dept. of Education has made this official declaration: “For many elementary and secondary school students with disabilities, COVID-19 has significantly disrupted the education and related aids and services needed to support their academic progress and prevent regression. And there are signs that those disruptions may be exacerbating longstanding disability-based disparities in academic achievement.”

The JLARC report released in November 2020 <http://jlarc.virginia.gov/landing-2020-special-education.asp> called for pre-service and inservice teachers to be prepared to understand the goals and benefits of inclusive education for all students. It also recommended that school divisions be required to conduct division-wide assessment and create division wide-plans to enhance inclusive practice.

The report also pointed out that Virginia relies on out-of-school placements to a greater degree than 37 other states, and cites the current CSA funding policies as a key factor in hampering school divisions’ ability to serve children with special needs in their local schools. They recommended that control of these funds be returned to the VDOE and that significant revisions in the funding mechanism occur. <https://www.vaco.org/jlarc-releases-report-on-childrens-services-act/>



Moving Forward

Make a division commitment to increase the number of students included in our general education classrooms for 80% or more of the school day.

Create a Framework for Inclusion and develop division-wide and individual school Inclusion Action Plans that:

- Creates a Culture of Inclusion
- Enhances special education/general education collaboration
- Builds capacity for inclusive practices



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