

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

**RADFORD** UNIVERSITY

Virginia Inclusive Practices Center



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

For more information on the Inclusive Practices Center, go to [www.radford.edu/vipc](http://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?



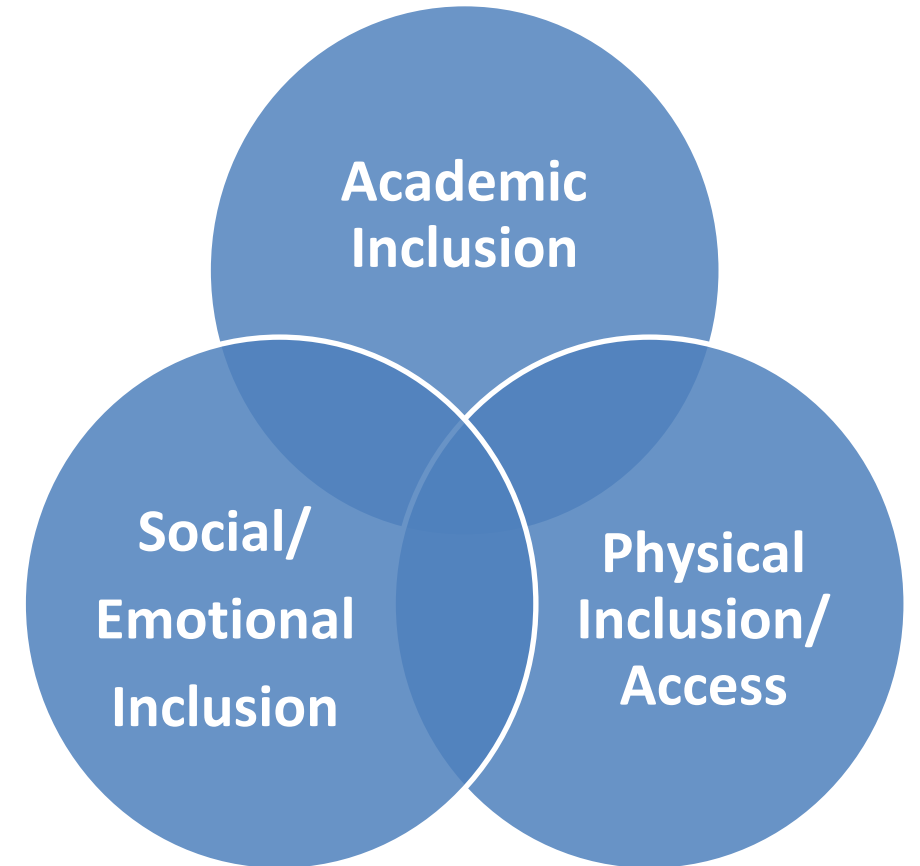


# What is Special Education?

Special education is the implementation of **specially designed instruction**, at no cost to the parent(s), to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability (§ 22.1-213 of the *Code of Virginia*; 34 CFR 300.39). Specially designed instruction addresses the unique individual needs of the child that result from the child's disability and **ensures access to the general curriculum and the same educational standards that apply to all children** (34 CFR 300.39(b)(3)).

# 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**

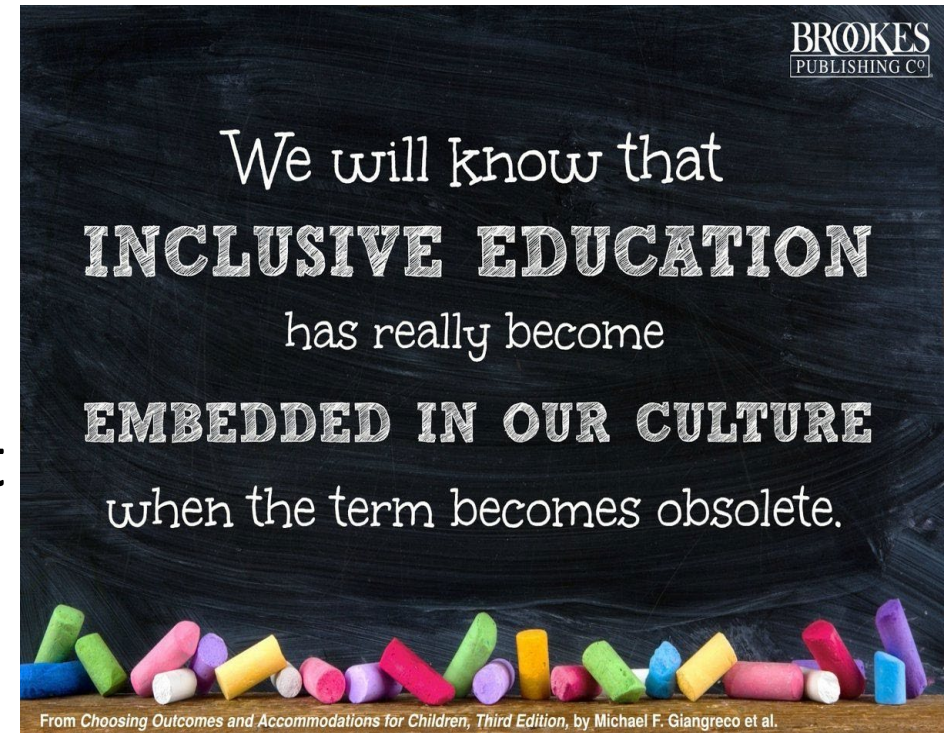




# Best Practice Recommendations - Inclusive Education for ALL Students with Disabilities

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).





# Special Education is a Service not a Place

- ✓ Disability does NOT dictate placement (8VAC20-81-100, FAPE)
- ✓ Delivery of supports and services in the general education classroom
- ✓ Learning environments are designed to be accessible and challenging
  - Universal Design for Learning
  - Differentiated Instruction
  - Co-Teaching Models





# Why Inclusion?

**Inclusive Education is not just about special education. It represents a larger vision for schools and educational services that support the academic and social/emotional/behavioral success of all students.**



Benefits include:

- Higher Academic Achievement
- Higher Educational Outcomes
- Increased Access to Curriculum
- Decreased Challenging Behaviors
- Greater Social Benefit
- More Valued Community
- More Independent Futures





# Why Now?

The majority of students with disabilities in Virginia are not achieving even basic competency in core academics.

<b>VA Standards of Learning Assessment</b>	<b>% of students with disabilities passing</b>
English	47%
Writing	39%
Math	55%
Science	51%
Social Studies	52%



# Why Now?

The statewide averages in Virginia for inclusion of students with disabilities:

- 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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