



Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council
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Inclusive Education

The Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council's Position:

All students benefit from Inclusive Education: where students with disabilities are full and equal members of the General Education classroom and receive the services and supports they need to access, progress, and succeed in the general curriculum.¹ Because Inclusive Education is more effective and less costly than educating students with disabilities in separate settings, including state schools,² Missouri must fully abide by and implement federal laws mandating Inclusive Education.³

The Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council's Reasons:

Inclusive Education is required by federal law⁴ and Missouri regulations⁵ and is consistent with educational best practices.⁶ For example, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act states "[t]o the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities [must be] educated with children who are not disabled"⁷ as part of an educational program designed to "prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living."⁸

Decades of research have documented the benefits of Inclusive Education for all students, with and without disabilities.⁹ Students in Inclusive Education have shown improvement in their academic skills,¹⁰ communication,¹¹ behavior,¹² and awareness and understanding of disabilities.¹³ In Inclusive Education classrooms, Special Education and General Education goals are met at a higher rate,¹⁴ and teachers are more likely to provide all students with instruction in technology and collaboration.¹⁵ In addition, fully implementing Inclusive Education will save state funds because taxpayer dollars will not be spent on separate classes and schools for students with disabilities.¹⁶

Nevertheless, schools have been slow to adopt Inclusive Education practices.¹⁷ In our most recent Statewide Needs Assessment, 66% of respondents stated that inclusive educational opportunities were either not available or only somewhat available.¹⁸ Students denied the opportunity for Inclusive Education miss out on the benefits listed above as well as "opportunities to develop connections that . . . prepare them to be successful in the community."¹⁹

The Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council's Recommendations:

- As a state and society, we must acknowledge that Inclusive Education is a legally required best practice that benefits all students.
- Missouri legislation, policy, and practice should set high expectations for educational programs, opportunities, and achievement, including the full implementation of Inclusive Education.
- Schools should develop and implement Inclusive Education policies and practices that encourage and empower students with disabilities to advance toward further inclusive education, employment, and independent living.
- Segregated educational placements, including state schools, should not be used.
- Cost savings from discontinuing segregated education should be invested in policies and practices that enable fully Inclusive Education, including assistive technology and accessible Universal Design of schools and classrooms.
- Missouri should seek out and consult with states and organizations that have successfully implemented Inclusive Education policies and practices.
- As part of its outreach to and regulation of schools and school districts, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education should examine whether schools are promoting and practicing Inclusive Education and require inclusion in school programs and services.

References

1. e.g. Carter, E. & Hughes, C. (2006). Including high school students with severe disabilities in general education classes: Perspectives of general and special educators, paraprofessional, and administrators. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 31(2), 174-185.
2. e.g. Savich, C. (2008). Inclusion: The pros and cons: A critical review. *Online Submission*. Available at: <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED501775.pdf> (last visited March 12, 2017).
3. e.g., The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400, *et seq.*; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 701, *et seq.*; The Every Student Succeeds Act, 20 U.S.C. 6301, *et seq.*; The Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12101, *et seq.*
4. *See, supra* Note 3, especially the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act at 20 U.S.C. 1412(a) (5).
5. *See*, <https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/StatePlanPartB2014.pdf>
6. e.g., Jackson, L. B., Ryndak, D. L., & Wehmeyer, M. L. (2008). The dynamic relationship between context, curriculum, and student learning: A case for inclusive education as a research-based practice. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 34(1), 175-195.
7. 20 U.S.C. 1412(a) (5).
8. 20 U.S.C. § 1400(d) (1) (A).
9. *See*, Carter, E & Hughes, C. (2005). Increasing social interaction among adolescents with intellectual disabilities and their general education peers: Effective interventions. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 30, 179-193; Causton-Theoharis, J., Theoharis, G., Bull, T., Cosier, M., & Dempf-Aldrich, K. (2010). Schools of promise: A school district–university partnership centered on inclusive school reform. *Remedial and Special Education*.
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11. Fisher, M. & Meyer, L. (2002). Development and social competence after two years for students enrolled in inclusive and self-contained educational programs. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 27, 165-174.
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13. Copeland, *et al.*, (2002). High school peer buddies: A win-win situation. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 35(1), 16-21.
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15. Kasa-Hendrickson, C. & Ashby, C. (2009). The strength based classroom: How the presence of students with disabilities enhances the general education classroom. *Disability Studies in Education, Policy, and Law Conference*, Syracuse, NY.
16. e.g. Savich, C. (2008), *supra* note 2.
17. Carter, E. & Hughes, C, *supra* note 1.
18. *See*, <http://moddcouncil.org/pageDownload.php?docID=455>
19. Carter, E. & Hughes, C. (2006), *supra* note 1.

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