

# PLANNING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**Natural Proportions:** Students are assigned to classes with consideration to the natural proportions of the population that live in the school jurisdiction. For example, if 12% of the students have disabilities, then the school team would plan to place students in classes in as close to that proportion as possible. Generally, schools try to assign no more than 20% of the students with special education academic needs to a class at one time.

**A “Zero-Reject” Approach:** ALL students who live in the community, regardless of their ability or disability, are considered members of the school community and are expected to attend and participate in all aspects of school life. If a student has educational, behavioral, or social-emotional needs which limit his or her participation, the school then engages in person-centered planning to identify the supports and services that are needed so that the student can fully participate. The need for a student to receive services outside of the general education setting will be based on a team decision that follows planning for inclusion and documents the reasons why the student cannot be included.

**Collaborative Leadership:** At the district level, the school level, and within instructional teams, collaborative structures are followed for clarifying issues, brainstorming ideas for solutions, establishing priorities, assigning responsibilities for actions, and reviewing progress toward defined goals. Teams share the roles of meeting facilitation, recording notes, encouraging each other’s participation, and being accountable for work to be done outside of the meeting. Nominal leaders (principals, supervisors, etc.) support the team with shared leadership and using brainstorming structures to solve problems.

**Instructional Collaboration:** Collaboration between and among school staff is necessary for joint curricular planning and individual student planning. Both special and general educators need to adopt new roles in planning and delivering lessons in the classroom, evaluating student progress, and designing modifications that are needed for individual students. Both general and special educators have responsibility for the delivery of special education services.

### **Instructionally Appropriate Programs and Learning Environments:**

Instructional environments (classroom and other general education settings) will be designed to address the grade-appropriate instruction in the Maryland Learning Outcomes for students with and without disabilities, and will also address the accommodations, adaptations, and other modifications to materials, strategies, or equipment so that ALL students can participate in age-appropriate general education lessons while working on their individualized goals.

**Professional Development:** Professional development conducted within schools always addresses how to apply the knowledge and skills to students who have special academic, behavioral, and other instructional needs. Application for students who receive special education services is infused within the teacher training. Areas for staff development include: differentiation, collaboration, co-teaching, positive behavior support strategies, and fostering positive and cooperative social relationships.