

### ***What is your position on ESE inclusion?***

In the last 20 years, our schools have worked toward access for ALL students that have been left out due to race, language, economic status, or mental or physical challenges. We are still working each day to improve the learning opportunities and experiences of our scholars.

As a building principal I stepped into a building in which was 46% English Learners and 20% students receiving exceptional student education services. Our school was blessed with having the Deaf/Hard Hearing department housed in our building. We instituted an ASL specialist class for all of our middle school students as a language.

Not ALL the students in our school were visible and they were being isolated. Leading with the vision of “Our Students - Our Focus”, we worked to shift the mindsets of “those kids and your students” to one of collective efficacy of ALL educating ALL. By setting the vision as the leader, I provided expectations of inclusive practices for all staff. I then provided supports that included training and feedback through a continuous improvement cycle. The last layer was accountability to ensure that ALL students were visible and receiving a well-rounded education that was defined by their standards-based Individual Education Plan.

Inclusion is essential to interrupt the institutional ableism that exists in our schools. All students deserve access to a standards-aligned quality education. Children who were routinely denied educational opportunities are now discovering, exploring, and achieving. While these inclusive practices have been, at times, difficult to implement, their positive impact is clearly demonstrated through each individual success. Students also are currently being enrolled in their community schools with site-based and cross categorical supports. This is to ensure that students are attending school with their neighborhood peers rather than being bused to “programs” that are often housed in buildings that had space at the time.

Finally, we are currently doing a district-wide redesign that moves our magnet schools centrally in our district. Past practice had students with exceptional student education services being placed in buildings that were not magnet schools. Our magnet schools generally have specialized opportunities that benefitted some students and not all students. Under this current redesign we will put filters into our placement practices that provides access for all students across the district.

***If selected for the Superintendent position, what would you do to improve ESE inclusion at Flagler Schools?***

It starts with a leader setting the vision with his or her “why”. Equitable access for all students as defined:

Educational equity is achieved when all students receive the resources, opportunities, skills, and knowledge they need to succeed in our democratic society. The **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**, the 2015 bipartisan reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, gives policymakers and educators the ability to leverage resources with the backing of the law to close opportunity gaps and improve learning outcomes for all students.

My “why” of Superintendent goes back to ALL students who have been left out due to race, language, economic status, or mental or physical challenges. Children who were once isolated and marginalized will be thriving members of a larger school community.

I will need to assess where the teachers and staff are with their skill and will around inclusive practices. However, the why needs to be stated day one and reinforced by me as the Superintendent. We cannot get today back for our children and there are no exceptions for students not receiving the high-quality learning experience that other students may be receiving in other parts of the school or district.

I will quickly learn about the professional development/investment for teachers and support staff around inclusive practices. This learning will need to happen before becoming Superintendent. A plan of action will need to either be continued, enhanced, modified or created to ensure the skill of the teachers and support staff are developed. I will work with the ESE Parent Advisory Council to seek input from their perspective so we are aligned for an inclusive and high-quality learning experience.

(Please see the School Inclusion Worksheet that we use)

**Is Your School Inclusive Worksheet**

(This document is a work in progress)

An inclusive school community is reflected by how we integrate ALL students and families. To be an inclusive school we recognize the labels we use impact our students. Inclusive school communities consider ability, disability, race, culture, creed, gender, identity, language, family structure, and other areas. This tool can be used to assess a classroom or school.

1 = I never thought about that.

2 = We have work to do.

3 = At least 75% of ALL demographic labels represented

4 = We have made progress and 90% of all demographic labels are represented

5 = We are ALL inclusive ALL the time in this area 100%

Inclusive Communication	
ALL communications (including robo calls) from school and classrooms are distributed and translated to ALL students.	1 2 3 4 5
Written and verbal communication is reflective of a variety of home lives (family structures and living situations)	1 2 3 4 5
The school website includes news, activities, and accomplishments of ALL students without labels.	1 2 3 4 5
Your school community has an inclusive statement that is posted and staff and students know the statement.	1 2 3 4 5
Total	/20
Inclusive Activities	
ALL students and families of all cultures are represented in social activities and celebrations at your school.	1 2 3 4 5
ALL school activities are designed to be accessible to ALL.	1 2 3 4 5
ALL students have access to extracurricular activities, after school activities, and sports at your school.	1 2 3 4 5
Total	/15
Inclusive Classrooms and Building	
ALL student lockers are near their age/grade level peers.	1 2 3 4 5
Rooms are located in the main area of the school and not	1 2 3 4 5

segregated/isolated down a hall or in "their" wing.	
ALL students enter the building through the same entrance(s).	1 2 3 4 5
ALL students have a seat in the general education classroom and are on the classroom roster.	1 2 3 4 5
Total	/20
<b>Inclusive Staff</b>	
Teachers, administrators, and support staff view ALL students in the school as their responsibility.	1 2 3 4 5
Staff and teachers refer to all students as "(school name) students" and use people first language. (ex: child who receives ELL)	1 2 3 4 5
Inclusive teaching strategies and topics are included in staff development time.	1 2 3 4 5
Staff are encouraged and given time to collaborate across departments (Gen. Ed., SpEd, EL, and Advanced Learning).	1 2 3 4 5
Staff are encouraged and given time to co-plan and co-teach.	1 2 3 4 5
Total	/25
<b>Inclusive Placement</b>	
There is a flexible learning environment to complement the strengths and success of ALL students.	1 2 3 4 5
ALL students are able to attend their neighborhood schools with their siblings regardless of ability.	1 2 3 4 5
ALL students are encouraged and given the opportunity to engage with age/grade like peers during non-instructional times (ex: lunch, recess, assemblies, field trips).	1 2 3 4 5
Total	/15
<b>Inclusive Data</b>	
Teams look at academic and social emotional data collectively, set goals, implement interventions, and make data based decisions together. General ed, special ed, EL, parent etc...	1 2 3 4 5
Total	/5

Add up all of the sections.

Inclusive Communication	_____
Inclusive Activities	+ _____
Inclusive Classrooms/Building	+ _____
Inclusive Staff	+ _____
Inclusive Data	+ _____
	_____
	/100

How to use this information:

Determine your areas of strength:

Determine your areas where growth is needed:

Have conversations with your building teams:

Set goals to make improvements:

Determine what you need as a building (some things to consider)

- PD
- Mind shift
- Parent support
- Administrative support

Connect with others who can help:

***In your previous positions, how have you worked to improve communications with a community group that has reduced conflict with the district?***

It begins with trust. Trust is developed by creating a process of communication that defines how the why will be collaboratively co-created for an aligned and expected set of outcomes. Implementing the process into an action plan with measurable and monitored outcomes that are transparent with the community is the next layer in building trust. Finally, we will meet on a monthly (or an agreed upon frequency) to discuss the progress of our expected outcomes.

As Associate Superintendent, I ensure that all schools are meeting the needs of all learners through their school improvement plans. All schools are expected to follow the following policies set forth by the school board:

NUMBER	TITLE	PURPOSE
P 5700	Special Education	The purpose of this policy is to set forth the position of the Board of Directors on the need for special education and related services on the part of some students with disabilities in the school district
P 5701	Special Education Workload Limitations	This policy establishes how case loads will be established for special education faculty serving students who receive direct or indirect special education services sixty percent (60%) or less of their instructional day.
P 5741	Special Education Placement (SEPP)	The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Minneapolis Public Schools offer a Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) when considering the placement of all of its students with special needs.
P 5750	Disability Nondiscrimination – Section 504	The purpose of this policy is to protect each student with a disability from illegal discrimination on the basis of disability and provide each student with the required free appropriate public education
R 5750 A	Section 504 Services	The purpose of these regulations is to establish the procedures for implementation of Section 504 services, accommodations and programs for qualified individuals.

Finally, I support our current parent group called Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC). I lead our Associate Superintendent of Specialized Programs in the support of the advisory council.

The Minneapolis Public Schools Special Education Advisory Council, SEAC (pronounced "seek") is a partnership between the school district and parents/guardians of Minneapolis students with disabilities. The SEAC is mandated by the state to advise the District on policy and planning through the Executive Director of Special Education.

The SEAC is comprised of a majority of parents/guardians, and key Special Ed Department staff. The SEAC often invites leaders from other district departments in order to be informed and to lend perspective to decision making.

**Vision Statement**

All children, regardless of their abilities, will achieve an academic, functional and social education in the Minneapolis Public Schools from birth through transition, to maximize their life choices and opportunities.

**Mission Statement**

- To increase the involvement and add the informed perspective of parents and families of children with disabilities in the making and implementation of district policies
- To identify and promote the common concerns of special education and non-special education students alike.
- To fulfill the requirements of Minnesota Statute 125A.24.

***If selected for the Superintendent position how would you improve communication with the ESE community?***

If selected as the new Superintendent, I will need to listen and learn about the expectations by all community members around communication. The communication expectations will need to be collaboratively developed to ensure I am meeting the needs of the community and students. The question uses the word “improve” which leads me to believe that understanding the past and build a new future will be essential in creating trust. We would work to break down any existing barriers and create new opportunities.

***Please explain how you have successfully changed management practices of administrators in your previous positions for the better, including processes used or recommended for holding administrators accountable?***

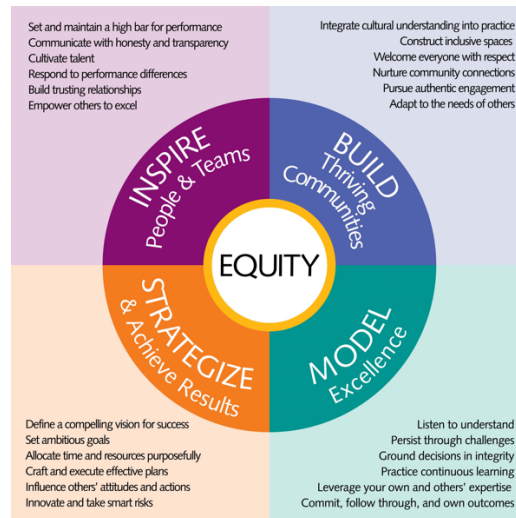
*I must begin my response to this question with speaking my truth. I find the narrative statement:*

It is an open secret among staff that there is a culture of retaliation in Flagler Schools that discourages teachers and staff to come forward with problems related to, among other things, violations of special education laws, regulations and school district policy. Teachers report having their grade levels changed as a penalty, being berated in front of peers, getting poor reviews, and not having annual contracts reviewed merely for reporting problems that need to be resolved. Of the dozens of staff members who have reported incidents like this to EPAC leadership, all of them contend that this behavior is being encouraged at the highest levels of District administration. EPAC contends that management by fear and retaliation reflects incompetent leadership. This is an issue we are interested in resolving because retaliatory management practices have directly resulted in several ESE students being abused or injured, many schools being out of compliance with special education laws and regulations. Further, it stifles creative problem solving by District staff, it undermines the work EPAC is engaged in to improve ESE and, we believe, it has resulted in the loss of many highly competent teachers and paraprofessionals.

*intolerable and unacceptable. If beginning my response in this way causes me to lose support of the selection committee then I will accept that. There is no excuse for any of the above behaviors to occur in and organization.*

A strong leader has a vision that is built, as previously stated, around his or her “why”. Laying out the expectations with supports and accountability is the foundation. As an equity-minded leader, I will lead with all students at the center of everything I do. I will to inspire others to follow by the excellence and high integrity that is modeled.

I currently have three core values: courage, presence and humility. Having the courage to interrupt unethical practices and behaviors is a priority. There are NO excuses for students or staff to have negative experiences that is either determined by their zip code or by poor leadership. All building leaders are held to high standard. Guided by policy, regulations and practice, building leaders are expected to model excellence and are held accountable for all actions. The building leaders are supported in their professional learning in the following *Leadership Blueprint*:



We currently have an Employee Relations Department that provides progressive discipline actions for all employees that do not follow policy or code of ethics. I work closely with the Senior Leader of Human Capital to closely monitor the leadership for all buildings and provide supports where there are gaps in leadership.

***If selected for the Superintendent position, what would you do to end retaliatory management practices against staff?***

I would need to first understand the past inequitable retaliatory practices, learn the current policies around ethical practices and vision out next steps to ensure that there is a transparent and understood set of expectations moving forward. I would work with the senior leadership team to develop a common understanding of a defined “models of excellence.” There will be no excuse for any employee of Flagler County Public Schools to exhibit any retaliatory, unethical or inequitable practices. I would bring us back to the Flagler Mission of:

Flagler County Public Schools ensures educational success through high expectations and innovative thinking in a safe learning environment to empower students to reach their full potential as responsible, ethical, and productive citizens in a diverse and changing world.

***In your previous positions, what have you done to cultivate the next generation of leaders?***

I am currently working with the Wallace Foundation around two initiatives: The Principal Supervisor Initiative (PSI) and The Principal Pipeline Initiative (PPI). The Principal Supervisor Initiative (PSI) is an effort to redefine the principal supervision in six urban school districts. (Baltimore City Public Schools, MD, Broward County Public Schools, FL, Cleveland Metropolitan School District, OH, Des Moines Public Schools, IA, Long Beach Unified School District, CA) The goal is to support districts in repurposing the position traditionally focused on administration, operations, and compliance to on dedicated to developing and supporting principals to be effective instructional leaders in their schools. The five core components include:

1. Revise the principal supervisors’ job description to focus on instructional leadership
2. Reduce principal supervisors span of control (the number of principals they oversee) and change how supervisors are assigned to principals
3. Train supervisors and develop their capacity to support principals
4. Develop systems to identify and train new supervisors (success planning)
5. Strengthen central office structures to support and sustain changes in the principal supervisor’s role

The Principal Pipeline Initiative (PPI) is our new initiative to identify and develop top equity-minded leaders that will continue to lead in a district that need high quality and courageous leaders.

Research shows that teachers are the number one lever to improving the academic outcomes for students. Principals are the number two lever as they set the vision, the culture and tone for the experience of staff, students and families. My role is to continue to guide, direct and support principals in the consistently changing educational landscape. *Teachers don’t leave buildings- they leave principals.*



***If selected for the Superintendent position, what would you do to improve the leadership skills of this new generation of leaders?***

I would be present in the schools and community. I would set high expectations with supports. We would build a learning leaders culture that starts with me and the building leaders. Focusing on strong instructional leadership that is centered in equity will be the foundation of our learning. I will accomplish this by having a clear logic model around the professional learning of the building leaders. There will be measurable metrics built in as we monitor the progress and growth of our building leaders. It will be important for me, as the superintendent, to set the tone and expectations that transfer into the school buildings.

***In your previous positions, what experience do you have working with the ESE community?***

I have worked collaboratively with our Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC). Being present and supportive of the parents and students is high priority. Having the parents know that I am a champion for all students is part of my why. Being present in a senior leader position to bring their voice into the space brings value to the parents. I will continue to support all parents and families to ensure all students have equitable access to a well-rounded educational experience.

***What positive results were you able to accomplish as a result of that relationship?***

We continue to see our disproportionality of out of school suspensions for our Level I, II, and III black students decrease. This is being done with strong teacher support in partnership with the teachers' union and strong support from our community to fully implement an inclusive model that is built on the success for all students. I am including the co-created *frequently asked questions* that we continue to build for full transparency of practice and implantation.



**Staffing**

Questions	Answers
As we move forward toward inclusion, will the number of special education teachers be the same and will they just be used in a different capacity? <i>I am afraid the kids with high needs will be dumped on the regular education teachers and the kids will not get their needs met by a single classroom teacher.</i>	Staffing allocations are, and will continue to be, based on student enrollment and student needs. Staffing needs will be supported through the district budgeting process. We will continue to respond to student needs as they are identified. For example, we have added 22 special education assistant positions already first semester. Staffing shifts will be made based on IEP team decisions.
Can you explain how this reduction in SERT caseloads has not simply served as an excuse to overload SERTs with other duties taking away from the students they are trying to serve?	The reduction in SERT caseloads was put in place to allow SERTs to ensure IEP service minutes are provided, to have more time to participate in collaborative planning and teaching with general education teachers, and to address due process requirements unique to special education staff.
How do you expect a special education teacher who is just not trained in ASD, who has a caseload of 25-30 kids, to provide adequate services to a kid with ASD?	Caseload for Special Education Resource Teachers in MPS is 1:20 or 1:17 in high priority schools, with some schools having lower caseloads. Special education teachers are expected to have knowledge and understanding of evidence-based practices that are good for all children. MPS provides support and training for our new and veteran teachers and SEAs. We have also hired itinerant ASD teachers to provide consultation, modeling, and direct service.
Please describe how inclusive practices PD for SEAs, SpEd Teachers, and General Education teachers will be coordinated in the future?	Inclusive Practices professional development will be infused in all district professional development. Professional development will be in the form of ProPay classes, Special Education Get Together events, district modules, courses, and ELearning. There will be specialized training for our general and special education teachers who are new to the district this summer as a part of new teacher orientation. The <a href="#">Inclusive Practices Web Resource</a> will be updated throughout the year as well.