



State Board of Education Resolution
Calling for a Statewide Framework for Special Education Instructional Best Practices
SR26-3

WHEREAS, the D.C. State Board of Education (State Board) advocates for policies and practices that empower educators, support families, and ensure that every student—regardless of disability status—has meaningful access to high-quality instruction and the opportunity to thrive;

WHEREAS, all students in the District of Columbia deserve equitable access to high-quality instruction and inclusive learning environments that enable them to meet rigorous academic standards;

WHEREAS, states such as North Carolina provide robust training opportunities and courses on implementing evidence-based practices for students with disabilities, such as an in-person workshop titled “Supporting Students with ASD in the General Education Setting”;¹

WHEREAS, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) provides robust in-person and online training opportunities and courses on implementing evidence-based practices for students with disabilities, such as the four-course Foundations of Special Education Micro-credential, the Special Education Institute, Universal Design for Learning training, multi-tiered system of supports training, and the Secondary Transition community of practice;²

WHEREAS, students with disabilities are increasingly educated in general education classrooms, yet feedback from educators, families, and stakeholders indicates variability in inclusive instructional practices across DC and a lack of shared understanding of what effective inclusion and specialized instruction should look like in daily classroom practice;³

WHEREAS, effective inclusion requires intentional planning, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), differentiation, accommodations and modifications, co-planning between general and special educators, coordination with support specialists (e.g., occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech therapists), small-group instruction and supports, accessible materials and content, progress monitoring, and ongoing collaboration, not merely physical placement in the general education classroom;

WHEREAS, teachers benefit from strong content knowledge and pedagogy in special education

¹North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2026, March 3). *Supporting students with ASD in the general education setting*. NC DPI. <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/news/events/supporting-students-asd-general-education-setting-1>.

² OSSE’s website contains additional information, including this webpage on the Foundations of Special Education: <https://osse.dc.gov/page/foundations-special-education-skill-building-opportunities-dc-educators>.

³ In addition to the feedback received from State Board representatives in their respective communities, see also the recording of the Educator Excellence Committee’s meeting from January 29, 2026, which convened a panel of content experts and practitioners: <https://youtu.be/wvDoAzETs24?si=-Xj8voYJshjaPJdA>.





and the special education process, including early identification, referral procedures, multi-tiered systems of support, and implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs);

WHEREAS, current professional development opportunities, including OSSE's Special Education Initiative and conference, are valuable, but do not consistently reach all educators or provide ongoing job-embedded support;

WHEREAS, educators, families, and stakeholders have identified the need for a citywide foundational framework to help ensure that strong inclusive practice does not depend on individual school leadership but is implemented consistently across all DC public schools;

WHEREAS, strengthening inclusive instruction benefits all students, not only students with disabilities, by improving differentiation, engagement, and multi-tiered systems of support;⁴ and

WHEREAS, disparities in training and implementation can contribute to inequitable outcomes, over-referral or misidentification, teacher burnout, and reduced access to rigorous instruction for students with disabilities.^{5,6,7,8}

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the State Board urges the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) to develop and disseminate a statewide foundational framework to guide LEAs in strengthening special education instructional best practices and inclusive teaching;⁹

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that OSSE is encouraged to share updates with the State Board regarding progress toward the development and dissemination of this framework; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this framework should include, at minimum:

⁴ Shlasko, D., & Pacheco, R. (2024, March 8). *Applying Universal Design for Learning (UDL) supports inclusive education*. Southern Poverty Law Center. <https://www.splcenter.org/resources/stories/applying-universal-design-for-learning-udl-supports-inclusive-education/>.

⁵ Bettini, E., Nguyen, T. D., Gilmour, A. F., & Redding, C. (2022). *Disparities in Access to Well-Qualified, Well-Supported Special Educators Across Higher- Versus Lower-Poverty Schools Over Time*. *Exceptional Children*, 88(3), 283-301.

⁶ Ripma, T. A., DeMatthews, D. E., & Voulgarides, C. K. (2024). *Addressing Inequity in Special Education Referrals: Integrating General and Special Education Strategies in School Leadership*. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*, 27(4), 105-121.

⁷ Alahmed T (2024) *Burnout of special education teachers in Saudi Arabia's inclusive education schools*. *Front. Educ.* 9:1489820. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2024.1489820.

⁸ Gilmour, A. F., & Wehby, J. H. (2020). *The association between teaching students with disabilities and teacher turnover*. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 112(5), 1042–1060. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000394>.

⁹ For example, Louisiana published a Special Education Playbook for System Leaders in November 2024: <https://redesignschoolsloisiana.org/ldoe-special-education-playbook.pdf>.





1. Guidance on effective inclusive practice and specialized instruction in general education settings
2. Guidance on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), differentiation, accommodations, and modifications
3. Guidance for co-planning and collaboration between general and special educators
4. Strategies for small-group instruction, modifying content and materials, and progress monitoring
5. Guidance on the special education process, including early identification and referral procedures
6. Examples of effective instruction across grade levels and content areas.

Date Adopted: April 22, 2026

Signed: _____

Jacque Patterson
Jacque Patterson, President

