INCLUSIVE SCHEDULING
Including Students with Disabilities in General Education

Inclusive scheduling...

• Begins with a school philosophy that values and promotes responsible inclusive practices
• Recognizes the general education classroom as the first placement considered for students with disabilities
• Links student needs with existing school-wide staff
• Regards all special education staff as capable of providing in-class support
• Creates a master schedule aligned with in-class service delivery models
• Starts by scheduling students with disabilities first!

Begin with the end results in mind

• Students with disabilities receive instruction and support in general education based on student needs, the Standards of Learning (SOL), and current data.
• Students with disabilities make adequate progress and learning gains.
• General and special education staff collaborates to provide instruction, assessment, behavioral, and learning supports that benefit students with and without disabilities.

Steps for inclusive scheduling

1. Identify scheduling team
2. Determine level of support needed, analyze student needs
3. Determine the number of classes based on levels of support needed
4. Select general and special education teachers
5. Designate common planning times for teachers
6. Enter classes and common planning times into the master schedule
7. Add other classes in which students with disabilities will be enrolled
8. Schedule students with disabilities first

Adapted from (Stetson & Associates, 2012), (Friend, 2008)
Questions to guide the scheduling process

All School Levels
• How many students with disabilities attend the school? At what grade levels?
• Based on students’ assess needs, what type of service (if any) should each student receive?
• How many classes/sections of each service are needed? Which grade levels or which courses (co-teaching, resource/support, separate core instruction, self-contained)?
• Which students would receive consultation or other indirect services instead of, or in addition to, other services?
• Which grades or courses are priorities for co-teaching? What are the priorities for separate core instruction?

Elementary Schools
• By grade level, how could students across sections be grouped for services (for example, moving students class to class for skill instruction in reading or math)? Have we considered “staggering” periods (e.g., reading blocks, lunch) to accommodate a schedule of in-class support by the special education teacher(s)?
• How could all support personnel be deployed to support student-learning needs without duplicating services (for example, the speech-language therapist, reading specialist, paraprofessionals – who could go where)?
• How can special educators be assigned so that caseloads are equitable and services are not duplicated (for example, one special educator might serve kindergarten, first grade, and fourth grade and provide some service to a student with significant disabilities who comes to one of those classes)?

Middle Schools
• If more than one grade-level team exists, could all students with disabilities be place on a single team? How could those students be distributed across sections on that team so that the class composition is heterogeneous?
• How could separate sections be created to cross, if necessary, teams and grade levels (for example, a separate section of math for the few 6th and 7th grade students who must have this intense instruction)?
• Could any students needing separate instruction receive it in an existing (and appropriate) self-contained class (for example, a student with LD receiving English instruction in a class for students with emotional disabilities)?
• If classes are leveled, how could students with disabilities be scheduled into middle level (not low level) classes so that achievement can more easily be fostered and class heterogeneity maintained?
High Schools

- Which courses prepare students for high stakes tests? These should be the priority for co-teaching
- Are other factors priorities? Examples include beginning with 9th and 10th grade classes, focusing on English and algebra, and so on.
- If the high school is arranged in small school learning communities, how can necessary separate resource or separate instruction be scheduled as a priority in order to cross those learning communities?

(Friend, 2008)

Guidelines

- Put students with disabilities in the master schedule first
- Resist the urge to increase the student-teacher ratio
- Recognize that general education teachers should only have one co-teaching partner
- Recognize that special education teachers can only have 2-3 partners for co-teaching
- Ensure that those who schedule also know the guidelines and will continue to follow them throughout the year
- Encourage the proactive feedback of teachers, especially special education teachers
- Avoid over-scheduling special educators to the point they cannot be effective.
  Schedule by subject matter, by grade, by professional learning community (PLC), or by caseload
- Keep in mind the additional job responsibilities of special educators and build them into the schedule (assessing, IEP meetings, monitoring, adapting materials)
- Consider the physical placement of co-teachers and their respective classrooms
- Schedule team meetings as a priority
- Group students with disabilities into one section but choose a high achieving instead of a low achieving section
- Schedule students with disabilities individually
- Try for coinciding planning time when possible (grade level, title teacher, special education)
- Meet by teams everyday, even if just for five minutes before school
- Schedule classes with a balance of ability levels (don’t group all nonreaders into one class)
- Be flexible with students labels; use a cross-categorical teaching model
- Enable students who might fall through the cracks to get special education support in inclusive classes
- Use paraprofessionals to assist in covering general education settings

(Murawski and Dieker, 2013) (Dieker, 2007)
Resources


