

New York City Task Force on Quality Inclusive Schooling  
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June 17, 2008

Dear Principal:

The New York City Task Force on Quality Inclusive Schooling (NYCTFQIS) is part of a statewide network. We are a small volunteer group composed of teacher educators, parents, teachers, school administrators, and members of private organizations. As a group of general and special educators, our interest lies in encouraging, maintaining, and supporting inclusive education. While our time is limited, and our resources small, we have collaborated to produce the enclosed book, *Supporting Inclusive Classrooms: a Resource* in the hope that it will be of service to you and your staff.

Most of us have been teachers and/or administrators within the public school system and know the complexities involved in creating and sustaining inclusive schools. As fellow New Yorkers, we created a book that represents the voices of different stakeholders, including administrators, parents, teachers, students, service personnel, and university faculty. In addition, we bore in mind how teachers like useful strategies and knowledge of various approaches to educating a diverse body of students. In short, the book is comprised of nineteen sections containing a range of information from advice, tips, suggestions, strategies, comments, resources, planning templates, and a historical context for the inclusion movement. Each section is also followed by a series of open ended questions, designed to remind us that inclusive practices require all of us to think beyond doing “business as usual,” and the need to act differently if change is to occur.

This book was designed to be used for professional development for school personnel. Some suggestions for professional development activities are:

- Use a specific section for professional development with school personnel and parents
- Utilize the co-planning sheets for collaborative team teachers
- Create drafts of lessons that incorporate differentiated instruction
- Discuss innovative ways to influence disability awareness
- Distribute several sections to different staff members and have them summarize ideas and/or offer a critique, contingent upon making constructive suggestions that support students and teachers in an inclusive classroom
- Analyze the origins of the inclusive movement and the ongoing counter-pull against it
- Study the perspectives of students in collaboratively taught classes
- Prioritize the usefulness of ideas to support inclusive classrooms at the elementary, middle, and high school levels
- Compare opportunities for students with disabilities in school and in college

- Use the ideas to create your own rubric of an inclusive school
- Choose one question a month to discuss in faculty or department meetings
- Locate excellent materials that reflect student diversity for class libraries
- Order a recommended video that can be studied as a group
- Use ideas to incorporate in school mission statements
- Locate a specific article that can be read by all staff members
- Generally gain more knowledge about the “whys” and “hows” of inclusive education as shared by fellow educators from New York City schools and colleges

We are happy to inform you that this book can also be downloaded from the New York Higher Education Support Center for Systems Change website <http://www.inclusion-ny.org/region/nyc/inclusion-book>. We hope that you will find it useful in your efforts to maintain and expand access to general education for students with disabilities.

With best wishes,

Dr. David J. Connor  
*Editor*

Dr. Brenda Dressler & Dr. Stephen Levy  
*Co-Liaisons, on behalf of the New York City Task Force on Quality Inclusive Schooling*

New York State Higher Education Support Center for SystemsChange