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Introduction

The Inclusionary Practices Professional Development Project

Inclusion is the belief and practice that all students are competent, capable, and have the right to meaningfully access academic and social opportunities in general education settings. Inclusion is more than a change in classroom placement. It is about equitable access to learning that happens in classrooms whether academic or social and emotional. Every student should be welcomed in all aspects of school life, be able to meaningfully participate and feel a deep sense of belonging.

Research tells us when children with and without disabilities are included, they learn more. Currently, Washington is one of the least inclusive states, ranking 44 out of 50\(^1\). Only 57 percent of students receiving special education services are included in general education settings for 80-100% of the school day\(^2\). To support more inclusive schools, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is partnering with stakeholders through the Inclusionary Practices Professional Development Project. The IPP is a two-year, project that will span the 2019–20 and 2020–21 school years, with emphasis on implementation of professional development in support of inclusionary practices.

"For inclusion to be successful, personnel from paraeducators to district superintendents, and families, need to know what inclusion is and how their role is expected to support an inclusive learning environment."

- OSPI, IPP Project

The Inclusionary Practices Family Engagement Collaborative has been organized by Partnerships for Action Voices for Empowerment (PAVE) to address aspects of family and community engagement within the IPP. The collaborative includes Open Doors for Multicultural Families (ODMF), Roots of Inclusion, and Education Northwest. This Family Engagement Collaborative is committed to strengthening family-school partnerships to support culturally-responsive approaches that center the experiences of students with disabilities and their families, particularly students of color and groups who have traditionally been denied a voice in decision making. To help accomplish the vision of inclusionary practices in Washington schools, the Family Engagement Collaborative will focus on three areas of work within the IPP. Those areas include an environmental scan, evaluation and a service provision of which this toolkit is one piece.

Roots of Inclusion has developed this toolkit with the intent that it provides families, educators and community leaders with a set of useable tools to help plan and hold a Community Conversation specifically on Inclusion.

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1 [https://www.k12.wa.us/policy-funding/special-education-funding-and-finance/inclusionary-practices-professional-development-project](https://www.k12.wa.us/policy-funding/special-education-funding-and-finance/inclusionary-practices-professional-development-project)

What is a Community Conversation?

Communities are made up of people, schools and organizations who are dependent on one another. A Community Conversation is typically a 2-hour event that brings a diverse set of community members together to listen, learn, and collectively brainstorm strategies and resources that can be used to address an adaptive challenge facing their community.

The primary objectives of an Inclusionary Practices Project Community Conversation are to:

1. **Engage the community**: Bringing together a diverse set of stakeholders provides an opportunity to build new relationships and strengthen discussions.

2. **Build a shared understanding of inclusion**: Collaborating together effectively and efficiently requires all stakeholders to understand the work ahead.

3. **Find new partners**: Sharing information about Inclusionary Practices work in your school and community creates opportunities and connections.

4. **Encourage further dialogue and develop opportunities for collaboration**: Creating pathways for people to contribute and building capacity to work together differently allows for inclusion to be more than a project, it becomes a cultural shift.

Families and Communities hold great wisdom and resources. Their input and involvement should be used to inform decision making and build the relationships and understanding needed for inclusion to be successful. Engaging families and community members will help identify:

- People’s aspirations for inclusive practices.
- People’s concerns about inclusive practices.
- How people think and talk about inclusion in relation to the community.
- What changes are needed.
- What people believe can be done, and who they can trust to take action.

By giving you tools to host a “conversation,” the Inclusionary Practices Project (IPP) Community Conversation Toolkit will provide a fun and engaging way to identify opportunities and new partners to create welcoming and inclusive schools and communities.

What is in this Toolkit?

This toolkit is a practical guide for families, educators and community leaders who are thinking about, in the process of, or looking to improve inclusive practices. It provides descriptions of essential components of a Community Conversation, along with detailed planning tools and resources for implementation of both in person and virtual events.

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3 The Community Conversation model is based on a project of the Natural Supports Project and the University of Wisconsin-Madison Waisman Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities and Tennessee Works, a collaboration supported by the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities.
This toolkit includes:

- Community Conversation Planning Tool (timeline, material checklist, venue checklist)
- Accessibility Checklist
- Language Access Resources
- System Mapping Tool
- Sample Invitation
- IPP Community Conversation Event Protocol with Annotated Agenda
- IPP Community Conversation Virtual Event Protocol with Annotated Agenda
- Group Agreements Table Tent Printable Template, Sign in Sheet
- Table Host Guidelines
- IPP Community Conversation Slide Deck
- Harvest Tool
- Community Conversation “Ticket Out the Door” Evaluation Tool
- Reflection on Your IPP Community Conversation

How will input from the Inclusionary Practices Project (IPP) Community Conversations be used?

The IPP Community Conversations are designed to engage families and the community, invite new people into the conversation, and to build the relationships necessary for inclusive practices to flourish. Feedback and ideas discussed in community conversations help Local Education Agencies and their communities identify what actions to take over others and identify issues that should be considered.
Embracing Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

It Takes a Community

Communities are made up of many interconnected systems, some small and some large. Families are systems, neighborhoods are systems, organizations are systems, classrooms and schools are systems as are the local education agencies they are a part of. These different systems are made up of stakeholders, people who have an interest in, or are impacted by an issue. Given the diversity of these systems, the stakeholders involved, and the relationships that are part of them, a commitment to inclusion requires that we listen to and work together with natural community partners who directly impact young people’s lives.

Positive Student Outcomes

Healthy Relationships
- Peer to peer
- Adult relationships
- Parent / Caregiver relationships

School and Life Success
- Engaged and supported socially, emotionally and academically
- Positive self-identity
- High expectations for every young person

Active Community Involvement
- Interconnected systems (no gaps)
- Coordinated and responsive
- Shared responsibility and ownership

Building inclusive schools and communities is an adaptive challenge, one that calls us all to action. Adaptive challenges differ from technical challenges. They do not have clear answers like technical challenges do. Think of a technical challenge as something that an expert can jump in and solve for us, like if our school’s website isn’t working. Adaptive challenges involve changing complex systems and the behaviors of those who are part of that system. They require leaders to work with, and learn from, the various stakeholders involved. All young people benefit when the natural community partners are focused on shared goals and work together in a coordinated and responsive way. Meaningful inclusion will only be fully realized when we work together to build a shared understanding of inclusionary practices and a shared ownership for change.
Creating a Space of Belonging

When communities gather people to discuss an issue or solve a problem, no matter the size or scope, it is important to create a respectful environment so people can build relationships and work better together. Anytime people with different perspectives on an issue come together, they can experience conflict or stress, even when they agree on a shared goal. We can create a space of belonging by using a process modeled on an approach known as Gracious Space, developed by The Center for Ethical Leadership in Seattle. Gracious Space is a proven, highly effective way to foster authentic dialogue and create a structure for a diverse group to engage in deep listening and shared learning in times of complexity and change. The Center for Ethical Leadership defines Gracious Space as “A spirit and a setting where we invite the stranger and embrace learning in public.”

Shifting successfully to Inclusionary Practices in our schools and communities demands that we work together and that we work together in different ways. Utilizing Gracious Space within a Community Conversation centers relationship building and ensures we value:

**Building Trust.** When we prepare to have complicated conversations, building trust in relationships is critical. We each have something to learn from one another. No one individuals’ experiences or life’s story is the same and taking time to listen and learn from others allows us to build trust as we tackle complicated challenges facing our communities.

**Having a Space to Listen.** When we create a space of belonging, we invite people to listen deeply, ask questions and learn from one another. Learning from one another challenges us to consider perspectives other than our own and seek to be open to growing in our ability to empathize and understand more of the complexities of a problem.

**Promoting the Common Good.** When we are seeking perspectives other than our own, we more fully understand the status quo that is holding in place the system that we seek to change. Without diverse perspectives, we are likely to address a problem with gaps in our understanding. The combined wisdom of diverse people with different perspectives seeking to address problems collectively is more likely to lead to a better solution that is anchored in equity, fairness, and the opportunity for every individual to reach their full human potential.

We create a Gracious Space that allows us to build trust and learn from one another when we engage in dialogue that highlights inquiry, reflection and listening. The IPP Community Conversation will use 3 discussion questions to allow participants to engage with one another in dialogue. The questions were designed to be clean and open, which means they will not influence or mislead and are open ended. The resulting dialogue provides opportunities for participants to recognize how ideas and people are connected to places in which they have commonalities and shared understanding. It also allows participants to listen deeply to one another and build trust in a group.

Sources and further reading about Gracious Space:
*Patricia M. Hughes with Bill Grace, 2010, “gracious space A practical guide for working better together”*
*The Center for Ethical Leadership www.ethicalleadership.org*
Accessible and Inclusive Community Conversations

At their heart, Community Conversations create opportunities for community members to come together recognizing that adaptive issues cannot be solved alone. Community Conversations are community driven and should have a broad reach. Inviting people and organizations with different experiences, backgrounds, and community connections is essential for identifying strategies and ideas that will be more equitable.

Each choice made while planning a Community Conversation matters for the event to be inclusive, recognize complexities of the community, and be responsive to the community. The most important initial choice is who is on the planning team. Identify who in the community is not typically heard from and use the planning of the event as an opportunity to build new relationships and partnerships. Planning teams are more likely to be aware of possible barriers to meaningful engagement and participation in the event if they include individuals who hold relationships with the community members they want to engage.

Creating spaces that are welcoming, accessible, and result in a sense of belonging for all participants is a critical aspect of the Community Conversation. The accessibility checklist (appendix 7.2) and language access resources (appendix 7.3) provide detailed considerations for physical space, interpretation, translation, accommodations, and supports needed for all participants to meaningfully participate.
Roles and Responsibilities

In every Community Conversation there are four main roles: the planning team, facilitator, table host and participants. Here are descriptions of each role:

Planning Team

A Community Conversation provides an opportunity for a diverse team of individuals to work together each bringing knowledge, skills and resources to plan an accessible, engaging and asset focused event. The planning team organizes the meeting, finds the meeting space, invites and brings together a group of people to share their values, experiences, and ideas. The planning team also identifies table hosts, supports the harvest and follows up with event participants.

Facilitator

The facilitator is the person who facilitates or runs the actual event. The facilitator can also be a member of the planning team. The facilitator should remain neutral and refrain from sharing personal views. They will welcome attendees, explain the process, keep track of time, move the dialog along, and facilitate the harvest at the end of the event. During the harvest, the facilitator may record all the ideas shared by writing on poster paper or someone else can be asked to do this note taking.

Table Host

The table hosts are people who stay at a table to facilitate the small group discussions. They are responsible for taking notes conversation, encouraging everyone to share, and keeping the conversation on topic and focused on building relationships and solutions.

Tip for Facilitating. Think of facilitating is simply guiding participants through a process. You can build trust and help participants to feel safe enough to learn together and engage honestly by:

- Remaining neutral
- Orienting your body and attention towards whomever is speaking
- Acknowledging participants so they know that they have been heard.
- Asking clarifying questions
- Summarizing key points heard
- Reframing issues as needed

Participant

Participants are at a Community Conversation to share their knowledge, experience, lived reality and opinions. Participants should be willing to follow community agreements set by the facilitators and be willing to engage in the process.
Identifying who to invite

Community Conversations are a powerful way to get to know different parts of your community and to learn from stakeholders you usually don’t hear from. System mapping can help you identify partners in your community to engage. By thinking about your community as a system and exploring that system and the different systems that intersect with it, you will identify more and different stakeholders to engage. At its core, system mapping helps you to identify the resources and relationships necessary for meaningful inclusion to take root and flourish. Utilize the System Mapping Tool (appendix 7.4) to identify the key stakeholder voices you need to include in your Community Conversation.

After you’ve identified individuals and organizations you want to invite, think about the individuals or groups who could help you reach those people. Ask yourself, “Who knows the organizations or people we want to invite?”

It is important to deliberately extend personal invitations to people and organizations who may not readily see their connection to inclusive practices. As individuals commit to attending, circle back to your Community Conversation Mapping tool to see whose voice is still missing. It is essential to engage diverse perspectives and every effort should be made to hear from those you don’t typically hear from.

A sample invitation (appendix 7.5) is included. Consider using an electronic invitation platform to help track confirmed attendees. If your Community Conversation is co-hosted, we encourage you to use the logos of any key partners.

Choosing a Date, Time and Venue

Date, time and location matters. One of the most important factors in planning the Community Conversation is choosing a date and time that works for the people you want to attend. That may be an evening or a weekend. You know your community best. When considering a date make sure to not conflict with any holidays or other events. Most local education agencies and schools also have calendars you can check.

Community Conversations are more engaging when the location and set up are inviting, accessible and functional. Venues do not need to cost money. Libraries and Community Centers are often free or available for a very reasonable rate. When choosing a space take into account the following factors:

- Is the location well known in the community?
- Does the space feel safe and comfortable for participants?
- Is it near public transportation?
- Is the space accessible?
- Does the space allow for childcare to be offered?

Tips for expanding attendance at the event.

- Invite people personally and encourage others on the planning team to do the same.
- Contact people on your email lists or via social media.
- Set clear expectations in the invitation.
- Ask if people prefer to be contacted through email or text for follow up communications.
- Send a reminder email or text to attendees one week before and then again one day before.
- When possible, try to invite people at least 6 weeks before the event.
Choosing a Facilitator

A Community Conversation facilitator does not need to be an expert on inclusion. They are there to guide the conversation, ensure all voices are heard, honor the diversity of perspectives and capture what is being shared. Choose someone who is comfortable presenting and has experience guiding large group conversations. The facilitator will frame the event so people will understand why they were invited, provide a brief overview of the event, present the PowerPoint slides, keep track of time, and capture key points and ideas shared throughout the evening. Often the facilitator will also be part of the planning team.

Choosing Table Hosts

As your list of confirmed attendees begins to form, identify who you could ask to be a table host. Prioritize people who hold relationships in the community and who may have experience guiding small group conversations. Table hosts will ensure all participants have the opportunity to participate, model to participants how to write notes and draw pictures on the poster paper and will redirect the conversation when necessary.

Setting up the Space

Greeting Table
Community Conversations are intentionally designed to help build relationships and make connections. Greeting participants as they arrive with a personal welcome, having a sign-in sheet and introducing participants to others in the room will help everyone feel welcome and included.

Table Size
Most venues will come with tables and chairs. Ideally the tables will be round, but rectangular will work too. Aim to have 4-6 people per table. No more than 8. You want enough people to have a meaningful discussion, but not so many that everyone doesn’t have time to share or feel comfortable speaking.

Layout
Tables and chairs should have enough space so that people can move around easily, including those who use mobility devices. People should be able to easily access food and restrooms. They should also be able to hear individuals at their table without being too distracted by conversations at neighboring tables. Remember to use your accessibility checklist (appendix 7.2) when setting up your space!

Tip: Preparing your event to be accessible will benefit everyone and minimize the need for special accommodations. By doing so you make sure everyone:

- Feels welcome
- Can get to facilities and navigate within them
- Is able to fully benefit from the event
- Can make use of equipment and software, if holding a virtual event
Childcare

It is important that participants feel comfortable and welcome. Consider bringing a couple of plants from home to add some greenery to the space. Use chart paper on tables and scatter additional colorful post-it notes and markers so that people can draw and take notes. Keep things simple at the tables so people have space to write things down, draw pictures, and have snacks if they want to.

Food

When you gather people always have food. When deciding on what food to provide, consider the time of day, how many people are coming and what matters to families in your community. You can provide simple snacks, baked goods and beverages or a simple meal. Make sure to inquire if your venue has any limitations around food, so you can work within their parameters. Consider providing options for people who may have food intolerances and allergies. Be sure food and beverages are set up before people begin to arrive.

Decorating

An important consideration for people to be able to participate is offering an option that would allow them to bring their children with them to the event. That can mean offering childcare and/or allowing participants to have their children with them. You can work with other partners in your community to offer this service. The accessibility checklist (appendix 7.2) provides additional details.
Community Conversation Facilitator Guide

Effective facilitation is pivotal to the success of a Community Conversation. A facilitator frames the importance of the event, guides participants through the process, and harvests the ideas, connections, and themes.

Throughout the event it is critical that the facilitator is neutral and a good listener. When participants and table hosts share out, the facilitator will reflect back clearly what has been expressed so participants know that they have been heard. Reflecting back to the group what has been shared helps identify patterns and insights that have been brought forward from the discussion. When a facilitator shows they are listening and people feel heard, they are building trust.

Participants should arrive to a welcoming space that is accessible and comfortable. Ensure participants are greeted as they arrive and sign in at a registration table so you know who attended and how to keep in contact with them after the event. Encourage participants to help themselves to food and refreshments, find a seat and settle in.

Event Protocol and Agenda

The Inclusionary Practices Project Community Conversation Event Protocol with Annotated Agenda are in appendix 7.6. Ideally, Community Conversations should be held in person to strengthen connections and relationships. If in-person gatherings are not possible, a Virtual Event Protocol and Agenda is included in appendix 7.7. An event protocol is the roadmap for the Community Conversation. The agenda will give participants a clear understanding of how the Community Conversation will go and ensure they know what to expect. A Community Conversation should always begin and end on time to respect everyone’s time.

Group Agreements

Group agreements are a useful tool to make sure participants have a common understanding of how interactions will take place during the Community Conversation. Group Agreements will help people stay focused on building relationships, listening, and learning from other perspectives. They also gives the facilitator something to refer back to should any conflict arise.

Allow for time to review and ask participants to accept the Group Agreements before the event gets underway. Begin by proposing this set of agreements, which are also available as table tents in appendix 7.8. Ask everyone to follow the group agreements during your time together.

Suggested Group Agreements

1. Be inclusive allowing everyone to share.
2. Share from your own perspective using “I” statements.
3. Listen to build understanding, learning from others.
4. Practice self-care. Attend to your personal needs.
5. Respect confidentiality, personal information that is shared should remain in the meeting room.
6. Enjoy the time together!
Diamond Pattern of Interaction

Within the Community Conversation there will be opportunities for interactivity and multiple modes of engagement accessible to diverse participants. The facilitator will guide participants through a process of individual reflection, small and large group discussion and integration of learning. This process is modeled after the Diamond Pattern of Interaction. By using the Diamond Pattern of Interaction participants will have the opportunity to share their ideas and reflections verbally, through writing and drawing. A diamond pattern of interaction is “a sequence of individual work, followed by structured sharing, ending with an opportunity for individual integration of new ideas” (Wellman & Lipton, 2017, p. 86).

![Image Description: A graphic representation of the Diamond Pattern of Interaction by Lipton and Wellman. The interactions include solo think time, small group processing, large group processing and individual integration of learning.]

Clean and Open Discussion Questions

Clean and open questions do not have the opinions of the planning team embedded in them and allow for multiple perspectives to be expressed. They do not lend themselves to a simple yes or no answer. They allow people to take an opportunity to think and reflect on their answer. Organizing the Community Conversation around clean and open questions will allow participants to see what in the system has potential rather than simply focusing on the problems.

Three discussion questions have been developed for your Community Conversation. One question is for Gracious Space and the remaining for small and large group discussions. These questions provide opportunities for learning rather than simply gathering information. Utilizing these questions will help develop a broader and more comprehensive understanding of what is important to the members of a community and how to achieve more equitable outcomes.
Gracious Space Question:
- What wisdom do you bring to this conversation?

Discussion Questions:
- What does inclusion and belonging look like, sound like, and feel like to you?
- What relationships are vital to develop and strengthen so that students can thrive as learners, future employees, and community members?
- As we move through this work together, what are we missing?

Slide Deck
The IPP Community Conversation slide deck is included in Appendix 7.9. Additional slides can be added to fit the event and community as appropriate. If slides are added, keep in mind that it will add time to the event.

Harvesting, Evaluation and Closing
During the last portion of the event the facilitator will take the opportunity to reflect on what was heard, and elevate key ideas, concerns, etc. that were brought up. This is called harvesting. Facilitators can begin the harvest by making connections with statements like:
- “It sounds like there was a lot of great discussion. Let’s think about next steps we can take as a community.”
- “What did you hear today that resonates with you?”
- “What ideas did you hear that we can work together and take action on?”

As ideas and next steps are discussed, make sure the facilitator or a notetaker writes them down.

The facilitator is also responsible for bringing the conversation to a close at the end of the harvest. Facilitators should ask participants to fill out a Community Conversation “Ticket Out the Door” Form, which is included in Appendix 7.12. Participants should expect to receive a follow up communication within 2 to 3 weeks after the event sharing a summary of themes that were heard and the next steps that were identified. Ask participants to leave all notes, drawings, and evaluation forms on the table. Facilitators and members of the Planning Team should collect all those items from each table to further harvest ideas from the event.

Tip: Consider taking pictures of any drawings participants make. When you send a followup communication sharing a summary of themes you can include some of those pictures to illustrate what ideas came out of the event.

Image Description: A sample drawing from The Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Conference, September 2018, depicting a school building listing the elements of an inclusive school community including student centered, engaging and informing, and offering different ways to communicate with families.
After the Community Conversation

Community Conversations are a great way to build excitement around inclusion and the importance of inclusive practices to the community. Some people will feel excited and ready to take action. Others may feel overwhelmed at the work ahead. After the event, bring the Planning Team back together to review all the notes and drawings from the Community Conversation and reflect on what was shared. A Harvest Tool is included in Appendix 7.11 to help the Planning Team members clearly identify action steps, strategies, partners needed and other items to ensure action is taken on what was heard during the Community Conversation. The Harvest Tool will also help to organize what to share in the event summary to send to participants. The event summary should include ideas and information harvested from the conversations as well as the identified next steps. Share the summary with all participants, people who were interested but unable to attend, school and district leaders, school board, parks and recreation, city council and all other stakeholder groups who would be interested in the community’s perspective on inclusion. Feel free to include pictures of drawings, or specific quotes that were shared at the event. You want to show all the great work that happened at your Community Conversation!

The Planning Team should also evaluate how the event went. Reflect on the planning process and the actual event. A “Reflection on Your IPP Community Conversation” form is included in Appendix 7.13.

Taking Action

Follow up is critical after the Community Conversation. Taking action on issues that were identified reinforces to families and community members that their voices were heard and their feedback matters. Aim to take action on 2 or 3 of the ideas raised at the Community Conversation that were identified through harvesting utilizing strategies and partners outlined in the Harvest Tool.

Don’t be surprised if people want to come together again. Community Conversations should continue. Once you begin to build relationships, you want to tend to them and strengthen them. We are stronger when our families, schools and community work together!

Final Thoughts

This toolkit was developed with the intention of giving you the tools needed to hold your own conversation. The intent is to give you a specific roadmap and examples of what it could look like, sound like and feel like to bring together people who live and work in your community to address challenging issues that we are all faced with each day. It is not exhaustive and you know your community best so trust your instincts. We have put together some additional resources for you as well that are listed at the end of this document. The most important thing is to take the first step and decide to hold a Community Conversation. We are confident that it will be a rewarding experience for you and everyone who attends. Your commitment to inclusion is to be commended and know that there are many others that support your efforts.
References and Resources


Launching Inclusive Efforts Through Community Conversations. [https://www.tennesseeworks.org/communityconversations/](https://www.tennesseeworks.org/communityconversations/)


APPENDIX
Inclusionary Practices Project
Community Conversation Planning Tool

Planning Timeline

4-5 months before
Organize your planning team and system map

2-3 months before
Find your venue and choose the date and time of your event; decide on food, decide on decorating, choose questions, make childcare plans

6 weeks before
Invite participants through personal invitations and by distributing flyers, posters, press releases, e-invitations, and social media announcements

2-4 weeks before
Gather all needed materials such as decorations, placemats, markers, pens, nametags, etc.

1 week before
Visit the venue for final check. Make sure any technology you plan to use functions and the planned layout will work in the space

Day of the event
Give yourself plenty of time to arrive, set up, and problem solve any glitches that may occur

1-7 days after
Follow up with participants through email, thanking them for attending

2-3 weeks after
Bring Planning Team together to harvest what was shared at the event. Send event summary to all participants and other stakeholder groups who would be interested in the community’s perspective on inclusion. Follow up with any participants who offered to assist with a specific idea or initiative

Materials Needed

- Poster sized paper
- Post it notes
- Markers
- Name tags
- Computer and Projector

Venue Planning Checklist

☐ Accessibility

☐ Equipment and Electrical needs

☐ Registration Table

☐ Childcare
Accessibility Checklist

Creating physical spaces that are welcoming and result in a sense of belonging is an important aspect of the Community Conversation. Each choice that we make matters when it comes to creating an inclusive space.

PLANNING AN IN-PERSON GATHERING

When planning a gathering of people who will be in a physical space together, there are many considerations to ensure that people will feel welcome and safe. As you consider different aspects of your event, use the following checklist to guide your preparations.

1. Ensuring the Space is Accessible for All People:
   - The meeting space itself is accessible for mobility device users.
   - Everyone should have a choice of where they would like to be in the space. Make sure that all parts of the room and all tables are able to be accessed by anyone using a mobility device. That means that there should be spaces between tables and isles of chairs.
   - Make sure that power cords and cables are not in a space that people will need to navigate to avoid tripping hazards and clearing floor space for people using mobility devices.
   - The lighting can be adjusted, either dimmed or reduced.
   - Leave space in the room where people could choose to pace or stand.
   - Be certain that parking spaces and restrooms are ADA accessible.
   - Ensure that service animals are welcomed in the space.

2. Planning for an Inclusive Event:
   - Before setting a date for the event, check the calendar and be mindful of significant cultural holidays, there are many online calendar resources to guide planning.
   - Ensure that any breaks are long enough for all people to meet their needs. Typically, 15 minutes is adequate but consider if longer breaks are needed.
   - Assure that microphones are available and are used by all speakers. This is critical to be certain that everyone has the opportunity to hear what is being said in the space.
   - Advise attendees what accommodations are being provided ahead of time and let people know that they can request others as needed. Allow people to request preferential seating if appropriate for your venue.
   - Partner with your school district to provide interpreters for language access supports and plan for the following:
     - Share information about the event with the interpreter ahead of time including subject matter and number of participants.
     - Ask interpreters how they would like to communicate with the presenter.
     - Be sure the seating is arranged appropriately for the participant and interpreter.
   - If you are serving food be certain that dietary restrictions are taken into consideration.
3. Making Materials Accessible:

- Use dark text on white backgrounds or white text on a dark background for electronic materials. This holds true for presentations (i.e. PowerPoint) or for websites as well.
- Make certain that any links in electronics materials are clearly identified.
- If you have printed materials, make some available in a large font size (22 or larger) and PowerPoint slides should be printed full page.
- Use a sans serif font (e.g. Arial)
- Find ways to make your materials available electronically during your event. As an example, making presentations accessible on a website.
- Videos should be accessible with closed captioning.
- Visual cues on a printed or electronic agenda can be helpful.
- If using nametags, encourage participants to include their preferred pronouns (i.e. she/her, he/him, they/them)
- Consider if materials need to be translated to make them accessible to people attending your event. Partner with your school district to make certain that you understand the needs of your community and are providing accessible materials.

4. During the Event:

- Avoid activities that exclude people. For example, asking people to stand or to raise their hands may exclude some in attendance.
  - Consider ways to elicit participation of the group that are inclusive of everyone. As an example, have someone who will circulate with a wireless microphone to allow people to comment or ask questions. This person could also convey questions or answers from participants.
- Be mindful of people who may use a device for communication.
  - Allow time for responses and discuss ahead of the meeting beginning how they would like to signal that they have something to say.
  - Make the agenda and questions available ahead of time.
- Use real time captioning if it is available to you.
- If interpreters are being used for language access during the event consider the following:
  - Presenters Allow time for participants to process critical information.
  - Avoid jargon, acronyms and metaphors.
  - Provide an opportunity to offer feedback to you regarding the accessibility of the training including feedback from interpreters.
PLANNING A VIRTUAL GATHERING

If you are planning an online or virtual event, there are some additional accessibility principles that you should keep in mind.

1. Ensuring the Space is Accessible for All People:
   - Evaluate the accessibility features of online platforms. Some things to look for include the following:
     - Allows you to customize the font size in the chat.
     - Allows for use of a screen reader.
     - Platform can be navigated with just the keyboard.
     - The platform allows for closed captioning (either internally or third party).
     - An interpreter can be visible no matter who is speaking.
   - Make certain the links to join the meeting are available in the meeting invitation.
   - Send the invitation early enough to plan for accommodations for participants, including captioning.

2. Making Materials Accessible for a Virtual Meeting:
   - Any documents or video shared on a screen should follow the principles of accessibility of materials.
   - Consider distributing slides and other materials in advance of the meeting.

3. During the Event:
   - Make certain the meeting starts and ends on time.
   - Encourage everyone to use their video when possible.
   - Model use of pronouns in name displayed (i.e. Jane Smith (they/them)).
   - Facilitators should avoid lighting the limits participants ability to see you clearly (i.e. lamp or window light).
   - Ensure that everyone can hear all participants and speakers. Ask people to mute their microphones when not speaking.
   - Ask participants to state their names before speaking.
   - Explain accessible ways of participating (i.e. using raise hands feature on the platform).
   - Have someone assigned to monitor the chat.
   - Describe any visuals that were not provided ahead of time.

Note: This accessibility checklist is not intended to be exhaustive. It is intended to provide guidance about how to make events more accessible to a broad group of stakeholders. Collaboration with your community is critical and through those relationships you will learn what additional supports are important for your events.
COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILIES WITH LANGUAGE ACCESS NEEDS

TIPS FOR EDUCATORS WHEN USING A QUALIFIED INTERPRETER (TELEPHONIC OR IN-PERSON)

OVERVIEW

WHY SHOULD I, OR MY SCHOOL/DISTRICT, USE A QUALIFIED INTERPRETER?

Communicating effectively with students and families is fundamental to your role as an educator and requires the assistance of a qualified interpreter when families speak a primary language other than English, sometimes referred to as Limited English Proficient (LEP) families, or are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (HOH) who might communicate using American Sign Language (ASL) or some other system of visual communication.

Schools and districts have a civil rights obligation to ensure meaningful communication with families with language access needs. Qualified interpreters help educators strengthen family-school relationships while fulfilling these obligations.

Quick Resources to Learn More About:
Communication modes for Deaf/HOH families: See these resources from the National Deaf Center and PEPNet2:
https://www.nationaldeafcenter.org/resources
https://www.nationaldeafcenter.org/resource/sign-language-interpreters-introduction

Legal obligations for language access: See these resources from the Department of Education—Office of Civil Rights:
https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ellresources.html; NAD—Section 504 and ADA Obligations of Public Schools: https://www.nad.org/resources/education/k-12-education/section-504-and-ada-obligations-of-public-schools/

GETTING STARTED: UNDERSTAND YOUR SCHOOL/DISTRICT'S PROCESS FOR ACCESSING INTERPRETERS

Your school or district must take steps to ensure qualified interpreters are available to assist you in communicating with families when needed. That may include having individuals on staff who are qualified to interpret, having a contract with outside agencies that provide in-person interpreters, and maintaining an account with a telephonic interpreter. Remember: Even if your school or district has qualified interpreters on staff or on-call for in-person support, you will always be prepared if you have a telecommunications option as a back-up, especially to provide coverage for a range of languages and when time is of the essence. For some Deaf or HOH families, a regular phone call is not an option. You may communicate with them via text, email, or Telephone Relay Service. Please ask families what works best for them.

Many districts have written guidelines for accessing interpretation services for families who use a primary language other than spoken English. Determine who in your school district is responsible for the provision of
language interpreting services. In some schools, it is the English Language Learners (ELL) department and for others it may be the Americans with Disabilities Act/504 coordinator or some other office. Please remember that even if the student speaks English and does not receive language learner services, the ELL department is a resource for families who need interpretation in languages other than English. Similarly, the special education department can be a resource for families of students with disabilities.

For Deaf/HOH families, the district’s Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Program, DSHS’ Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH), or the Washington School for the Deaf can provide resources and referrals to qualified interpreters. See: ODHH—https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/office-deaf-and-hard-hearing; Washington School for the Deaf—http://www.wsd.wa.gov/outreach/

Providing annual training for school staff on working with interpreters of all kinds is a valuable, proactive step to ensuring effective communication when needs arise.

Additional Tips:

- Find and review your school or district’s guidelines on accessing interpretation for families with a primary language other than English or those who are Deaf/HOH.
- If your school relies on bilingual or Deaf/HOH staff to provide interpretation, check to be sure that the staff person is familiar with the terminology that will come up in the conversation you are planning, and understands the role and responsibilities of serving as an interpreter. (See below for information on the role of the interpreter.)
- For in-person interpretation (generally preferable), plan to schedule in advance. Similarly, interpreters for Deaf and HOH families need to be pre-arranged.
  - When working with LEP families, you can call a telephonic interpreter while the family member is with you in person and have the interpreter on speaker-phone, if your phone has this feature. You can also call a telephonic interpreter and ask them to initiate the call to the family. If you receive a call from a family and need to connect with an interpreter, you can put the first call on hold, call the interpreter service, and then merge the two calls.
  - Educators can usually access telephonic interpreters in more than 100 languages. To reach telephonic interpreters, you will generally need the interpreter service toll-free number and your account number. You will be prompted to provide your name and the language you need. Do not hesitate to ask for a few minutes to brief the interpreter on the matter that you will be discussing.
  - When working with Deaf/HOH families, determine the family’s preferred method of communication. The Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 give deference to these preferences, as well as provide for choices of interpreters. If the family prefers meeting by phone, families and schools can connect immediately through the telecommunication relay service accessed by dialing 1-800-833-6384. For in-person meetings where no interpreter is on site, schools can contract, for a fee and with pre-arrangement, for video remote interpreting (VRI), where an off-site interpreter can see and hear all of the participants in the meeting and provide language access.
INTERPRETATION VENDORS ON CONTRACT WITH THE STATE OF WASHINGTON*

WA State Contracts can be found at:
https://des.wa.gov/services/contracting-purchasing

- In-person, spoken interpreter services for languages other than English are listed in the master contract:

- Telephone based interpreter services for languages other than English are listed in the master contract:

- Phone interpretation vendors currently on contract with the state of Washington:
  - CTS Language Link https://www.language.link/ 1 (360) 823-2287 $0.62 per minute
  - Linguistica International www.linguisticainternational.com 1 (866) 908-5744 $0.57 per minute
  - Voiance Language Services www.voiance.com 1 (866) 742-9080 $0.65 per minute

- Contracts for in-person interpreters for Deaf/HOH families:
  https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/odhh/sign-language-interpreter-contracts-and-resources-program-0

- Telecommunication relay services for Deaf/HOH families:
  https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/odhh/telecommunication-relay-services

- Video remote interpreting services for Deaf/HOH families. Sample vendors but not necessarily on contract or endorsed by OEO: https://signlanguage.com/vri/; and https://www.zvrs.com/about/faqs/faq-for-vri/

- Communication facilitator services for Deaf/HOH families:
  https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/odhh/communication-facilitator

DSHS has the authority to manage the statewide sign language interpreter contracts through its Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

*Schools and districts may be eligible to use vendors listed in the state of Washington master contracts. Check with your district to see if they have signed a Master Contracts Usage Agreement, https://des.wa.gov/services/contracting-purchasing/master-contracts-usage-agreement. They can also hire/work with qualified interpreters through other local organizations or with staff members who are qualified to work as interpreters.

MANAGING COMMUNICATION THROUGH INTERPRETERS (TELEPHONIC, RELAY, OR IN-PERSON)

As an educator in a public school, communicating with the diverse families in your school community is a key part of your job. When you need to communicate with a family that does not speak or understand English or uses ASL or another language to communicate, you will need to work with an interpreter unless you can communicate education-related information proficiently in the family’s language. Even when you can communicate to a family directly in their primary language, you will need an interpreter if others are joining the conversation and they do not also speak that language. Follow these steps to make each conversation with an interpreter as effective as possible:
PRE-PLANNING FOR INTERPRETED CONVERSATIONS:

1. **Know when you will need an interpreter.** Inform families early, often, and in a language they can understand, of their right to have interpretation for communicating with the school or district. Keep track of the need for an interpreter once it is identified, and check your records before making a call or scheduling a meeting. (See if your school or district has a process for indicating the need for interpretation for a student’s family member.)

2. **If at all possible, request an interpreter who is the same gender and age, with a similar background to the family with language access needs.** Realize that getting closer alignment to the family member’s identity can build comfort and rapport. Even when this is not possible, recognize that the differences could be barriers for sharing confidential information or expressing opinions fully.

3. **Schedule meetings to allow for twice the time generally expected.** Interpreted conversations generally take longer not only because of the time taken in the interpretation, but also to allow time for families and educators to ask questions, check for understanding, avoid miscommunication, and prevent feelings of being rushed.

4. **Brief the interpreter on the topic of the conversation and provide any documents that may be reviewed during the meeting.** Share documents with the family, too. Both families and interpreters benefit from getting documents as soon as possible.

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE INTERPRETED CONVERSATION:

1. **Provide families with a copy of the INTERPRETATION SUPPORT TIPS CARD,** designed to help them feel confident in asking for clarification during an interpreted conversation. Families might feel hesitant to interrupt; at the start of the conversation, welcome families to use the card and pause the meeting as needed.

2. **Clarify the expected role of the interpreter:**
   - Explain your expectation that the interpreter will interpret what each person says without adding or removing information or providing the interpreter’s own opinions or insights.
   - Ask the interpreter to let you know if the interpreter or the family does not understand something you have said.
   - During the conversation, if it appears that the interpreter is only summarizing what is being said, you can refer to the expectations shared at the beginning of the meeting and ask that the interpretation be given fully. Check to see if time is the barrier.
   - If it appears the interpreter is being asked for, or is offering his or her own explanation in response to a family’s question, ask the interpreter to interpret the family’s question for you so that you can respond directly as the educator.
   - If you are working with a bilingual co-worker who has been trained as an interpreter to serve in this role as needed, take some time to clarify for everyone involved in the conversation that the co-worker will only act as an interpreter in the conversation, not provide guidance or make decisions.

DURING THE INTERPRETED CONVERSATION—MONITORING YOUR OWN COMMUNICATION FOR CLARITY AND TIMING:

- **Speak directly with and face the family members.** Focus the conversation on them and the student. Let the interpreter serve as your voice. Note that interpreters for Deaf/HH families might sit next to the educators at the meeting so that the families can glance at you and pick up nonverbal cues and expressions. See—National Institutes of Health, 10 Tips for Using a Sign Language Interpreter: [https://www.edi.nih.gov/blog/communities/10-tips-using-sign-language-interpreter](https://www.edi.nih.gov/blog/communities/10-tips-using-sign-language-interpreter)

- **Avoid personal side conversations with the interpreter during the professional situation.** He or she is working as a means of language and communication transmission, not as a meeting participant.

- **Use simple language and avoid metaphors, slang, abbreviations, and technical jargon.**

- **Be yourself, using first person language and avoiding phrases like “Tell her” and “Explain to them.”**
- **Speak in your normal tone and pace, open to feedback from interpreters.** For interpreters assisting families in a language other than English, expect to stop and pause for the interpreter to catch up with your speech. Interpreters for Deaf/HH families usually prefer that you speak at your normal pace. Know that interpreters will direct you to pause or slow down, if needed. They might also ask you to repeat or spell an unfamiliar word.
- **Try to avoid acronyms,** but if you must use them — define them clearly and repeat the definition later in the conversation.
- **Relax.** If you feel uncomfortable or worried, check in with the family to ask how and what you can improve.

**DURING THE INTERPRETED CONVERSATION: CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING:**

- **Check in regularly with families for understanding** and let them explain what they understand after each idea or allow time for them to summarize the conversation.
- **When discussing technical terms, be sure to define them clearly.** Ask families to explain back to you what they understood when covering essential information.
- **Offer families opportunities to ask questions throughout the conversation.**
- **Share with families that they can end the interpretation or request another interpreter if they feel like their needs are not being met.**
- **Listen carefully.** If the family does not respond the way you expect given what you have shared, check for understanding.
- **Ask questions** if anything is unclear to you about what the family understands or is trying to communicate.

**FOLLOWING UP AFTER THE MEETING:**

Seek feedback from the family about how they felt the interpretation process went so that you can decide if a follow-up meeting is necessary and the interpreter should be used again at future meetings. Family feedback can help identify areas for further training for interpreters and/or staff who work with interpreters.

**CONTACT US IF WE CAN BE OF ASSISTANCE WITH YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT LANGUAGE ACCESS:**

Governor’s Office of the Education Ombuds
Toll-free phone: 1-866-297-2597 *Phone interpreter services available.
Email: oeoinfo@gov.wa.gov   Website: [http://www.oeo.wa.gov](http://www.oeo.wa.gov)
Image Description: A graphic representation of the Community Conversation Stakeholders including families, schools, community based organizations, agencies and local business representatives and the different groups that reside within each of those categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural Community Partners</th>
<th>Organizations with connections</th>
<th>Best means of engagement (Phone call/ email)</th>
<th>Relationship to the issue?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Families of students with disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Families of students without disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>People with Disabilities</td>
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<td>Educators</td>
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<td>Out of school providers</td>
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<td>Community based organizations</td>
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<td>Business leaders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faith Based Community Leaders</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

We invite you to a Community Conversation about how our schools and community can increase inclusion and belonging for youth with disabilities.

- Join us for a community wide conversation as we discuss how to schools and our community can be more inclusive and increase opportunities.

- We want to hear from anyone connected to youth in our community...students, parents, educators, employers, organizations and agencies. All are welcome to attend.

- Accommodations and interpretation are available upon request. Please contact [name and contact information] by [date].

replace with LOGO

[NAME AND/OR ORGANIZATION]
[Contact Information – email, website, phone]

Image Description: An image of a sample invitation to a Community Conversation.
Inclusionary Practices Project Community Conversation Protocol

This protocol is designed to elicit input from a diverse group of stakeholders (e.g., students, families, community partners, educators, business leaders) to build a shared understanding of, and commitment to, Inclusion. Each Community Conversation will last approximately 2 hours.

Goals

A Community Conversation creates an opportunity for participants to reflect on:

1. Role of inclusion in helping young people with disabilities to develop as learners, future employees, and community members
2. Relationships and understanding needed for inclusive practices work to be successful

Engaging families and community members in a Community Conversation will help you understand:

- People’s aspirations for inclusive practices.
- People’s concerns about inclusive practices.
- How people think and talk about inclusion in relation to the community.
- What changes are needed.
- What people believe can be done, and who they can trust to take action.

Planning Considerations

- Forming a planning team
- Identifying and recruiting participants
- Identifying a facilitator
- Choosing table hosts
- Accessible Location
- Accessible date and time
- Planning for childcare
- Translation and interpretation
- Materials needed- poster paper, sticky notes, markers, pens/pencils
- Any displayed materials (i.e., PowerPoint) use strong contrast in text and background
- Food and refreshments

Facilitation Strategies

- Setting up the space
  a. Consider accessibility (all parts of the room are accessible for everyone), as well as how the space looks and feels
  b. Microphones are available
  c. Questions are available in print on tables (and translated if appropriate)
  d. Prioritize participants representing diversity of different roles and realities. Families, Educators, Community members, Community Based Organizations, Business leaders, etc. Encourage people to spread out across tables so there are mixed roles represented.

- Establishing group agreements and creating a space of belonging
  a. Introduction question
  b. Present group agreements

- Creating opportunities for interactivity and multiple modes of engagement accessible to diverse participants - individual reflection, small group discussion, large group discussion, integrate learning - Diamond Pattern of Interaction (Lipton/Wellman)

- Allow people to participate verbally, through writing, and drawing.
- Make sure table host helps to take notes and report out
- Ensuring there are clear opportunities for follow-up (e.g., e-mails, text messages, or communications from the Local Education Agency)
Agenda

1. **Welcome and framing – slides 1-4** (10 minutes)
   a. Review meeting goals and plan for today’s session
   i. Share information about the Inclusionary Practices Project
   ii. Discuss what inclusion means to you
   iii. Get your thoughts and advice
   b. Group Agreements

2. **Introductions – slide 5** (15 minutes)
   a. Share your name and your connection to our community.
   b. What wisdom do you bring to this conversation?

3. **Share information about the Community Conversation Process – slide 6** (5 minutes)

4. **Share information about the Inclusionary Practices Project – slides 7 - 9** (5 minutes)

5. **Small group discussion at tables – slide 10** (20 minutes)
   a. What does inclusion and belonging look like, sound like, and feel like to you?

6. **Large Group Share out – slide 11** (10 minutes)

7. **Share information on school, family and community partnerships. Share information about Inclusion work in District/ school – slides 12 - 14** (10 minutes)

8. **Small group discussion at tables – slide 15** (20 minutes)
   a. What relationships are vital to develop and strengthen so that students can thrive as learners, future employees, and community members?
   b. What are we missing as we move through this work together?

9. **Large Group Share out – slide 16** (10 minutes)

10. **Harvest – slide 17** (10 minutes)
    a. Review of key ideas and concerns by all attendees, followed by a large group discussion of common themes.
    b. What did you hear today that resonates with you?
    c. What ideas did you hear that we can work together to take action on?

11. **Closure, evaluation, thank you, and next steps - slides 18-19** (5 minutes)
Inclusionary Practices Project Community Conversation Virtual Event Protocol

This protocol is designed to elicit input from a diverse group of stakeholders (e.g., students, families, community partners, educators, business leaders) to build a shared understanding of, and commitment to, Inclusion. Each Virtual Community Conversation will last approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes.

Goals

A Community Conversation creates an opportunity for participants to reflect on:

1. Role of inclusion in helping young people with disabilities to develop as learners, future employees, and community members
2. Relationships and understanding needed for inclusive practices work to be successful

Engaging families and community members in a Community Conversation will help you understand:

- People’s aspirations for inclusive practices.
- People’s concerns about inclusive practices.
- How people think and talk about inclusion in relation to the community.
- What changes are needed.
- What people believe can be done, and who they can trust to take action.

Planning Considerations

- Forming a planning team
- Identifying and recruiting participants
- Identifying a facilitator
- Choosing a Virtual Platform
  - Consider capacity limits
- Planning for break out rooms
  - Aim for 5 participants per break out room
  - Identify break out room hosts
- Accessible date and time
- Translation and interpretation
  - Consider accessibility needs for translation and interpretation
    - Close captioning
- PowerPoint uses strong contrast in text and background
- Capture Chat, notes from break out room hosts and notes from harvest

Facilitation Strategies

- Setting up the virtual space
  - Consider accessibility needs for translation and interpretation
    - Close captioning
  - Place participants in small groups in breakout rooms ensuring diversity of different roles. Families, Educators, Community members, Community Based Organizations, Business leaders, etc.
- Establishing group agreements and creating a space of belonging
  - Introduction question
  - Present group agreements
- Creating opportunities for interactivity and multiple modes of engagement accessible to diverse participants - individual reflection, small group discussion, large group discussion, integrate learning - Diamond Pattern of Interaction (Lipton/Wellman). Allow people to participate verbally and through writing in the chat
- Asking the break out room hosts to take notes and report out
- Ensuring there are clear opportunities for follow-up (e.g., e-mails, text messages, or communications from the Local Education Agency)
Break out Room Host Responsibilities

- Create a space where everyone feels comfortable in participating
- Share questions in the chat, so all participants can see them
- Encourage everyone to participate either verbally or by writing in the chat
- Monitor the chat for comments and questions
- Invite the quiet voices to share. Please make sure that everyone feels comfortable in contributing to the conversation. If the conversation diverts to a different topic not quite related to the question, gently bring the conversation back to the question.
- Capture notes from what is shared verbally.
- Share out one or two themes in the large group share out

After the Virtual Event

- Capture a transcript of the chat
- Request break out room hosts to email all notes to the planning team
- Email an evaluation to all participants. The “Ticket Out the Door” document is available as a fillable PDF.
Agenda for Virtual Event

1. Welcome and framing – slides 1-4  (5 minutes)
   a. Review meeting goals and plan for today’s session
      i. Share information about the Inclusionary Practices Project
      ii. Discuss what inclusion means to you
      iii. Get your thoughts and advice
   b. Group Agreements

2. Share information about the Community Conversation Process – slide 5  (3 minutes)

3. Share information about the Inclusionary Practices Project – slides 6 - 8  (7 minutes)

4. Break Out Rooms Round 1 – slides 9  (20 minutes)
   a. Share your name and your connection to our community.
   b. Small group discussion
      What does inclusion and belonging look like, sound like, and feel like to you?

5. Return to Main Room

6. Large Group Share out – slide 10  (10 minutes)

7. Break – slide 11  (5 minutes)

8. Share information on school, family and community partnerships. Share information about Inclusion work in District/ school – slides 12 - 14  (10 minutes)

9. Break Out Room Round 2 - Small group discussion at tables – slide 15  (15 minutes)
   a. What relationships are vital to develop and strengthen so that students can thrive as learners, future employees, and community members?
   b. What are we missing as we move through this work together?

10. Return to Main Room

11. Large Group Share out – slide 16  (10 minutes)

12. Harvest – slide 17  (10 minutes)
   a. Review of key ideas, concerns and common themes shared by all attendees
   b. Ask participants to use the chat function to respond to:
      i. What did you hear today that resonates with you?  
      ii. What ideas did you hear that we can work together to take action on?

13. Closure, evaluation, thank you, and next steps - slides 18-19  (5 minutes)
Image Description: Below are images of the Group Agreements Table Tent Printable Template and Sign In Sheet. Both can be downloaded on the Community Conversation Toolkit page of the IPP Family Engagement Collaborative website at www.FECInclusion.org.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Print Name</th>
<th>Phone / Text #</th>
<th>Email Address</th>
<th>Preferred communication (email and/or text)</th>
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COMMUNITY CONVERSATION GUIDELINES FOR A TABLE HOST

The Goal of the Event: To engage families and the community and to build the relationships necessary for inclusive practices to flourish. Feedback and ideas will help Local Education Agencies and the community to identify actions to take over others and identify issues that should be considered.

The Place: [Insert information about the place / day / time here]. All are welcomed and encouraged to participate in authentic dialogue. We ask everyone to engage in deep listening and shared learning during and after the event.

The Facilitators: [Insert information about those who are hosting the event].

Our Time Together: [Insert the beginning time (i.e., 6:30 p.m.) and the amount of time the meeting will last (i.e., 90 minutes]. Below is a set of guidelines for you to use as a Table Host. Use the guidelines and your good judgment and be aware of how the conversation is going at your table. The intention is to create a space where everyone feels comfortable in participating. All participants are also encouraged to write down their thoughts on the notepaper covering the tables and on note pads provided. Those will be collected for the harvest of ideas.

Discussion questions: These clean and open questions have been formulated to use to understand what matters to our community in a way that more than yes or no answers are required. Encourage all of the people at your table time to share their thoughts.

These questions will be presented to the group by the meeting facilitator, they are below for your reference.

- *What does inclusion and belonging look like, sound like, and feel like to you?*
- *What relationships are vital to develop and strengthen so that students can thrive as learners, future employees, and community members?*
- *As we move through this work together, what are we missing?*

Specific Guidelines:

- Seat 5 to 7 people at a table, including yourself.
- Welcome guests to the table. Encourage people to introduce themselves and their role in the community and reason for attending.
- The facilitator will start with an introduction question. This activity is designed to build trust at the table and gets people oriented to conversation. Following is the question that everyone will be asked.
  
  What wisdom do you bring to this conversation?

- These will be two small group table discussions. Each one is scheduled for 20 minutes of conversation.
- People (including table hosts) are encouraged to write, doodle and draw their key ideas on the table covers. There will also be large sheets of paper and post it notes for people to use on the table.
- Invite the quiet voices, please make sure that everyone feels comfortable in contributing to the conversation. If the conversation diverts to a different topic not quite related to the question, gently bring the conversation back to the question.
- After each of the two rounds of conversation, there will be an opportunity of sharing insights and discoveries in a large group discussion. This is where we may see patterns begin to emerge.

Group Agreements for the Community Conversation:

- Be inclusive allowing everyone to share.
- Share from your own perspective using “I” statements.
- Listen to build understanding, learning from others.
- Practice self-care. Attend to your personal needs.
- Respect confidentiality, personal information that is shared should remain in the meeting room.
- Enjoy the time together!

Write, Doodle, Draw – Being creative on the table covering is encouraged!
Image Description: Below are images of the cover pages of the Community Conversations PowerPoint slide deck for both in-person and virtual events. The documents can be downloaded on the Community Conversation Toolkit page of the IPP Family Engagement Collaborative website at www.FECInclusion.org.
Image Description: Below is an image of the Harvest Tool for the IPP Community Conversation. The document can be downloaded on the Community Conversation Toolkit page of the IPP Family Engagement Collaborative website at www.FECInclusion.org.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Critical partners</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Technical Assistance Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DEVELOPED BY ROOTS OF INCLUSION
Ticket Out the Door

Please tell us about your Community Conversation on Inclusionary Practices!

Today I learned…

What I learned today

Two things I plan to do next

Something I am wondering about

☐ I want to help!

Name

Contact information
Reflection on Your IPP Community Conversation

The purpose of this reflection is to help the facilitator and members of the planning team understand what went well and ways to improve future events.

Date: __________________

Inclusionary Practices Project Community Conversation location:

1. How would you describe your role(s)? (Please check all that apply)
   - [ ] Parent / Family / Caregiver
   - [ ] Administrator
   - [ ] Educator (e.g., teacher, paraeducator, specialist, school psychologist)
   - [ ] Business
   - [ ] Community-based organization
   - [ ] Other ____________________________

2. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased a shared understanding among planning team members and participants</td>
<td>![Sad Face]</td>
<td>![Sad Face]</td>
<td>![Neutral Face]</td>
<td>![Happy Face]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided a respectful space for participants to tell their stories and share ideas about inclusion</td>
<td>![Sad Face]</td>
<td>![Neutral Face]</td>
<td>![Neutral Face]</td>
<td>![Happy Face]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped participants strengthen connections and/or build new relationships</td>
<td>![Sad Face]</td>
<td>![Neutral Face]</td>
<td>![Neutral Face]</td>
<td>![Happy Face]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was accessible to all members of the community</td>
<td>![Sad Face]</td>
<td>![Neutral Face]</td>
<td>![Neutral Face]</td>
<td>![Happy Face]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The event produced ideas and information that will help to improve inclusive practices in our community</td>
<td>![Sad Face]</td>
<td>![Neutral Face]</td>
<td>![Neutral Face]</td>
<td>![Happy Face]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was a great experience that I would recommend to others</td>
<td>![Sad Face]</td>
<td>![Neutral Face]</td>
<td>![Neutral Face]</td>
<td>![Happy Face]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>