Adopting an Inclusive Mindset
(An excerpt from the book introduction)

The first step in designing authentically inclusive educational experiences is believing that it can be done. Adopting an Inclusive Mindset is a necessary prerequisite before one can design educational experiences that can meet all learners’ needs. Educators working to design such experiences do so by embracing and respecting the fact that everyone is unique with different abilities, backgrounds, and preferences. Innovation and progress are accelerated when heterogeneous individuals work together to solve problems. An Inclusive Mindset means that these variances are celebrated as a source of strength not just for each individual, but as a community and society as a whole.

The principle element in inclusive design is flexibility. Providing options promotes learner agency and intrinsically motivates individuals to actively engage in their own learning. Individually, the strategies outlined in the book can help you immediately provide more options to learners. However, collectively, our greater hope is that by experiencing, practicing, and implementing these strategies this furthers your own professional (and personal) goal toward adopting and spreading an Inclusive Mindset. Using these strategies as a whole can help you, your colleagues, and your entire local education agency further a culture where every learner, regardless of ability, cultural background, or demographic group is valued, respected, and honored equally.

CONGRATULATIONS CHRIS BUGAJ!

For more information, please visit: https://inclusive365.com/
Educational experiences involving robots have proven to be an engaging and empowering way to teach expressive language concepts to those who use augmentative/alternative communication while simultaneously improving computer science skills. During the 2020-2021 school year, Instructional Facilitators of Computer Science worked with Classroom Teachers, Speech-Language Pathologists, and other educators to design and deliver educational experiences using robots to practice expressive language with some students with autism. This collaboration will continue and expand in the 2021-2022 school year with the inclusion of some students with intellectual and/or multiple disabilities. Learn more about how robots can be used by everyone to learn language by checking out the following resources.

- VIDEO: Coding for Core: Teaching Language with Block Coding & Robots! AAC in the Cloud 2020
- PODCAST: Using Robots & Coding to Teach Core Words and Support Peer Collaboration
- ARTICLE: Get With The Program(ming)

LIVING & LEARNING SUITE at INDEPENDENCE HIGH SCHOOL

The Independence Living and Learning Suite at Independence High School is an immersive classroom lab for students to gain practical hands-on experience in order to learn critical independent daily living and vocational skills. Some students come to the suite daily to work on skills. Classes can also schedule times to come on a daily or weekly basis.

Each week there are 4 tasks highlighted and set up. When classes arrive the teacher or TA supporting takes a clip board for each student. The clip board contains task analysis data collection for each set up task and a dry erase checklist to use as a schedule. If a student has previously completed the task, staff get data sheets from the folders organized on a counter so that the team is able to track progress.

Living and Learning Lab Task List:

- Changing sheets on the bed
- Making the bed
- Setting the table
- Wiping down a surface
- Sweeping the floor
- Vacuuming the floor
- Sorting Silverware
- Wrapping silverware
- Filling salt and pepper shakers
- Folding and putting away dishcloths
- Folding and putting away towels
- Folding and putting clothes in a dresser
- Manually folding and stocking shirts by size
- Folding shirts using a shirt folding jig and stocking by size
- Placing clothes on a clothes hanger
- Hanging shirts by size
- Putting away Groceries (pantry/fridge/freezer)
- Stocking shelves in the grocery store
- Microwave cooking
- Cleaning a microwave
- Loading a dishwasher
- Unloading a dishwasher and putting away the dishes
- Dusting and polishing furniture
- Assembly first aid kits
- Bagging Groceries

**MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT (MTSS)**

**Positive Behavior Support (PBS)**

Dr. Jason Checca (PBIS Coordinator) and Dr. Lindsay Orme (Social Emotional Learning Specialist) presented *Social Emotional Learning and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports: Aligning and Empowering Schools with MTSS* at the 2021 Administrative Leadership Team Institute. The importance of providing predictable and consistent behavioral expectations along with developing social emotional competencies for children returning to in-person instruction was discussed. School leaders were provided with resources to support staff and students in their implementation of PBIS and SEL.

The PBIS team Consulting Teachers – Dr. Lisa Fillipovich, Laura Stanford, and Erin Hornbeck - are working hard on the development of upcoming professional learning opportunities. The PBIS team has already presented to 63 new PBIS Internal and External Coaches who will support the implementation of PBIS across the district. Check out the MTSS Library where you will find information on upcoming trainings including PBIS Coaches Training, Check-In/Check Out, and Classroom Management Systems as well as Schoology courses and useful PBIS resources!

**Expansion and Enhancements in Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)**

Dr. Lindsay Orme, SEL Specialist, and SEL Consulting Teachers, Devon Becker and Meredith Miller, facilitated professional learning for 200 new elementary and middle school Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) lead teachers through training offered August 2, 5, 10, and 12, 2021. Teachers engaged in learning to develop their understanding of SEL competencies and practices, prepare for effective delivery of the Second Step SEL curriculum, and explore the digital curriculum materials for instruction and family engagement. This cohort of teachers includes the remaining elementary schools, bringing the division
to full implementation at the elementary level (K-5), as well as the first cohort of 13 middle schools implementing at 6-8.

While new schools were onboarding with Second Step, all elementary teachers in schools from cohorts 1 and 2 engaged in asynchronous learning through Schoology to prepare for teaching SEL with the new digital Second Step curriculum, offered August 13 - September 10, 2021. All schools implementing Second Step are now using the same web-based curriculum designed to meet the needs of today’s communities with engaging lesson materials and interactive components.

To support the emphasis on rebuilding community as we begin a new school year, community building resources were created to support schoolwide practices and SEL lessons. The First 30 Days resource provided a framework with administrator, staff, and student actions for rebuilding a strong school community. Weekly morning meeting and advisory lesson slides for the first 4 weeks of school were created and adapted using resources from Second Step, Committee for Children, and Responsive Classroom, for teachers to facilitate with students each day through activities and discussions to promote community, connection, safety, and belonging.

**SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS SUMMER INSTITUTE**

Specialized Programs Summer Institute for new teacher was held August 9th and 10th at Lightridge High School. New teachers in self-contained Autism, ED and ID/MD programs were welcomed to our district with informational professional development in evidence-based practices. The PDs focused on Specialized Reading and Math, Assistive Technology, Curriculum, Social Skills, Mental Health, the Mandt and Ukeru systems and much more! New teachers were excited to begin the new year and the feedback that was received was very positive!

Specialized Programs Summer Institute for Returning Teachers was held virtually on August 13th, 16th and 17th with over 200 teachers and behavioral assistants attending. Summer Institute this year focused on PDs in Specialized Reading and Math, Assistive Technology, Social Skills, Transition, and much more. Many breakout sessions featuring ABA principles and strategies were added this year. Feedback from attendees was very positive and teachers expressed that they were energized and excited to implement some of the new strategies they learned about in their classrooms this coming year.

Dr. Joy Engstrom, Christie McKee, Kelly McGraw, Alison Lyons and Daphne Papageorge worked very diligently to organize Summer Institute this year and it certainly paid off with all the wonderful feedback that was received!!
TRAILSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL provides for UNIQUE LEARNERS

Traveling to the Trail for Unique Learners is a summer program for rising 6th and new 7th graders at Trailside Middle School. Its purpose is to acclimate new students to their school before they enter in the fall. This year, Trailside Middle School introduced a similar program for students who attend Self-contained ID/Autism programs. “Traveling to the Trail for Unique Learners” was a pilot program that focused on transitioning these students to middle school. Its goal was to help them adjust to their new environment while participating in some fun activities.

The impact on students was significant as they became familiar with their new teachers, learned to navigate the new school, attended an APE class, located their lockers, participated in social skills activities and fun hands-on learning opportunities. The hope was that behavioral concerns would be reduced at the start of the new school year since students would be more familiar with their new school environment.

Teachers were also given the opportunity to learn about their new students and their unique needs before school began which allowed for better planning, including environmental set-ups. Because this pilot program was such a success, it will be introduced to other middle schools in our division so that our self-contained program students can have access to the same type of program.

Molly Mosher, self-contained Autism teacher at Trailside Middle School, should be proud of the work she did this summer to establish such a great opportunity for her students!

If you would like more information about this program please contact Daphne Papageorge at daphne.papageorge@lcps.org.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE SERVICES

Student Assistance Specialists provided our Substance Use Trends Training to over 100 Student Health Services Health Clinic Specialists and Assistants on August 23rd. Our team is committed to keeping our staff and parents informed as new substance misuse trends emerge which may impact our youth.
WHERE ARE WE WITH THE VIRGINIA IEP?

Loudoun County Public School (LCPS) was accepted to participate in the Virginia Department of Education’s (VDOE) Virginia IEP cohort for the 2021-2022 school year. Approximately 110 Virginia school divisions and Local Education Agencies use Virginia IEP to make data-driven decisions more efficient, ensure compliance, and provide increased transparency and collaboration. LCPS has joined 16 other school divisions in Cohort V. LCPS officially began using Virginia IEP on July 1, 2021.

As part of the Virginia IEP family, the VDOE provides the following at no cost to the school division.

- IEP process
- Eligibility Process
- FBA/BIP/MDR
- Advanced Reporting

Using the Virginia IEP comes with other benefits as well.

- Virginia IEP is the only IEP system vetted by Virginia Department of Education.
- Virginia IEP seamlessly integrates with all SIS systems in Virginia.
- Consistency in processes and documentation ensures ease of district to district transfer.
- Divisions can have confidence that VDOE is defining regulations within the system.
- There is a community of divisions and division leaders who meet regularly to continually enhance the system.

Beginning in March 2021, end-user staff (special education teachers, related service providers, leads, deans, designees, CT's, SIF's, identified Virginia IEP School-Based Trainers and all OSE administrator's) have had multiple opportunities to attend live synchronous training provided directly by VDOE and the Public Consulting Group (PCG). Throughout the summer, the Office of Special Education (OSE) provided additional synchronous training opportunities for Principals and District Level Administrators. The OSE also created a Virginia IEP Schoology course that is available to all LCPS staff. This course provides a variety of asynchronous trainings, recordings, and resources. At this time over 1400 LCPS staff have enrolled in the Virginia IEP Schoology course!

The OSE is aware that staff will continue to have questions about the Virginia IEP system. Each school has a dedicated Virginia IEP school-based trainer to support staff at the building level with questions and/or concerns. Each school-based trainer participated in a VDOE/PCG led synchronous training. They have also had opportunities to meet with the OSE’s IEP Rescue Team. The IEP Rescue Team continues to offer monthly office hours to school-based trainers and building designees.

In addition to the IEP Process, Eligibility Process, FBA/BIP/MDR and Advanced Reporting, PCG offers additional “add-ons” that can be purchased by the school division. LCPS will also be using the following PCG “add-ons”.

- EDPlan Connect Parent Portal with Remote Signature
- Section 504
- Document Translation
  (Current languages: Spanish, French, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Korean, Russian, German, Gujarati)
- Medicaid Documentation & Billing
- Progress Track

To keep the community and other stakeholders informed about the Virginia IEP, the OSE will be doing a short presentation was provided at the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) meeting on September 8, 2021.
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<td>➢ Disability Awareness History &amp; Education Month: October 2021</td>
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<td>➢ Dyslexia Awareness Month: October 2021</td>
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The **Department of Student Services** welcomes one and all back as we begin the 2021-2022 school year. We are grateful to the dedication and hard work of our staff and administrators. We welcome and are humbled by the opportunity to serve LCPS students and families. We look forward to celebrating this exciting new year and stand ready to face all challenges with positivity and grace as we work to ensure that growth and learning continues for all.

**Welcome back!**