**2019 Mississippi Exemplary Inclusive School Application**

IDEA states that all students with disabilities must receive a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment (LRE). LRE is defined as the setting most like that for peers without disabilities in which a student can succeed with appropriate supports and services.

Inclusion is a philosophy or set of beliefs based on the idea that students with disabilities have the right to be members of classroom communities among students without disabilities, whether they can meet the traditional expectations of those classrooms. Inclusion is based on the notion that all students can make valuable contributions to a class. In most schools, no single service delivery system can exist alone as the means through which inclusive practices are implemented. Instead, there should be a wide variety of service delivery systems emphasizing collaboration that provides appropriate supports to students with special needs.

Exemplary inclusive schools ensure that all students, regardless of their disability, are included in both academic and social aspects of the school as part of their regular practices. The Mississippi Department of Education Office of Special Education is pleased to give your school an opportunity to be recognized for its inclusion of students with disabilities in general education programs. Inclusion, when successful, provides both the child with a disability and their typically developing peers with meaningful educational benefits. The Exemplary Inclusive School Recognition is designed to provide special acknowledgment to schools where the philosophy of inclusion is embraced and provides students with disabilities opportunities in all aspects of academic and extra-curricular activities through creative programming. Special recognition will be awarded to up to two elementary schools, up to two middle schools and up to two high schools based upon entries submitted to the Mississippi Special Education Advisory Panel for review.

The Mississippi Special Education Advisory Panel is composed of individuals concerned with the education of students with disabilities as required by State and Federal regulations. Membership shall include, but not be limited to:

* parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26);
* individuals with disabilities;
* teachers;
* representatives of institutions of higher education that prepare special education and related services personnel;
* state and local education officials, including officials who carry out activities under subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431et seq.);
* administrators of programs of students with disabilities;
* representative of other state agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to students with disabilities;
* representatives of private schools and public charter schools;
* not less than one (1) representative of a vocational, community, or business organization concerned with the provision of transition services to students with disabilities;
* a representative from the state child welfare agency responsible for foster care; and
* representatives from the state juvenile and adult corrections agencies.

**Instructions for Completing the Application**

1. Complete the cover page and include a copy of your district’s current year Performance Determination Report with a “Meets Expectation” designation.
   1. Superintendent’s name and original signature must be included.
2. Write an application report:
   1. Narrative using first person language
   2. Arial 11-point font
   3. Double spaced
   4. Do not exceed **five (5) report pages** (excluding 1 cover page and the Performance Determination Report)
3. Include the following content in the application report:
   1. Summary
      1. How the model was developed
      2. Basic principles of the model
   2. Exemplary Practices
      1. School Vision – Please include your schools vision.
      2. Leadership, Mentorship and Management – Please include practices that build capacity for staff, teachers, and students.
      3. Staff Development – Please include a list of workshops, training, mentoring, and coaching that results in professional growth in exemplary inclusion practices during the year.
   3. Administrative Support of Inclusive Philosophy
      1. How consideration is given to the unique needs of students when scheduling.
      2. How collaboration between general and special education is planned for and implemented.
      3. How teachers participated in school-wide curriculum planning in order to continuously examine and adjust specific inclusive settings to meet the changing needs of a diverse population.
   4. Parental Support
      1. How the school partners with families to continuously improve inclusive practices in your school.
   5. How the school addresses the educational components of physical integration of students with disabilities.
      1. Approach for high incidence disabilities (i.e. Learning Disabled) as well as those with low incidence disabilities.
   6. How the school addresses the educational components of social integration of students with disabilities.
      1. Methods for students with emotional, behavioral, and/or cognitive concerns should be emphasized.
   7. How the school addresses the educational components of instructional integration of students with disabilities.
      1. Strategies for students with disabilities instruction at an appropriate level within general education classroom.
   8. How all students benefit.
   9. Other supportive evidence of an inclusive school setting.
4. Prior winners of the Inclusion Award are encouraged to submit annually; however, winners will not be eligible for award for two (2) consecutive years.
5. Verify all requirements are included per these instructions prior to submitting the application package.
6. The application package must be received at the address listed below by **January 18, 2019,** to meet the timelines of the selection process; no exceptions will be made to the entry deadline. Please send the application to:

Mississippi Exemplary Inclusion Program

Office of Special Education

Mississippi Department of Education

P.O. Box 771

Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0771

For questions or assistance, contact Dr. Armerita Tell at [atell@mdek12.org](mailto:atell@mdek12.org) or call (601) 359-3498.

**EXEMPLARY INCLUSION APPLICATION COMPLETENESS CHECKLIST**

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| --- |
| ***FOR MDE USE ONLY*** |
| * Met Application requirements * Did not meet application requirements |

*Use this checklist to verify the application is complete per instructions.*

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| --- |
| **Checklist** |
| **Cover Page**   * School district and county * School name, address, and telephone number * Have you previously applied for the award? If so, what year(s)? * Teachers or staff responsible for administering the program, including the positions and credentials held * Faculty Information   + Number of administrators   + Number of general education teachers   + Number of special education teachers   + Number of classified staff funded by district   + Number of classified staff funded by IDEA   + Number and position of additional support staff, if any * Student Information   + Total number of students enrolled in the school   + Percentage of the school population that is eligible under IDEA – by category * Superintendent’s name and original signature |
| **Report Format**   * Narrative using first person language * Arial 11-point font * Double spaced * No more than five (5) report pages (excluding 1 cover page and the Performance Determination Report) |
| **Report Content**   * Summary   + How the model was developed   + Basic principles of the model * Exemplary Practices   + School Vision   + Leadership, Mentorship and Management practices that build capacity for staff, teachers, and students.   + Staff Development - list of workshops, training, mentoring, and coaching that results in professional growth in exemplary inclusion practices during the year. * Administrative Support of Inclusive Philosophy   + How consideration is given to the unique needs of students when scheduling.   + How collaboration between general and special education is planned for and implemented.   + How teachers participate in school-wide curriculum planning in order to continuously examine and adjust specific inclusive settings to meet the changing needs of a diverse population. * Parental Support   + How the school partners with families to continuously improve inclusive practices in your school. * How the school addresses the educational components of physical integration of students with disabilities.   + Approach for high incidence disabilities (i.e. Learning Disabled) as well as those with low incidence disabilities. * How the school addresses the educational components of social integration of students with disabilities.   + Methods for students with emotional, behavioral, and/or cognitive concerns should be emphasized. * How the school addresses the educational components of instructional integration of students with disabilities.   + Strategies for students with disabilities instruction at an appropriate level within general education classroom. * How all students benefit. * Other supportive evidence of an inclusive school setting. |

**EXEMPLARY INCLUSION SCORE SHEET**

Proposal # \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer ID # \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Evaluation of applications is based upon evidence of the following indicators.*

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **CATEGORY** | **Maximum Points** | **Reviewer’s Score** |
| **Vision**   * Vision is clear, easily understood * Examples are given of how and why the vision drives the principles, practices, and goals of the program * Vision provides clarification and direction of common purpose to support and build inclusive practices | 5 |  |
| **Leadership, Mentorship, and Coaching**   * Leadership team consciously connects staff actions to the vision * Leadership inspires confidence and motivates while creating a positive environment to embrace change * Leadership ensures program strategies address the inclusion issues and dynamics to support the learning and success of all students * Leadership continually invests in growth and development of all stake holders. | 10 |  |
| **Inclusive Practices**   * **Physical and Emotional Safety of Students**   + - School has a conscious commitment to support the healthy social, cultural and cross-cultural development of all participants, to teach values of respect and inclusion of all people and to offer programming that helps reduce social disparities and inequities.     - Leadership, teachers and staff consciously work to build respect and trust in program across boundaries of race, culture, class and disabilities.     - Activity space, equipment and materials are appropriate, accessible and safe for all ages and ability areas.     - Staff is trained in positive group and behavior management, including conflict resolution which can effectively translate into practice.     - School is involved in developing and upholding rules and agreements for how people should treat each other.     - Enhancing the participation of students with special needs through Assistive Technology. * **Challenging and Engaging Learning Experiences**   + School offers activities that are “hands-on” and experiential and designed to reflect the many ways in which young people learn such as visual/spatial, body/kinesthetic, intra- and interpersonal.   + School offers ongoing opportunities for students to learn diverse skills in classrooms they might not otherwise experience.   + School offers activities that build decision-making, problem solving and critical thinking skills.   + School intentionally embeds learning opportunities into program activities that strengthen academic skills, as well as important social and life skills. * **Participation and Social Inclusion of Students**   + Providing a school environment that holds positive expectations and opportunities for all students.   + Providing a school environment that includes the celebration of differences.   + Planning and structuring of activities to promote social inclusion and friendship development.   + Addressing individual behavioral needs of students with consistency throughout the day.   + Providing information to families of students with special needs as to leisure/recreational opportunities within the community. * **Academic Alignment to support Inclusion of Students**   + Teachers and staff are knowledgeable about the curricula used   + Staff has been trained in and approaches academic support from a culturally aware and sensitive perspective   + A system is in place to inform staff about the academic levels and needs of the students with whom they work   + A system is in place for tracking student progress in meeting academic goals (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Tier 1, 2, & 3)   + Recognizing and assuring students’ right to access to the general curriculum.   + Providing support programs and services that meet the needs of students with disabilities.   + Using a range and variety of instructional and assessment practices in order to accommodate various disabilities in the general education classroom.   + Providing related services (L/S, OT, PT) delivered in the general classroom setting and coordinated with ongoing instruction, as appropriate.   + Promoting learning environments that hold positive expectations and opportunities for all students. | 75 |  |
| **Measuring and Managing Outcomes**   * Ability of program to be replicated by other schools. * School measures results and makes changes or adjustments as needed * The school routinely assesses and measures the benefit of program to all students. * Evidence of scientifically researched-based practices. | 15 |  |
| **TOTAL** | **100** |  |
| ***FOR MDE USE ONLY*** | | |
| **GRAND TOTAL** | **100** |  |