

Project: Promoting Inclusion by Using Quality Indicators - Year 3
Applicant: NJ Coalition for Inclusive Education

Address: 9 Auer Court, Suite H
East Brunswick, NJ 08816

Partners: Perth Amboy School District

Council Funds: \$23,125

Match Funds: \$15,254

Abstract: This is the third and final year of the project which seeks to promote inclusive education through the application of NJ Department of Education [DOE] supported district assessment tools. Collaboration with the NJ DOE is a central element of this third year.

Motivated by federal data showing New Jersey's unusually high percentage of students with disabilities in segregated settings, NJ has devoted substantial resources toward inclusion, but has yet to achieve this goal for the vast majority of students with DD. The federal IDEA requires education for children with disabilities in the most effective environment, and directs the states to develop strategies and action which achieves inclusion and integration (used to be called mainstreaming) at all levels. NJ has been historically lax in enforcing this legislation.

One factor which may explain this stubborn statistic is the absence, up to now, of clearly articulated Quality Indicators (QIs) which can serve as guideposts for systemic change by helping districts assess school practices which are either facilitating inclusion or acting as barriers to it. Without action planning, even districts which do a self-assessment will be on a treadmill, never including more students with disabilities. The QI Manual Guidelines and Appendix will be enhanced by the end of Yr 3 with tools and insights resulting from developing and presenting these full day trainings. To the extent possible, by the end of Yr 3, a fully tested QI Manual will be readily available which NJ administrators will find to be a useful, economical and credible tool for sustainable systems change around inclusion.

Deliverables

A. QI-Manual and Guidelines: Content of the QI Manual Guidelines and Appendix with insights and tools created in connection with the full day training developed and provided in Yr 3 in replicatable format.

B. Three, full day trainings in collaboration with NJDOE at Learning Resource Center-South; with NJPSA at their new conference center in Monroe; and at the Summer Inclusion Conference, 2010 for district administrators/teams.

C. Supporting documentation, overview (executive summary) and relevant data for use in disseminating the QI Manual to other states in the form of a final report to the NJCDD.