

NDSC Helping Implementation of Least Restrictive Environment Provisions in IDEA

NDSC Senior Education Policy Advisor, Ricki Sabia, is helping improve the implementation of the Least Restrictive Environment provisions in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) by acting as the parent liaison to the TIES (Time/Instructional/Engagement/Support) Center. As part of her work as parent liaison, Ricki will be collaborating to develop new parent resources. One such resource already completed is *10 Reasons to Support Inclusive School Communities for All Students*, which can be found on the TIES website at [<https://tiescenter.org/>].

The TIES center is affiliated with the National Center on Educational Outcomes in the Institute on Community Integration at the College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota. There are six additional collaborating partners: Arizona Department of Education, CAST, University of Cincinnati, University of Kentucky, University of North-Carolina–Charlotte, and University of North Carolina–Greensboro.

The Center has been funded by the U.S. Department of Education to work with states, districts, and schools to support the movement of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (students who take alternate state assessments) from less inclusive to more inclusive environments. TIES Center is the national technical assistance center on inclusive practices and policies. Its purpose is to create sustainable changes in kindergarten-grade 8 school and district educational systems so that students with significant cognitive disabilities can fully engage in the same instructional and non-instructional activities as their general education peers while being instructed in a way that meets individual learning needs. The mission of the work includes:

- Developing professional learning communities in partner states and local education agencies.
- Developing coaching models for implementation of resources, inclusive practices, and communicative competence.
- Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of existing resources.
- Supporting parents to become partners in the practice of inclusion for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- Supporting systems change within the leadership of state and local education agencies for the implementation of inclusive practices.

After a rigorous selection process TIES chose Maryland as the first intensive technical assistance state. The work done in Maryland will yield resources that can be used to move inclusion forward in other states. Updates and additional resources are being added to the TIES website [<https://tiescenter.org/>] regularly so check back for new information.

Stay up to date with current policy events, news and developments, learn more about available resources, and receive other policy-related information by signing up to receive the *NDSC Newsline*, the NDSC Policy & Advocacy digital newsletter.

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