



# Administrator's Guide to Fostering Inclusion: A Timeline for Back-to-School

This handout offers strategies to create an environment where all students and staff feel valued and empowered. Remember that fostering inclusion is an ongoing process: regularly assess your progress, seek community feedback, and adapt your approach as needed. Your commitment to these efforts will drive a year of growth, understanding, and achievement across your entire school.

## Before Teachers Return:

**In the weeks leading up to the new school year, focus on laying the groundwork for an inclusive environment:**

1. Review and update school policies to ensure they align with inclusive practices.
2. Update your whole school schedule that includes protected time for collaborative planning throughout the year.
3. Develop a clear vision statement for inclusion to share with the school community.
4. Work with your special education team to review IEPs and 504 plans, ensuring accommodations are ready for day one.
5. Plan professional development sessions focused on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and inclusive practices.
6. Prepare a resource map of available interventions and support services to share with staff.

## During Teacher Professional Development Days:

**Use this valuable time with your staff to set the tone for an inclusive year:**

1. Share your vision for inclusion and engage staff in discussions about its implementation.
2. Conduct training sessions on UDL principles and inclusive teaching strategies.
3. Facilitate collaborative planning sessions with mixed teams of general and special educators.
4. Introduce the resource map and systems for early identification of student needs.
5. Organize team-building activities that model inclusive practices.
6. Provide guidelines for inclusive language and practices to be used in all classrooms

## Once Students Return:

**In the first weeks with students, focus on embedding inclusive practices into daily routines:**

1. Host a school-wide assembly that celebrates diversity and sets expectations for an inclusive community.
2. Implement "get-to-know-you" activities in all classrooms that celebrate student diversity.
3. Begin universal screening to identify student needs early.
4. Launch a communication plan with families about inclusive initiatives.
5. Start a recognition system to celebrate inclusive practices observed in classrooms.
6. Conduct regular informal check-ins with new staff and students to ensure they feel supported.