



Framework for Special Education Quality

The Ability Challenge has worked with experts, educators, parents, and community members from around the country to develop the following framework of a high-quality special education program in a public school.

DIMENSION		MARKERS
<i>Overarching category for framing</i>		<i>Elements present when the Dimension is implemented at its best</i>
APPLIED EQUITY AND PERSONALIZATION LENS	<p>#1 Instruction</p> <p><i>What we teach and how we teach it to meet the needs of all students</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All lesson plans have standing modifications for diverse learners Multiple methods to demonstrate understanding flexibly All students are engaged Student choice Competency-informed instruction Responsive, flexible curriculum Differentiated and diverse methods of instruction employed Rigorous, grade level instruction accessible to all Universal design for learning
	<p>#2 Specialized and Differentiated Supports and Services</p> <p><i>Program, services, accommodations and supports tailored to individual student need and the systems to support those services</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong and full continuum of services and supports Effective, transparent evaluation for service providers Understanding the difference between need for specialized instruction and result of poor prior instruction High functioning RTI (academic and behavioral) Solid systems for creating high quality documents (IEPs, BIPs, etc.) Effective and ongoing reassessment of student progress & course correction Appropriate enrollment in inclusive settings
	<p>#3 Student-Centered Focus</p> <p><i>Whole school environments that put all students at the center of each decision and seek to empower students to own their learning</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on assets and strengths All kids are always part of the conversation Students leading their own learning – focus on metacognitive strategies Ongoing evaluation of students and their goals Students are self-actualized and accountable Students understand their own disabilities and what they need to be successful
	<p>#4 Family & Community Engagement</p> <p><i>Family and community members are equipped to and fully support students with disabilities</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents knowledgeable, involved, directing, deciding, advocating for what their child needs and getting it Parents know what good special education "looks like" & "sounds like" Language access Better support for parents as "experts" on their child High quality IEPs without jargon Parents feel comfortable advocating and participating in SPED processes Parents actively involved in school-wide decision-making processes
	<p>#5 Culture & Climate</p> <p><i>School community and environment is supportive, safe, equitable, and inclusive</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defined MTSS and regular review as students flow through it Mission driven schools committed to equitably serving all (starting with the school leader) FBA/BIP and other behavioral supports for students and progress monitoring Special education is integrated into school practice (not siloed) Differences are valued Positive interactions between adults & students Clear expectations and consistent methods for addressing behavior Feeling of safety and order throughout the school facility and surrounding areas
	<p>#6 Resource Allocation & Data Culture</p> <p><i>Equitable distribution of money, goods, services, and other resources across student populations and consistent review of data to support all decision-making</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each student gets what they need Protocols to review data/ strategies at student, class and district level (Norms to review, reflect, plan, act) Effective analysis and use of qualitative and quantitative data School leadership armed with data and resourced with technical experience needed to allocate resources Administrators who think of special education in all decision-making Regular review of SPED data to inform decision making Matching of special education service requirements to staff responsibilities (e.g., caseloads, types of classes)
	<p>#7 Staff Readiness</p> <p><i>All staff are "ready" to teach and/or support diverse learners</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff are knowledgeable about the needs of special education students Common co-planning time and systems for collaboration Shift in school culture for SWDs to be considered everyone's responsibility Regular coaching and PD seamlessly integrated into school PD generally (esp. on meeting diverse needs) All teachers understand neuroscience of learning, literacy instruction, UDL, supporting diverse learners Leadership pipeline development with SPED components and of SPED staff Peer training, mentoring, knowledge sharing across general/ special education Staff wellness and respect for all Diverse school staffing & leadership
	<p>#8 Systems/ Structures</p> <p><i>Systems and structures that are non-racist and non-ableist are reimagined and implemented</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Normed identification process across US that is inclusive of cultural and linguistic diversity School structures don't silo SPED Adults held accountable without punishing them for deeply entrenched systemic challenges Disability types (and student experience) are supported differently Adults name and own on complicitness in culture of white supremacy making segregation a comfortable option Separation of students as a learning strategy is not tolerated