

THRIVE FRAMEWORK



Based on compelling research from across the sector and input from thousands of practitioners, ABC’s THRIVE framework outlines the five core elements of a high-quality special education program. Within each element, success indicators offer a roadmap for the essential **knowledge, mindsets, and practices** required of leaders and educators to set the **conditions for authentic inclusion**. Schools that implement these elements are transforming how they meet the needs of diverse learners—empowering them to learn and thrive.

ELEMENT 1

Culture of Inclusion

Leaders set and hold staff accountable for a bold, clear, inclusive vision and aligned practices. Educators believe that all students can learn and grow and deeply value an inclusive, collaborative school environment.

ELEMENT 2

Student-Centered Curriculum & Instruction

Leaders manage the implementation of evidence-based, standards-aligned, culturally-responsive curriculum with clear outcomes and sequenced units of study. Educators facilitate meaningful and supportive relationships with students and deliver instruction that provides access to grade-level content for diverse learners.

ELEMENT 3

Shared Understanding of Special Education Mandates

Leaders are familiar with special education laws and understand their role in ensuring quality programming. Educators understand how disability impacts learning, know their legal obligations, and collaborate with peers to deliver integrated support that meets each student’s needs.

ELEMENT 4

Equitable Systems and Resource Management

Leaders allocate resources and put in place effective systems to manage the execution of quality special education programming in their context. Educators are knowledgeable about and implement those systems paying close attention to data and adjusting course as needed.

ELEMENT 5

Meaningful Family Partnerships

Leaders prioritize building meaningful partnerships with families and provide resources to staff to make those partnerships happen. Educators enter into effective, reciprocal relationships with families centered on empathy and cultural competence.

THRIVE FRAMEWORK

Each element is further defined by a set of **success indicators** that break down each element into sub-components for **effective implementation**, listed below.

ELEMENT 1

Culture of Inclusion

KNOWLEDGE & MINDSETS

- Belief that serving exceptional learners is a collective responsibility
- Belief that all students can learn and grow
- Belief that an inclusive school environment benefits all students
- Understanding of the leaders' role in shaping culture
- Understanding of the components of effective change management focused on inclusion

PRACTICES

- Creation of a bold, clear vision for inclusion
- Implementation of an action plan for making or sustaining inclusive change
- Implementation of practices for mitigating bias
- Effective formal & informal collaboration

- Basic understanding of the impact of disabilities on learning
- Clear roles and responsibilities for special education

PRACTICES

- Writing of clear and effective documents
- Design and delivery of programming tailored to individual student needs
- Effective IEP Team meetings
- Effective practices for progress monitoring
- Regular compliance monitoring
- Integrated provision of related and other services

ELEMENT 2

Student Centered Curriculum and Instruction

KNOWLEDGE & MINDSETS

- Knowledge of evidence-based instructional and assessment practices for diverse learners
- Strengths-based understanding of student potential

PRACTICES

- Use of clear teaching outcomes
- Use of standards-aligned, inter-dependent units of study (academic and social-emotional)
- Use of data to make instructional decisions
- Use of intentional differentiation and specialized instruction for diverse learners
- Use of collaborative approaches to instruction
- Effective planning and co-planning
- Fostering of supportive relationships and learning environments for students

ELEMENT 4

Equitable Systems and Resource Management

KNOWLEDGE & MINDSETS

- Understanding the relationship between tiered systems of support and special education

PRACTICES

- System for identifying and delivering services to students in need of intervention
- Equitable and efficient staffing and resource allocation
- Whole school schedules designed to facilitate collaboration and inclusion
- Continuum of placements that honors least restrictive environment
- Tracking and use of data for continuous improvement of systems
- System for Child Find, referral and evaluation for special education

ELEMENT 3

Shared Understanding of Special Education Mandates

KNOWLEDGE & MINDSETS

- Familiarity with special education laws

ELEMENT 5

Meaningful Family Partnerships

KNOWLEDGE & MINDSETS

- Belief in the value of engaging with parents and families as partners
- Belief that parents and families want the best for their children
- Belief in the value of engaging with empathy
- Understanding cultural competence

PRACTICES

- Effective and regular communication with families
- Family training and development