



# MTI ISSUE PAPER



## MTI POLICY: INCLUSIONARY PRACTICES\*

\*Unanimously approved by the MTI Faculty Representative Council on April 16, 1996.

1. MTI believes that Inclusion exists when student(s) with disability(ies) attend age appropriate regular education class(es), with appropriate support and funding.
2. MTI believes that Inclusion is one option in the full continuum of services and full range of delivery models available to students with disabilities as determined by the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP).
3. MTI believes that Inclusion requires additional Federal and State funding. This funding is mandatory prior to the implementation of Inclusion and will continue for as long as this option exists.
4. MTI believes that coordinated planning time for all educational employees involved is a requirement for successful Inclusion.
5. MTI believes that the impact of Inclusion must be bargained.
6. MTI believes that regular educators, special educators and support personnel must be involved as full partners in the planning for and implementation of Inclusion.
7. MTI believes that inservice education for all educational employees involved in the implementation of Inclusion must be provided.
8. MTI believes that modification in class size, scheduling, and curriculum design may be needed to accommodate the shifting demands that Inclusion creates.

Madison Teachers Inc. believes the prime consideration in the placement of all students should be the welfare of each student thereby requiring a full continuum of placement options. MTI opposes the exclusive use of any full inclusion model. Any decision concerning the placement of an exceptional student must be a majority opinion of those participating in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team meeting. MTI further believes that adequate safeguards must be provided for the classroom teacher to ensure that a proper classroom atmosphere be maintained at all times.

### PROPOSED DEFINITION OF INCLUSION

The word "inclusion" is not found in any law pertaining to special education. The basis for inclusion is the federal mandate for education in the least restrictive environment. The federal mandate has been in effect, without change, since 1975.

The public schools in Wisconsin are required to provide a free and appropriate public education for all exceptional children, and to the maximum extent appropriate, these exceptional children are to be educated with children who are not exceptional. MTI endorses and supports this requirement and believes that the education program, the placement of students, and the involvement of the professional staff is essential for the success of the exceptional child.

As MTI's ISS Sub-Committee to MTI's Bargaining Committee discussed the issue of inclusion, it was determined that certain terms needed to be defined:

**Full Inclusion Model** - The practice of including **all students who have IEPs** in the regular classroom, all day, every day, regardless of their needs. MTI opposes a full inclusion model because such a model is a barrier to appropriate placement and program. It assumes that one program fits all the needs of all children.

**Inclusion** - Educating students with IEPs in the regular classroom for all or part of the school day.

**Appropriate Inclusion** - The opportunity for children to experience, to the maximum extent possible, a sense of belonging in their community, with the goal of educating them in the school they would otherwise attend for all or part of the school day, with all the supports and services delineated in the IEP. Appropriate inclusion in such

programs requires thoughtful deliberation by the respective IEP team, with consideration of a full continuum of placement options, based on the student's needs. MTI supports appropriate inclusion.

**Full Continuum of Placement Options** - As per the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), "Each public agency shall ensure that a continuum of alternative placements is available to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related services. The continuum required must include the alternative placements listed in the definition of special education instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions." MTI supports a full continuum of placement options.

MTI supports a free, appropriate public education of students with exceptionalities in the least restrictive environment, which is determined with maximum teacher involvement. There must be a full array of models available to students with exceptionalities. However, to implement special education services effectively, MTI recognizes that:

- The educational environment, using appropriate instructional materials, support services, and pupil personnel services, must match the learning needs of students both with and without exceptionalities.
- Adequate released time or funded additional time **MUST** be made available so that teachers can carry out the increased demands they face. All educational personnel servicing students must have scheduled time to meet with each other to collaborate, consult, deliberate, plan, implement, assess, etc.
- Student identification and placement must be based on individual needs. Necessary building and staffing modifications must be provided to facilitate the placement. Such placement must be examined on at least an annual basis to ensure its appropriateness by the IEP team. Anyone on the IEP team or anyone implementing any portion of the IEP may request a review of the IEP at any time. Placement based on fiscal reasons, rather than student needs, is inappropriate.
- Full funding must be provided by local, state, and federal governments. MTI must continue to lobby in coalition with other education organizations to increase the state and federal share of funding.
- Discipline, suspension, and expulsion policies and practices used by the Madison Metropolitan School District must be applied consistently to both students with and students without exceptionalities. In the case of students who pose a threat to themselves, other students, or school personnel, the Madison Metropolitan School District has the responsibility to remove students as per federal and state law. In this event, school personnel should notify the proper authorities.
- Regular, vocational, technology, and special education teachers, pupil personnel staff, administrators, educational support personnel, parents, and where appropriate, the student must share in planning and implementing the Individualized Education Program. The appropriateness of educational methods, materials, professional development, and supportive services must be determined as part of the planning by this IEP team. All affected educators should assertively make a request to be involved as a participant in the IEP team.
- Educators responsible for implementing any portion of the IEP need to be familiar with all aspects of the IEP, including goals, objectives, specially designed instruction, accommodations in the regular classroom, behavior modification techniques, etc., prior to teaching said student.
- Students with physical disabilities and/or medical needs requiring nursing procedures, or health-related services, must have these needs met by or under the direction and supervision of certified school nurses. Such services must be listed in the IEP.
- Other auxiliary services such as paraprofessional support must be available, as per student need, and included in the IEP.
- Regular, vocational, technology, special education teachers, and handicapped children's assistants must be adequately prepared for their roles through appropriate training, inservicing, and professional development. Incentives for participation in professional development activities should be made available for education employees.

MTI advocates for the protection of member rights:

Appropriate inclusion programs shall require at least the same number and, perhaps, additional bargaining unit staff to provide the appropriate supports needed.

All impacted staff members must be accorded the right of dissent concerning each Multi-disciplinary Evaluation and Individualized Education Program, including the right to have the dissenting opinion recorded. Such a dissenting opinion needs to be written and signed by the staff member, and attached to the Multi-disciplinary Evaluation Report or IEP. (Signatures on the IEP form do not indicate agreement; signatures indicate attendance at the IEP meeting only.)

Teachers will not be held accountable for students' mastery of individual IEP goals and objectives. Section 300.350, IDEA, Individualized Education Program--Accountability.

As well, teachers cannot be held accountable under § 895.45 of Wis. Stats., 34 CTR, for work such as preparation of IEPs undertaken within the scope of their employment.

"Each public agency must provide special education and related services to a child with a disability in accordance with an IEP. However, Part B of the Act does not require that any agency, teacher, or other person be held accountable if a child does not achieve the growth projected in the annual goals and objectives." In addition, regular education, special education, technology, and vocational education programs will not be evaluated nor their future determined based on the mastery level of all students.

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