

Becoming more inclusion-FOcused & student-centered

Capstone Project - UCEDD Aspiring Special Education Leaders
Janel G. Brown, Ed.S., Putnam Public Schools, June 2025

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measurement
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01

**Vision,
Mission &
measurement**

vision

The vision for this capstone is to change adult thinking within the district to become more inclusion-focused and student-centered, in order to arrive at the best outcomes for all students.





mission

The mission of this capstone project is to create a framework for PPT (Planning & Placement Team) meetings for LEA (Local Educational Agency) representatives and case managers to follow that aligns with the requirements of LEA in IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Act).



How will success be measured?

Success will be measured by:

- implementation of the framework at PPT meetings
- staff pre and post surveys
- through a review of TWNDP (time with non-disabled peer) data across the district over time (longer term)

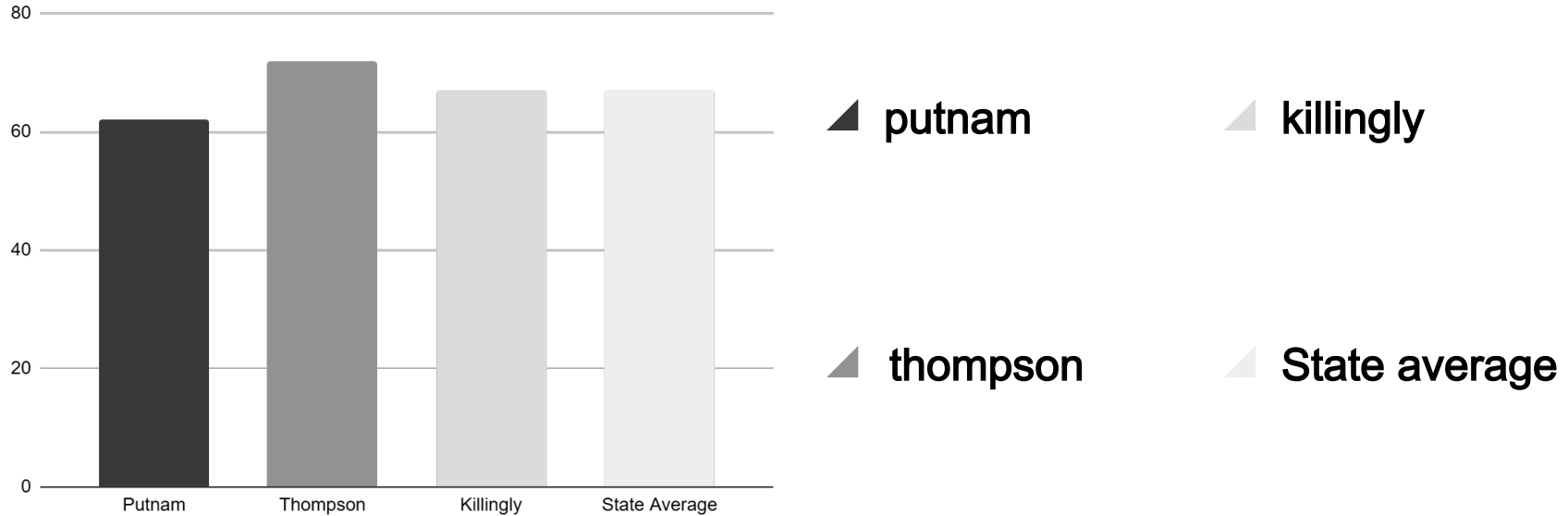


02

why?

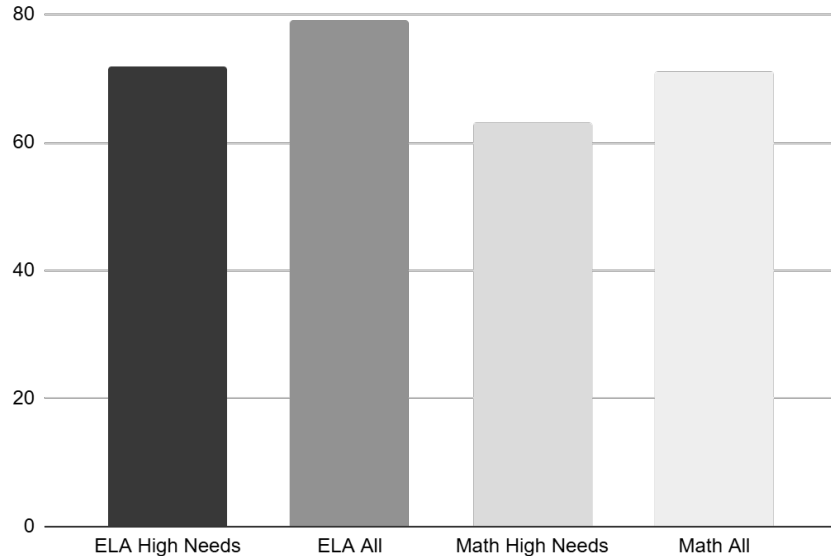
TWNDP Data

**Time with nondisabled peers*



Data taken from District Profile and Performance Reports, 2023-24, from <http://www.public-edsight.ct.gov>

Students with disabilities Data



◀
Ela
Performance
index - High
Needs

◀
math
Performance
index - High
Needs

◀
Ela
Performance
index - all
students

◀
math
Performance
index - all
students

Follow the link in the graph to modify its data and then paste the new one here. For more [click here](#)

Data taken from District Performance Profile Reports, 2022, from <http://www.edsight.gov>

Data take -aways

- TWNDP data is lower than state average = Less students are included than the state average
- Twndp data is lower than districts similar to us demographically = less students are included than in similar districts
- Students with disabilities score lower in ela and math when compared to all students = there is a performance gap for students with disabilities (One theory - exacerbated by lack of inclusion?)

anecdotal

- Many teachers in the district have communicated their belief that students should be largely housed within the program environment once they are displaying externalizing behaviors.
- Teachers in the district have pushed back when students have made steps towards rejoining the classroom environment.
- Referrals to specialized programs are often made before other less restrictive avenues have been attempted.
- Discussion of placement for students often happens early in the PPT process, and is not fully aligned with the structures in place in IDEA.



03

Plan phase A

Shift adult thinking (SPED and General Education) about the duty of providing Least Restrictive Environment as detailed in IDEA

Objective 1: survey current and future adult attitudes about restrictive environment and inclusion

Activity 1. Create and administer survey for LEA representatives and Case Managers for views about least restrictive environment/ inclusion within the structure of the PPT.	Janel; Responders: Principal, Director of FRC, AP, SS Director, SLPs, Pre-K Teachers, SPED resource teachers, Specialized program case managers	Google Form, Language from IDEA, Email	See above	June 16, 2025	See above
Activity 2. Create and administer survey for general education teachers for general views about least restrictive environment and inclusion.	Janel, Responders: PES-Certified (Email list)	Google Form, Language from IDEA, Email	See above	June 16, 2025	See above
Activity 3. Create a bimonthly inclusion PLC with SPED, related services and general education representatives to discuss methods of improving inclusion and outcomes for students.	Janel, consult with SS Director and PES Admin	PLC plan document, IDEA language, resources about inclusion to link in, access to SPED 8:10 meeting	Create a group of like-minded individuals passionate about improving inclusion opportunities for all SWD	September 2025	Bimonthly PLC notes, attendance numbers for PLC

Objective 1, CONTinued:

survey current and future adult attitudes about restrictive environment and inclusion

Activity 4. Administer post-implementation survey to LEA representatives, case managers, and general education teachers to evaluate for shifts.	Janel, Responders	Google Form	Get updated data on staff attitudes and mindset around inclusion and LRE	June 2026	Creation of surveys and 55% or more of invited responders respond; look for 10-15% increase in agreement
Activity 5. Share results from Elementary pilot with rest of district for review and analysis.	Janel, SS Director, MS Admin, HS Admin, Superintendent	Meeting time, presentation slides of data	Share with district results of pilot at elementary school for consideration of implementation at other buildings	Fall 2026	Meeting happens with presentation, look for 10-15% increase in agreement, review TWNDP data (may not see movement yet)

Objective 2: Create and share presentations about least Restrictive environment in its alignment with idea, and find ways to implement at meetings and in classrooms

Activity 1. Plan presentations about importance of least restrictive environment in its alignment with IDEA and ways to implement at meetings and in classrooms.	Janel, SS Director consult, PES Admin consult	Planning time with PES admin and SS Director	Shared understanding of the presentation and the reasons behind it; alignment on language and district protocols	Summer 2025	Evidence of planning meeting
Activity 2. Create presentations with active participant activities around LRE and inclusion	Janel	Planning time, IDEA language, Google Slides	Succinct but interactive presentation about LRE, inclusion	Summer 2025	Evidence of presentations
Activity 3. Present presentation to SPED and related services colleagues	Janel, PES SPED Team (possibly loop in any members of Inclusion PLC for sharing components)	Dedicated time at 8:10 SPED Meetings	Improve awareness and understanding of laws for LRE and inclusion and improve knowledge of strategies for inclusion	Fall 2025	Evidence of meeting and presentation (longer term-look for improved answers on post-survey)
Activity 4. Present abridged version of presentation at PES Staff Meeting to all staff	Janel, PES Admin, PES All Certified Staff	Dedicated time at PES Staff Meeting	Improve awareness and understanding of laws for LRE and inclusion and improve knowledge of strategies for inclusion	Fall 2025	Evidence of presentation (longer term-look for improved answers on post-survey)



04

Plan phase B

Create and implement a framework to be used at PPTs that aligns with LRE as detailed in IDEA and lends itself to student centered decision making.

Objective 3: Create a framework (agenda) to be used at PPT meetings that aligns with Ire as DETAILED In IDEA, and support its implementation across Putnam Elementary School

Activity 1. Create a framework (agenda) to be used at PPTs that aligns with LRE as detailed in IDEA	Janel, SS Director Consult	Existing PPS SS Documents, IDEA Language, Google Docs, Time to consult with SS Director	See above	By June 16, 2025	Evidence of framework document
Activity 2. Facilitate a meeting with PES LEA Representatives and Case Managers to review the framework and rationale for implementation.	Janel, PES Principal, Director of FRC, AP, SS Director, SLPs, SPED Case Managers including Preschool	Existing PPS SS Documents, IDEA Language, Google Docs, Time to consult with SS Director, Time to meet during August PD	See above	August 2025	Evidence of meeting
Activity 3. Monitor implementation of framework at PPTs across PES and gather feedback from LEA representatives and case managers at each trimester throughout 2025-2026 school year.	Janel, consult with LEA Representatives, gather feedback at 8:10 PES SPED meetings	Discussion at PES SPED meetings	See above	Ongoing, 2025-2026 school year	Evidence of discussion and feedback at meetings


Sample agenda:



Putnam Public Schools

Agenda:


1. Introductions
2. Reasons for meeting
3. Updates from parent
4. Updates from student
5. Updates from classroom teacher
6. Review current performance levels
7. Proposed goals and accommodations
8. Discuss service time and placement (review LRE Checklist)
9. Assessment, Transportation, ESY
10. Paperwork
11. Next steps



05

Plan phase c

Shift thinking within specialized programs to determine how students can gradually increase their time with non-disabled peers while remaining within the supports of the program.



Objective 4: determine twndp baselines for each student in specialized programs at elementary school.

Activity 1. Determine TWNDP for RISE Behavioral Program as model to share with specialized program staff.	Janel	TWNDP Data from current IEPs	See above	By June 16, 2025	Evidence of TWNDP document
Activity 2. Support specialized program staff with determining TWNDP for students in their respective programs and compiling together in one shared (confidential) document.	Janel, Specialized program staff	TWNDP Data from current IEPs, Shared planning document	See above	August-September 2025	Evidence of TWNDP document and shared planning time

Objective 5: Share samples and facilitate creation of “inclusion maps” for students within specialized programs that map out individualized, incremental steps for students to increase participation with non - disabled peers.

Activity 1. Share “inclusion maps” for students in RISE program with specialized program staff and facilitate Q&A session.	Janel, Specialized program staff, PES Admin invited	Current inclusion maps for RISE program students, time to meet (PLC time)	See above	August-September 2025	See above
Activity 2. Support specialized program staff with creating a form of “inclusion map” for students within their own programs.	Janel, Specialized Program Staff	Inclusion map template, time to meet (PLC time)	Strategies documented in all specialized programs for plans to keep LRE and inclusion at the forefront even within specialized program, increased awareness	September-October 2025	Evidence of created inclusion maps for other programs, evidence of meeting time
Activity 3. Discuss with general education staff the purpose of the inclusion maps and their roles in making these maps a reality.	Janel, Specialized Program Staff, applicable General Education staff	Inclusion maps from each program, time to meet with general education staff	Increased awareness of LRE and inclusion and staff's role in making this happen	October - November 2025	Evidence of meeting time

Sample “Inclusion map”:

Green highlight = accomplished as of 5/30/24

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goal - Reach Step 5 or beyond by end of 23-24 school year and continue meeting behavioral goals as defined in BIP and IEP consistently 	
<i>Baseline (Beginning PES)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0 minutes included with program support Shortened day (8:30-12:25) fully self contained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% self-contained 1:1 away from peers
Step 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0 minutes included with program support Shortened day (8:30-12:25) fully self contained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% self-contained Participating in small groups in RISE program
Step 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 minutes included with program support Shortened day (8:30-12:25) fully self contained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly self-contained Participating in small groups in RISE program Attending general education recess with K Peers
Step 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 65 minutes included with program support Shortened day (8:30-1:20) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly self-contained Participating in small groups in RISE program Attending general education recess with K Peers Attending K Specials with K Peers with program support
Step 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90 minutes included with program support Shortened day (8:30-1:20) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly self-contained Participating in small groups in RISE program Attending general education recess and lunch with K Peers with program support Attending K Specials with K Peers with program support
Step 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 120 minutes included with program support Shortened day (8:30-1:20) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly self-contained Participating in small groups in RISE program Attending general education recess and lunch with K Peers with program support Attending general education class 25 minutes a day with program support Attending K Specials with K Peers with program support



06

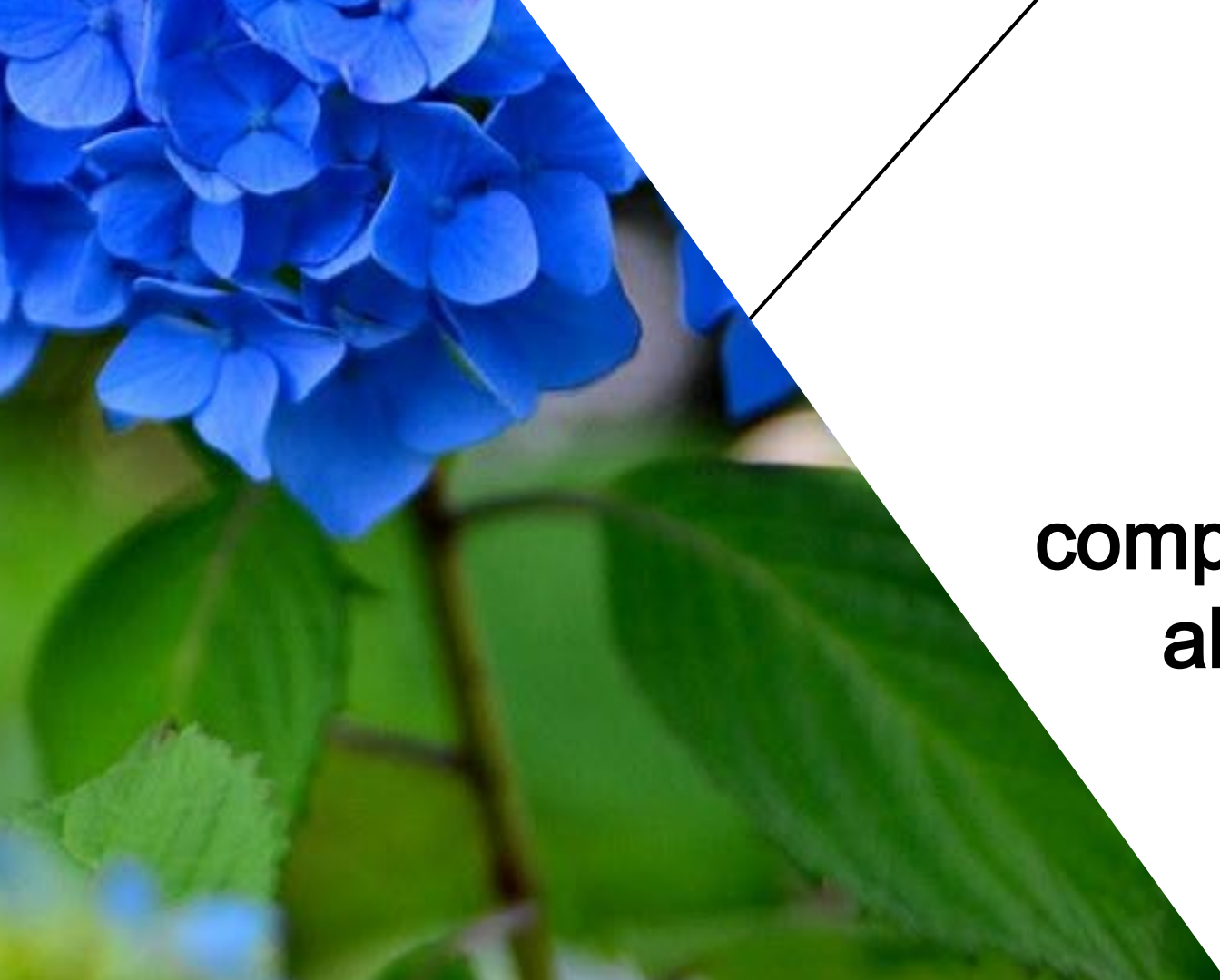
**Determining
impact**



How will success be measured?

Success will be measured by:

- implementation of the framework at PPT meetings
- Implementation of “inclusion maps” within specialized program settings
- staff pre and post surveys (looking for an increase in awareness of importance of inclusion as it is defined in IDEA and a change in attitudes related to inclusion)
- through a review of TWNDP (time with non-disabled peer) data across the district over time (longer term)



07

**Aspiring
leaders
competencies
alignment**

Competencies alignment:



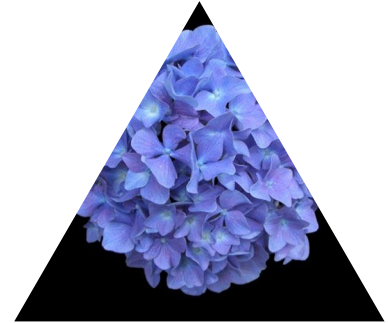
2.0

You will be able to develop, implement, monitor and revise (as necessary) state and local laws, regulations, Policies, and procedures to improve the special education system and outcomes for students with disabilities and their families.



3.0

You will be able to develop or revise and implement a plan to improve the administration of the state or local special education system in compliance with federal and state requirements under IDEA.



4.0

You will be able to motivate and lead diverse partners to implement strategies to improve the special education system and outcomes for students and families representing diverse linguistic, racial, ethnic, cultural, socio-economic, educational, and historically underrepresented backgrounds.

Competencies alignment, continued:



6.0

You will be able to design and implement a special education continuous improvement plan to ensure the effective use of resources to address system, school, staff, student needs and outcomes.



7.0

You will be able to scale up, implement, evaluate, and sustain a practice(s), program, or policy with fidelity, fiscal accountability, and positive outcomes for special education students, their families, and the special education system.



08

**Questions
And/or
comments**