

## Notes from WASC Board Meeting: *September 9-10, 2007*

The notes and lesson plan that follow relate to the specific discussion of the WASC Board to partner with Special Olympics of Washington during the 2007/08 school year. This partnership was developed based on a WASC Board goal to participate more in the lives of intellectually disabled students to make their high school experience more authentic and memorable.

### **Definition of Inclusion:**

We believe in the creation of meaningful opportunities for all regardless of differences or abilities. The concept of inclusion is important to student leaders and schools because it...

- Makes school better for all students
- Empowers and nurtures both the recipient and provider
- Improves school climate
- Fosters student success
- Promotes the idea of a "family" looking out for one another
- Reduces bullying and teasing
- Unifies the school while allowing the school to be diverse
- Lives up to the guiding principle that everyone has the right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness"
- Educates students to be accepting

### **Where and how is inclusion missing from our schools?**

- Lunchroom
- Clubs
- Sports
- Activities
- Representation on student council
- Recognition
- Attitudes and mind-sets
- Socially in the halls

### **What can we do to change this?**

- Develop a lesson plan that allows student leadership teams to evaluate their ability to "include all."
- Join the campaign sponsored by the National Association of Student Councils to ban the "R" word
- Educate students more about intellectual disabilities and how they affect students
- Participate on a personal level in the lives of intellectually disabled students
- Partner with Special Olympics of Washington during the 2007/08 school year
- Present a workshop on inclusion at the 2007 WASC Conference
- Publish a list of ideas for inclusion on the Washington Student Leadership Web site: [www.awsp.org/leadership](http://www.awsp.org/leadership)

# Inclusion: *More than just a word*

## **Objectives:**

- To define the meaning of inclusion
- To articulate the importance of inclusion for the success of all students
- To evaluate a student leadership program's attempts to meet the needs of all students

## **Time and Materials:**

45 minutes, butcher paper & markers, sticky dots for value voting

## **Introduction:**

The phrase we need to "include all students" is often heard from student leaders. But what does this really mean? Who is "all" and how do you "include" them? A meaningful discussion of the concept of inclusion is the beginning of a student leadership team's attempt to live up to the noble quest of including all students.

## **Guiding Questions:**

- What is our definition of inclusion?
- Why is it important to our school and to us as student leaders?
- Where and how is it missing in our school?
- What can we do to change this?

## **Lesson Plan:**

1. Read the guiding questions to the group. Explain that a meaningful discussion about a large concept such as inclusion is an important step in realizing the word's potential.
2. Divide the group into teams of 5 to 7. Ask each group to come up with a definition of inclusion and write the definition on a piece of butcher paper.
3. Have each team present their definition of inclusion to the large group. After each team has presented, ask the large group to comment on any word or phrase in a definition that they particularly liked. Circle these words and phrases.
4. Ask the group to agree upon a definition of inclusion. Explain that they may adopt one of the definitions or combine parts of definitions to create the final description of inclusion.
5. [Brainstorm](#) a list of answers to the question: "Why is this definition of inclusion important to our school and to us as student leaders?"
6. Brainstorm a list of answers to the question: "Where and how is inclusion missing from our school?"
7. Using [Value Voting](#), have the large group identify an area or aspect of school that they want to focus on.
8. Set a goal and create an action plan based around the identified area or aspect of school that is lacking inclusion or generate a discussion based on the question: "What can we do to change this?"