

NATIONAL SCHOOL

~~DISABILITY~~

INCLUSION TOOLKIT

Promoting Barrier-Free, Inclusive, and Accessible
Education Across Canada



By Yasmin Atwal

National Accessible Schools Initiative

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword

About the Author

Endorsements

A Message from Yasmin Atwal: Youth Leadership in Accessibility

Why Disability Inclusion Matters in Canadian Schools

Provincial Accessibility Legislation Comparison Table

Essential Voices: Building an Inclusive School

How to Use This Toolkit (For Teachers, Administrators, and Students)

Section 1 : *Understanding Disabilities & Inclusion*

1.1 What Is Disability? (Inclusive Definitions)

1.2 Types of Disabilities in Schools

Physical and Mobility Disabilities

Sensory Disabilities (Vision & Hearing)

Neurodiversity (Autism, ADHD, Learning Disabilities)

Mental Health Disabilities

Chronic and Invisible Disabilities

1.3 Myth vs Fact: Breaking Stigma

1.4 Respectful Language & Inclusive Communication

Section 2: *Creating Accessible School Environments*

2.1 Physical Accessibility Checklist

2.2 Digital Accessibility Checklist

2.3 Accessible Classrooms & Learning Spaces

2.4 Accessible Playgrounds and Sports Facilities

2.5 Sensory-Friendly and Quiet Spaces

2.6 Accessible School Events and Assemblies

Section 3: *Inclusive Teaching & Learning Strategies*

3.1 Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

3.2 Differentiated Instruction for Diverse Learners

3.3 Supporting Students with Physical Disabilities

3.4 Supporting Neurodiverse Students

3.5 Supporting Students with Mental Health Needs

3.6 Flexible Assessments & Inclusive Evaluation Methods

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 4: Inclusive Sports, Arts, and Extracurricular Participation

- 4.1 Adapting Physical Education for All Abilities
- 4.2 Inclusive School Sports Models
- 4.3 Accessible Music and Arts Participation
- 4.4 Adaptive Equipment and Assistive Technology

Section 5: Student Leadership & Peer Ally Programs

- 5.1 Creating a Student Accessibility Ambassador Program
- 5.2 Peer Mentorship for Inclusion
- 5.3 Student-Led Accessibility Campaign Ideas
- 5.4 Inclusion Pledge & School Commitment Charter

Section 6: Mental Health & Invisible Disabilities Support

- 6.1 Understanding Invisible Disabilities
- 6.2 Classroom Supports for Anxiety, Depression & Trauma
- 6.3 Reducing Bullying and Social Isolation
- 6.4 Building Emotionally Safe Classrooms

Section 7: Family & Community Engagement

- 7.1 Partnering with Families for Student Success
- 7.2 Understanding IEPs and Accommodation Plans
- 7.3 Community Accessibility Resources Across Canada
- 7.4 Collaborating with Disability Organizations

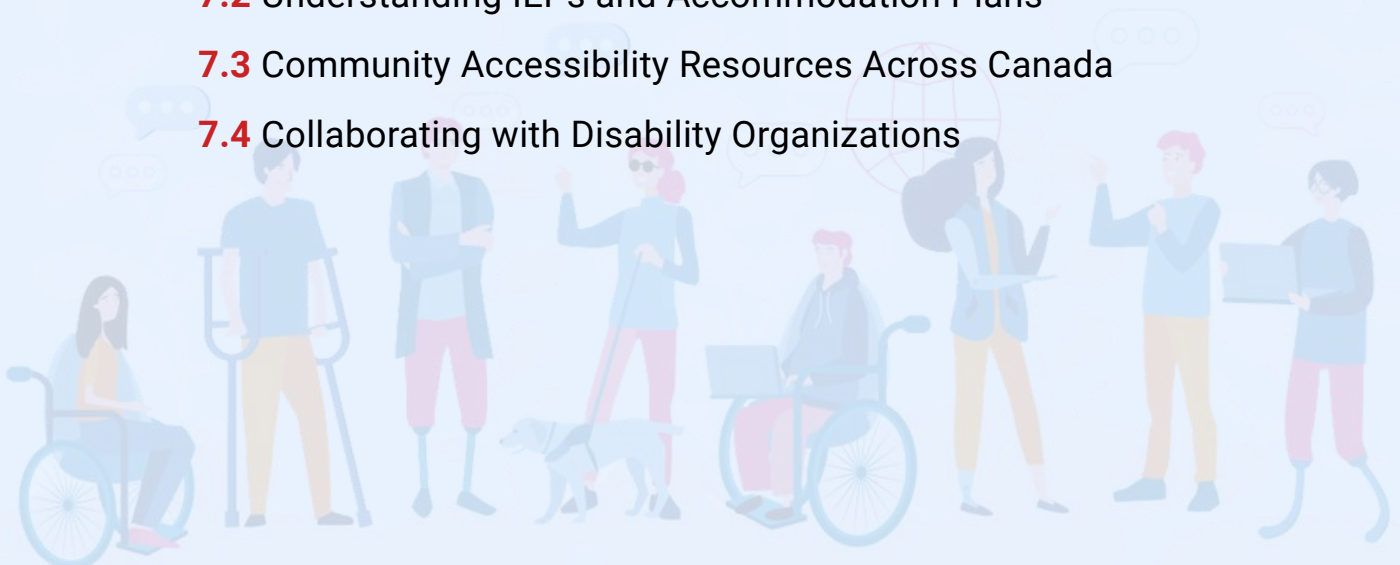


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 8: Accessibility Planning & School Audits

- 8.1 School Accessibility Self-Assessment Tool
- 8.2 Barrier Identification Worksheets
- 8.3 Creating an Annual Accessibility Action Plan
- 8.4 Monitoring Progress and Measuring Impact

Section 9: Transition Planning

- 9.1 Purpose
- 9.2 Key Components
- 9.3 Roles and Responsibilities
- 9.4 Key Strategies
- 9.5 Monitoring Progress

Section 10: Youth Action Project Toolkit

- 10.1 Starting an Accessibility Improvement Project
- 10.2 Fundraising for Adaptive Equipment
- 10.3 Advocacy for Inclusive Policies and Spaces
- 10.4 Leading Awareness Campaigns in Schools

Section 11: Accessible STEM Initiative

- 11.1 Why Disability Inclusion in STEM Matters
- 11.2 Barriers Students with Disabilities Face in STEM
- 11.3 Accessible STEM Classroom Design
- 11.4 Accessible Science Labs
- 11.5 Neurodiversity in STEM
- 11.6 Accessible Technology & Coding
- 11.7 Girls with Disabilities in STEM
- 11.8 Inclusive STEM Competitions & Clubs

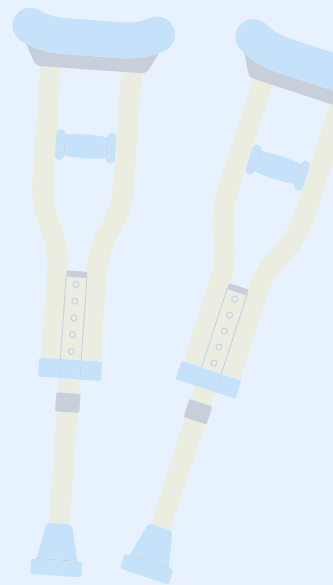


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 11: Accessible STEM Initiative

- 11.9 STEM Mentor Disability Inclusion Training
- 11.10 Assistive Technology in STEM
- 11.11 STEM Accessibility School Audit Tool
- 11.12 National Call to Action: STEM Without Barriers

Section 12: National Call to Action

- 12.1 The Right to Belong: Accessibility as a Human Right
- 12.2 Duty to Accommodate to the Point of Undue Hardship
- 12.3 A Youth Vision for Inclusive Schools in Canada
- 12.4 How Schools Can Join the National Inclusion Movement

Acknowledgements

Join the National Accessible Schools Movement



FOREWORD

A Message from Yasmin Atwal: Leading Youth in Accessibility

Every student should feel like they belong. They deserve to feel welcome, valued, and supported at school. Yet for many students living with disabilities, barriers which can be visible and invisible can make full participation in school life more difficult than it should be. Accessibility is not simply about physical spaces. Accessibility is about ensuring that every student has the opportunity to learn, contribute, and thrive and participate fully in school life. I am writing this as an ally as someone who has had two family members with a disability.

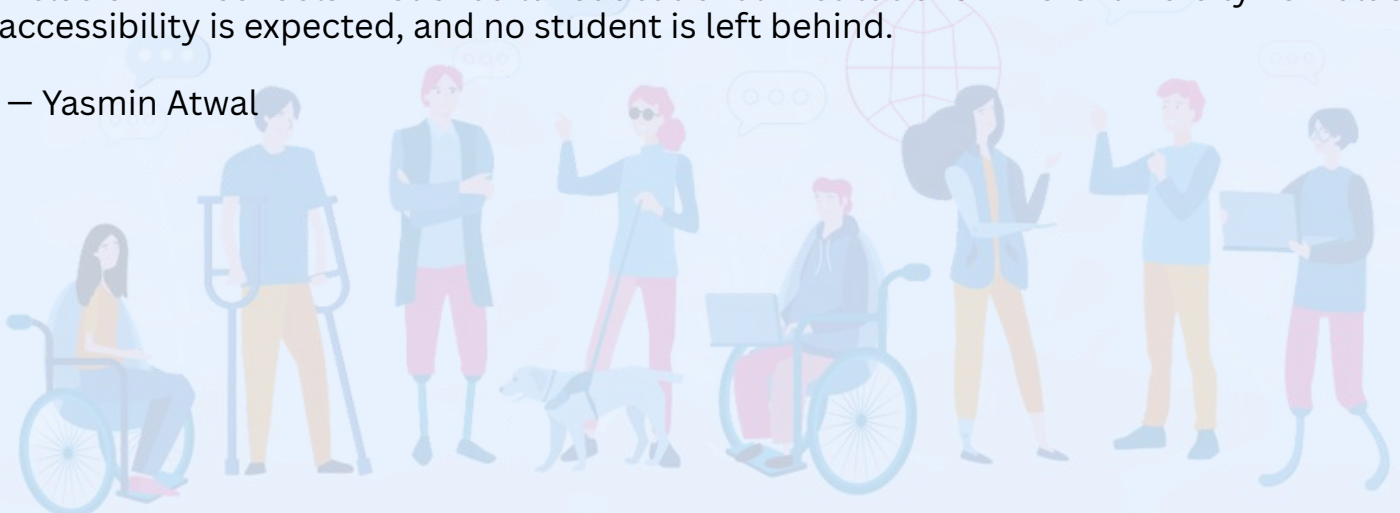
Schools play a powerful role in shaping inclusive communities. When educators, administrators, and students work together to remove barriers and promote understanding, schools become places where diversity is respected and everyone feels that they belong.

The National Disability Inclusion Toolkit for Schools was created to provide practical guidance for building more accessible and inclusive learning environments. The goal of this resource is to support educators and school leaders with strategies that can be implemented in everyday school settings—from improving physical accessibility and inclusive classrooms to encouraging student leadership and awareness.

This toolkit reflects a simple but important idea: small actions can lead to meaningful change. By identifying barriers, promoting empathy, and creating opportunities for participation, schools can make a lasting difference in the lives of students with disabilities.

Accessibility and inclusion are not one-time initiatives; they are ongoing commitments. As schools continue to learn, adapt, and improve their practices, they help create environments where every student can reach their full potential. Inclusion is not charity. It is fairness. It is respect. Every student has this right. It is my hope that this toolkit will serve as a useful starting point for conversations and actions that strengthen inclusion across schools and communities across Canada. I encourage centring the voices of people with disabilities in this work and ensuring that leadership of people with disabilities is encouraged in every aspect of advancing accessibility and inclusion in schools. Let's build educational institutions where diversity is valued, accessibility is expected, and no student is left behind.

— Yasmin Atwal



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



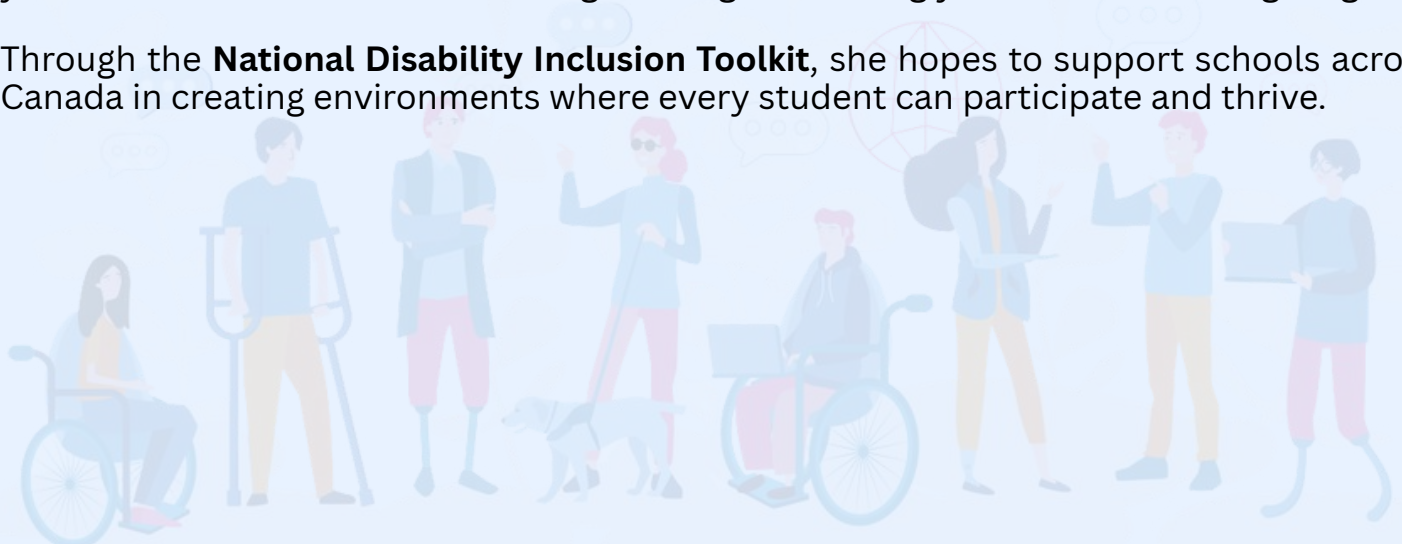
Yasmin Atwal is an 18 year old youth accessibility advocate and student dedicated to advancing disability inclusion and equitable access to education. She is a Certified Disability Rights and Accessibility Consultant and a Certified Human Rights Consultant, having completed specialized training in accessibility standards and disability rights frameworks.

Her work focuses on creating practical tools that help schools and organizations remove barriers and build inclusive environments. Yasmin is passionate about giving back to the community through volunteer work. Yasmin has fundraised \$1,000 for the Canadian Music Therapy Fund. She has seen first hand how music therapy for seniors living with dementia and for children and adults with mental and physical disabilities has allowed them to connect and communicate. She also donated \$1,000 worth of new adaptive musical instruments to Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital to support children with autism and developmental and physical disabilities. This is Canada's largest pediatric rehabilitation facility.

Yasmin is launching the Canadian chapter of Beyond Boundaries Soccer, a sports-based initiative that promotes social inclusion and guarantees access to teamwork, confidence building and competitive sports for youth living with physical disabilities. Yasmin is also the co-founder of Women Stem Mentorship where she encourages women and girls of any ability to thrive and excel in the world of STEM. As the co-founder of Green Teen Generation, Yasmin advocates for sustainability and disability advocacy.

In recognition of her advocacy, Yasmin has received the Global Changemaker in Disability Inclusion and Accessibility Rights Innovation Award from Future Collaboration and was listed on Top 20 under 20 for Global Impact by Humans of Globe. She was also awarded Rising Global Star in 2025 from International Eminence Excellence Awards and Transformational Leader of the Year 2025 at the House of Lords at the UK Parliament from Whitepage International. She received The Global Volunteer Recognition Medal from the Global Volunteer Recognition Program. She was also the recipient of the Wendy J Thompson Havergal Entrance Scholarship. She is a Tedx speaker, author of a book called "The Human Code: Law Through Our Eyes" and runs a youtube channel called Yasmin's Legal Lounge educating youth about their legal rights.

Through the **National Disability Inclusion Toolkit**, she hopes to support schools across Canada in creating environments where every student can participate and thrive.



ENDORSEMENTS

"Inclusive education is not a goal to aspire to – it is a legal obligation and a matter of fundamental human dignity. Yasmin Atwal's National School Disability Inclusion Toolkit provides practical, actionable guidance for Canadian schools seeking to remove barriers and ensure that every student can participate fully in school life. Youth-led initiatives like this one reflect exactly the kind of leadership our communities need."

– Lorin MacDonald, CM, OOnt, LSM, JD

Human Rights Lawyer and Disability Rights Advocate and Law Professor
Order of Canada 2024
March of Dimes Disability Changemaker of the Year 2024
Ontario Human Rights Commission Award for Distinguished Service 2024
King Charles III's Coronation Medal 2024
Law Society Medal, the Law Society's highest distinction
Top 25 Most Influential Lawyers in Human Rights by Canadian Lawyer Magazine
Governor General's Award 2023 in Commemoration of the Person's Case
Order of Ontario 2021

"As a person with a disability and sibling of individuals with disabilities, advocate, and disability justice leader, I am pleased to support this initiative by Yasmin Atwal. Young leaders are central to ensuring an inclusive society starting right from the school environment. Yasmin's tool kit is a perfect starting point to begin empowering leadership of students with and without disabilities to bring the change we need toward true inclusion."

– Rabia Khedr, B.A. (University of Toronto), M.A.(York University)

Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal Awardee 2021
King Charles III Coronation Medal
Daniel G Hill Human Rights Award
National Director of Disability Without Poverty
Founder of Race and Disability Canada
Past Director on the Accessibility Standards Ontario Board
Commissioner on the Ontario Human Rights Commission
CEO of DEEN (Support Services)
Minister's Disability Advisory Group



WHY DISABILITY INCLUSION TOOL MATTERS TO CANADIAN SCHOOLS?

Inclusion is a Human Right

Access to education is a fundamental human right. Every student—regardless of ability—deserves equal access to learning, participation, and opportunity. Inclusive education is not optional; it is a legal and moral obligation rooted in Canadian values of equality, diversity, and respect.

Schools play a critical role in ensuring that students with disabilities are fully included, supported, and empowered to succeed.

Legal Foundations of Inclusion in Canada

Inclusion of people with disabilities is supported by a strong legal framework at both the national and international level:

1. Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees equality rights and protects individuals from discrimination, including on the basis of disability.

2. Federal Legislation


The Accessible Canada Act (2019) establishes accessibility standards for federally regulated organizations and sets a national goal of a barrier-free Canada by 2040.

3. Provincial Accessibility Laws

Each province has legislation that promotes accessibility and inclusion. Examples include:

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
- Accessibility for Manitobans Act

These laws require organizations—including schools—to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility.

A faint, stylized illustration at the bottom of the page shows a group of diverse people with various disabilities. It includes a person in a wheelchair, a person with a white cane, a person with a hearing aid, and a person with a prosthetic leg, all engaged in social interaction.

WHY DISABILITY INCLUSION TOOL MATTERS TO CANADIAN SCHOOLS?

Inclusion is a Human Right

4. Human Rights Codes

Provincial and territorial human rights codes prohibit discrimination based on disability and require equal access to education, services, and opportunities.

5. International Commitment

Canada is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), adopted in 2006.

- Signed by Canada in 2007 and ratified in 2010
- Protects the rights, dignity, and inclusion of persons with disabilities
- Applies to education, employment, accessibility, and participation in society
- Requires Canada to report progress to the United Nations

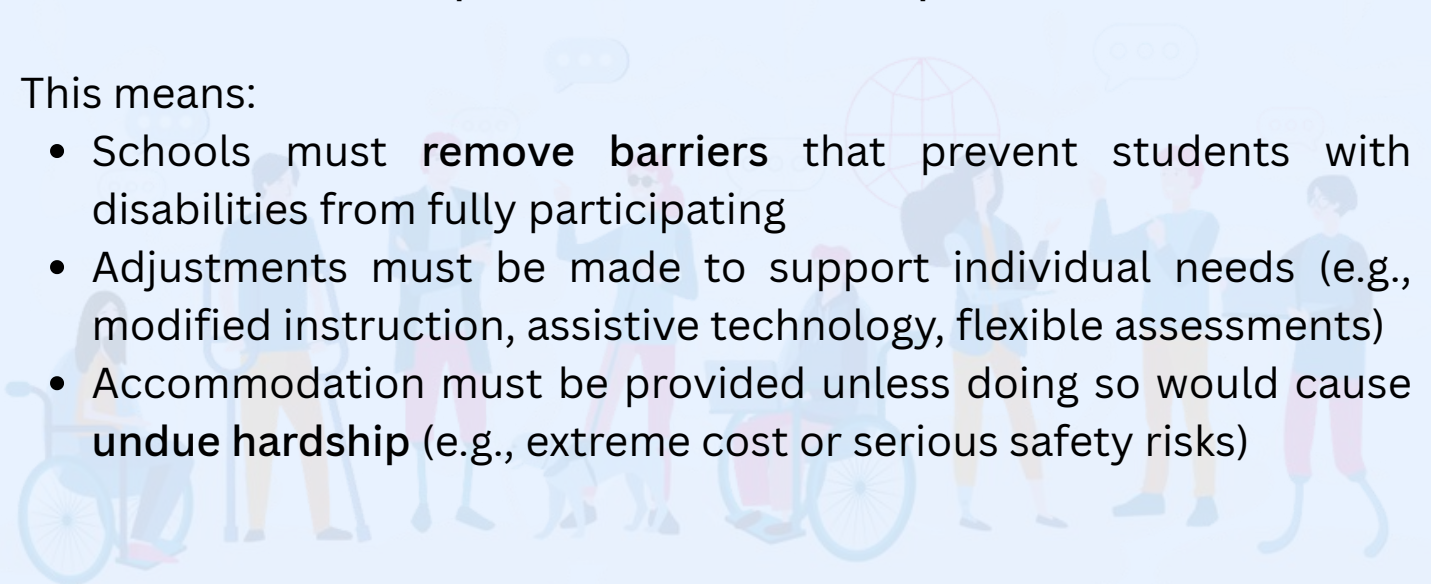
This commitment reinforces Canada's responsibility to advance inclusion both **domestically and globally**.

Duty to Accommodate: A Core Legal Obligation

A central principle of Canadian disability law is the **duty to accommodate to the point of undue hardship**.

This means:

- Schools must **remove barriers** that prevent students with disabilities from fully participating
- Adjustments must be made to support individual needs (e.g., modified instruction, assistive technology, flexible assessments)
- Accommodation must be provided unless doing so would cause **undue hardship** (e.g., extreme cost or serious safety risks)



WHY DISABILITY INCLUSION TOOL MATTERS TO CANADIAN SCHOOLS?

Disabilities are Present in Every School

Accessible classrooms benefit everyone. Flexible seating, captioned videos, clear instructions, and differentiated assessments improve learning outcomes for all students – not just those with identified disabilities.

Inclusive environments:

- Increase empathy and social awareness
- Reduce bullying and stigma
- Strengthen collaboration skills
- Improve academic engagement
- Support mental health and belonging

When diversity is normalized, students develop lifelong respect for differences. Students begin to see differences as a natural and valuable part of everyday life rather than something unusual or divisive. This fosters empathy, reduces prejudice, and helps students build respectful, inclusive attitudes that extend into adulthood and diverse communities.



Provincial Accessibility Legislation Comparison Table

Province	Legislation Name	Year Enacted	Type of Law	Key Features	Status
Ontario	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)	2005	Comprehensive, standards-based	Employment, customer service, transportation, built environment standards; strong compliance requirements	✅ Fully in force
Manitoba	Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)	2013	Comprehensive, standards-based	Accessibility standards (customer service, employment, info/communication); phased implementation	✅ In force
Nova Scotia	Accessibility Act	2017	Comprehensive, goal-based	Target: fully accessible by 2030; covers public & private sectors	✅ In force
British Columbia	Accessible British Columbia Act	2021	Framework legislation	Focus on identifying/removing barriers; accessibility committees required	✅ In force
Saskatchewan	Accessible Saskatchewan Act	2023	Framework legislation	Creates standards development process; evolving regulations	✅ Early implementation
Newfoundland & Labrador	Accessibility Act	2021	Comprehensive, goal-based	Target: barrier-free by 2040; standards under development	✅ In progress
New Brunswick	Accessibility Act	2024	Comprehensive (new)	Province-wide accessibility standards being developed	🟡 Newly enacted
Quebec	Act to secure handicapped persons in the exercise of their rights with a view to achieving social, school and workplace integration	2004 (amended)	Rights-based	Focus on inclusion, accommodation, and equality rather than standards	✅ In force
Alberta	No specific accessibility act	—	Human rights-based	Relies on Alberta Human Rights Act; no unified accessibility framework	❌ No comprehensive law
Prince Edward Island	No specific accessibility act	—	Human rights-based	Accessibility addressed through policies and human rights protections	❌ No comprehensive law



Essential Voices: Building an Inclusive School

The voices of students and teachers with disabilities are pivotal in cultivating an inclusive school environment, as their unique experiences and insights can significantly shape educational practices and policies. Here's an expanded exploration of why their contributions matter, along with illustrative examples:

Importance of Student Voices

1. Advocacy and Empowerment:

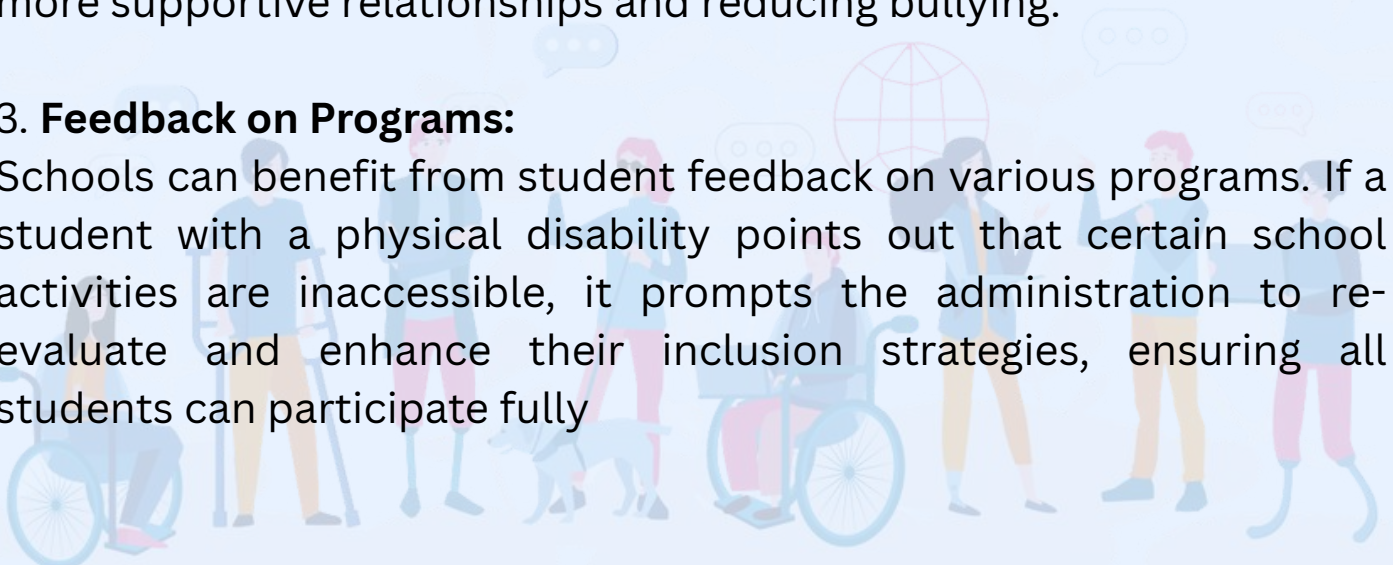
When students with disabilities are encouraged to share their experiences, they become advocates for themselves and their peers. For instance, a student with dyslexia might express the need for more time on tests or alternative assessment methods. By speaking out, they not only highlight their specific challenges but also bring attention to broader issues of fairness and equity in assessment.

2. Peer Awareness and Sensitivity:

Students who articulate their experiences help foster a culture of empathy among their peers. For example, a student with autism sharing their experiences regarding social interactions can help classmates understand the nuances of communication, leading to more supportive relationships and reducing bullying.

3. Feedback on Programs:

Schools can benefit from student feedback on various programs. If a student with a physical disability points out that certain school activities are inaccessible, it prompts the administration to re-evaluate and enhance their inclusion strategies, ensuring all students can participate fully.



Essential Voices: Building an Inclusive School

Importance of Teacher Voices

1. Innovative Teaching Strategies:

Teachers with disabilities can share unique teaching methods that have worked for them, which may also benefit other educators. For example, a teacher with visual impairment may utilize technology that enhances classroom accessibility, such as screen readers or audio descriptions, which can also aid students with similar challenges.

2. Inclusive Curriculum Development:

Educators who have firsthand experience with disability can contribute to curriculum design that reflects diverse perspectives. For instance, a teacher with a hearing impairment might advocate for the inclusion of sign language or deaf culture in the curriculum, enriching the educational experience for all students.

3. Professional Development:

Teachers with disabilities can lead professional development sessions, sharing strategies that promote inclusivity and accessibility. For example, they might conduct workshops on differentiated instruction tailored to meet the needs of students with various disabilities, thereby equipping their colleagues with practical tools and insights.



Essential Voices: Building an Inclusive School

Collaborative Initiatives

1. Student-Teacher Partnerships:

Schools can create committees that include both students and teachers with disabilities to collaborate on school policies and practices. For instance, a committee might work on developing an anti-bullying policy that includes input from both groups, ensuring it addresses the specific concerns of students with disabilities.

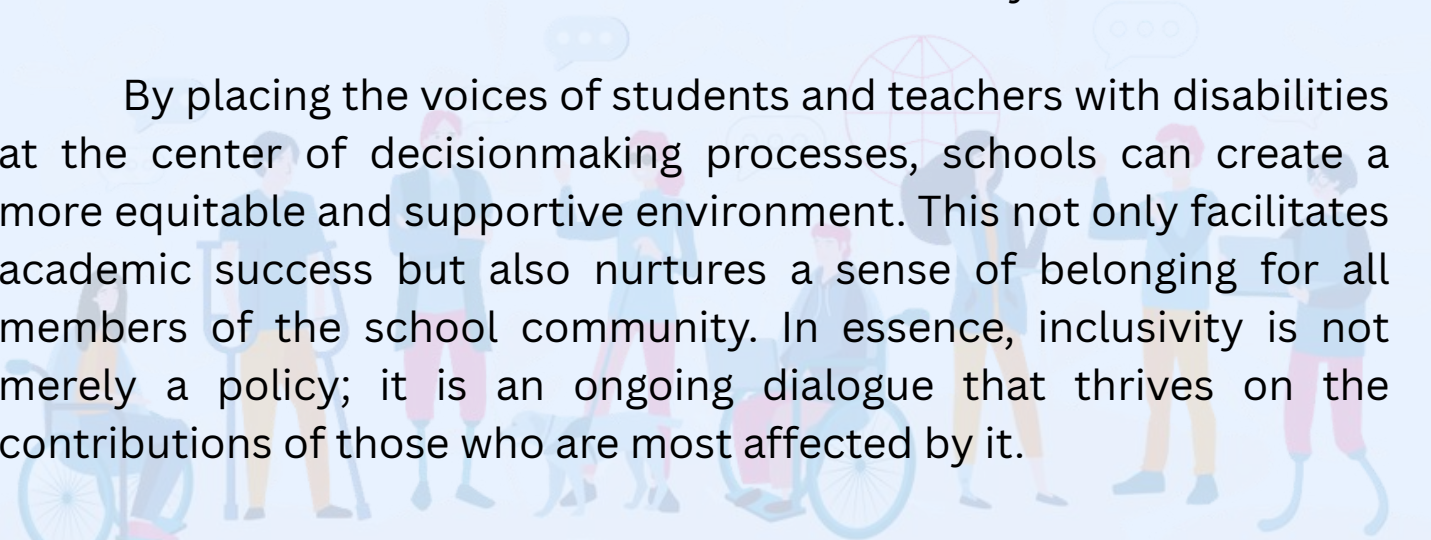
2. Mentorship Programs:

Establishing mentorship programs where students with disabilities are paired with teachers who share similar experiences can foster a supportive community. This can help students navigate their educational journey while allowing teachers to provide guidance based on shared experiences.

3. Feedback Mechanisms:

Schools can implement regular feedback mechanisms, such as surveys or focus groups, specifically targeting students and teachers with disabilities. This can be instrumental in identifying ongoing challenges and areas for improvement, creating a cycle of continuous enhancement in the school's inclusivity efforts.

By placing the voices of students and teachers with disabilities at the center of decisionmaking processes, schools can create a more equitable and supportive environment. This not only facilitates academic success but also nurtures a sense of belonging for all members of the school community. In essence, inclusivity is not merely a policy; it is an ongoing dialogue that thrives on the contributions of those who are most affected by it.

A faint, stylized illustration at the bottom of the page shows a group of diverse people with various disabilities. It includes a person in a wheelchair, a person using a cane, a person with a prosthetic leg, and a person with a hearing aid. They are depicted in a simple, colorful style, representing the school community mentioned in the text.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT?

(For Teachers, Administrators, and Students)

FOR TEACHERS

Use this toolkit to:

- Apply inclusive instructional strategies
- Adapt classroom environments
- Support diverse learning styles
- Reduce stigma through open discussion
- Design accessible assessments

The strategies provided are scalable and adaptable to all grade levels.

FOR ADMINISTRATORS

Use this toolkit to:

- Conduct accessibility audits
- Improve infrastructure planning
- Strengthen inclusive policies
- Provide professional development
- Create school-wide inclusion initiatives

System-level leadership is critical for sustainable accessibility.

FOR STUDENTS

Students play a vital role in shaping inclusive school culture.

Students can:

- Join or create accessibility ambassador programs
- Lead awareness campaigns
- Support peers through mentorship
- Advocate for barrier-free events
- Promote respectful language
-

Youth leadership drives meaningful cultural change.



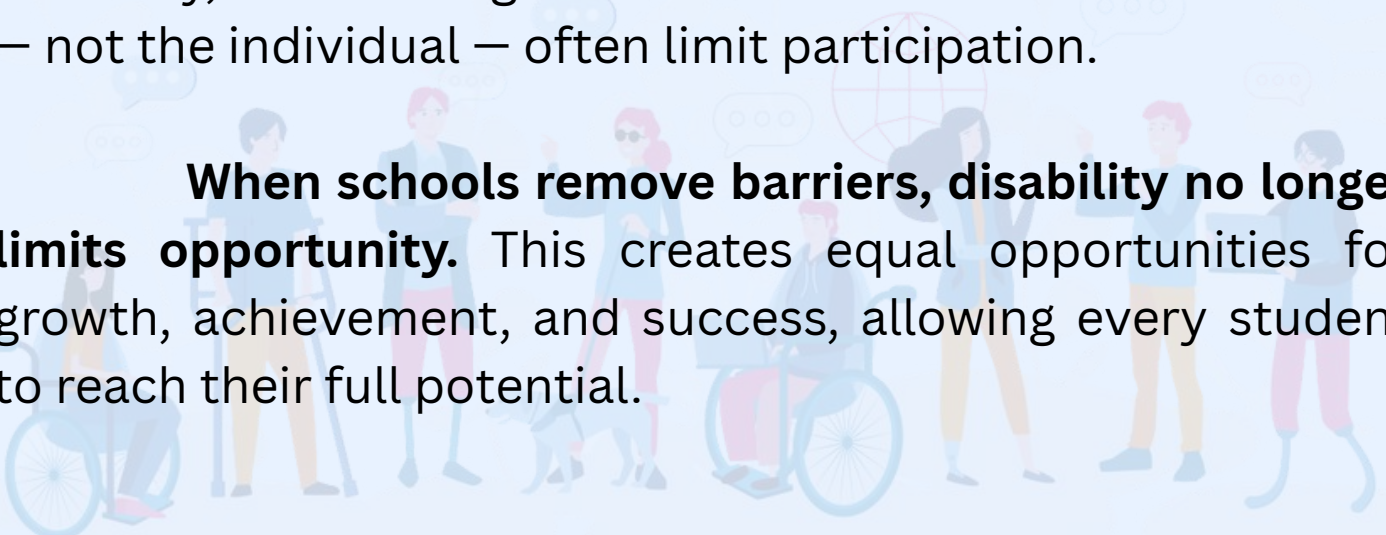
SECTION 1: UNDERSTANDING DISABILITIES & INCLUSION

1.1 What is Disability?



Modern understanding follows the social model of disability, which recognizes that barriers in the environment – not the individual – often limit participation.

When schools remove barriers, disability no longer limits opportunity. This creates equal opportunities for growth, achievement, and success, allowing every student to reach their full potential.



SECTION 1: UNDERSTANDING DISABILITIES & INCLUSION

1.2 Types of Disabilities in Schools

Physical and Mobility Disabilities:

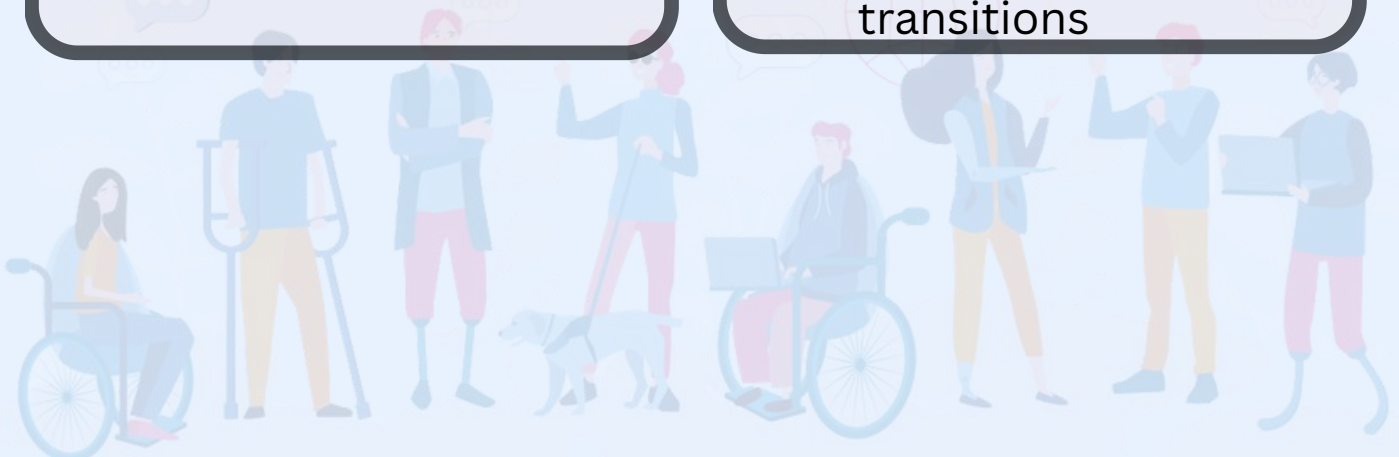
- Spinal cord injuries
- Cerebral palsy
- Muscular dystrophy
- Limb differences
- Chronic mobility impairments

Students may use:

- Wheelchairs
- Walkers
- Braces
- Adaptive writing tools

Support Strategies

- Adjustable desks
- Accessible entrances
- Modified PE activities
- Extra time for transitions



SECTION 1: UNDERSTANDING DISABILITIES & INCLUSION

1.2 Types of Disabilities in Schools

Vision Loss

Vision impairments may require:

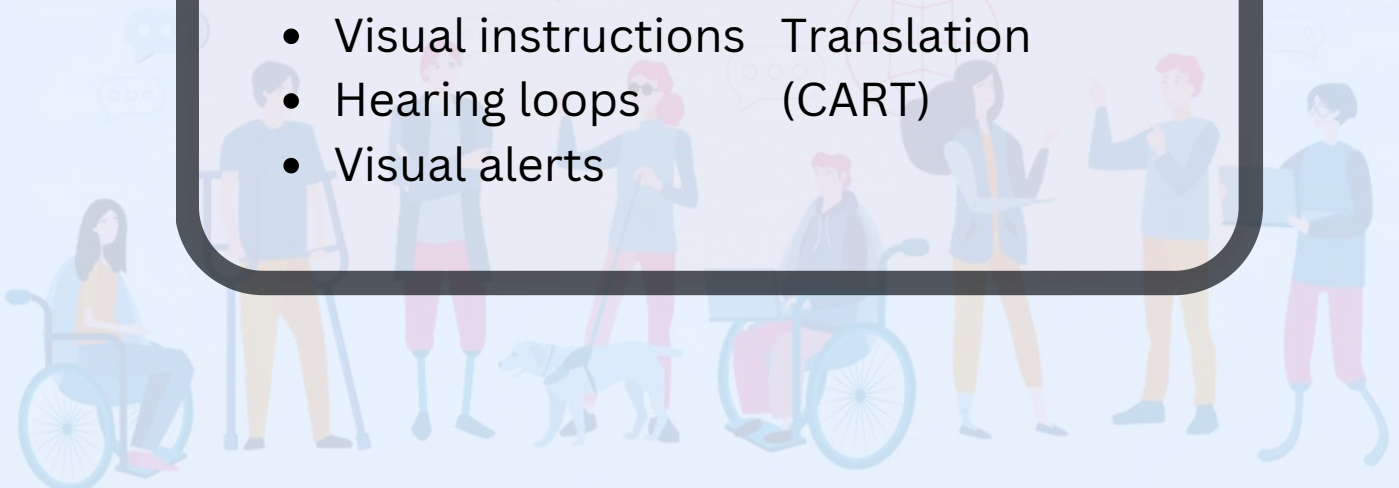
- Braille materials
- Tactile Materials
- Screen readers
- Orientation and mobility support



Hearing Loss

Hearing impairments may require:

- Captioned media
- Bluetooth-enabled systems
- FM systems
- Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART)
- Sign language interpreters
- Visual instructions
- Hearing loops
- Visual alerts



SECTION 1: UNDERSTANDING DISABILITIES & INCLUSION

1.2 Types of Disabilities in Schools

Neurodiversity (Autism, ADHD, Learning Disabilities)

Neurodiversity recognizes that brain differences are part of human variation.

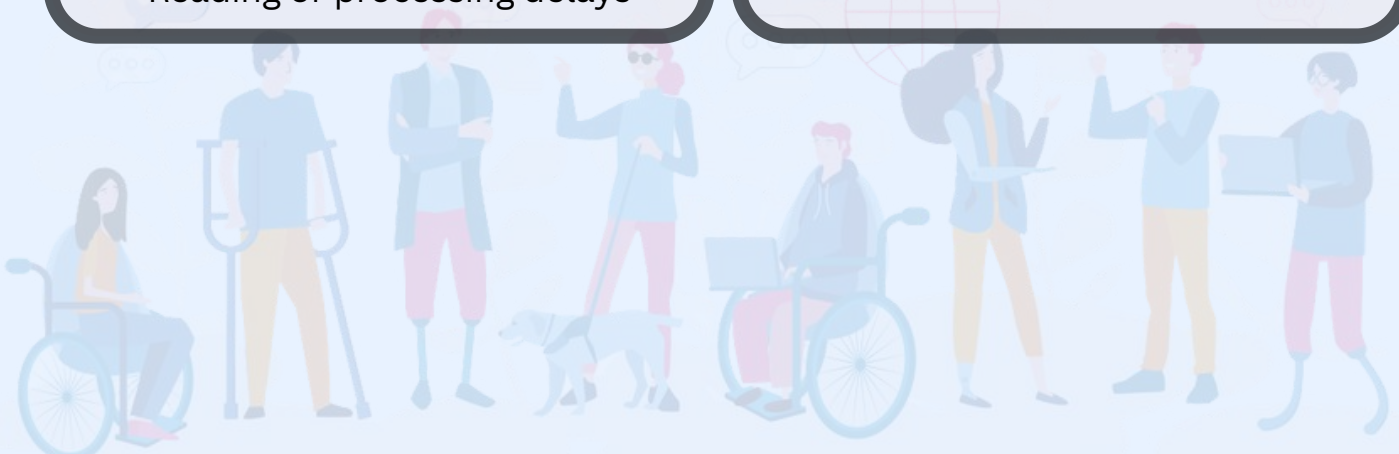


Students may experience

- Sensory sensitivities
- Executive functioning challenges
- Social communication differences
- Reading or processing delays

Support Strategies

- Predictable routines
- Visual schedules
- Flexible deadlines
- Clear step-by-step instructions



SECTION 1: UNDERSTANDING DISABILITIES & INCLUSION

1.2 Types of Disabilities in Schools

Mental Health Disabilities

May include:

- Anxiety disorders
- Depression
- PTSD
- Mood disorders

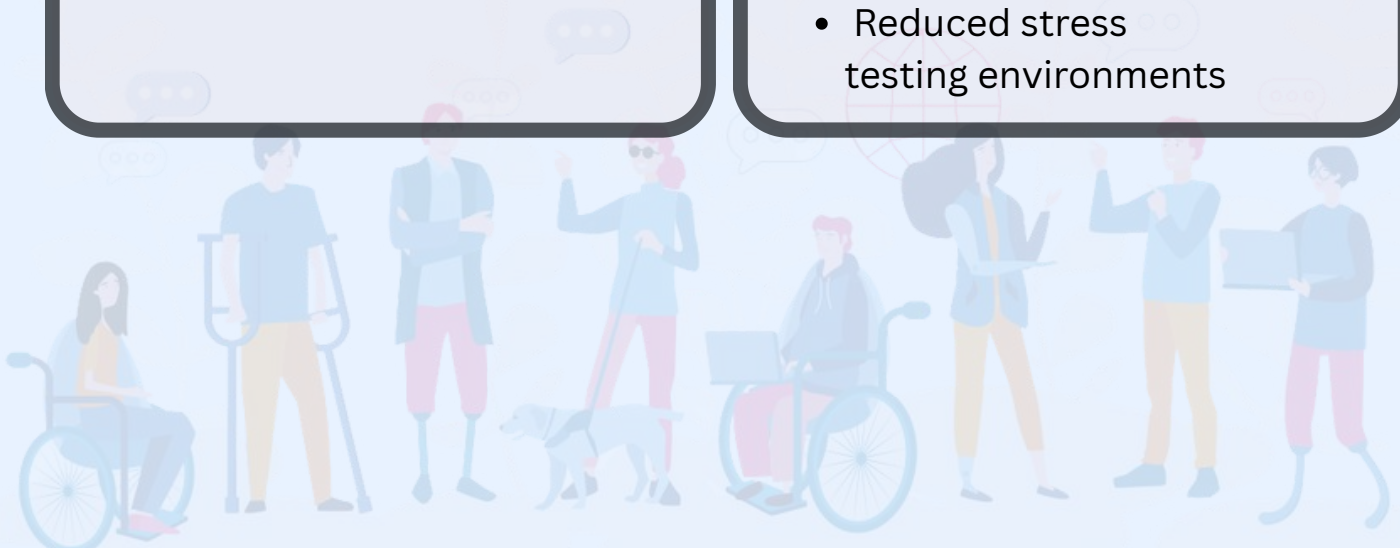


Students' reminder

- Mental health is just as important as physical health.

Support Strategies

- Break spaces
- Check-ins with trusted staff
- Flexible participation options
- Reduced stress testing environments



SECTION 1: UNDERSTANDING DISABILITIES & INCLUSION

1.2 Types of Disabilities in Schools

Chronic and Invisible Disabilities

May include:

- Epilepsy
- Diabetes
- Autoimmune disorders
- Chronic pain
- Chronic Condition

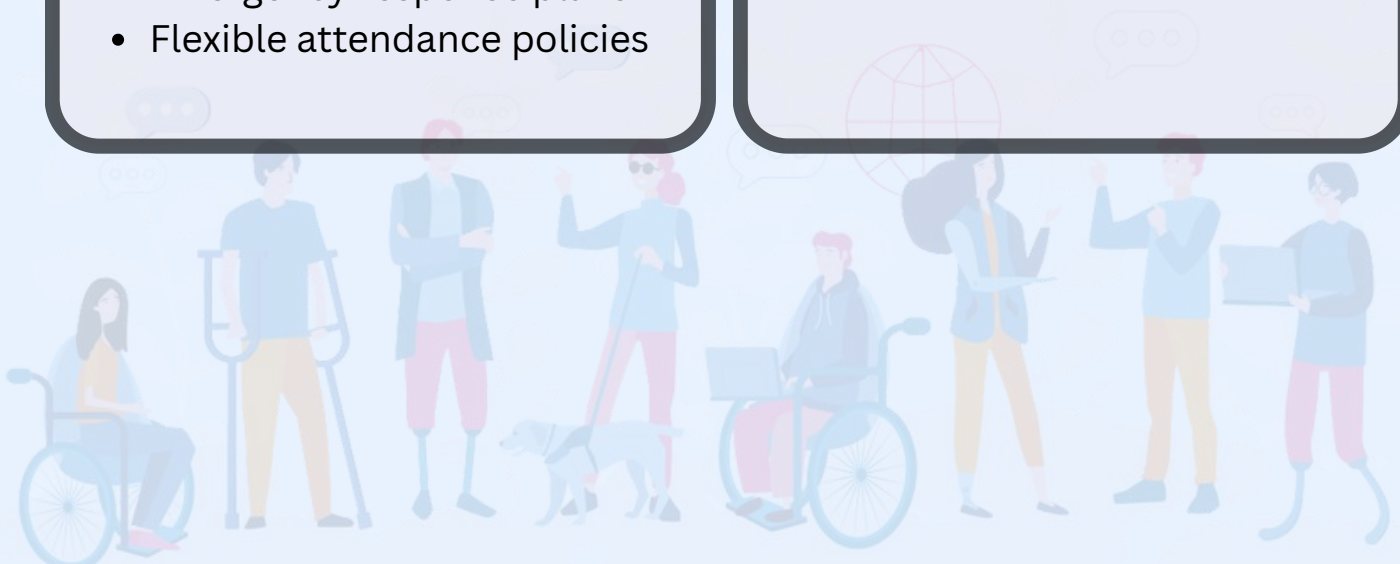


Students may experience

- Medication schedules
- Rest breaks
- Emergency response plans
- Flexible attendance policies

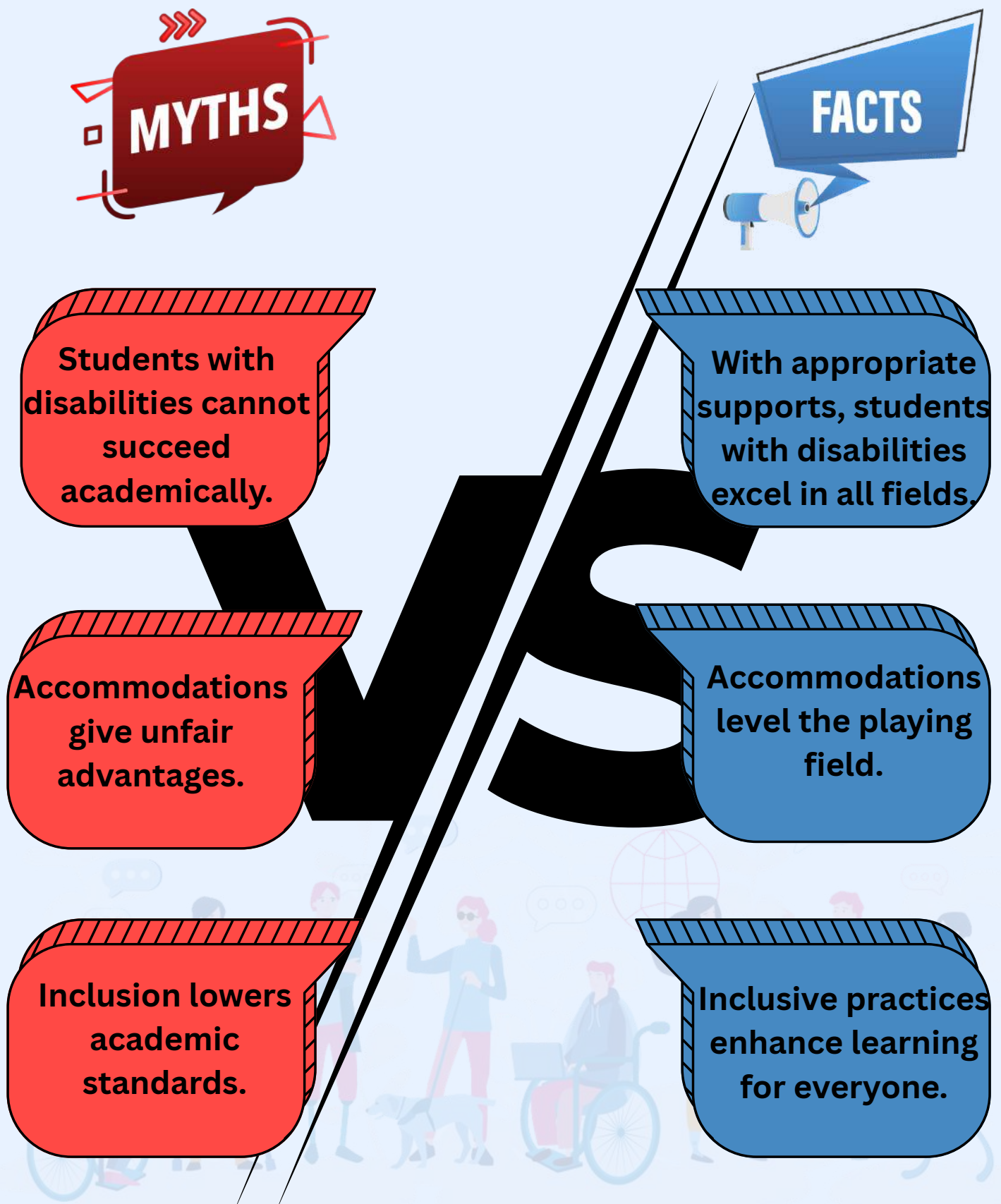
Support Strategies

- Invisible disabilities deserve visible support



SECTION 1: UNDERSTANDING DISABILITIES & INCLUSION

1.3 Myth vs Fact: Breaking Stigma



SECTION 1: UNDERSTANDING DISABILITIES & INCLUSION

1.4 Respectful Language & Inclusive Communication

Guidelines:

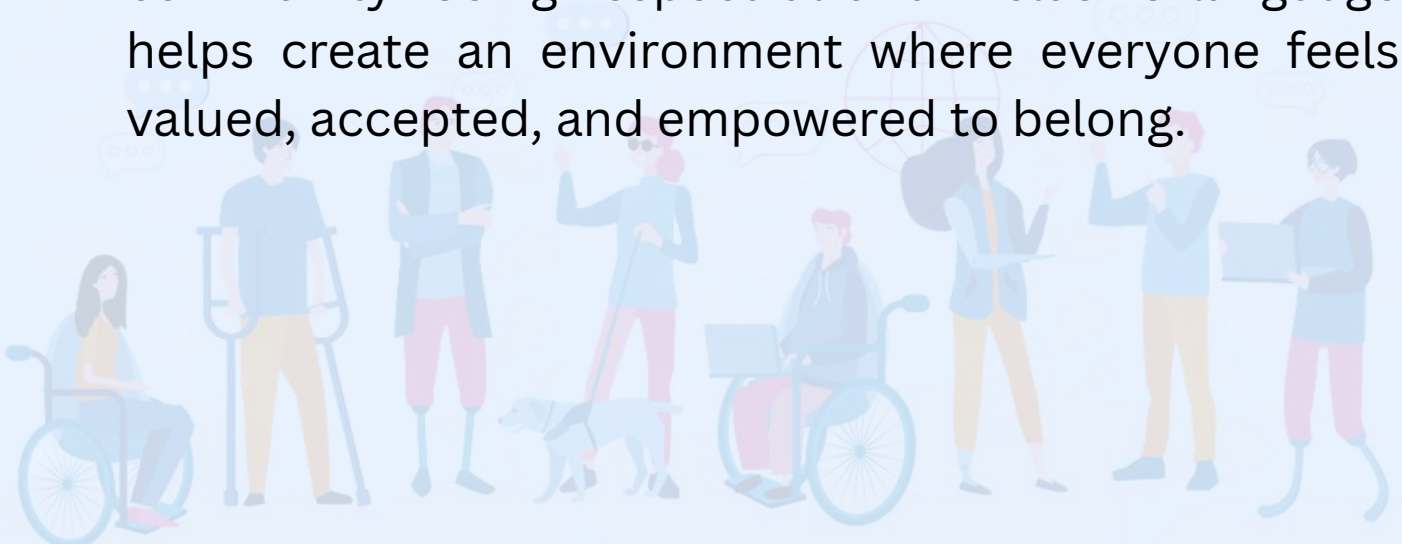
- Ask individuals how they prefer to be identified.
- Avoid pity-based language.
- Focus on strengths, not limitations.
- Use person-first or identity-first language based on preference.

Example:

Instead of: “Wheelchair-bound student”

Use: “Student who uses a wheelchair”

Language shapes culture. It is by influencing how people think, interact, and perceive others in their community. Using respectful and inclusive language helps create an environment where everyone feels valued, accepted, and empowered to belong.

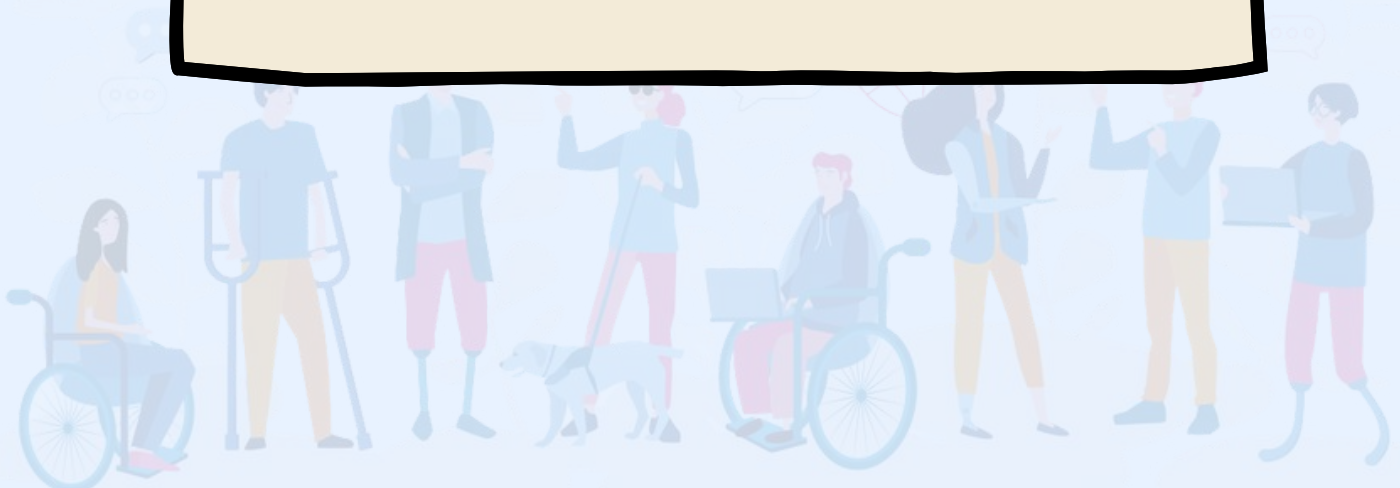


SECTION 2: CREATING ACCESSIBLE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

2.1 Physical Accessibility Checklist

Schools should ensure:

- Step-free entrances
- Elevators and ramps
- Accessible washrooms
- Wide doorways
- Adjustable desks
- Clear hallway pathways



SECTION 2: CREATING ACCESSIBLE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

2.2 Digital Accessibility Checklist

Schools should ensure and provide:

- Accessible PDFs
Screen-reader compatible documents
- Captioned online content
- Accessible web design

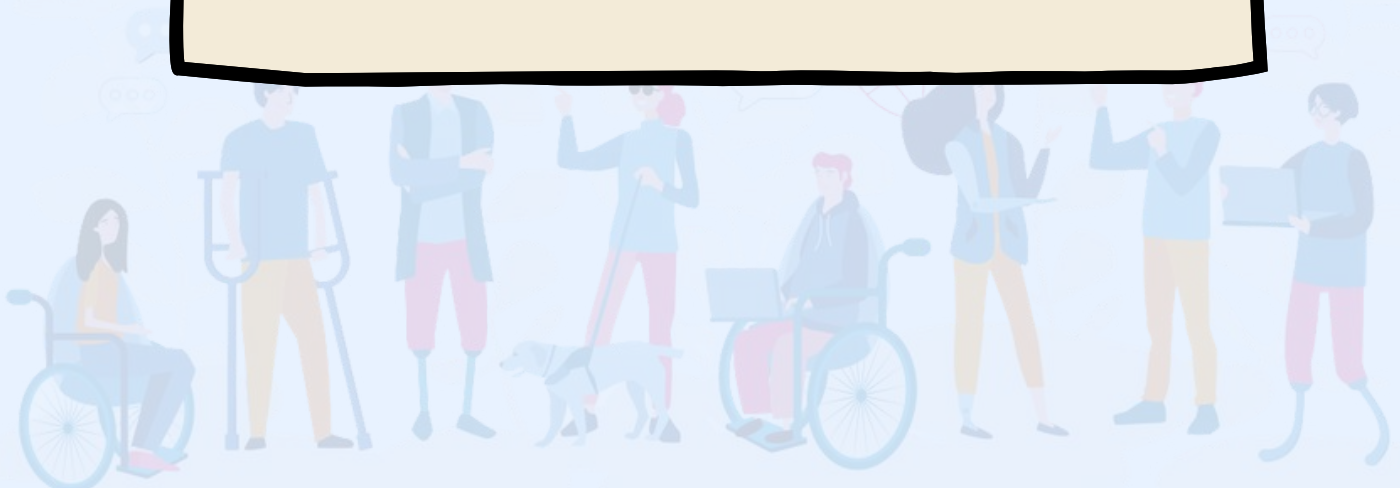


SECTION 2: CREATING ACCESSIBLE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

2.3 Accessible Classrooms & Learning Spaces

Schools should ensure:

- Flexible seating
- Captioned videos
- Accessible digital materials
- Clear visual instructions
- Assistive technology access
-



SECTION 2: CREATING ACCESSIBLE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

2.4 Accessible Playgrounds and Sports Facilities

Playgrounds should:

- Include ramp-accessible structures
- Offer inclusive swings
- Provide smooth pathways

Sports facilities should:

- Allow adaptive equipment
- Offer seated participation options
-



SECTION 2: CREATING ACCESSIBLE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

2.5 Sensory-Friendly and Quiet Spaces

Schools should designate:

- Low-light areas
- Noise-reduced rooms
- Calm-down spaces
- Flexible workstations
-



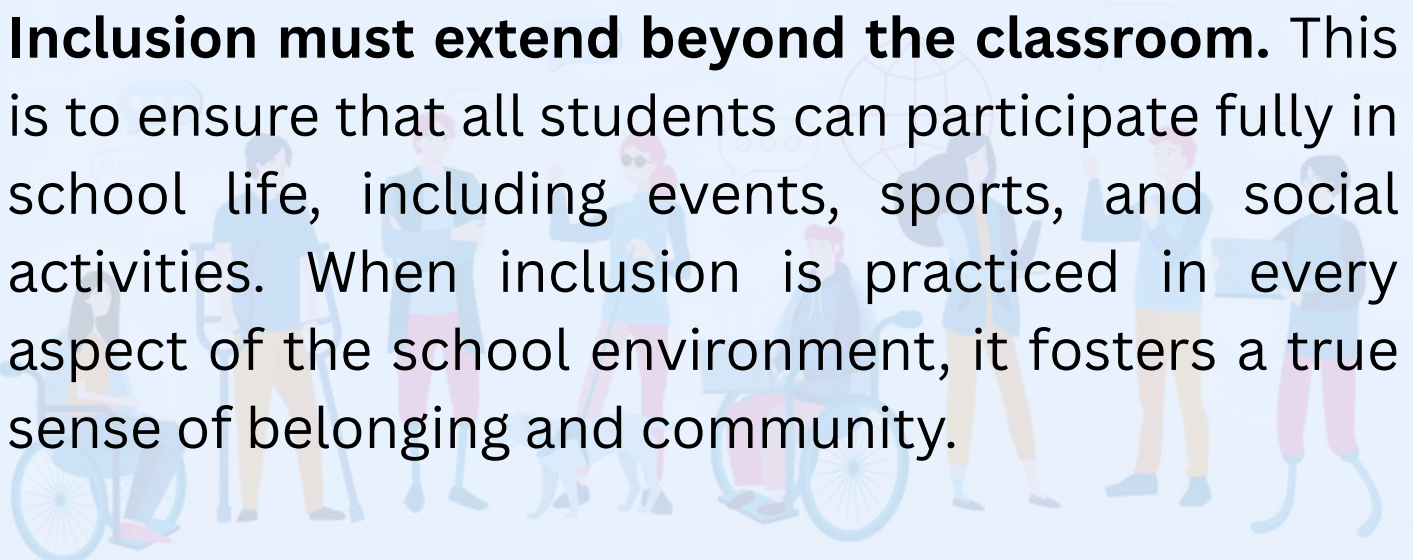
SECTION 2: CREATING ACCESSIBLE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

2.6 Accessible School Events and Assemblies

Ensure:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Wheelchair seating areas
<input type="checkbox"/>	Captioning for presentations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Microphone use
<input type="checkbox"/>	Accessible stage entry
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clear signage

Inclusion must extend beyond the classroom. This is to ensure that all students can participate fully in school life, including events, sports, and social activities. When inclusion is practiced in every aspect of the school environment, it fosters a true sense of belonging and community.



SECTION 3: INCLUSIVE TEACHING & LEARNING STRATEGIES

3.1 Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework that promotes flexible teaching methods to accommodate diverse learners from the start, rather than retrofitting accommodations later.

UDL is built on three core principles:

1. Multiple Means of Engagement

Provide different ways to motivate and involve students (group work, independent study, hands-on learning).


2. Multiple Means of Representation

Present information in varied formats (visual, auditory, written, digital, tactile).

3. Multiple Means of Expression

Allow students different ways to demonstrate learning (presentations, projects, written responses, videos, creative work).

When lessons are designed with flexibility in mind, fewer students require individual modifications. This reduces the need for separate adjustments, allowing more students to access learning in an inclusive and supportive way.



SECTION 3: INCLUSIVE TEACHING & LEARNING STRATEGIES

3.2 Differentiated Instruction for Diverse Learners

Differentiated instruction recognizes that students learn at different speeds and in different ways.

Strategies include:

Tiered assignments based on readiness

Choice boards for projects

Small-group instruction

Scaffolded instructions

Extended time when needed

Differentiation does not mean lowering expectations – it means providing equitable access to success.

A faint illustration at the bottom of the page shows a diverse group of students. On the left, a student is seated in a wheelchair. In the center, there are several students standing, some with crutches. On the right, a student is using a cane. The background is light blue with a subtle pattern of icons representing various disabilities.

SECTION 3: INCLUSIVE TEACHING & LEARNING STRATEGIES

3.3 Supporting Students with Physical Disabilities

Teachers can:

Ensure accessible seating arrangements

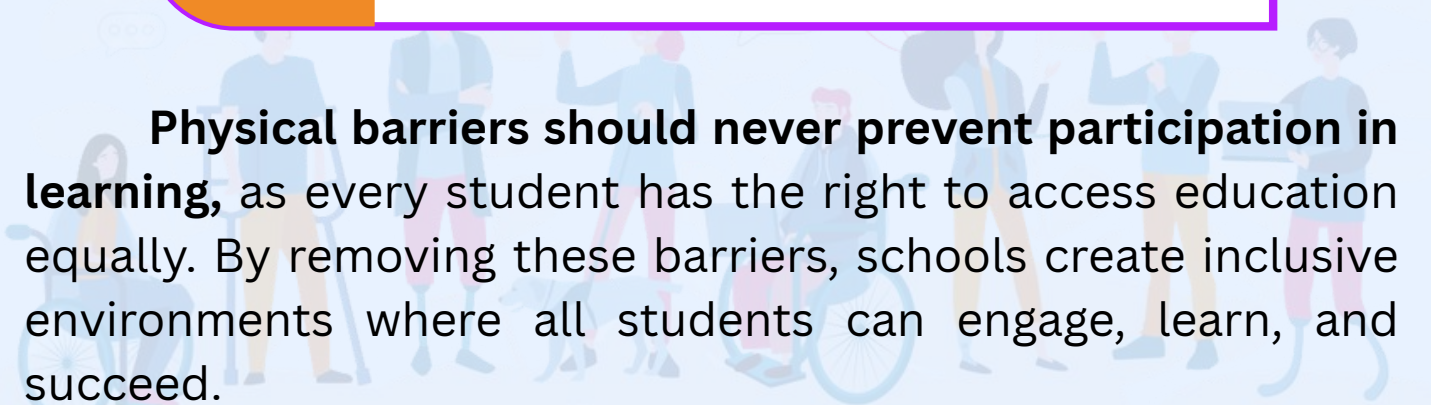
Allow alternative note-taking methods (digital, audio)

Provide Extra time for transitions

Coordinate with support staff

Modify lab or physical activities

Physical barriers should never prevent participation in learning, as every student has the right to access education equally. By removing these barriers, schools create inclusive environments where all students can engage, learn, and succeed.



SECTION 3: INCLUSIVE TEACHING & LEARNING STRATEGIES

3.4 Supporting Neurodiverse Students

Effective strategies include:

Clear, consistent routines

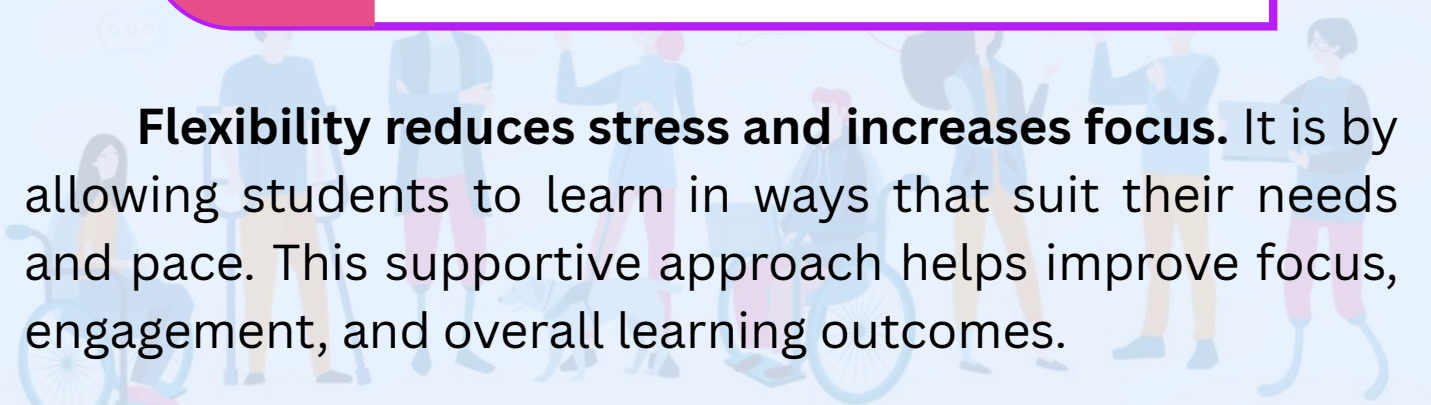
Visual schedules and timers

Chunking assignments into smaller parts

Providing written and verbal instructions

Offering movement breaks

Flexibility reduces stress and increases focus. It is by allowing students to learn in ways that suit their needs and pace. This supportive approach helps improve focus, engagement, and overall learning outcomes.



SECTION 3: INCLUSIVE TEACHING & LEARNING STRATEGIES

3.5 Supporting Students with Mental Health Needs

Support strategies include:

Regular check-ins

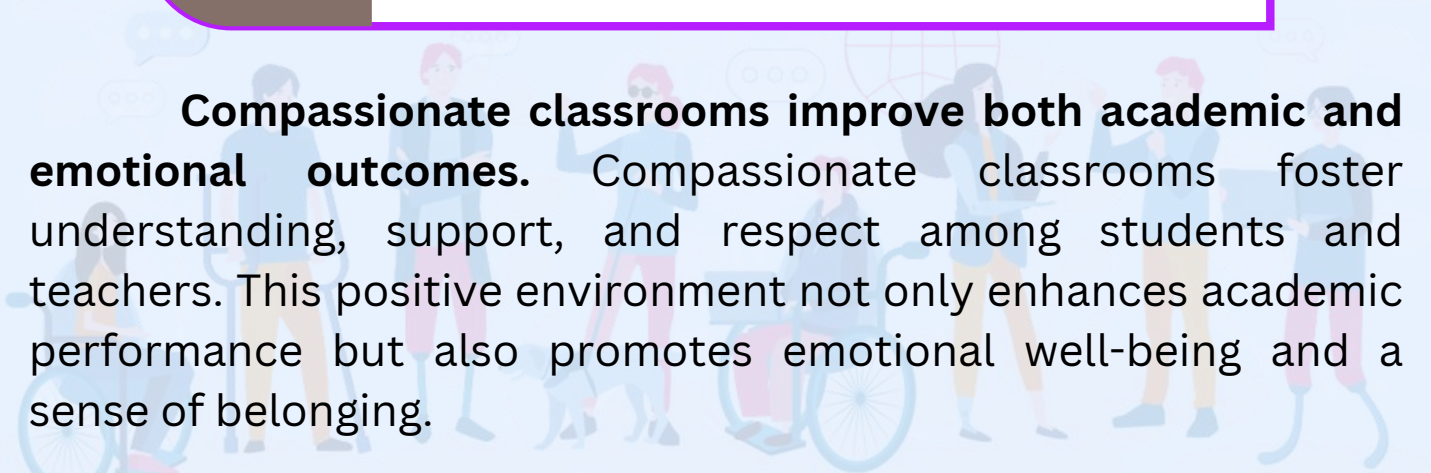
Private feedback rather than public correction

Calm-down passes or break cards

Reduced stimulation testing environments

Clear, predictable expectations

Compassionate classrooms improve both academic and emotional outcomes. Compassionate classrooms foster understanding, support, and respect among students and teachers. This positive environment not only enhances academic performance but also promotes emotional well-being and a sense of belonging.



SECTION 3: INCLUSIVE TEACHING & LEARNING STRATEGIES

3.6 Flexible Assessments & Inclusive Evaluation Methods

Assessment options may include:

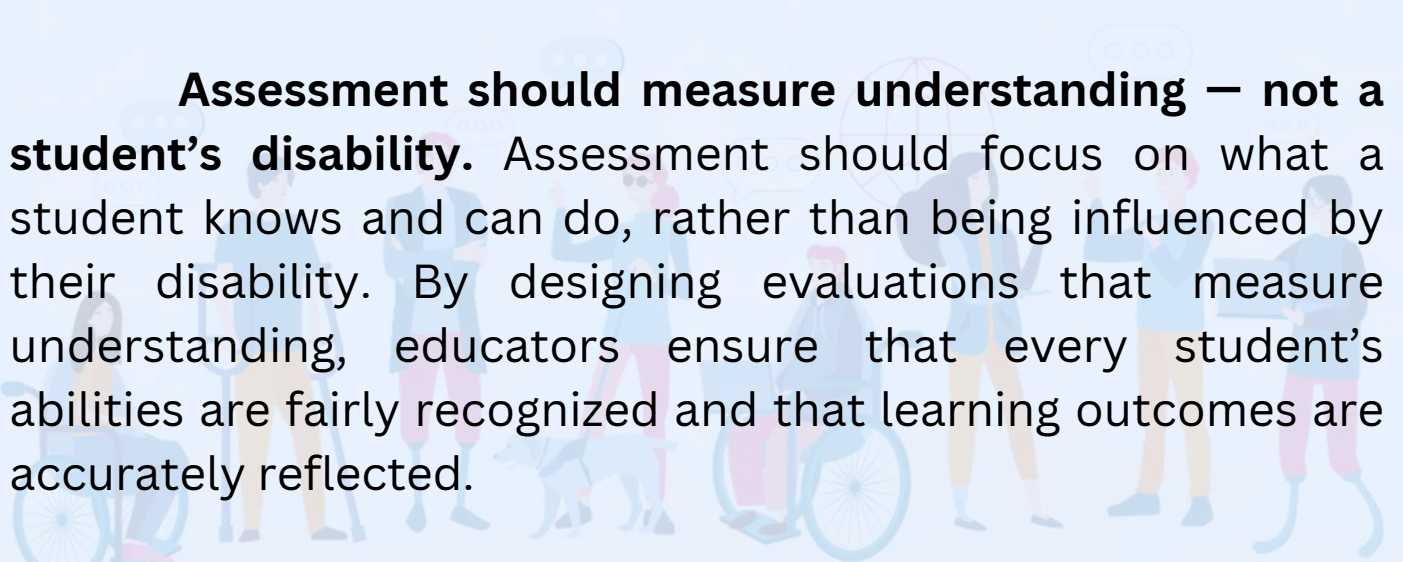
Oral presentations instead written tests

Project-based demonstrations

Portfolio submissions

Extended deadlines when appropriate

Assessment should measure understanding – not a student's disability. Assessment should focus on what a student knows and can do, rather than being influenced by their disability. By designing evaluations that measure understanding, educators ensure that every student's abilities are fairly recognized and that learning outcomes are accurately reflected.

A faint, stylized illustration at the bottom of the page shows a group of diverse students with various disabilities. It includes a student in a wheelchair, a student with a white cane, a student with a hearing aid, a student with a prosthetic leg, and a student with a dog. The illustration is in a light blue and pink color palette.

SECTION 4: INCLUSIVE SPORTS, ARTS, AND EXTRACURRICULAR PARTICIPATION

4.1 Adapting Physical Education for All Abilities

Assessment options may include:

Using lighter or larger balls

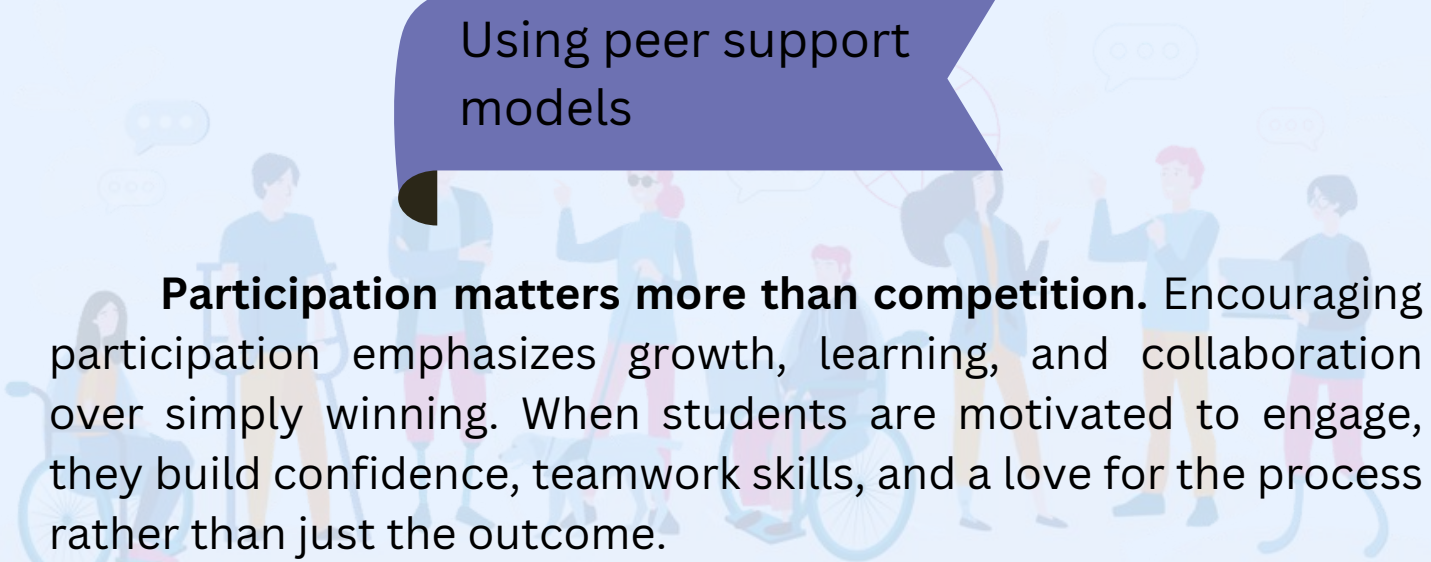
Shortening playing distances

Allowing seated participation

Creating team-based cooperative games

Using peer support models

Participation matters more than competition. Encouraging participation emphasizes growth, learning, and collaboration over simply winning. When students are motivated to engage, they build confidence, teamwork skills, and a love for the process rather than just the outcome.

A background illustration showing a group of diverse students in a physical education setting. Some students are in wheelchairs, some are using crutches, and some are standing. They are engaged in various activities, with speech bubbles indicating communication and interaction.

SECTION 4: INCLUSIVE SPORTS, ARTS, AND EXTRACURRICULAR PARTICIPATION

4.2 Inclusive School Sports Models

Schools can:



Develop unified sports teams (students with and without disabilities)



Offer adaptive sports clubs



Create mixed-ability training sessions



Partner with community organizations like Beyond Boundaries Soccer

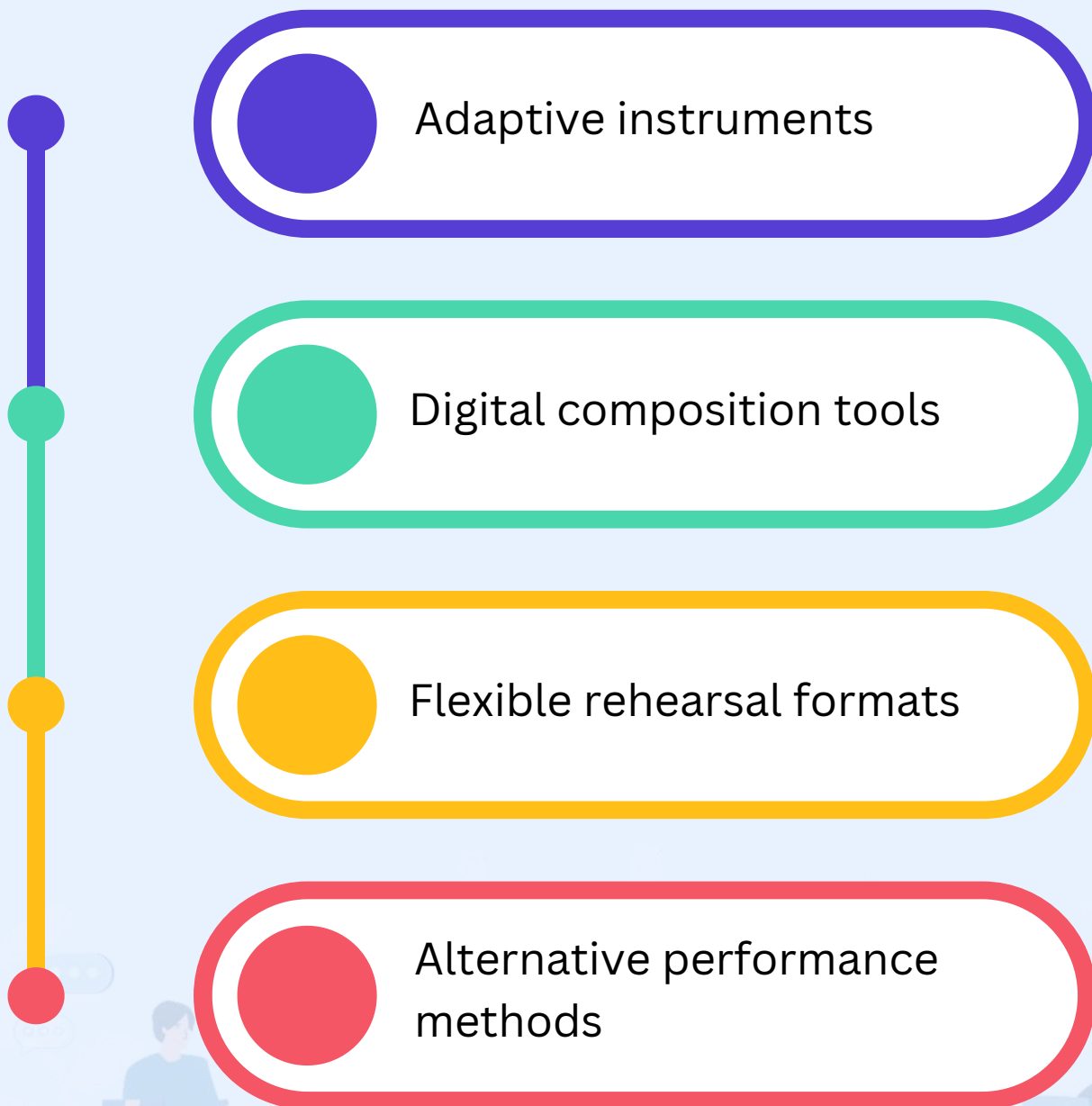
Inclusive sports foster teamwork, confidence, and leadership. Inclusive sports bring students together, promoting teamwork and cooperation. They also help build confidence and leadership skills in every participant.

A faint background illustration at the bottom of the page shows a group of diverse students. Some are walking, some are using a wheelchair, and some are using a cane, representing an inclusive school environment.

SECTION 4: INCLUSIVE SPORTS, ARTS, AND EXTRACURRICULAR PARTICIPATION

4.3 Accessible Music and Arts Participation

Arts participation should include:



Every student deserves access to creative expression. Every student should have the chance to explore and express their creativity. Access to creative opportunities nurtures imagination, confidence, and personal growth.

SECTION 4: INCLUSIVE SPORTS, ARTS, AND EXTRACURRICULAR PARTICIPATION

4.4 Adaptive Equipment and Assistive Technology

Examples include:

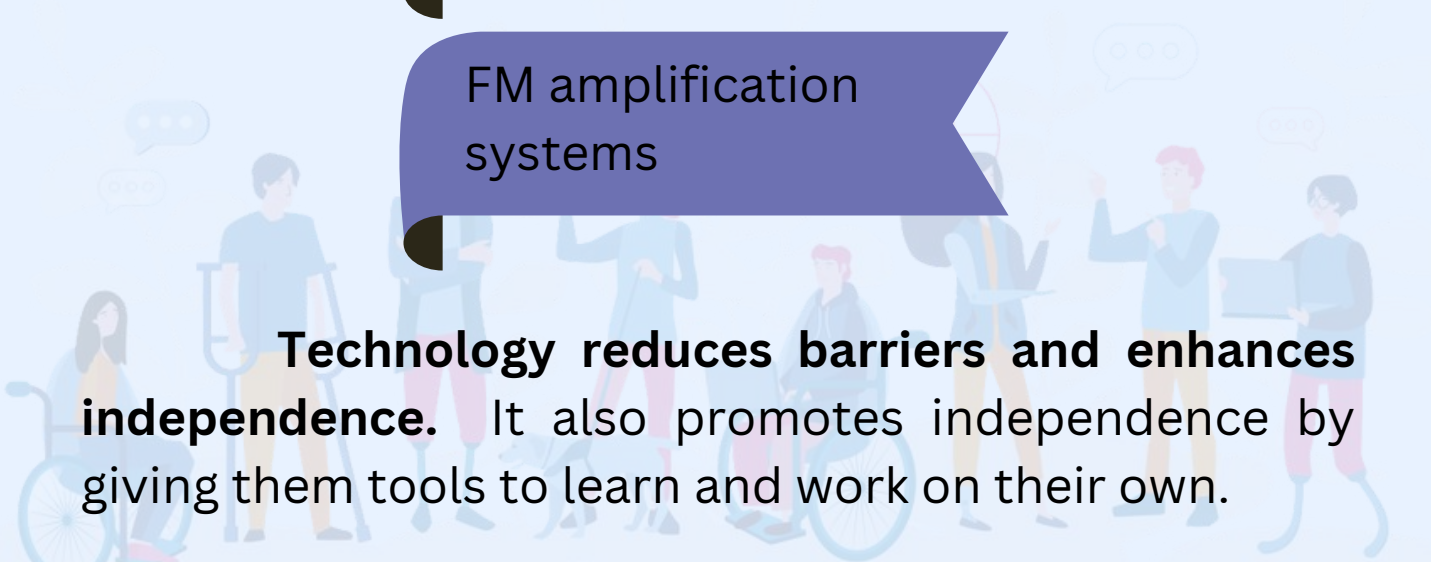
Speech-to-text
software

Screen readers

Adaptive keyboards

Switch-access
devices

FM amplification
systems

A faint background illustration shows a group of diverse people. Some are using assistive devices like wheelchairs, canes, and prosthetic limbs. There are also speech bubbles and a laptop, suggesting communication and technology use.

Technology reduces barriers and enhances independence. It also promotes independence by giving them tools to learn and work on their own.

SECTION 5: STUDENT LEADERSHIP & PEER ALLY PROGRAMS

5.1 Creating a Student Accessibility Ambassador Program

Schools can establish student-led inclusion committees that:

- Conduct accessibility audits
- Host awareness events
- Advocate for improvements
- Support peers with disabilities

Youth leadership accelerates cultural change. It inspires peers and drives positive cultural shifts. Engaging young leaders fosters innovation, inclusivity, and lasting change in their communities.



SECTION 5: STUDENT LEADERSHIP & PEER ALLY PROGRAMS

5.2 Peer Mentorship for Inclusion

Peer mentorship programs:

Pair Students across abilities

Promote social integration

Reduce isolation

Strengthen empathy

Mentorship fosters community. It connects individuals and strengthens a sense of belonging. It builds supportive relationships that nurture community and mutual growth.



SECTION 5: STUDENT LEADERSHIP & PEER ALLY PROGRAMS

5.3 Student-Led Accessibility Campaign Ideas

Ideas include:

● Accessibility Awareness Week

● Inclusive Spirit Days

● Panel discussions with guest speakers

● “Barrier-Free School” initiatives

● Fundraisers for adaptive equipment

Students are powerful advocates.

5.4 Inclusion Pledge & School Commitment Charter

Schools may adopt a formal pledge such as:

“We commit to building a barrier-free, inclusive learning environment where every student is valued, respected, and supported.”



SECTION 6: MENTAL HEALTH & INVISIBLE DISABILITIES SUPPORT

6.1 Understanding Invisible Disabilities

Invisible disabilities may include:

Chronic pain

Learning disabilities

Anxiety disorders

Schools must avoid assumptions and ensure confidential support systems.

Schools should recognize that invisible disabilities are not always outwardly visible and avoid making assumptions about a student's abilities or needs.

6.2 Classroom Supports for Anxiety, Depression & Trauma

Supports include:

Flexible deadlines

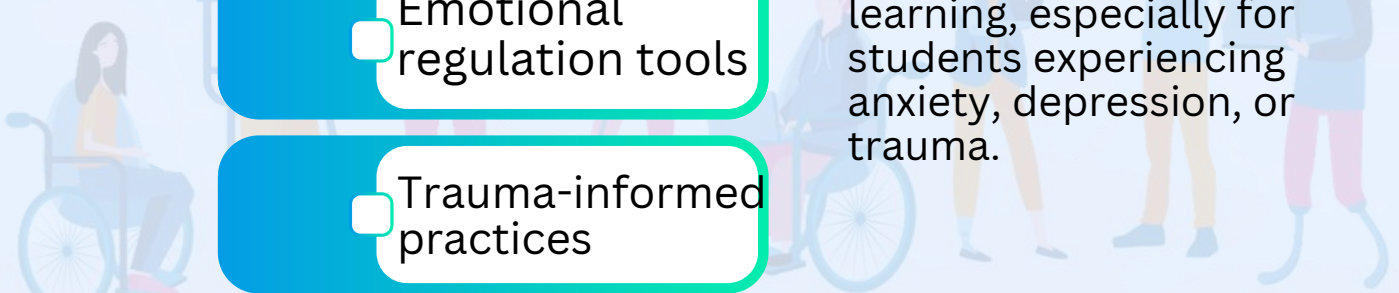
Quiet test-taking areas

Emotional regulation tools

Trauma-informed practices

Safety and stability are foundational for learning

Creating a safe and stable classroom environment is essential for effective learning, especially for students experiencing anxiety, depression, or trauma.



SECTION 6: MENTAL HEALTH & INVISIBLE DISABILITIES SUPPORT

6.3 Reducing Bullying and Social Isolation

Schools should:

Implement clear anti-bullying policies

Address ableist language immediately

Encourage inclusive peer interactions

Promote restorative practices

Respectful environments reduce harm. Creating respectful environments for students with disabilities promotes inclusion, supports their well-being, and reduces the risk of discrimination or harm

6.4 Building Emotionally Safe Classrooms

Teachers can:

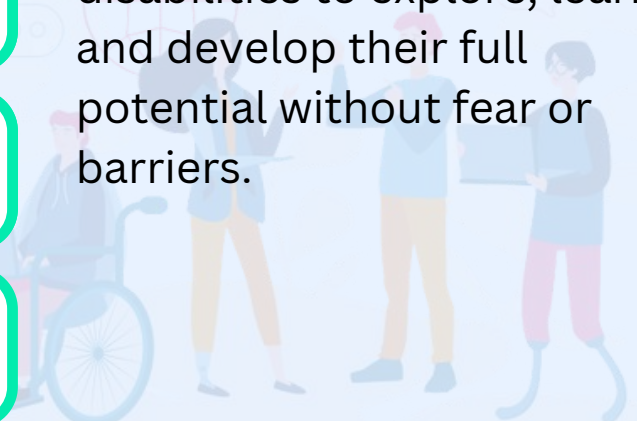
Establish clear norms

Celebrate diversity

Encourage respectful dialogue

Model empathy and inclusion

Safety enables growth. Ensuring a safe environment allows students with disabilities to explore, learn, and develop their full potential without fear or barriers.



SECTION 7: FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

7.1 Partnering with Families for Student Success

Families are experts on their children. Schools should:

- 01 Invite families into collaborative planning conversations
- 02 Provide clear communication about accommodations
- 03 Offer translation services where needed
- 04 Respect cultural perspectives on disability
- 05 Hold regular progress meetings

When families feel heard, students feel supported. When families of students with disabilities feel heard and valued, it strengthens support systems, helping students thrive academically and socially.



SECTION 7: FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

7.2 Understanding IEPs and Accommodation Plans

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) outlines specific support for a student.

Effective IEP implementation requires:

01

Shared responsibility among staff

02

Clear documentation of accommodations

03

Regular progress review

04

Student involvement when appropriate

05

Flexibility and responsiveness

IEPs are living documents – they should evolve with the student’s needs. IEPs are dynamic tools that grow and change to meet the evolving needs of students with disabilities, ensuring personalized support and meaningful progress.

SECTION 7: FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

7.3 Community Accessibility Resources Across Canada

Schools can collaborate with:

- 01 Children's rehabilitation hospitals
- 02 Mental health organizations
- 03 Adaptive sports programs
- 04 Music therapy associations
- 05 Local disability advocacy groups and public health units

Community partnerships expand access to specialized services and inclusive opportunities. Community partnerships provide students with disabilities greater access to specialized services and inclusive opportunities, enhancing learning, social engagement, and overall development, while fostering a stronger, more supportive network around them.

SECTION 7: FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

7.4 Collaborating with Disability Organizations

Partnerships can include:

01

Guest speaker events

02

Staff training workshops

03

Student mentorship programs

04

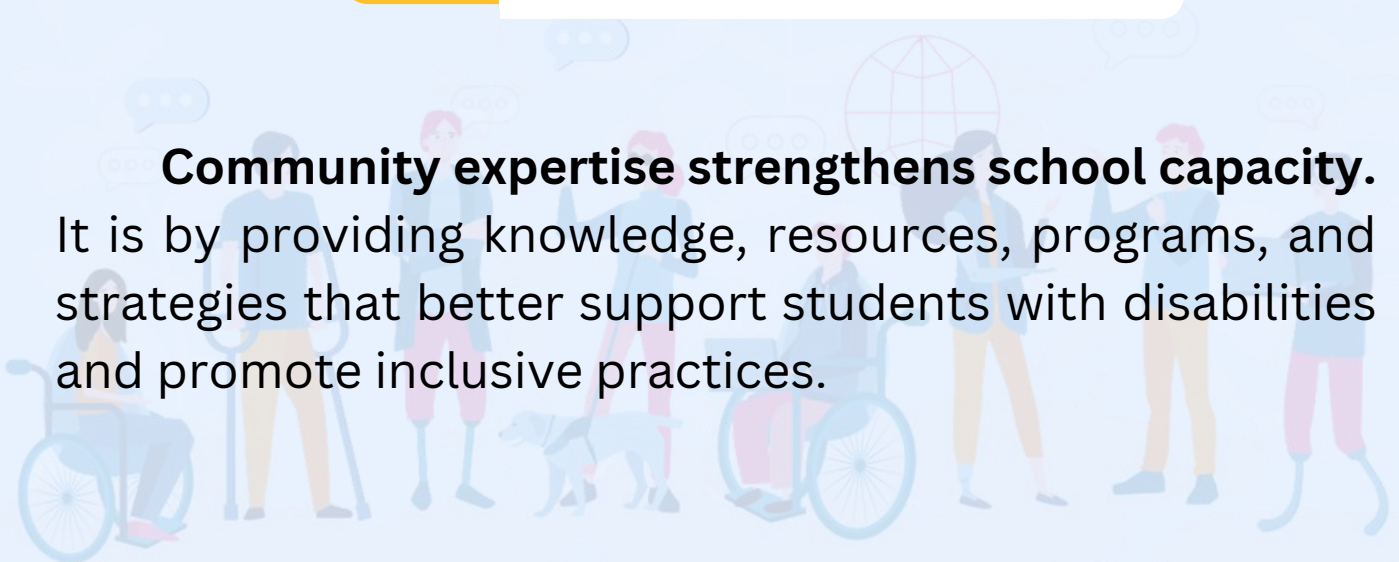
Accessibility audits

05

Adaptive equipment grants

Community expertise strengthens school capacity.

It is by providing knowledge, resources, programs, and strategies that better support students with disabilities and promote inclusive practices.



SECTION 8: ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING & SCHOOL AUDITS

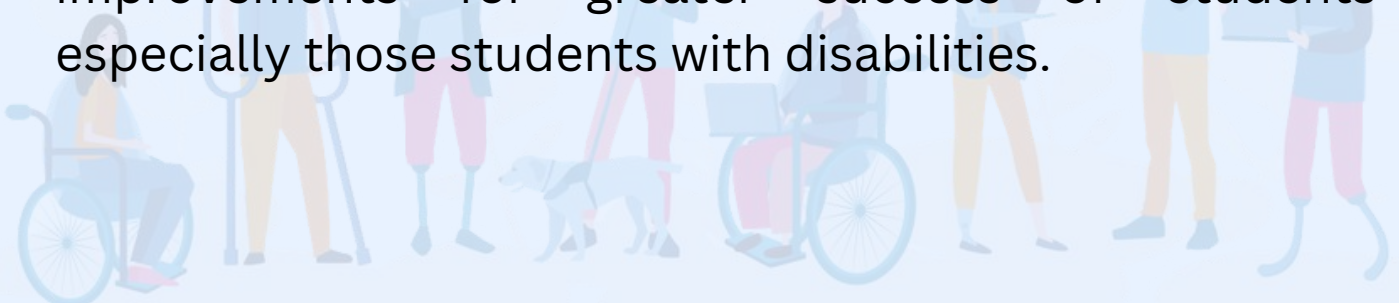
Inclusion requires structured planning and accountability.

8.1 School Accessibility Self-Assessment Tool

Schools should evaluate:

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		CLASSROOM PRACTICES		SCHOOL CULTURE	
✓	Are entrances fully accessible?	✓	Are multiple learning formats used?	✓	Is inclusive language modeled?
✓	Are emergency exits inclusive?	✓	Are assessments flexible?	✓	Are students with disabilities represented in leadership roles?
✓	Are washrooms accessible?				

Self-assessment encourages continuous improvement. Through this, schools can reflect on progress, identify growth areas, and make ongoing improvements for greater success of students especially those students with disabilities.



SECTION 8: ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING & SCHOOL AUDITS

8.2 Barrier Identification Worksheets

Schools can document:

- 1 Physical barriers
- 2 Communication barriers
- 3 Policy barriers
- 4 Attitudinal barriers

Each Identified barrier should include:

- Description
- Impact on students
- Proposed solution
- Timeline for resolution
- Responsible staff member

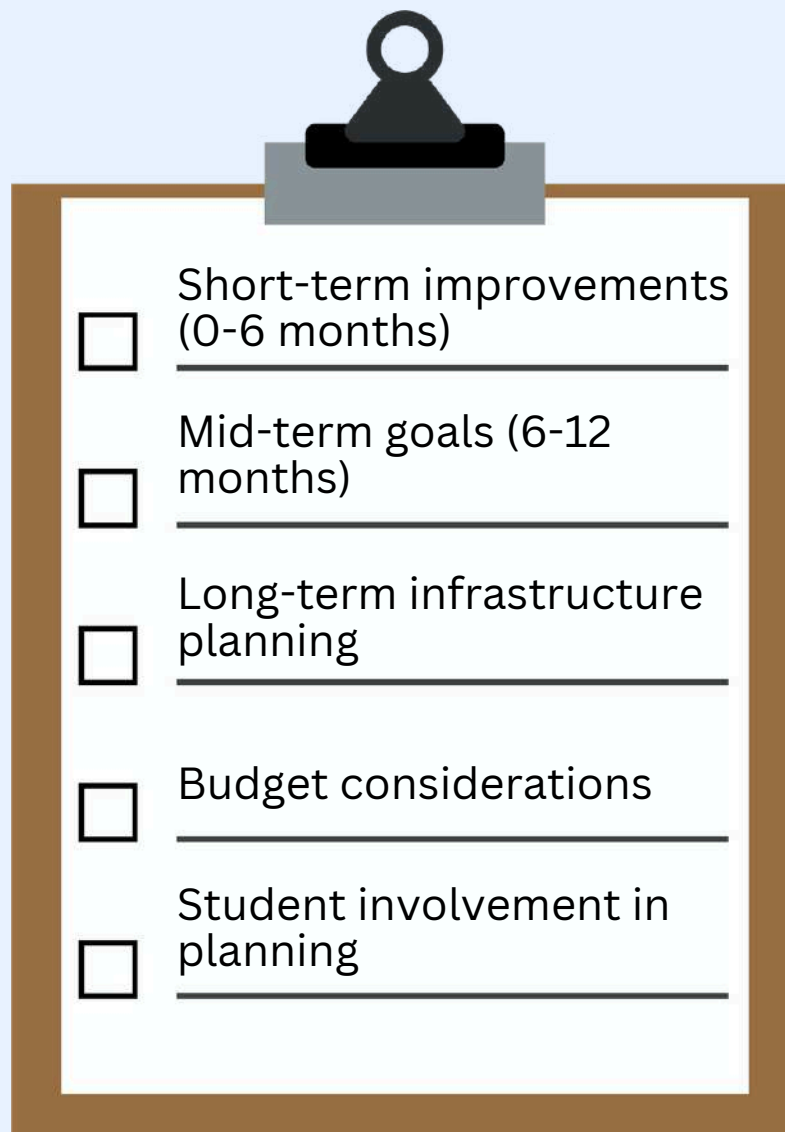
Clear tracking ensures follow-through by helping schools monitor progress, address gaps, and provide consistent support for students with disabilities.



SECTION 8: ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING & SCHOOL AUDITS

8.3 Creating an Annual Accessibility Action Plan

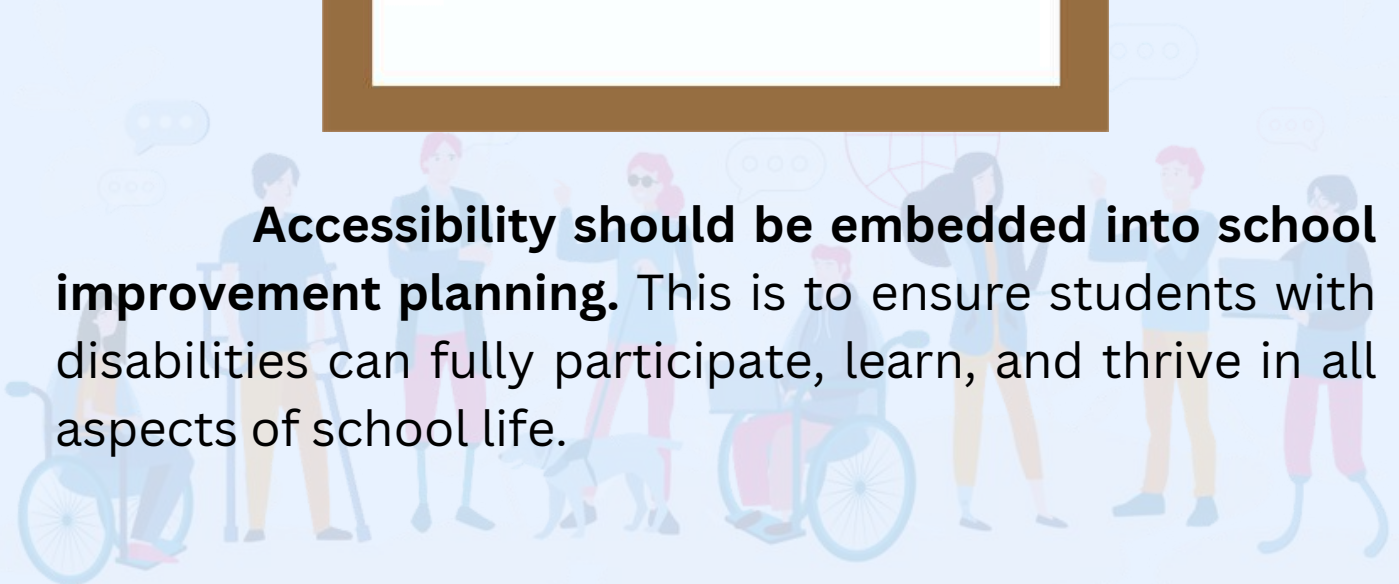
An action plan should include:



A clipboard with a black clip at the top, containing a checklist of five items. Each item has a square checkbox to its left and a horizontal line below it for notes.

- Short-term improvements (0-6 months)
- Mid-term goals (6-12 months)
- Long-term infrastructure planning
- Budget considerations
- Student involvement in planning

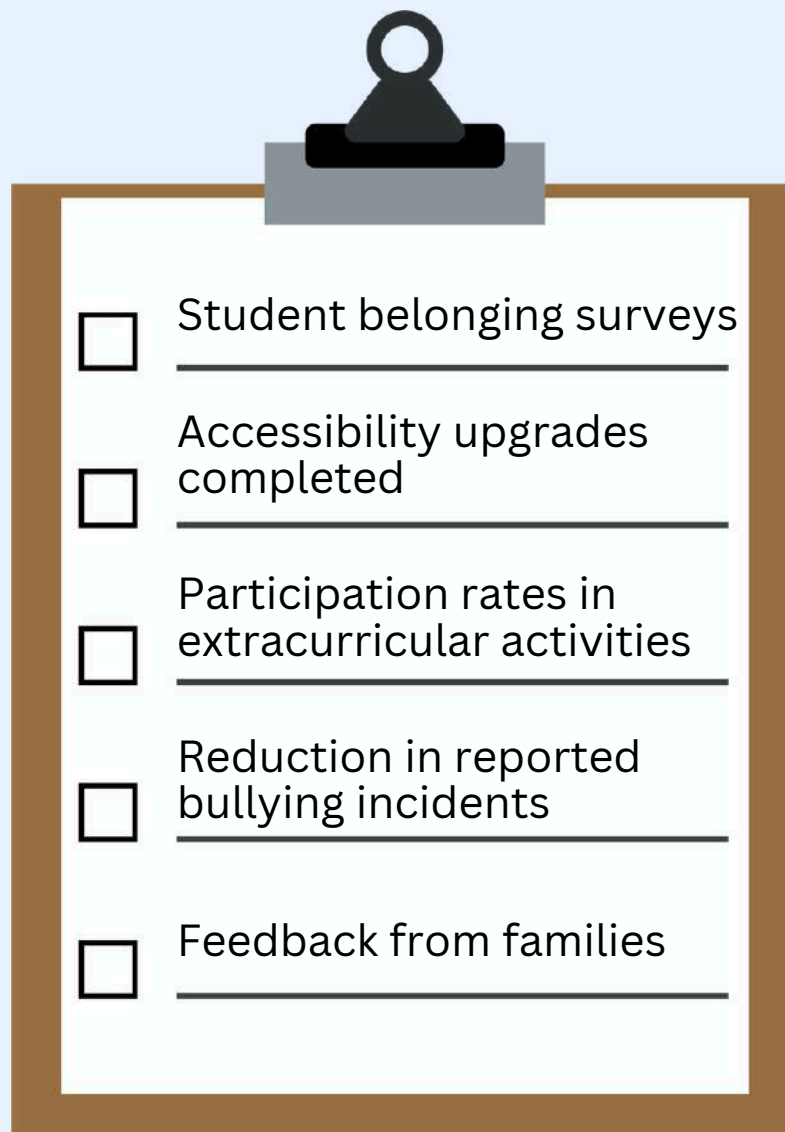
Accessibility should be embedded into school improvement planning. This is to ensure students with disabilities can fully participate, learn, and thrive in all aspects of school life.



SECTION 8: ACCESSIBILITY PLANNING & SCHOOL AUDITS

8.4 Monitoring Progress and Measuring Impact

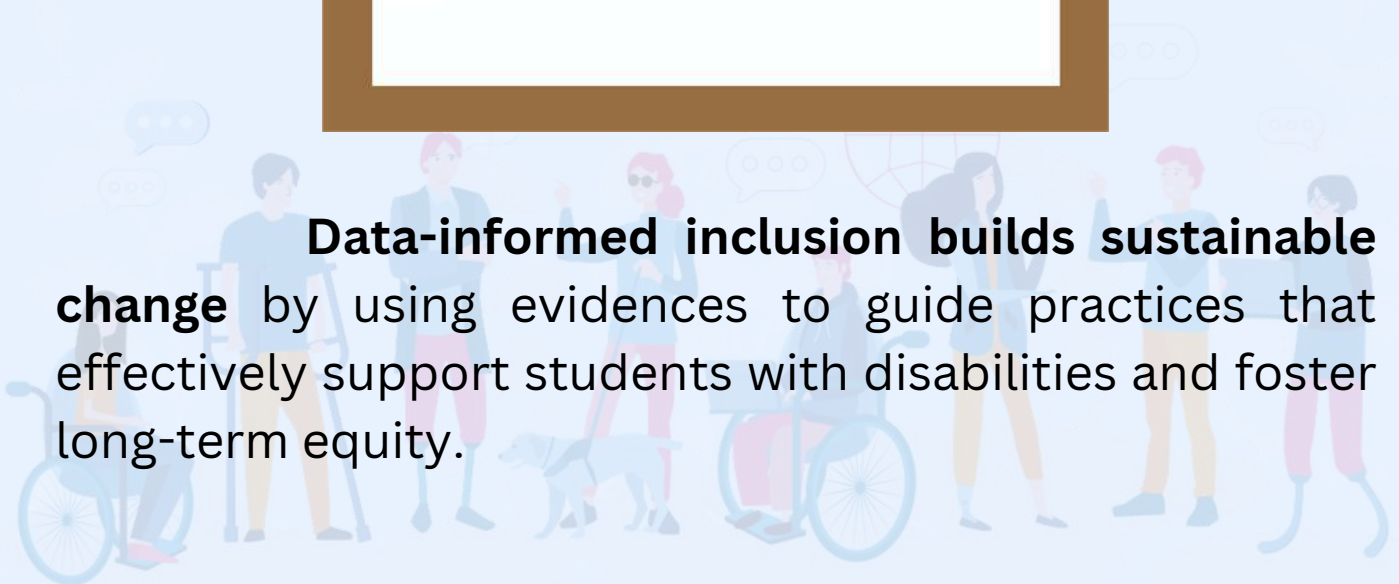
Schools may track:



A clipboard with a black clip at the top, containing a checklist of five items. Each item has a square checkbox to its left and a horizontal line below the text.

- Student belonging surveys
- Accessibility upgrades completed
- Participation rates in extracurricular activities
- Reduction in reported bullying incidents
- Feedback from families

Data-informed inclusion builds sustainable change by using evidences to guide practices that effectively support students with disabilities and foster long-term equity.



SECTION 9: TRANSITION PLANNING

9.1 Purpose

Transition planning aims to:

- Support successful movement to further education or training
- Prepare students for employment
- Build independence and life skills
- Promote self-advocacy and decision-making

9.2 Key Components

A transition plan should include:

- **Student Profile:** Strengths, interests, and needs
- **Postsecondary Goals:** Education, employment, and independent living
- **Skill Development:** Academic, social, and daily living skills
- **Supports and Services:** School and community-based supports
- **Action Plan:** Clear steps, responsibilities, and timelines

9.3 Roles and Responsibilities

- **Students:** Share goals and actively participate
- **Families:** Support planning and decision-making
- **Educators:** Guide planning and provide skill development
- **Community Partners:** Offer training and employment opportunities



SECTION 9: TRANSITION PLANNING

9.4 Key Strategies

- Career exploration (job shadowing, internships)
- Life skills training (budgeting, time management)
- Post-secondary preparation (applications, campus visits)
- Self-advocacy development

9.5 Monitoring Progress

Schools should monitor:

- Progress toward identified goals
- Development of independent living and employment skills
- Student and family feedback
- Readiness for post-school environments



SECTION 10: YOUTH ACTION PROJECT TOOLKIT

Students are not just beneficiaries of inclusion — they are leaders of it.

10.1 Starting an Accessibility Improvement Project

Steps include:



Identify a barrier in the school.



Develop a proposal.



Gather student input.



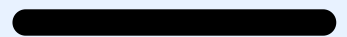
Present findings and solutions.



Meet with administration.



Monitor progress.



Youth-led initiatives demonstrate powerful civic leadership.




SECTION 10: YOUTH ACTION PROJECT TOOLKIT

10.2 Fundraising for Adaptive Equipment

Students can organize:

- 1 School-wide charity events
- 2 Inclusive sports tournaments
- 3 Talent shows or concerts
- 4 Awareness Campaigns
- 5 Community sponsorship drives

Funds may support:

- Adaptive musical instruments
 - Assistive technology
 - Inclusive playground features
 - Sensory room materials
- 

Student-led fundraising builds empathy and ownership.



SECTION 10: YOUTH ACTION PROJECT TOOLKIT

10.3 Advocacy for Inclusive Policies and Spaces

Students may advocate for:

- Barrier-free graduation ceremonies
- Accessible field trips
- Inclusive sports teams
- Clear anti-ableism policies
-

10.4 Leading Awareness Campaigns in Schools

Campaign ideas may include:

- Disability Awareness Month activities
- "Inclusion Matters" assemblies
- Poster campaigns promoting respectful language
- Student panels sharing lived experiences
- Accessibility audits conducted by student ambassadors



SECTION 11: ACCESSIBLE STEM INITIATIVE

11.1 Fundraising for Adaptive Equipment

Key Concepts:

- Students with disabilities remain underrepresented in STEM
- Barriers exist in:
 - labs
 - coding environments
 - robotics
 - engineering spaces
 - competitions
- Inclusive STEM strengthens innovation

More than 1.3 billion people worldwide live with a significant disability representing approximately 16 percent of the global population according to the World Health Organization.

Children and youth with disabilities continue to experience lower educational participation rates globally.

Stephen Hawking:

“Disability need not be an obstacle to success”



SECTION 11: ACCESSIBLE STEM INITIATIVE

The Accessible STEM Initiative aligns closely with several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

SDG 4: Quality Education

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all. Accessible STEM education helps ensure that students with disabilities can fully participate in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics learning opportunities.

SDG 5: Gender Equality

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Girls with disabilities often face intersecting barriers in education and leadership. Inclusive STEM initiatives help create pathways for girls of all abilities to pursue careers in innovation and science.

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Promote inclusive economic participation. STEM careers are among the fastest-growing sectors globally. Ensuring accessibility in STEM education supports future employment opportunities for students with disabilities.

SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Build resilient infrastructure and foster innovation. Accessible design and inclusive technology lead to stronger, more innovative systems that benefit everyone.



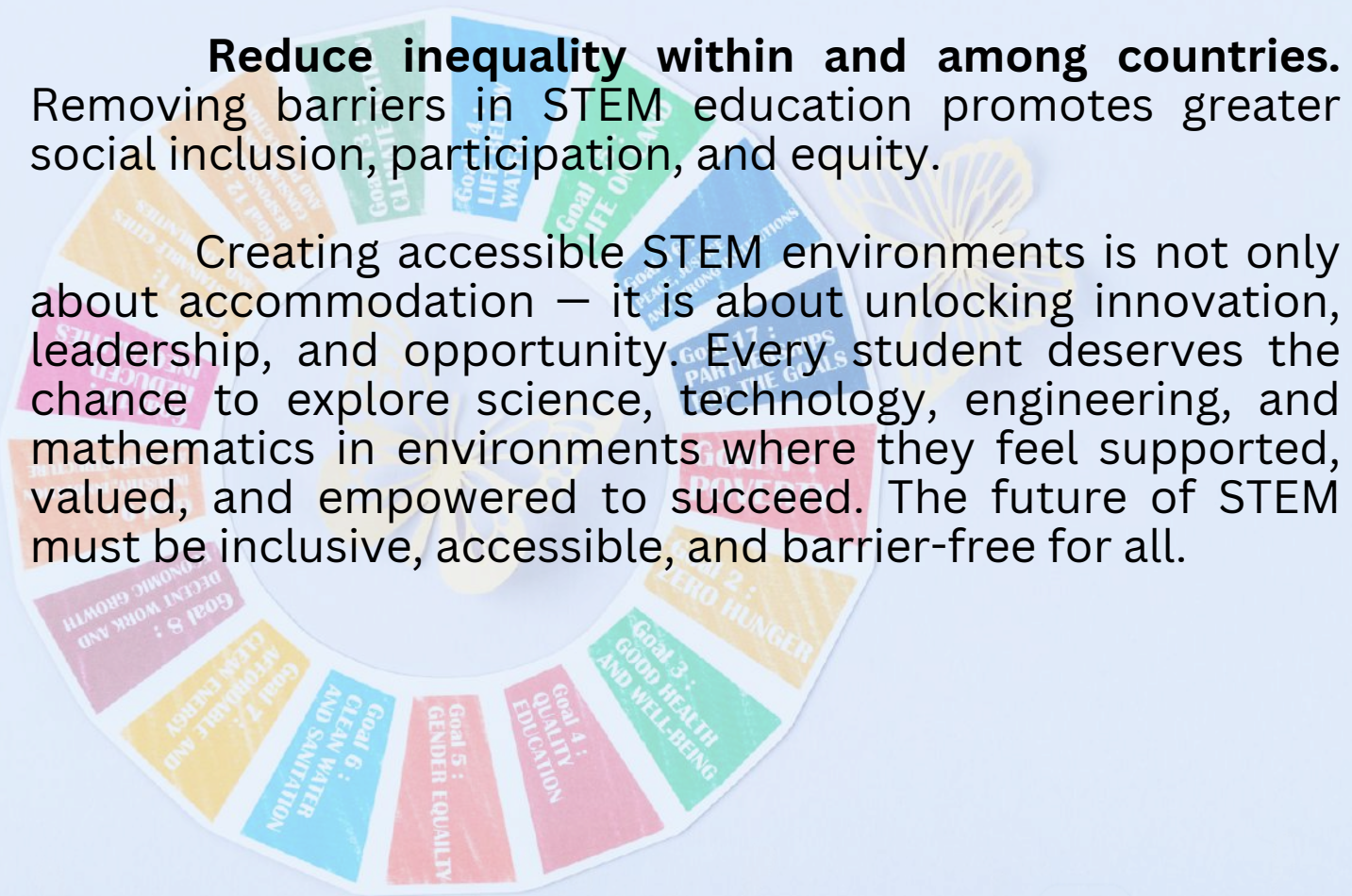
SECTION 11: ACCESSIBLE STEM INITIATIVE

The Accessible STEM Initiative aligns closely with several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

Reduce inequality within and among countries. Removing barriers in STEM education promotes greater social inclusion, participation, and equity.

Creating accessible STEM environments is not only about accommodation – it is about unlocking innovation, leadership, and opportunity. Every student deserves the chance to explore science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in environments where they feel supported, valued, and empowered to succeed. The future of STEM must be inclusive, accessible, and barrier-free for all.



SECTION 11: ACCESSIBLE STEM INITIATIVE

11.2 Barriers Students with Disabilities Face in STEM

Barriers:

Physical:

- inaccessible labs
- fixed-height tables
- inaccessible equipment

Digital:

- inaccessible coding platforms
- lack of captions
- inaccessible PDFs

Social:

- stereotypes
- low expectations
- exclusion from leadership

Competition-Based Barriers

- robotics competitions
- science fairs
- hackathons
- internships

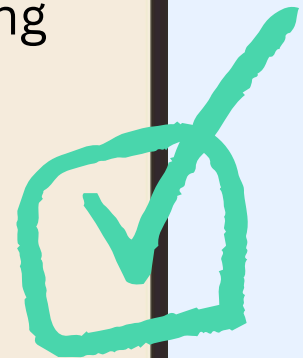


SECTION 11: ACCESSIBLE STEM INITIATIVE

11.3 Accessible STEM Classroom Design

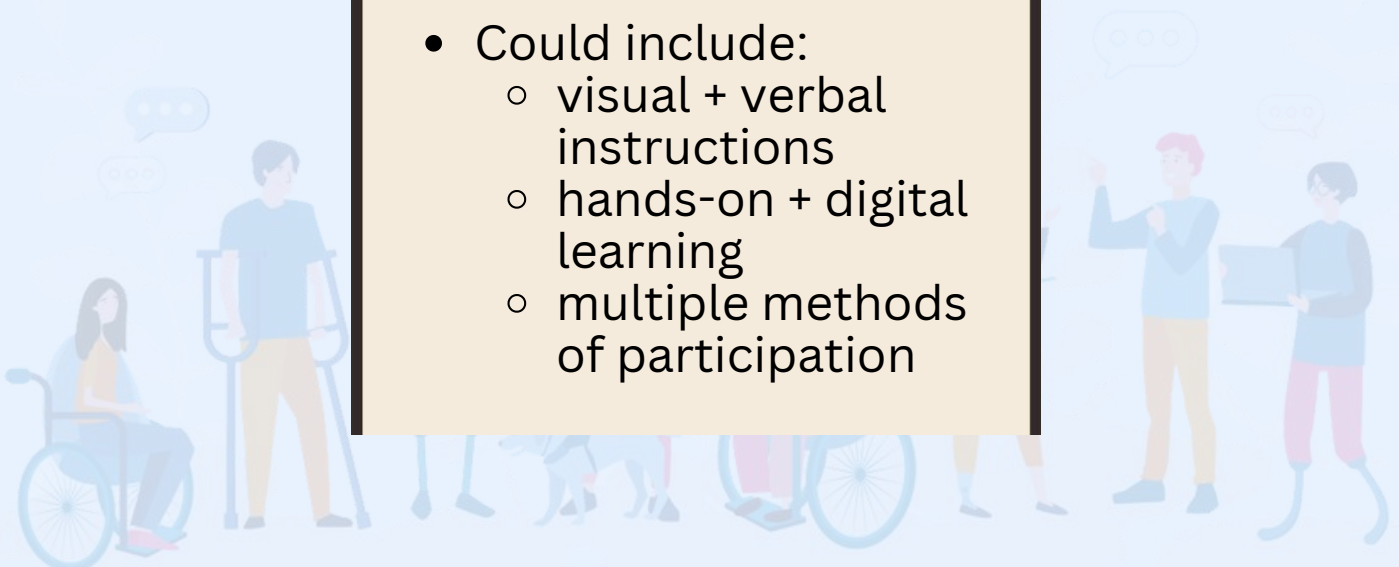
Schools Should Ensure:

- adjustable-height lab tables
- wheelchair-accessible lab stations
- tactile science models
- captioned STEM videos
- screen-reader compatible coding platforms
- flexible seating
- sensory-friendly workspaces



“Universal Design for STEM Learning

- Could include:
 - visual + verbal instructions
 - hands-on + digital learning
 - multiple methods of participation

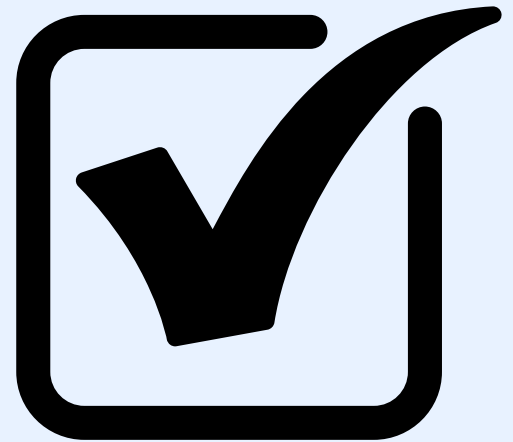


SECTION 11: ACCESSIBLE STEM INITIATIVE

11.4 Accessible Science Labs

Lab Accessibility Checklist

- lowered counters
- seated lab participation
- adaptive microscopes
- voice-to-text note taking
- large-print labels
- tactile diagrams
- emergency accessibility planning



Safety Considerations

- accessible emergency exits
- visual alarms
- buddy systems
- accessible PPE



SECTION 11: ACCESSIBLE STEM INITIATIVE

11.5 Neurodiversity in STEM

Recommended:

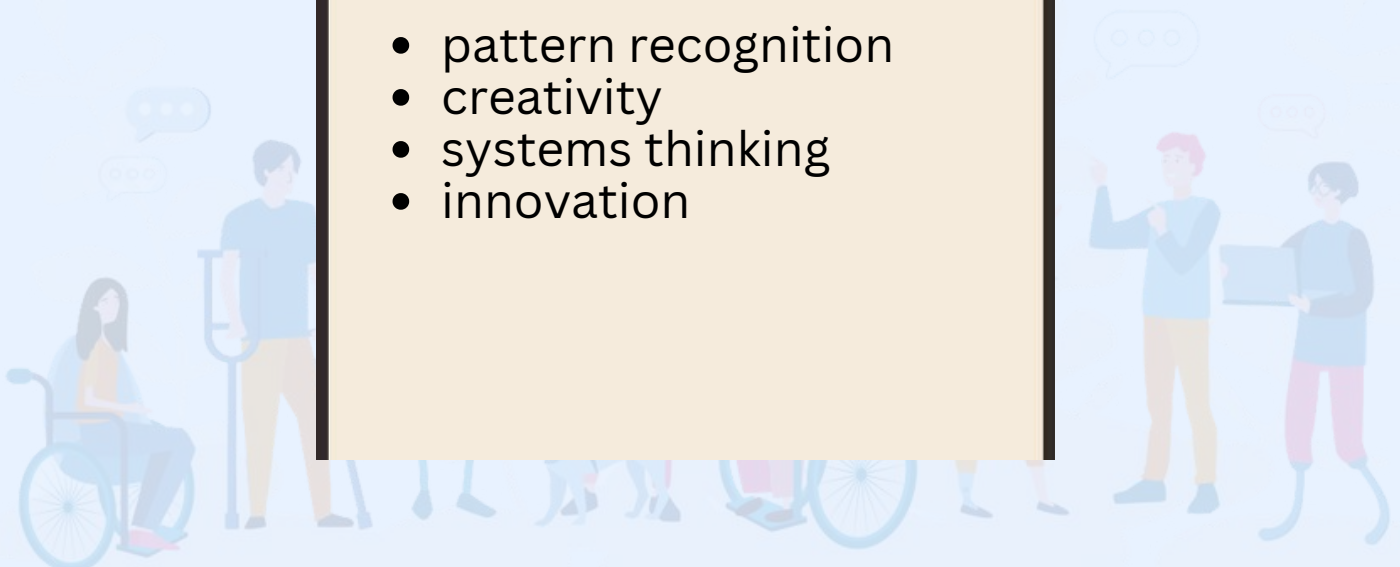
Many neurodiverse students excel in STEM when supported appropriately.

Include:

- ADHD supports
- autism-friendly STEM learning
- sensory accommodations
- flexible deadlines
- visual schedules
- chunked coding assignments

Strength-Based Framing:

- pattern recognition
- creativity
- systems thinking
- innovation

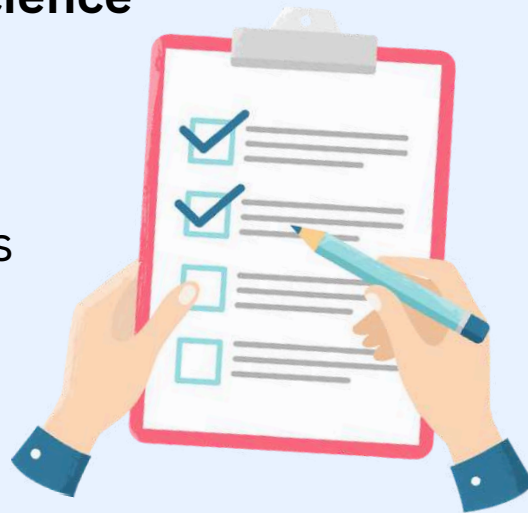


SECTION 11: ACCESSIBLE STEM INITIATIVE

11.6 Accessible Technology & Coding

Accessibility in Computer Science

- screen-reader friendly coding tools
- keyboard navigation
- captioned coding tutorials
- dyslexia-friendly fonts
- voice coding tools

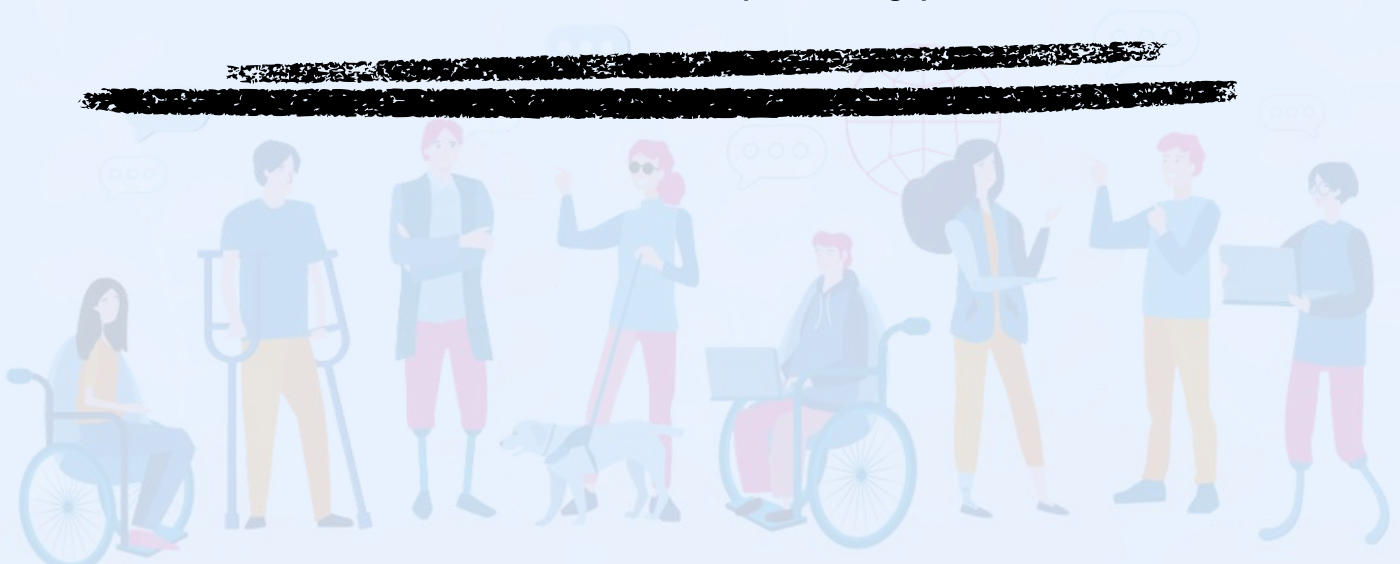


AI & Accessibility

- speech-to-text
- live captioning
- AI learning supports
- accessibility apps

Student Innovation Challenge Ideas

- build accessibility-focused apps
- AI for inclusion
- adaptive technology prototypes

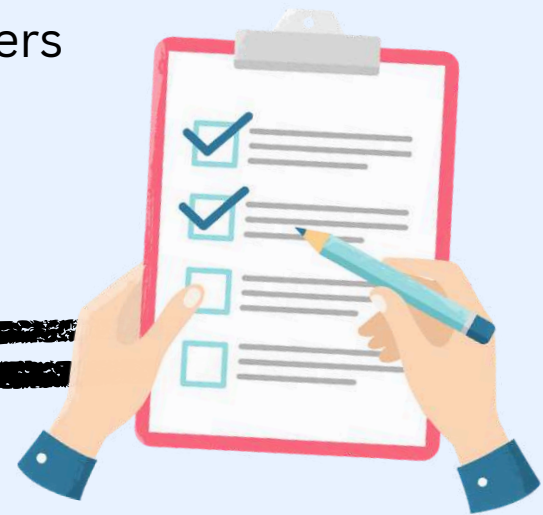


SECTION 11: ACCESSIBLE STEM INITIATIVE

11.7 Girls with Disabilities in STEM

Issues:

- gender + disability barriers
- lack of representation
- confidence building
- mentorship importance



“Representation Matters”

- Feature:
 - women scientists with disabilities
 - engineers with disabilities
 - disabled innovators



SECTION 11: ACCESSIBLE STEM INITIATIVE

11.8 Inclusive STEM Competitions & Clubs

How Schools Can Make STEM Clubs Accessible

- accessible meeting spaces
- sensory-friendly environments
- adaptive participation options
- transportation supports

Inclusive Competition Guidelines

- flexible presentation formats
- accessible judging
- communication accommodations



SECTION 11: ACCESSIBLE STEM INITIATIVE

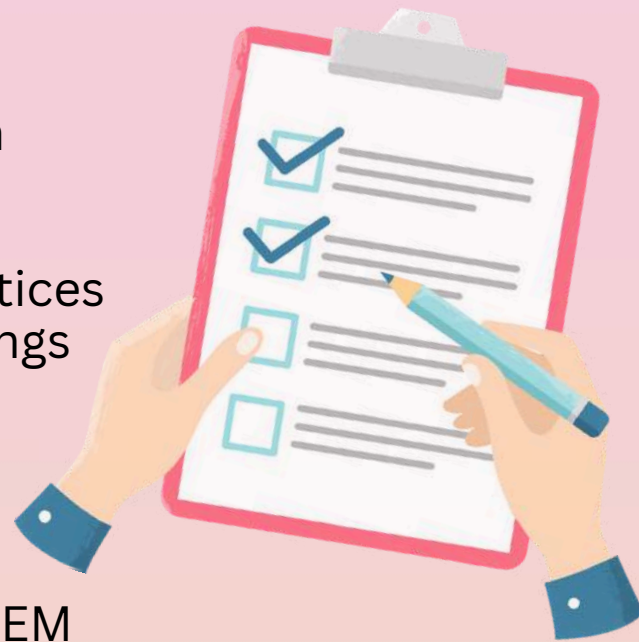
11.9 STEM Mentor Disability Inclusion Training

Include:

- respectful communication
- neurodiversity awareness
- accommodations
- inclusive mentorship practices
- accessibility in STEM settings

Sample Workshop Topics:

- Inclusive Mentorship in STEM
- Universal Design for Learning
- Accessibility in Coding & Robotics
- Supporting Neurodiverse Learners



SECTION 11: ACCESSIBLE STEM INITIATIVE

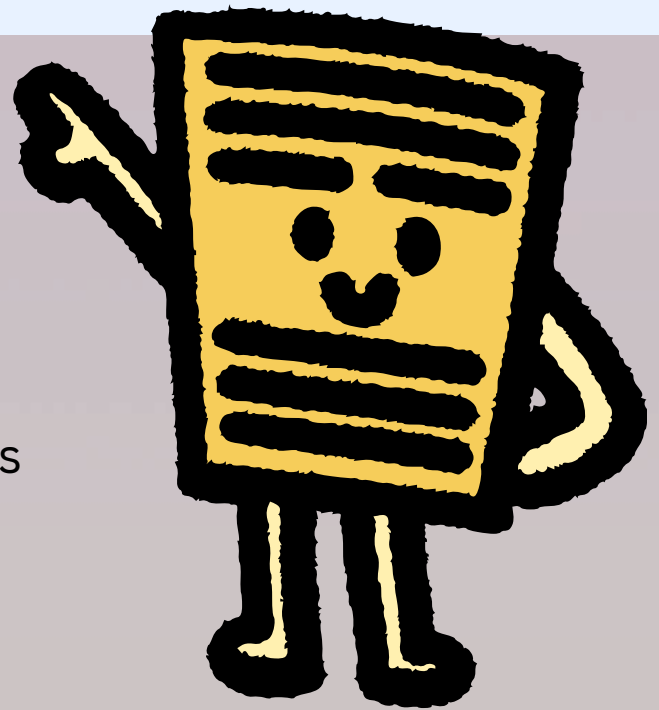
11.10 Assistive Technology in STEM

Examples:

- screen readers
- eye-tracking tools
- adaptive keyboards
- speech-to-text
- tactile graphics
- 3D printed adaptive tools

Technology should remove barriers – not create them.

- flexible presentation formats
- accessible judging
- communication accommodations



SECTION 11: ACCESSIBLE STEM INITIATIVE

11.11 STEM Accessibility School Audit Tool

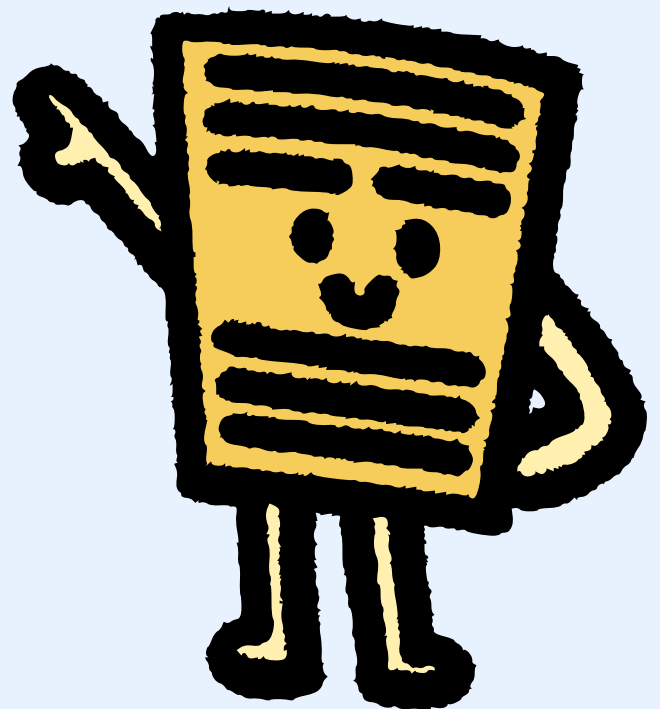
Categories:

- Labs
- Robotics
- Coding classes
- STEM clubs
- STEM competitions
- Accessibility of STEM websites/platforms

Schools score themselves.

This becomes:

- ✓ measurable
- ✓ scalable
- ✓ media-friendly



SECTION 11: ACCESSIBLE STEM INITIATIVE

11.12 National Call to Action: STEM Without Barriers

Schools commit to:

1. accessible STEM environments
2. mentor accessibility training
3. inclusive competitions
4. assistive technology access
5. representation of disabled voices

The future of STEM must be accessible, inclusive, and barrier-free for every student.



SECTION 12: NATIONAL CALL TO ACTION

12.1 The right to Belong: Accessibility as a Human Right

Accessibility is not optional. It is a fundamental human right.

Every student deserves:

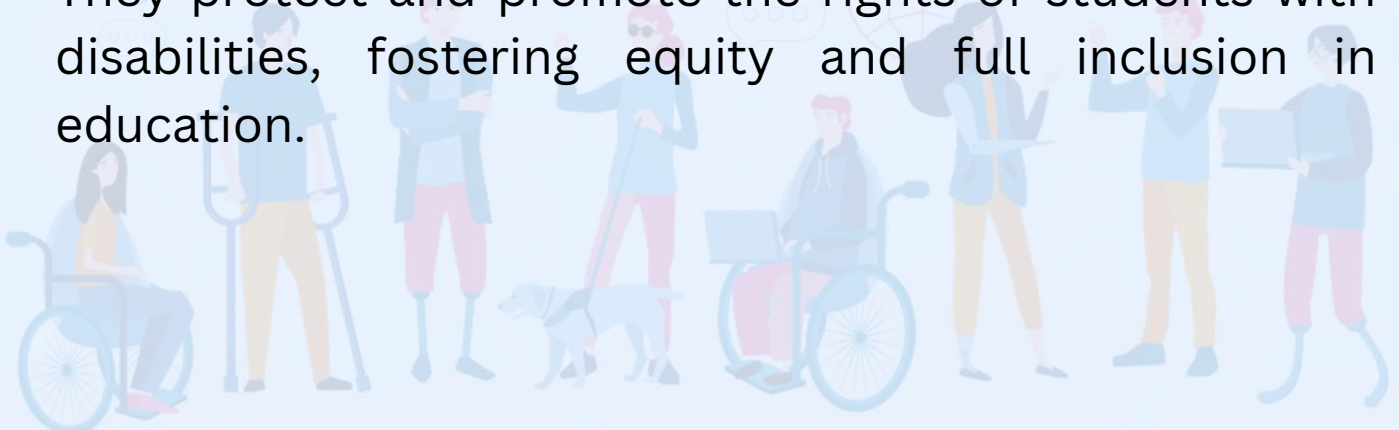


Equal
access to
education

Equal
opportunity
to
participate

Equal
dignity and
respect

When schools remove barriers, they uphold rights. They protect and promote the rights of students with disabilities, fostering equity and full inclusion in education.



SECTION 12: NATIONAL CALL TO ACTION

12.2 Duty to Accommodate to the Point of Undue Hardship

The **duty to accommodate** is a core principle of Canadian human rights law that requires organizations (including schools) to remove barriers and adjust rules, policies, or environments so that people with disabilities can fully participate.

It arises under laws such as the Canadian Human Rights Act and provincial human rights codes like the Ontario Human Rights Code.

In simple terms:

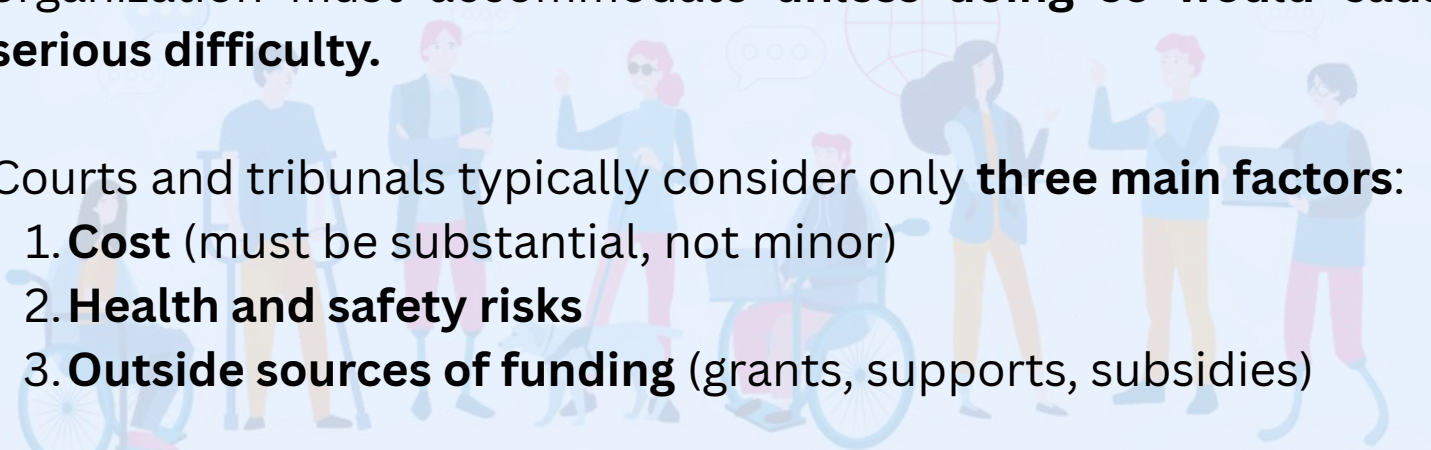
- You must **make changes to support someone’s disability-related needs**.
- You must do so **up to the point of “undue hardship”**.
- You **cannot refuse accommodation just because it is inconvenient or costly**.
-

What does “Undue Hardship” actually mean?

“Undue hardship” is a **high legal threshold**—it means an organization must accommodate **unless doing so would cause serious difficulty**.

Courts and tribunals typically consider only **three main factors**:

1. **Cost** (must be substantial, not minor)
2. **Health and safety risks**
3. **Outside sources of funding** (grants, supports, subsidies)



SECTION 12: NATIONAL CALL TO ACTION

12.2 Duty to Accommodate to the Point of Undue Hardship

Why Educators and Administrators MUST Understand this?

1. ⚖️ **Legal compliance**

Failure to accommodate can result in human rights complaints, lawsuits, and liability.

Schools have a legal duty, not a choice.

2. 🎓 **Equity in education**

Accommodation ensures that students with disabilities have equal access to learning, not an unfair advantage.

Equity ≠ equality.

- Equality: everyone gets the same
- Equity: everyone gets what they need to succeed

3. 🏫 **Inclusive school environments**

Understanding this duty helps create:

- Accessible classrooms
- Reduced stigma
- Better student outcomes

4. 🚫 **Prevention of systemic discrimination**

Without accommodation, schools may unintentionally create systemic barriers, which is a form of discrimination under Canadian law.

5. 🌍 **Alignment with international obligations**

Canada's approach reflects commitments under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which emphasizes inclusion and accessibility.



SECTION 12: NATIONAL CALL TO ACTION

12.3 A Youth Vision for Inclusive Schools in Canada

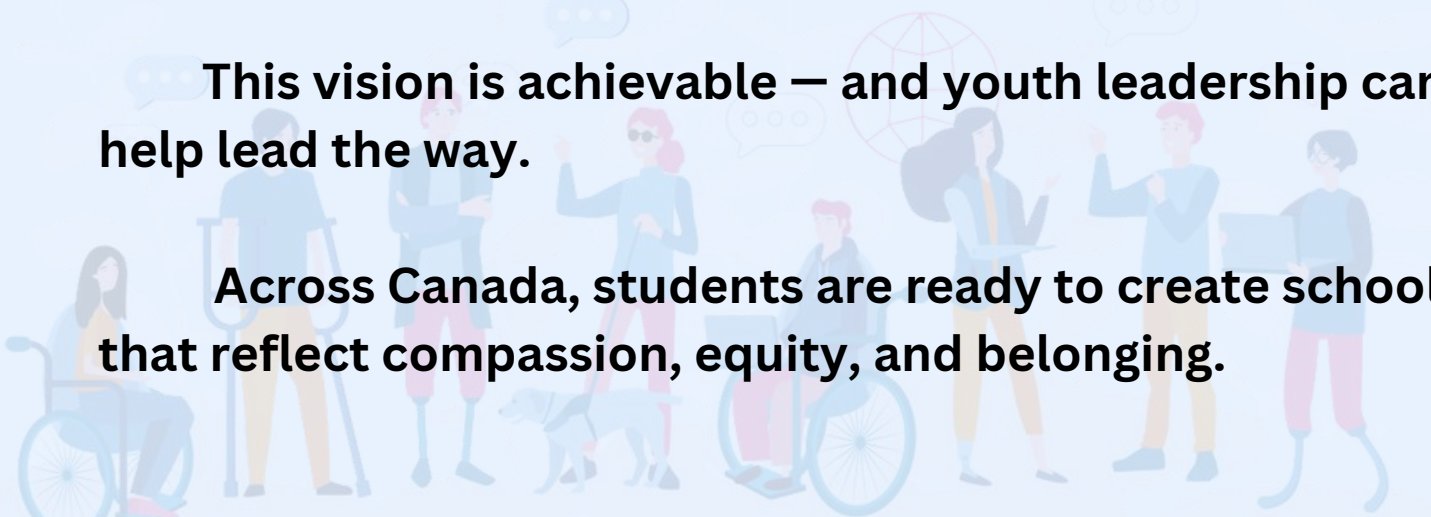
Imagine schools where:

- Every entrance is accessible
- Every classroom embraces diverse learners
- Every team includes all abilities
- Every student feels seen



This vision is achievable – and youth leadership can help lead the way.

Across Canada, students are ready to create schools that reflect compassion, equity, and belonging.



SECTION 12: NATIONAL CALL TO ACTION

12.4 How Schools Can Join the National Inclusion Movement?

Schools can:

Distribute
this toolkit
to staff

Establish
Student
Accessibility
Ambassador
programs

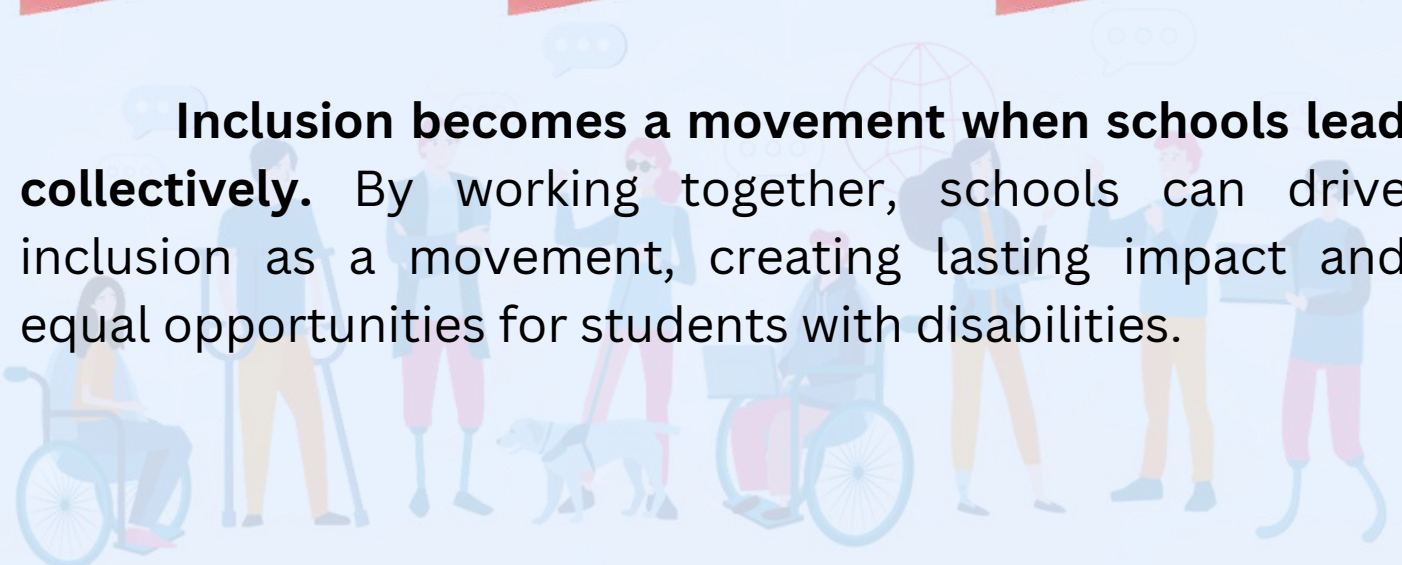
Conduct
annual
accessibility
audits

Integrate
Inclusive
design into
future
planning

Partner with
community
organizations

Share
inclusion
initiatives
publicly

Inclusion becomes a movement when schools lead collectively. By working together, schools can drive inclusion as a movement, creating lasting impact and equal opportunities for students with disabilities.



FINAL MESSAGE

Accessibility is not a single event or policy. It is a commitment, a culture, and a way of thinking.

In addition to helping students with disabilities, schools that stress inclusion foster stronger, more compassionate, more creative communities.

This toolkit is a CALL TO ACTION.

When Canadian schools work together, they can set the standard for inclusive, accessible learning environments where all students feel welcome.



*Gasmin
Attwal*



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of the **National Disability Inclusion Toolkit for Schools** has been informed and inspired by organizations whose work continues to advance accessibility, inclusion, and support for individuals with disabilities across Canada. Their leadership, innovation, and commitment to equity and their input have helped shape the principles reflected in this toolkit and continue to guide efforts toward building more inclusive communities.

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital is Canada's largest pediatric rehabilitation hospital, providing specialized care and support for children and youth with disabilities. Its leadership in inclusive programming and research has helped inform approaches to accessible arts and participation, including initiatives that expand opportunities for children with autism and physical and developmental disabilities to engage in music and creative expression.

Canadian Music Therapy Centre

The Canadian Music Therapy Centre supports individuals of all ages through therapeutic music programs that promote communication, emotional well-being, and cognitive development. Its work highlights the importance of accessible arts in supporting seniors living with dementia as well as individuals with mental and physical disabilities, reinforcing the value of inclusive, therapeutic approaches within communities and schools.

Hearvue

Hearvue focuses on improving communication accessibility for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing through innovative solutions and advocacy. Its work underscores the importance of removing communication barriers in educational settings so that all students can fully participate in learning and social interaction.

Race & Disability Canada

Race & Disability Canada brings attention to the intersection of race and disability, advocating for more equitable and inclusive systems. Its work highlights the importance of recognizing diverse lived experiences and ensuring that inclusion efforts reflect the needs of all individuals, particularly those facing multiple forms of marginalization.

DEEN Support Services

DEEN (Disability Empowerment Equality Network) Support Services provides community based support for individuals with developmental disabilities, helping them build independence and participate meaningfully in everyday life. Its focus on inclusion, dignity, and culturally responsive support reinforces the importance of creating environments where all individuals feel valued and supported.

Access Kix

Access Kix is a community-based soccer program for youth over the age of 13 and adults with intellectual disabilities offering modified drills and games in Ontario.

JOIN THE NATIONAL ACCESSIBLE SCHOOLS MOVEMENT

Sign the National Accessible Schools Pledge

Every student deserves to learn in an environment where they feel safe, valued, supported, and included. Yet for many students with disabilities, barriers—both visible and invisible—can still limit full participation in school life.

The **National Accessible Schools Pledge** is an opportunity for schools across Canada to take a meaningful step toward creating more accessible, inclusive, and welcoming learning environments for all students.

This pledge is not about being perfect. It is about being intentional. It is about recognizing that accessibility and inclusion are ongoing commitments, and that every school can make a difference by taking practical steps to remove barriers and promote belonging.

By signing this pledge, your school joins a growing national movement committed to ensuring that students with disabilities are not left on the sidelines, but are fully included in classrooms, extracurricular activities, leadership opportunities, and school communities.

Why Join the Pledge?

By joining the **National Accessible Schools Initiative**, your school will:

✓ Demonstrate Leadership

Show your commitment to accessibility, equity, and inclusive education.

✓ Support Students of All Abilities

Help ensure that students with physical, sensory, developmental, neurodiverse, and invisible disabilities feel included and supported.

✓ Strengthen School Culture

Promote empathy, belonging, and awareness throughout your school community.

✓ Take Action

Move from awareness to practical steps by using the toolkit, audit tools, and accessibility resources provided.

✓ Join a National Movement

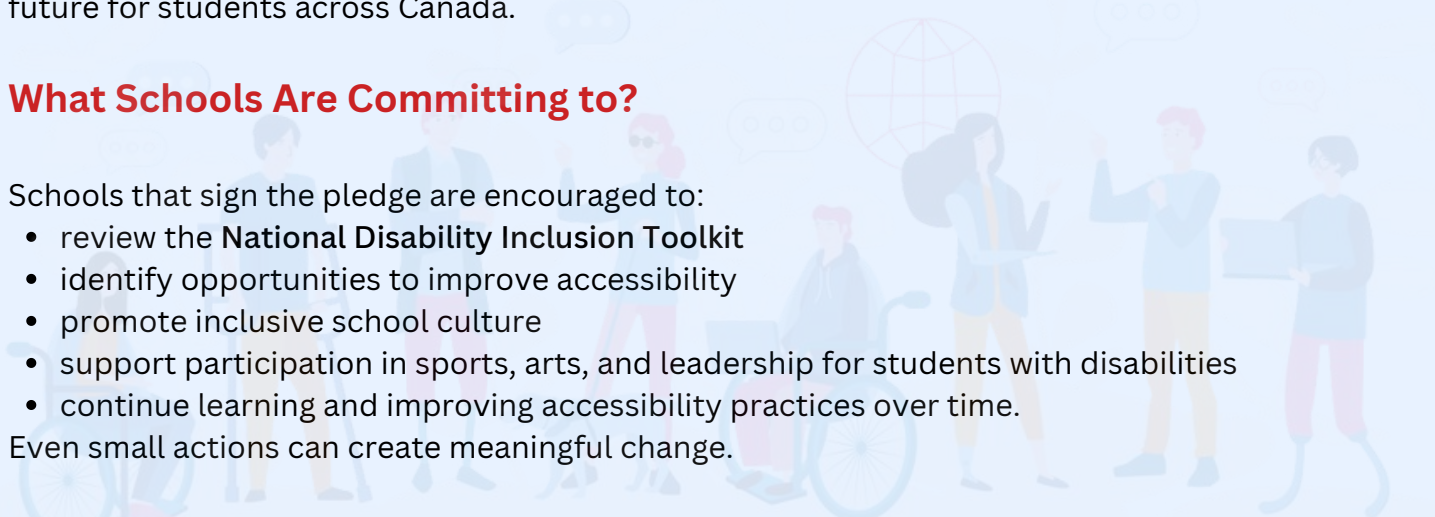
Become part of the **15,500 Schools Accessibility Challenge**, helping create a more inclusive future for students across Canada.

What Schools Are Committing to?

Schools that sign the pledge are encouraged to:

- review the **National Disability Inclusion Toolkit**
- identify opportunities to improve accessibility
- promote inclusive school culture
- support participation in sports, arts, and leadership for students with disabilities
- continue learning and improving accessibility practices over time.

Even small actions can create meaningful change.



JOIN THE NATIONAL ACCESSIBLE SCHOOLS MOVEMENT

How to Participate?

Step 1

Review the toolkit with your school team

Step 2

Identify at least one accessibility or inclusion goal

Step 3

Sign the National Accessible Schools Pledge

Step 4

Join the movement by submitting your school online

SIGN THE PLEDGE

👉 **Join the National Accessible Schools Initiative today:**

Use the link: <https://forms.gle/jTBqrXMmdHzpy38q6>

or Scan the QR code below to sign online:

QR Code:

