# RADFORD UNIVERSITY

## Virginia Inclusive Practices Center

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For more information on the
Inclusive Practices Center, go to
www.radford.edu/vipc



### Virginia Board for People with Disabilities

# Hot Topics in our Talk Today

**1** **Overview of 3Cs project**

What we do and why

**2** **Social Isolation**
Closed schools hurt ALL children and youth

**3** **Learning Loss**
Segregated instruction is not the answer

**VDOE's Initiatives**

**4** **EdEquityVA**

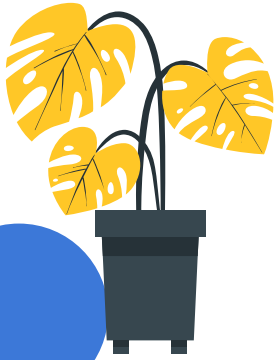Virginia's commitment to culturally responsive and inclusive education

**5** **VDOE and Inclusion**

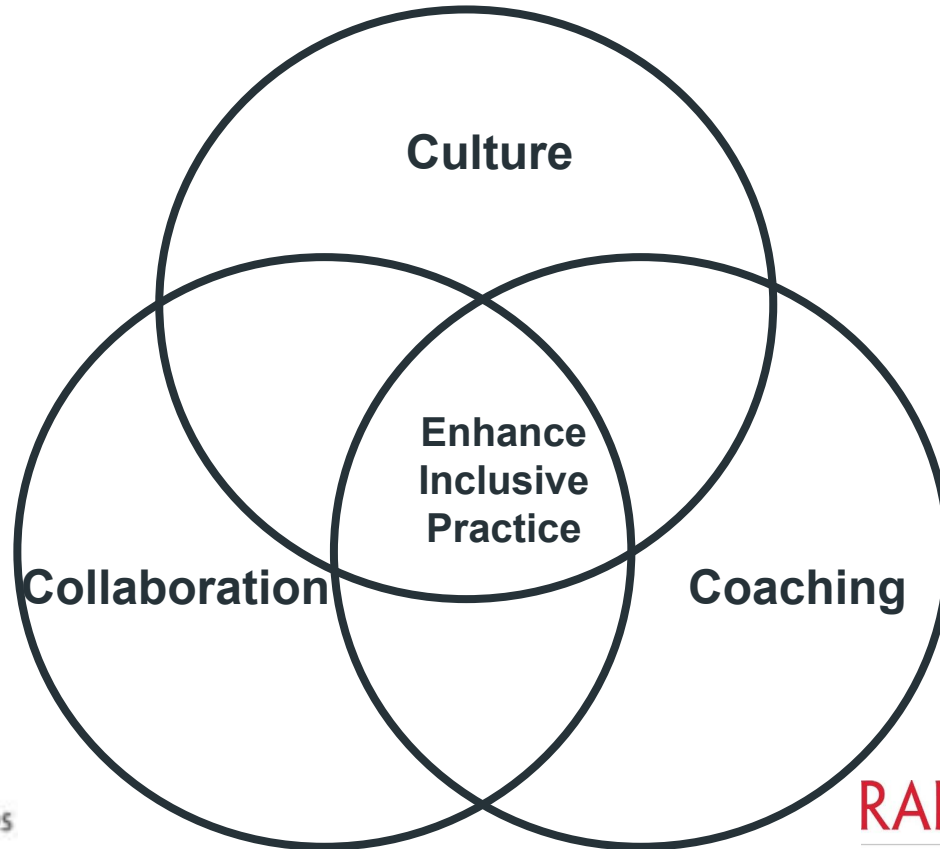Information, incentives, and more

**6** **The JLARC Report**

The key recommendations with implications for inclusive education

# 2 School Divisions

Develop inclusion teams at each school

Create an inclusion action plan

Implement plan with support from trained inclusion coaches (2 per school)

# 4 Regional Conferences

Train families and self-advocates to give presentations

Assist in moving forward with inclusion in your school/division

Materials to support inclusion

# What is Inclusive Education?

✔ ALL Students are **Competent and Capable** of Learning

✔ **FULL Participation** in General Education Setting

✔ REQUIRES **Access, Belonging,** and High Quality **Teaching**

**Academic Inclusion**

**Social/ Emotional Inclusion**
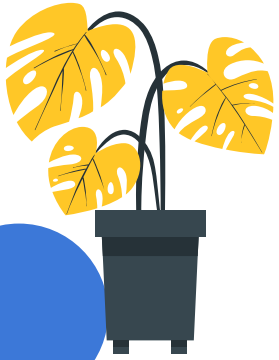
**Physical Inclusion/ Access**
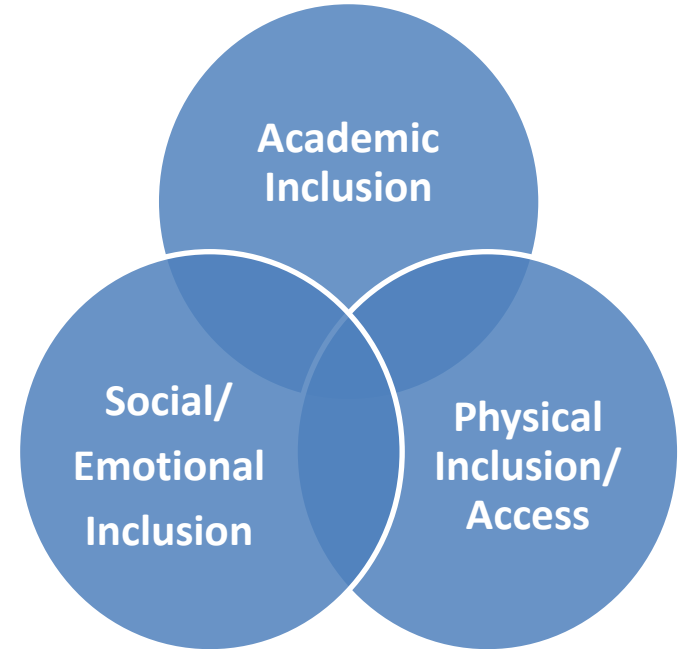
**The United Nations UNESCO declared last year at the height of the pandemic that:**

Inclusive education should be a "non-negotiable" right for all children.

[Universal, inclusive education 'non-negotiable' | | UN News](#)

# Social Isolation and Inclusion

# We need to mitigate the effects of the Social Isolation our children experienced during the Pandemic

Closed schools or partial returns to school meant disrupted daily routines, inadequate child care, & burden for care and instruction placed on parents and older siblings. But most of all, this resulted in children being socially isolated from their peers and their friends.



Image of isolated person curled up and head down with Covid germ image as background (image found at https://www.everydayhealth.com/emotional-health/the-lasting-impact-of-covid-19-how-will-it-affect-our-mental-health/ )

In a new NEA report called "A Back-to-School Like No Other," educators and counselors are calling for us to understand that connection and well-being must be the priority for all students, and that social and emotional learning must be a key part of the curriculum side by side with academics.

https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/back-school-no-other?fbclid=IwAR0p3zqlNPG0koQcyYX7FpAKWXoTR2W2htgZnCbupauY7Arv82HE6d7mOHE

Returning to school face-to-face has shown us how important social emotional connections and relationships are to academic success for ALL students

# Anthony Swann, 2021 VA Teacher of the Year



Last February, Anthony Swann described the reaction of one of his students upon returning to school 4 days a week:

"One of my students walked in the room...His very first words were, 'Oh my God, I get to see my friends, Mr. Swann, I get to see my friends!'"

https://www.nbc29.com/2021/02/05/live-gov-northam-hold-coronavirus-briefing/

The lesson here for inclusive education and students with disabilities is that the key to ALL children's success in school is their sense of belonging within their school community and the important social connections that are a part of learning.

# Learning Loss and Inclusion
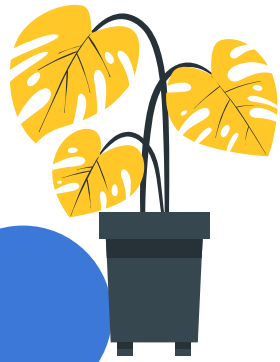
# We need to address the Learning Loss caused by the Pandemic

In a new report- *The Disparate Impacts of COVID-19 on America's Students* - The US Dept. of Education has made this official declaration: "For many elementary and secondary school students with disabilities, COVID-19 has significantly disrupted the education and related aids and services needed to support their academic progress and prevent regression. And there are signs that those disruptions may be exacerbating longstanding disability-based disparities in academic achievement."

An increase in segregated and/or self-contained special education instruction is not the answer!

# What do we know about "learning loss"

## Equity Impact:

Social & economic inequalities of students in school-based "gap groups" were made worse by the pandemic.

## Academic loss is defined by testing:

What we are calling learning loss is based on test-scores only. For some students, the loss seems less than predicted.

## The most vulnerable students with the least access to instruction are not included in the data

**A North Carolina educator asked her students this question -**

"What have you learned this past year?" One student answered with this...

"I learned that family matters and is more important than anything else. I also learned that isolation hurts more than we can imagine. And life is shorter than we think. Nothing is permanent, and we should enjoy and take advantage of every moment while we can."

https://www.ednc.org/perspective-rethinking-the-concept-of-covid-19-learning-loss/

**Teenagers interviewed by the New York Times wanted readers to know that they *DID learn last year* and pointed to technology skills, global awareness and resilience.**
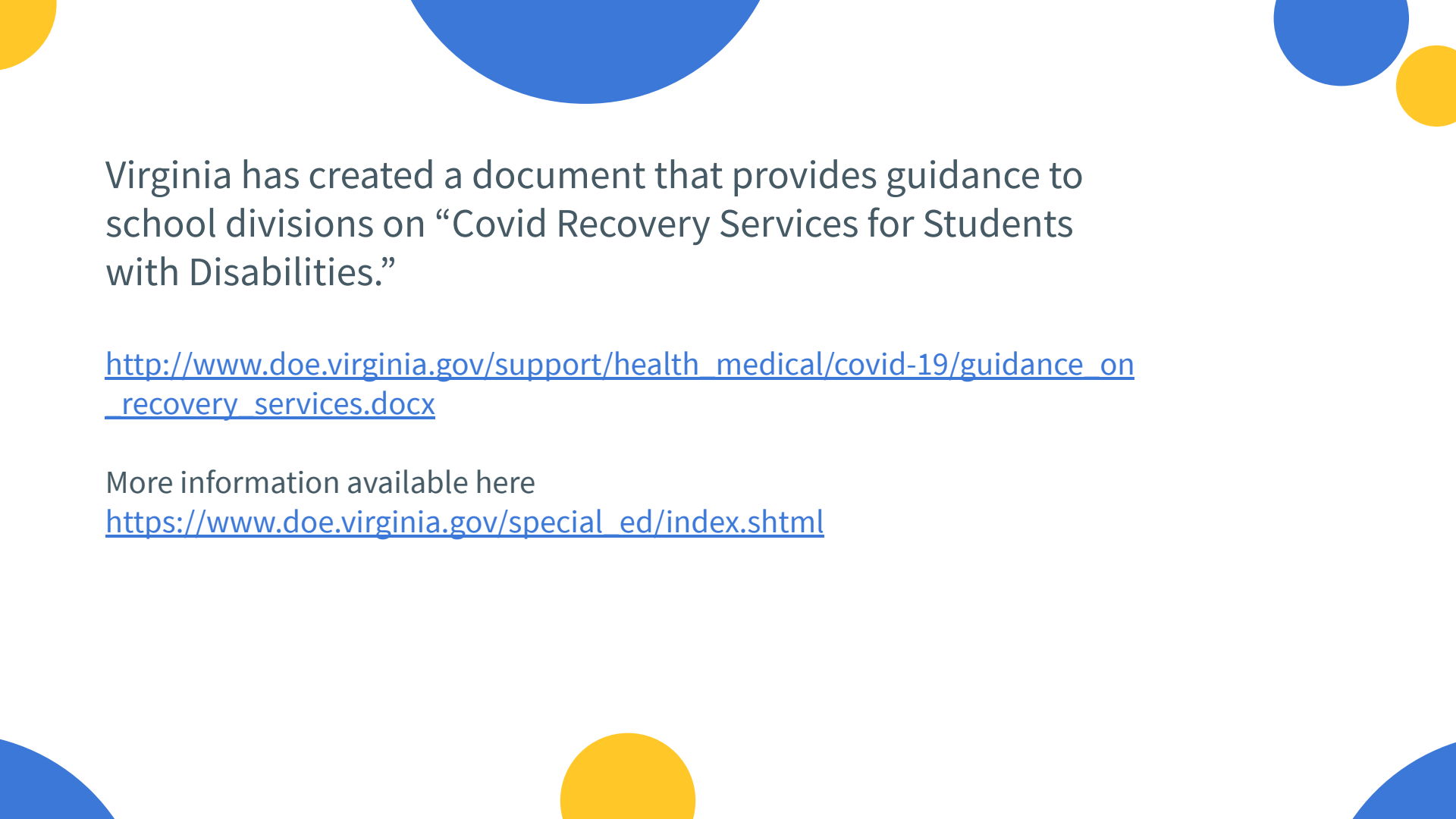
https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/29/learning/what-students-are-saying-about-learning-loss-during-the-pandemic.html

A major study out of Stanford University concluded that:

Addressing students' learning loss will require a student-centered approach that puts family and student relationships first, and a systemic transformation in how schools address the overlapping learning, behavioral, and emotional needs that support effective learning and teaching.

https://edpolicyinca.org/newsroom/covid-19-and-educational-equity-crisis

Virginia has created a document that provides guidance to school divisions on "Covid Recovery Services for Students with Disabilities."

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/health_medical/covid-19/guidance_on_recovery_services.docx

More information available here
https://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/index.shtml

The key for inclusive education and students with disabilities is that Learning Recovery Must Be INCLUSIVE.

A group of nine disability organizations including the National Down Syndrome Congress are supporting these recommendations for Covid learning recovery.

https://www.ncld.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/9-Recommendations-for-Inclusive-Learning-Recovery-for-Students-with-Disabilities-Final-1.pdf
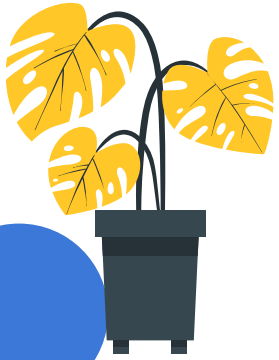
Try using this phrase

**Strengthening Student Learning Through Engagement**

instead of "addressing learning loss."

# We can build on VDOE's Growing Commitment to Inclusion

**Virginia's Roadmap to Equity includes Specific Strategies tied to Inclusion.**

[Navigating EdEquityVA – Virginia's Roadmap to Equity | Virginia is ...](#)



Equity VA

5 STRATEGIES FOR **SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

**01**
Increase data literacy. Disaggregate and analyze data by multiple factors including; race and ethnicity, gender, disability type, age, grade, etc. Engage stakeholders in conversation about what those data may mean with direct implications to students with disabilities and their outcomes both in school and post-school.

**02**
Identify, plan, and support the implementation and maintenance of evidence-based practices for teaching and learning for students with disabilities. Incorporate culturally sound instruction that mitigates the effects of unconscious bias by establishing clear expectations of all staff involved and continuously assessing fidelity of use and efficacy.

**03**
Promote and support self-determination for students with disabilities, as their direct involvement is key to K-12 as well as post-secondary success.

**04**
Utilize positive preventative and restorative school discipline practices and maintain a focus on equity while establishing prevention and intervention in a tiered system of supports.

**05**
Evaluate systems and policies to ensure that educational equity is established as a foundational platform for the success of every student with an understanding and belief that the needs of all students are not the same.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**
- What are My Choices? Facilitating Meaningful Conversations with Families of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students during the Disabilities Referral Process (Colorín Colorado)
- Instructional Resources Supporting Students with Disabilities

For more information visit: www.VirginiaIsForLearners.virginia.gov/EdEquityVA

48 VDOE - Office of Equity & Community Engagement #EdEquityVA | www.VirginiaIsForLearners.Virginia.Gov/EdEquityVA
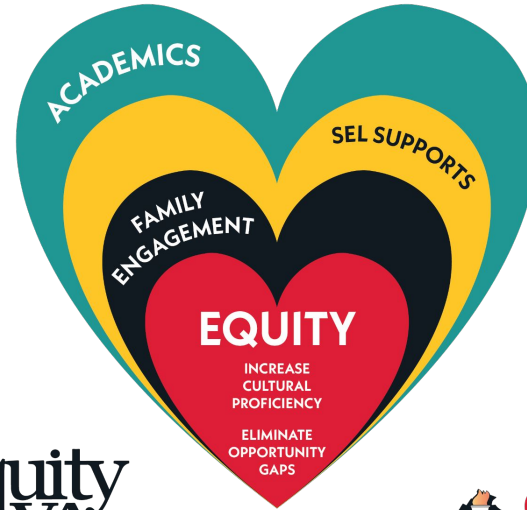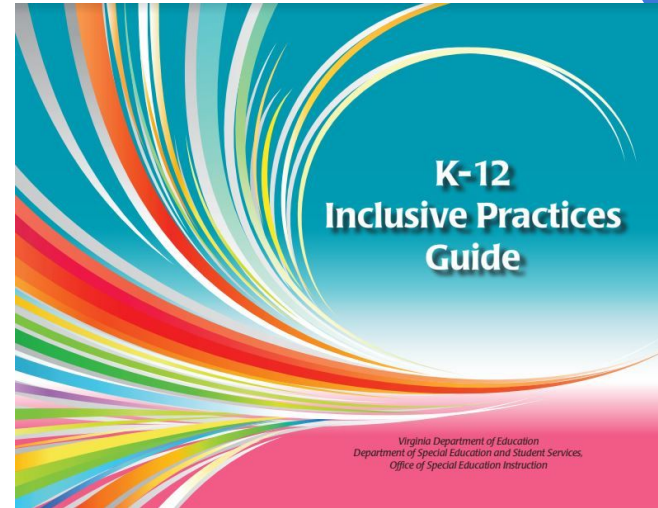
**VDOE has created a webpage of resources for Inclusive Practice**

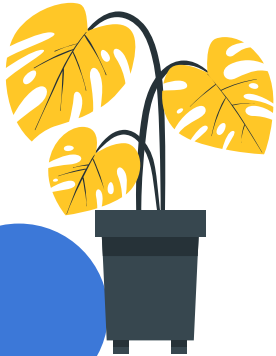https://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/iep_instruct_svcs/inclusive/index.shtml

# We can build on the Recommendations of the Joint Legislative Review and Audit Committee (JLARC)

You can read the full report here
http://jlarc.virginia.gov/pdfs/reports/Rpt545.pdf

**The JLARC report to the Governor and the Assembly of Virginia was conducted in 2019 & released in November 2020**

Staff conducted a thorough review of K–12 special education services. They used structured interviews, observations, surveys, document review, and analysis of data to examine the processes used by school divisions to enroll students in special education, to determine the services needed by students with disabilities, and to provide needed services, as well as to review the effectiveness of VDOE in its supervisory role.

[JLARC | K-12 Special Education in Virginia](#)

## The report made specific recommendations related to the inclusion of students with disabilities

It called for pre-service and inservice teachers to be prepared to understand the goals and benefits of inclusive education for all students, and to specifically be trained in these skill areas:

- differentiating instruction for students depending on their needs
- understanding the role of general education teachers on the IEP team
- implementing effective models of collaborative instruction, including co-teaching

The report called for similar training for school administrators.

## The report also made these recommendations

- School divisions should be required to conduct division-wide assessment on inclusive practice and placements
- School divisions should be required to create division wide-plans to enhance inclusive practice.

The report also recommended that VDOE take a more comprehensive approach to monitoring the inclusion of students with disabilities.

## Moving toward LRE for those students in segregated out-of-school placements

The report also pointed out that Virginia relies on out-of-school placements to a greater degree than 37 other states, and cites the current CSA funding policies as a key factor in hampering school divisions' ability to serve children with special needs in their local schools. They recommended that control of these funds be returned to the VDOE and that significant revisions in the funding mechanism occur.

https://www.vaco.org/jlarc-releases-report-on-childrens-services-act/

What can you do to advocate for inclusive education as we return to school face-to-face?
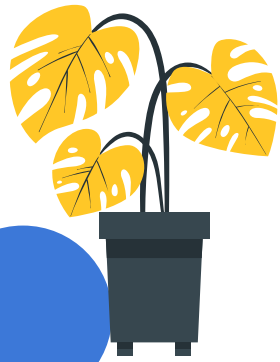
# We think the time is right to ask your school division to get ahead of the curve and do the following:
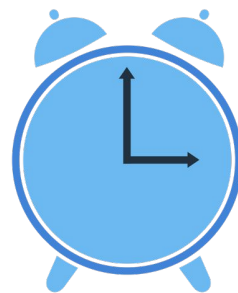
Conduct a division-wide assessment to assess current inclusive practices and take a deep data dive into placement practices for students with disabilities (SWD).

Determine: What % of SWD are included in core academic instruction? What % of SWD are in their home schools with siblings and neighbors? What % of SWD are not included on a daily basis with age peers? What % are in separate and/or private segregated facilities?

Create division wide-plans to enhance inclusive practice and set goals to improve numbers and percentages.

# Thank you for being here today and for being an advocate for inclusive education.

**Do you have any questions?**

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