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# Introduction

Inclusive education is occurring throughout California, in urban, suburban and rural communities, in public high schools, middle and elementary schools, and preschool settings. In many districts, every school offers an inclusive option; in some schools, all students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are now members of general education classes in their home schools. Highly diverse urban centers such as San Francisco and Los Angeles have demonstrated their ability to design and support inclusive options on a large scale; small towns such as Arbuckle, Colusa, and Pierce have been doing so for years; and communities as different from each other as Auburn, Whittier, Davis, Black Oak Mine, and Berkeley are continually working to develop and enhance inclusive school options for all students. They achieved this goal by applying the principles and practices of inclusive education to their local situation.

The *Inclusive Education Starter Kit* consists of two manuals and a set of accompanying resource materials. These manuals are not intended to stand alone. Instead, they provide information, materials, and resources that may be directed toward different audiences within a district or school. The purpose of Manual 1 is to provide California districts, schools, and families with strategies for and information about developing and enhancing general education class membership and participation for students who experience disabilities. The content addresses all students with disabilities, with specific emphasis on students most likely to be excluded from general education — those with moderate-severe disabilities.

Through case studies of inclusive classrooms from preschool to high school, explanations of the statutes and regulations governing inclusive education, and descriptions of strategies being used throughout the State, Manual 1 illustrates the benefits and possibilities that inclusive education brings to teachers, students, and communities.

The purpose of Manual 2 is to highlight information and strategies relevant to site-level teachers, administrators, parents, and support staff and district-level administrators, resource/support teachers, designated instruction and services (DIS) or related services staff, parent facilitators, and curriculum specialists. This Manual

includes strategies that years of experience and research have demonstrated to be critical in the design and implementation of programs that successfully educate all students with disabilities in general education programs. Specifically, Manual 2 describes strategies to support inclusive schooling in the areas of:

- ▶ Assessment
- ▶ Instructional and Curricular Practices
- ▶ Peer Interaction and Friendships
- ▶ Collaboration

Readers of this material are encouraged to review the case studies presented in Manual 1, which provide snapshots of schools and classrooms practicing inclusive education and implementing the strategies discussed in Manual 2. Readers are also directed to use the Appendices of resource materials to supplement or further explore the strategies and information presented here.