Supporting Inclusive Schools for the Success of Each Child:
A Guide for States on Principal Leadership

CASE STUDY: GEORGIA

Strategy 7: Meaningfully Engage Stakeholders as Partners in the Work

State education agencies can involve a variety of stakeholders, including educators, preparation programs, districts, and families of students with disabilities, in the development of their vision and goals for inclusive principal leadership.

Georgia Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership (AIPL) Objectives

Objective 1: Create guidance and/or toolkits for local education agencies on how to pursue, develop and retain inclusive leaders.
Objective 2: Revisit, realign, and revise the state-mandated evaluation system for leaders – the Leader Keys Evaluation System (LKES) – to ensure inclusion of behaviors and practices that specifically address meeting the needs of ALL learners by race, ethnicity, ability, economic status, and English language learner status.

Objective 3: Develop professional learning opportunities – face-to-face and virtual – to address the behaviors and practices critical to meeting the needs of ALL learners by race, ethnicity, economic status, ability, and English language learner status.

Making the Case for Inclusive Leadership: How Georgia is Building Coalitions and Creating a Shared Vision for Equitable Opportunity

As part of CCSSO’s Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership (AIPL) State Initiative, the Georgia Department of Education has taken meaningful steps to promote inclusive principal leadership in the state. In less than two years, the state has formed partnerships with key stakeholders, developed a communications and engagement strategy, and created a set of resources for principals and superintendents. In doing so, Georgia has laid important groundwork for its ongoing efforts to strengthen principals’ capacity to lead inclusive schools in which all students, including those with disabilities, have an equitable opportunity to succeed.

It was necessary to make critical connections between inclusive leadership and its positive impact on the teacher pipeline, as well as student outcomes.
LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

The Peach State is not new to the work of inclusive leadership and instruction. Among other initiatives, Georgia has worked since 2014 with the University of Florida’s CEEDAR Center to integrate inclusive practice into teacher preparation programs.

But while efforts to prepare and support inclusive school leaders may not be new for Georgia, the AIPL initiative brought focus and much-needed resources to the state’s work, according to Wina Low, the senior program manager in Georgia’s Division for Special Education Services and Supports.

The Georgia AIPL state team formed in fall 2018, consisting of representatives from the Georgia Department of Education, school districts, and principal preparation programs. Among the first steps the team took was to assess programs already in place and identify where inclusive leadership might be prioritized.

In spring 2019, with a review of the current policy landscape complete, the team convened with other AIPL states to draft plans of action. After careful consideration, Georgia established three main objectives for its AIPL work. [See Sidebar: Georgia Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership (AIPL) Objectives].

Of the three objectives, the state is prioritizing Objectives 1 and 3—the toolkits and professional learning opportunities—to “quickly leverage statewide awareness and capacity,” says Zelphine Smith-Dixon, the state director for the Division of Special Education Services and Supports and AIPL team lead. By taking this approach, Smith-Dixon says, Georgia can focus on building awareness and buy-in to support school leaders before considering how to formally evaluate the inclusion of behaviors and practices in the leader evaluation system.
BUILDING COALITIONS

MAKING THE CASE

BUILDING ON EARLY WINS

GO BACK TO AIPL STATE INITIATIVE

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