

The SELPA Dispatch

Published for our beautiful Butte County SELPA community

Volume 7, October - November, 2025

From the Director ...

The year is in full swing, and we have much to share and much that we are grateful for. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, the law that started it all and makes it possible for us to do this work on behalf of students with disabilities and their families in the first place. I was recently reminded by a friend and colleague of the opening sentence of this landmark legislation, signed into law by Gerald Ford on November 29, 1975, which reads:

"Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities."



In spite of the progress we have made, the promise remains far from fulfilled, and we must continue to advocate for a path to full funding of the IDEA. There are many wonderful plans underway to celebrate the 50th, including a field trip movie day on Monday to Chico State for a screening of the Disney film, "Out of My Mind" for many of our special day class students. The Fall 2025 edition of the SELPA Administrators of California [SELPA IMPACT Newsletter](#) also includes a great collection of articles and resources related to this special anniversary year.

Wishing you a terrific holiday season!

Aaron P. Bentr



Stay in touch with SELPA and community events by liking and following us at ["Butte County SELPA Community Connection."](#)



Visit our website at: www.buttecountyselpa.org for information, contacts, resources, trainings, and more!



Seeing Inclusion in Action in Early Childhood Programming

Daymi Trowbridge, SELPA Program Specialist



In September, early educators from across Butte County toured inclusive preschool classrooms in Marysville, watching inclusion at work, sharing strategies, and studying each site's focus areas. With support from Supporting Innovative Practices (SIP), a CDE-funded initiative, Marysville Joint Unified School District is investing in its Child Development Program through professional learning and recognition to deepen inclusive practices and ensure every preschooler, including students with disabilities, feels a strong sense of belonging.

The mission of the [Supporting Innovative Practices \(SIP\)](https://www.sipimpact.org/) is to help schools across California create classrooms where every child feels welcome, included, and supported. They work with educators so students become thoughtful, confident, and capable; learning in a community that values belonging and connection. Their vision is that every student learns in a classroom that's intentionally designed to be fair, inclusive, and responsive to their needs.

SIP's support to schools, LEAs, and SELPA includes tier one supports such as creation and curation of resources and easy to access tools like live/recorded webinars and practical guides that help schools use inclusive practices in everyday classrooms. Their tier two supports include extra support for selected districts or programs, and they do this by allocating funding, specialized trainings, and coaching tailored to local needs—so schools can improve outcomes for young learners, including those with disabilities. And, at tier three, they are working with the California Department of Education to spread effective, inclusive practices across the state.

For more information visit their website at: <https://www.sipimpact.org/>



Build capacity. Strengthen relationships. Resolve conflict. Countywide Support at Your Fingertips

Daymi Trowbridge, SELPA Program Specialist

Did you know SELPA Program Specialists regularly facilitate IEP Meetings, consult with educational advocates, and train and coach case managers throughout Butte County? The Butte County SELPA Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) options address all stages of conflict management.

Effective conflict management begins with **prevention**. The cornerstone of our ADR program is developing district capacity to address and resolve issues at the earliest stage. Through focused engagement and training in communication and facilitative meeting practices, we reduce the likelihood of conflict.

By engaging a neutral party in the IEP process, **interventions** are designed to prevent further conflict and preserve collaborative relationships within the team. When problems remain unresolved through the IEP process, or when legal proceedings seem imminent, the intervention is classified as **Intensive**.

Our goal is to provide a full range of supports for families and districts, with an emphasis on building district capacity to resolve misunderstandings and conflict while fostering positive relationships and connection; always with student-centered, forward-moving resolution.

It is the commitment of Butte County SELPA to address concerns and/or disagreements that might arise between parents/guardians and the Local Educational Agency at the earliest time possible. It is critical to promote understanding, open communication, and satisfying solutions to conflict that support and strengthen relationships.

Learn more about Alternative Dispute

Resolution services through our SELPA [Alternative Dispute Resolution Brochure](#).





What is Alternative Dispute Resolution?

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is a process for resolving conflicts or disagreements that may arise during the IEP process. ADR uses communication, collaboration, negotiation, and mediation to produce an agreement that meets the interests of the parties involved. The ADR process allows the parties to come up with a creative and mutually-agreeable outcome.

Butte County SELPA can facilitate an ADR process to help resolve conflicts between schools and families regarding special education assessment, programs and services.

Types of ADR

- Facilitated IEP Meetings
- Use of an Independent Educational Advocate
- Informal Resolution Sessions or Administrative Review
- Training
- Coaching

What is an Independent Educational Advocate?

The Butte County SELPA has for many years held a contract with Rowell Family Empowerment of Northern California, Inc., whose advocates help field parent concerns when parents are reluctant to work with district staff for whatever reason. Acting as a liaison, they work collaboratively with the family and the district, and many times SELPA staff, to bring about meetings or resolutions without a need for other complaint processes. Rowell Family Empowerment services are funded through grant funds from the SELPA Alternate Dispute Resolution grant. Rowell's website: <https://rfenc.org/Home/>

Another agency that parents often seek out to provide advocacy is Promotores of Northern Valley Catholic Social Service. Part of the mission of Promotores is to advocate for the poor and vulnerable, and to contribute to freedom and independence. They provide Court-Appointed Special Advocates (or CASAs) for students coming through the foster system without stable advocates of their own. The Promotores webpage is at: <https://nvcss.org/programs/promotores/>

Finally, Far Northern Regional Center (FNRC) is another resource for some families. Individuals who receive services from Far Northern Regional Center may request assistance from a FNRC Client Rights Advocate retained by regional center from Disability Rights of California. The Far Northern Regional Center advocate information is found at: <https://www.disabilityrightscalifornia.org/staff-links/far-northern-regional-center>

The Purpose of ADR

- Build trusting relationships between families and district staff
- Encourage respect
- Value the contributions of all participants

Facilitated IEP Meetings

Facilitated IEP meetings involve a neutral facilitator conducting the IEP. The goal of the facilitator is to promote effective communication in order to allow the IEP team to develop an appropriate IEP based on student needs. The facilitator maintains a neutral, student-focused lens while working through conflicts that arise ensuring each IEP team member is able to be heard, to participate in the development of the IEP through effective and respectful communication, and to address unresolved issues and concerns so the team can move forward in a positive direction.





Speaking with Confidence and Urgency About Inclusive Practices

Aaron Benton, SELPA Director



Creating a sense of belonging and connection to peers, staff, and school in general is not something that can be solved with a one-off training. Establishing school- and district-wide norms around inclusion takes long-term commitment from educational leaders at all levels, as they advocate for students with disabilities and their families, and when working with their general education and special education teams, who also need that same sense of connection and belonging.

Recently, at the third session of our Inclusion Academy, facilitated by the CDE Supporting Innovative Practices Project, we had a chance to showcase some resources we have created at the Butte County SELPA to support conversations around many key aspects of inclusion. These documents speak to the “why?” of inclusion, the legal mandate and its many benefits. We also shared a month by month bank of focus areas for staff and leadership to keep the inclusion at the forefront all year round. Finally, we created a custom tool for schools to reflect on their own program quality around inclusive practices.

Please feel free to **CLICK BELOW** on and use any of these resources designed to support your own positive communication in the educational community about inclusion.

PROGRAM QUALITY REVIEW
Inclusive Practices

School: _____ Program: _____
Date of Review: _____ Date of Final Report: _____
Self-Assessment Team: _____

1 = Minimal, 2 = Partially in place, 3 = In place

Leadership Inclusive Practices	1	2	3	Notes
School leaders explicitly discuss the expectation for collaboration, equity, and mutual respect among all faculty members. (L1)				
The principal understands the systemic strategies needed to support LRE (e.g., professional development/coaching, peer supports, common planning time, coordinated transportation schedules, and integration of these within the school site plan).				
The principal provides research-based best practices literature to inform the school staff of the array of services and strategies that support the implementation of LRE.				
An inclusion committee plans implementation of innovative and creative strategies in order to meet the needs of students with disabilities, with clear goals and benchmarks.				

Why Inclusive Education? For Educational Leaders

It is essential for educational leaders to fully understand, and become active advocates for, the inclusion of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. Successful implementation of inclusive practices requires commitment, planning, and effort, which are made easier when the educational community realizes the benefits of educating students in the least restrictive environment. This set of talking points was developed to help leaders who may be faced with questions about the various impacts of inclusion. Beyond this document, it is critical that leaders allocate the fiscal and human resources necessary to accomplish the goal of building inclusive school and district cultures.

Because it benefits all...
Shifting staff mindset

- In inclusive schools, staff share a belief that all students should have equal access to an appropriate education and that all students should learn alongside their same-age peers.
- The focus of education is on the student's abilities, not disabilities.
- Staff have high expectations for all students and SWDs who are in inclusive classes are absent less often due to their closer connection to school.
- The stigma of the special education label is removed the more SWDs are considered as any other student on campus and barriers to general education removed.

Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in General Education: Federal and California Requirements

1. Federal Legislative Requirements

The principle of inclusion is grounded in the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 20 U.S.C. 91400 et seq.)**. Central to IDEA is the requirement that students with disabilities be educated in the **least restrictive environment (LRE)**:

- IDEA Regulations, 34 C.F.R. 5300.114(a)(2) require that:
 - To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with nondisabled peers.
 - Removal to special classes, separate schooling, or other environments occurs only when education in general education settings with supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Other federal laws reinforce this expectation:

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. §794)** prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability and ensures equal access to general education.
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 42 U.S.C. 91201 et seq.)** extends nondiscrimination protections and reinforces the right of students with disabilities to equal participation in all educational programs.

Inclusive Practices Plan Month by Month

Month	School Leadership	Faculty and Staff
August	Facilitate collaboration and conversation among General Education and Special Education faculty, with the goal of sharing strategies and developing relationships. (L1)	Make a plan using rituals, (e.g., playing music as students enter the classroom), routines (e.g., posted daily schedule) to create and maintain a predictable academic environment. (I4)
September	Make a plan to ensure school events (e.g., assemblies) and public displays (e.g., bulletin boards) reflect diversity, including varied ability. (SW7)	Review IEP Goals, Accommodations, and Services for all of your students with disabilities. (I1)
October	Provide literature and facilitate regular discussions to inform school staff of best practices and strategies that support implementation of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). (L3)	Clarify and discuss with paraprofessionals, related services providers, and teachers about the role of the paraprofessionals to support Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). (I5)
November	Communicate to faculty and consistently reinforce school-wide behavior and learning expectations for all students. (SW5)	Reflect & Journal: Consider your use of differentiated instructional strategies. What strategies are currently in place? What is working? What is not? (I3)
December	Seek feedback from the educational community regarding equity and access to extracurricular opportunities for diverse student populations, including students with disabilities. (SEL4)	Identify and coach interested students to be peer tutors for students with disabilities. (SEL1)
January	Engage in several campus-wide observations during instructional and unstructured time to determine if students with disabilities are integrated as full members of the school.	Reflect & Journal: Observe students in your classroom over several days and take note of how students with disabilities are integrated as full members of the classroom community. (SW5)

Inclusive Practices Plan - Month by Month (May 2024) Page 1 of 2
[Find Examples for Each Month HERE](#)

Why Inclusion? Talking Points

...one knowledge, skills, and expertise, expanding problem-solving strategies.

SWDs are provided access to natural models of social skills, academics, and behavior. Stronger skills in reading and math and their academic performance is improved. Engaged and invested when participating in general education. Early incidents and suspensions occur when SWDs are not fully included are also more likely to obtain a high school diploma.

Inclusive Practices Plan Examples

August	
School Leadership	Faculty and Staff
Facilitate collaboration and conversation among General Education and Special Education faculty, with the goal of sharing strategies and developing relationships. (L1)	Make a plan using rituals, (e.g., playing music as students enter the classroom), routines (e.g., posted daily schedule) to create and maintain a predictable academic environment. (I4)
Calendar specific PLC time to the topic of inclusive practices within general education with clear, desired outcomes	Create a class schedule or routine and post it where all students can access it
Calculate schoolwide LRE data. Compare LRE rates with district and state targets. Set LRE targets for improvement. Analyze needs of students in the LRE	Provide visual supports for and teach specific appropriate behaviors and classroom routines and practice these as recommended by PBIS
Provide coverage or space for teachers to collaborate regarding specific questions or issues that would increase understanding of student needs	Select a song or video to play at the beginning of class, a song or video to play during transitions, and a song or a video to play at the end of the class
Pull specific resources, videos, articles to be used as a part of these PLC times	Establish classroom management systems that support behavior plans for students with disabilities and general education students

September	
School Leadership	Faculty and Staff
Make a plan to ensure school events (e.g., assemblies) and public displays (e.g., bulletin boards) reflect diversity, including varied ability. (SW7)	Review IEP Goals, Accommodations, and Services for all of your students with disabilities. (I1)
Survey the campus to document the diversity that exists across all campus environments and reflect on how you can highlight its importance	General education teachers: Request the IEP at Glance for your students with IEPs. SpEd Teachers: Provide GE Teachers with the IEP at Glance for your caseload

The Legal Basis for Inclusion

96301 et seq.) requires all abilities, to be included in all standards.

Students with disabilities are first rights to access and equity.

That students with exceptional education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment.

require Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students who will not participate with students in general education.

Program Quality Self-Reflection Instrument

Inclusive Practices Themes for the Year

Why Inclusion? Talking Points

Inclusive Practices Monthly Examples

The Legal Basis for Inclusion



Professional Learning Everywhere!!

Please make sure to check out all the wonderful training opportunities for staff and parents, which are posted on our website at www.buttecountyselpa.org/calendar or on Facebook at [Butte County SELPA Community Connection](https://www.facebook.com/ButteCountySELPACommunityConnection).



Butte County SELPA Behavior Training Series
Upcoming FREE Virtual Events
 Enhance your skills with professional learning focusing on inclusive practices, relationships, and effective strategies to support positive student behavior. Join us for a year of impactful learning and growth! Ideal for educators, psychologists, paraprofessionals, and administrators, but all are welcome!

7 Unique Trainings
 Something for Everyone!
 Click the Training Titles to Register!

BUTTE COUNTY SELPA INCLUSION ACADEMY

Intentional Design of System-wide Inclusive Cultures, Policies, and Practices

SIP



NOVEMBER 3, 2025
 A Systems Approach to Data Collection, Token Economy, Self-Reflection and Behavior Support Using DDBs

NOVEMBER 17, 2025
 5 Point Protocol - A Simple Behavior Plan For Teachers

DECEMBER 1, 2025
 Exploring The Intentions of Nurtured Heart Approach (TroyRUs, Baby Steps, Video Game Theory, Miracles from Molecules)

FEBRUARY 2, 2026
 Exploring Your Scenarios: Working Through Your Specific Behavior Challenges

MARCH 9, 2026
 Avoiding Power Struggles: Breaks vs Regulation and Rewards vs Free Choice

APRIL 6, 2026
 Exploring Games, Activities and Parasympathetic Transitions to Develop Community and Address Trauma

MAY 4, 2026

Joshua Kuensten has been in the field of special education since 1993, starting as a paraprofessional, then special education teacher, behavior intervention specialist, and expert trainer and consultant. He earned a Master's Degree in Advanced Special Education from Concordia University and



Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of I.D.E.A.

The SELPA Administrators of California has created some resources in English and Spanish for each month to recognize the impact of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Please stay tuned also for a special video compilation set to feature powerful messages

from our students, parents, a variety of statewide educational partners, state officers, state and federal legislators, keynote presenters, SELPAs from across California!

CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)

NOVEMBER 2025
 Special Education Related Services & Support

MONTHLY FOCUS:
Beyond the Classroom: Comprehensive Supports and Student Success

DISABILITY RECOGNITION

- National Family Caregivers Month
- Diabetes Awareness Month
- Epilepsy Awareness Month

DAYS OF RECOGNITION

- Nov. 3-7 - National School Psychology Week
- Nov. 5 - Stress Awareness Day
- Nov. 13 - Global Usability Day
- Nov. 13 - World Kindness Day
- Nov. 14 - World Diabetes Day
- Nov. 14 - Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day
- Nov. 24-30- National Family Week

DISABILITY HIGHLIGHT: OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRMENT

Other Health Impairment means having limited strength, vitality or alertness, due to chronic or acute health problems such as a heart condition, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, nephritis, asthma, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, epilepsy, lead poisoning, leukemia, or diabetes, which adversely affects a child's educational performance.

The below are examples of related services that may be required for a student:

- Speech Therapy:** Crucial for communication in the classroom and beyond.
- Occupational Therapy (OT):** Developing fine motor skills, organization, and sensory regulation necessary for school tasks.
- Physical Therapy (PT):** Ensuring mobility and functional movement in the school setting.
- Counseling/Social Work:** Providing social, emotional, and behavioral support.
- Specialized Transportation:** Guaranteeing safe and appropriate access to school.

SELPA
 Administrators of California



The compilation airs on Monday, December 1, 2025, and individual videos will be posted throughout the year on the [SELPA Administrators of California Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/SELPAAdministrators).