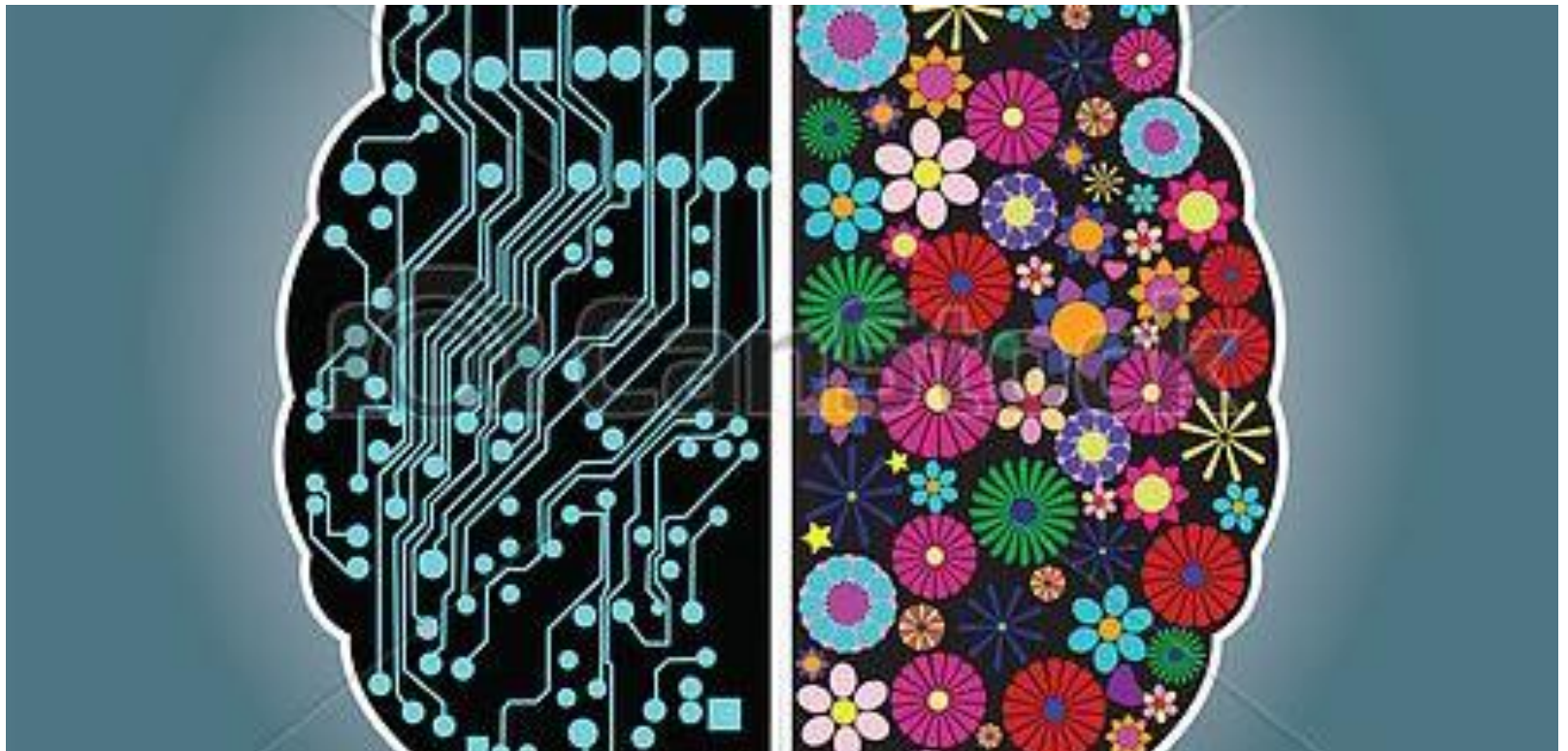


Building an Inclusive PAC Community

Galen Hutcheson, M.A. DVATI, Human, Parent, Community member, Citizen, Other.



Acknowledging First Peoples Traditional Territory

- I would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the unceded territory of the Syilx (Okanagan) Peoples

Everybody in! All Diversity Valued!

WSTM
process

A word cloud centered around the phrase "SOCIAL-INCLUSION" in large, bold, dark green letters. The words are arranged in various orientations and colors (red, purple, yellow, orange, brown). The most prominent words include "SOCIAL-INCLUSION", "community", "empowered", "sense-of-being", "accepted", "interaction", "confidence", "VOICE", "acknowledged", "normal", "purpose", "worthy", "trusted", "hopeful", "mutuality", "fuzzy", "comfortable", "useful", "safe", "journey", and "comradery".

hopeful
acknowledged
purpose
worthy
SOCIAL-INCLUSION
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useful
safe
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This work is hard and messy, so why do it?

Pub Ed is the most direct & immediate way of impacting your people

Whatever your passion is, you can build it at your school. The personal is the political.

Desperately needed.

Hobbled system relies on supports from families & the most vulnerable are most at risk.



Seeds to Grow Our School Community

- Case Study
- Nuggets that may or may not be transferable
- Ideas value connection & relationship to combat isolation & alienation for adults & children
- Specific Practical Applications
- Expertise from the room

Problems to Puzzle Out

- Problem: Underfunding + increased numbers of children who require specialized learning strategies
- How to engage parents/ caregivers (etc) in a collective, in this case a PAC, to create a venue for building inclusive schools.
- How do we create the environment where knowing each other, and working together on even small projects / shared goals creates opportunities for more effective advocacy for inclusive schools and communities

When trying, these ideas help me

Culture change is slow: True inclusion requires a radical culture change. Take heart, stay patient. Pace yourself, take breaks.

People come to action & advocacy via Relationship & we build these through simple stories

Strength based approach

Research/ best practice driven

Alignment- we all rise when we fight for each other



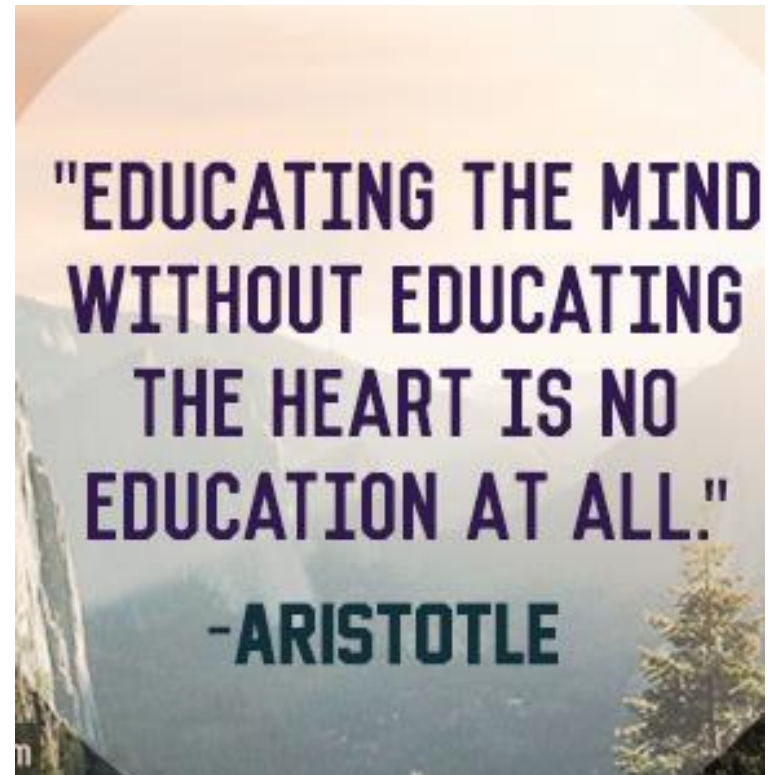
Privilege, compassion & helpful help

We can't know another's struggle or capacity

Its helpful to assume people are doing the best they can

IE. Unaffordable city, 1-5 kids in poverty, eldercare/childcare etc. Some people **can not** help any more

Nor should they have to.
AND I'm proposing volunteer wraparound services for those who can or **MUST**



The Good News & The Bad News

The Bad News: It's YOU. And, you don't have the time, the energy, the patience...it also might *not* be you

The Good News: It's YOU. And, you're not alone

AND... if this works, your world & the world of your child will get better.

You are building the community you want to belong to and if you weave the fabric it can catch you.



Reflecting Questions

- How can we cultivate a collective sense of belonging, pride and responsibility in our school culture in order to make our schools and communities inclusive?
- One of the ways is through parent engagement, advocacy, input & problem solving via our Parent Advisory Council

Have I got your attention? Whew...



Learn what PAC's do & don't

- From BCCPAC:
The School Act gives parents the right to provide feedback to the school. Officially recognized voice.
- Providing opportunities to educate & inform parents about the school
- Involving parents in volunteer activities; and
- Openly discussing parents' concerns and aspirations for their schools
- Advocacy

The problematic inequity in fundraising

Painting by Edvard Munch, The Scream



The problematic inequity in fundraising: Name it to Tame it

- Fundraising builds inequity & creates have and have not communities
- Alienates people who can not contribute
- Builds division between those who do/ do not contribute
- Normalizes inequity & parental need to subsidize
- BUT ... it also provides necessary material resources, programs and supports for students and teachers after years of chronic underfunding

Where to begin: STRAT Plan



You want it, you begin to build it



Start
From Where
You Are

- Read your room. Observe.
- Decide if you are a change agent.
- Do a capacity inventory: What do you have, what do you need? Get ready to lead by example.
- Put out your bat signal and gather your posse
- Notice connectors atyps/typs/ allys

Reciprocity & meaning will build it

- Folks must experience meaningful connections, feel valued & get bucket fillers
- See accomplishments
- Volunteering must be valued and appreciated
- Thank you both privately and publicly
- Balance between inviting what volunteers want to give and the job description
- Flexible, nimble, transparent, documented

Case Study: Every school is unique

- Elementary school situated in the lower mainland, westside urban community
- Privilege and poverty
- Two distinct broad demographic groups.
- New comers (less than 10 years) from China, Hong Kong, Korea
- Mix of professional incomes, middle class, 3rd or more generation, mostly white AND families in poverty
- Montessori choice program so families come from all over the city
- Inaccessible physical building

Goals built from vision & values

- Goal 1: Foster welcoming/ inclusive community
- How: exceptional group, respectful language & dialogue, public and private thank you, acts & words of appreciation, bulletin boards, volunteer leaves, valuing time as well as \$, compassion for life's complexity, permission to do what they can: No guilt! No shame!
- Goal 2: Bridge unique disconnected communities
- How: translated materials, native/ell buddy system for volunteering, kindergarten/established buddy system, Lunar event celebrating diversity, EPG, WeChat

Goals grounded in relationship & connection

- Goal 3: Increase trust between staff & parents through relationship
- How: direct thank you letters to staff, prioritizing staff wish lists, inviting direct communication, granting requests, \$ for classrooms, speaking to teacher concerns via advocacy and communicating it out
- Goal 4: Build volunteer capacity
- How: identify leaders early, sharing vision & values in communications, invite 'shadowing', embedding values via inclusive language in presentations, striving for balance between letting people contribute what they want/ job description, creating succession plan to combat burnout

Communicate everywhere

- ❑ Welcome packages introduces your culture, set the stage: values, goals, & critical specifics (sign up for blog, email etc, volunteer, opportunity \$, leaf, calendar)
- ❑ PAC Meetings (day/night?), Cookie Time, Presentations, skype? Video?
- ❑ Blog, Class room parents, volunteer coordinator (at school/ at computer)
- ❑ Chalk boards, posters, white boards, thank you letters, published minutes
- ❑ Social media, apps, twitter, facebook, instagram
- ❑ Word of mouth: stay and play builds connection, contribution & energy

Challenges

- ❑ Time. No one has it. If it is possible, we make it when we value it. We triage & prioritize.
- ❑ Energy. You need your oxygen mask on first.
- ❑ Volunteers with mixed skills & confidence
- ❑ Balance between not enough and too many cooks in the kitchen (high performance team/ capacity building)
- ❑ Burn out/ Aging out of school/ no succession plans
- ❑ Lack of successful feedback process/ wrong fit with a volunteer

Find or build your team

- Administration
- Teachers
- Parents
- Caregivers/ guardians/ grandparents/ advocate/ delegate
- Trustees, DPAC, BCCPAC



Relationship Building with Staff & Guardians

- Meet early with Principal/ VP and share your goals
- Invite collaboration & build a partnership. Without a healthy relationship here you'll get less done. They are the gateway to staff. Clarity around admin roles vital.
- If you volunteer, make them look good, value the staff, fundraise, and advocate for goodness they will be more motivated to help



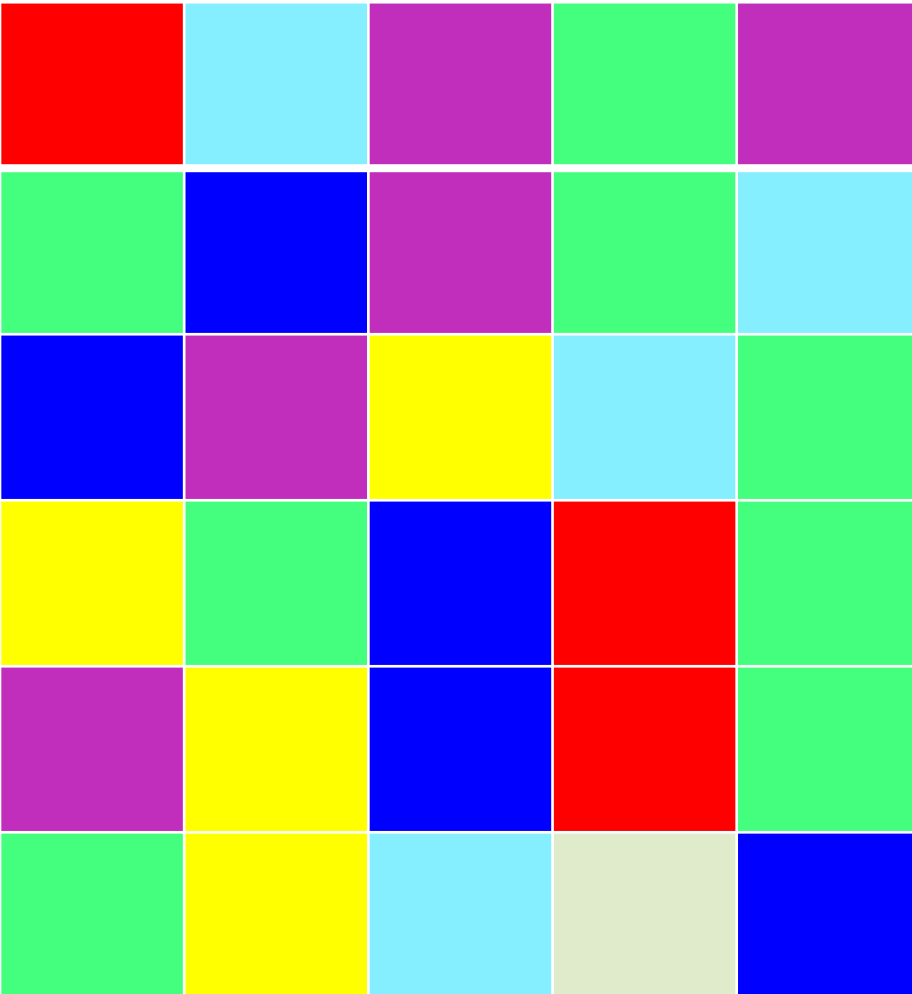
My favourite culture shift show & tell ideas

- I am talking about everybody right now
- You can't tell by looking
- A growing body of research says inclusion is good for everyone.
- Data tells us there is no 'normal'.
- I'm talking about YOU, if not now then later.



Kwyn Denny Maxwell- Victoria, BC Grade 4 teacher 2017- Typical class.

Some are harder and some are easier.



Light Blue: ESL students with 45min extra support / wk

Dark Blue: Students in class who are at least 2 years behind in 1 or more subject areas. They receive no support.

Pink: Students with challenging behaviours who disrupt the classroom regularly. They receive no extra support.

Yellow: Students who have been tested (or hopefully will be soon) and have a designated learning disability. They receive 1 hour a day extra support.

Red: Students who are facing HARD THINGS. Divorcing parents, deaths of close family members, poverty. These “things” are impacting their learning.

Green: Fully capable students who are meeting grade level and are able to work fairly independently. They have stable home lives & are getting their basic needs met.

Some Unidentified Diversity

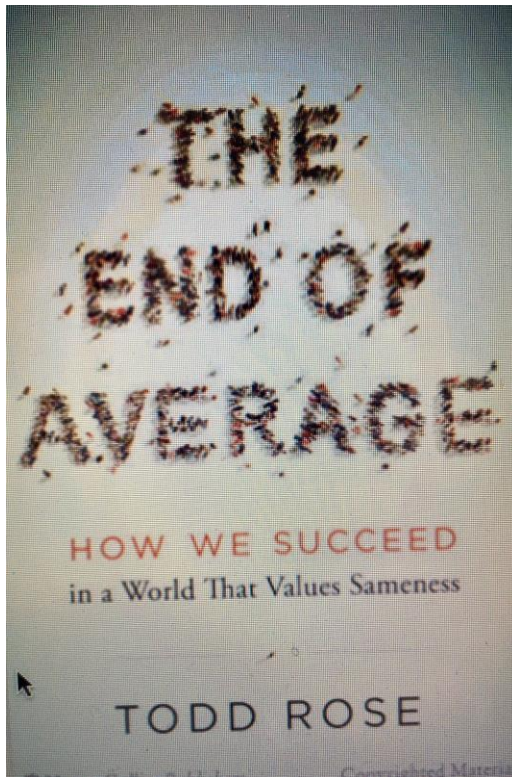
- Family Constellation & Supports
- ELL / Refugee experience /Poverty/ Housing Instability
- Social Emotional Readiness / E.Q/ Executive Functioning
- Stress / Food Insecurity
- Barriers to access
- Trauma (Divorce, Death, Abuse, Move, Loss...)
- Travel Time, Nutrition, Sleep, Screen Exposure
- Access to Physical Fitness...
- Illness Mental Health etc....



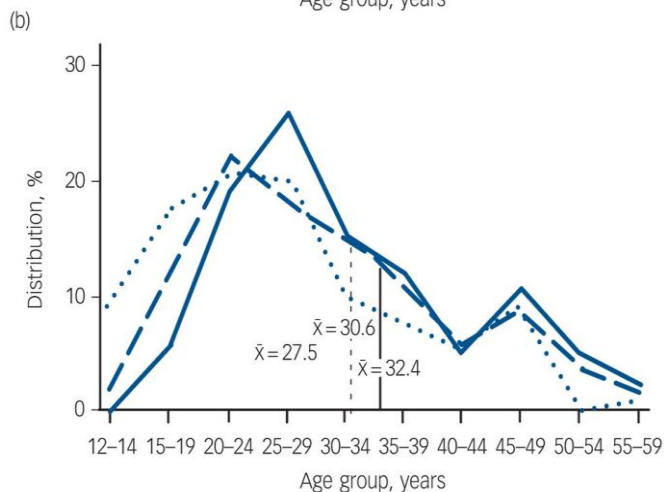
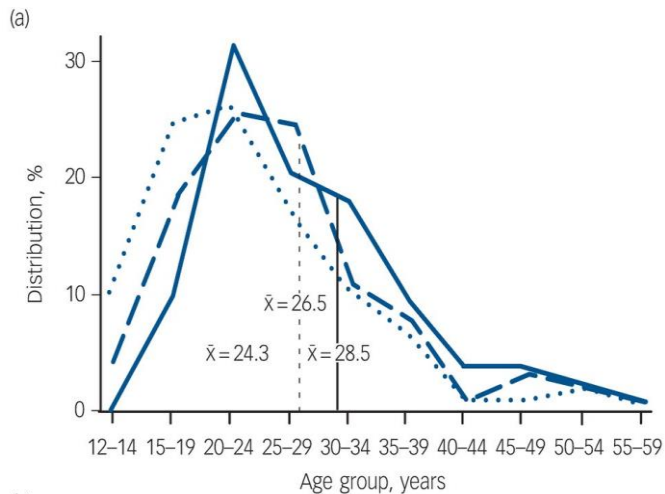
The End of Average by Todd Rose

The Myth of the Average: Todd Ross at TEDxSonomaCounty:

<https://ed.ted.com/on/4s8O5loM#review>



But this isn't about my kid...



- Well it is, and it might be because things evolve & change
- 1 in 7 Canadians have a 'disability' and in 2036 it will be 1 in 5
- "The median on set tended to be earlier for anxiety disorders (age 11 years), some of which begin and end in childhood, and for impulse control disorders (age 11 years) than for substance use disorders (age 20 years) and mood disorders (age 30 years)"¹
- And everyone benefits from supports that are built for the few but support the many.
- High tides lift ALL boats.**

The research is clear: Inclusive Education is the Ultimate win-win situation

“Thirty years of research shows us that when all students are learning together (including those with the most extensive needs) AND are given the appropriate instruction and supports, ALL students can participate, learn, and excel within grade-level general education curriculum, build meaningful social relationships, achieve positive behavioral outcomes, and graduate from high school, college and beyond.”

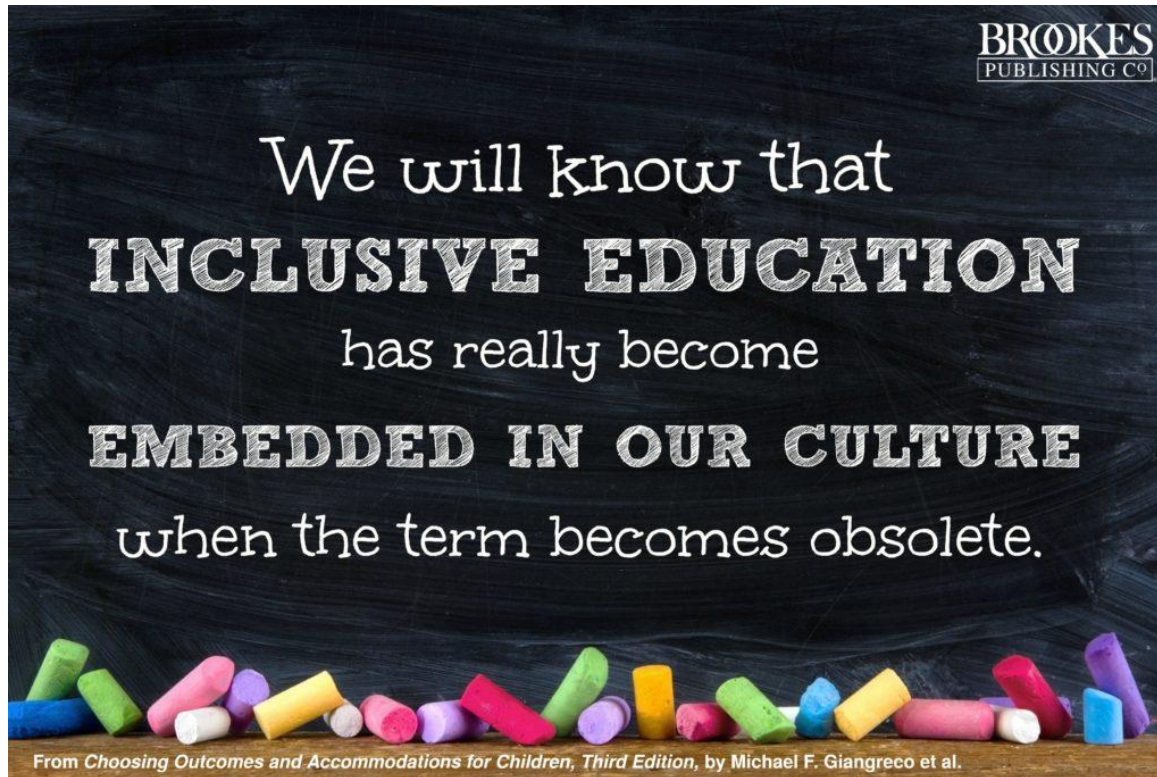
–SWIFT Schools

Only problem? Today we don't have adequate supports so... will you be the change



© Can Stock Photo

Thank you! Questions/ Discussion

A graphic featuring a dark chalkboard background. At the top right is the logo for BROOKES PUBLISHING CO. The main text is written in a white, chalk-like font. The words 'INCLUSIVE EDUCATION' and 'EMBEDDED IN OUR CULTURE' are in a larger, bold, all-caps font. At the bottom, there is a row of colorful chalk pieces in various colors like green, pink, purple, yellow, blue, and red.

BROOKES
PUBLISHING CO.

We will know that
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION
has really become
EMBEDDED IN OUR CULTURE
when the term becomes obsolete.

From *Choosing Outcomes and Accommodations for Children, Third Edition*, by Michael F. Giangreco et al.

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Build your PAC framework & then use it sparingly or as needed

- Constitution/ bylaws/ Roberts Rules
- Values/ vision/ goals/ evaluation/ (STRAT PLAN)
- Positions & co positions: 2 years, offset vacancies
- Chair/ Treasurer/ Secretary/ At Large/ Vices/ Co's
- Find the sweet spot between process & procedure or getting it done and building engagement
- Too much structure is alienating. Too little is confusing.
- **If your goal is community building choose FUN wisely!**

Discussion Questions

- What successes can you share from your PAC that others might benefit from?
- How can your school do better when valuing volunteerism & community building?
- What is one gift from your inclusive community and why is it good for everyone?

Inclusion is a Radical Culture Change

- Reminder: Change is slow
- Ground your process & progress in change management to depersonalize resistance to change
- How can we in our school promote the value that when we fight for the most vulnerable we all benefit ?

Language matters

- Find your voice. Use friendly, welcoming, inclusive stories & Pronouns. No jargon, \$10 words
- Start or end with thank you.
- Invite people in at the end of everything & ask for feedback and suggestions
- Letters to Teachers; Thank you, state of public ed, value their skills, inspiring, money available, how to/ deadline. Beg. Mid. End.

Build Leadership Capacity

- Identify leaders early
- Volunteers come with a diversity of skills and talents
- Translation/ buddy system/ co positions help bridge
- Shadow executive provides mentorship
- F2F, email, social off site gatherings
- Identify passions/ interests/ talents/ skills