

THE CHRIST-CENTERED EDUCATIONAL SERVICES STANDARD

Created by



THE CHRIST-CENTERED EDUCATIONAL SERVICES STANDARD:

A Christ-centered school which fully includes children and young people of all abilities creates a culture that equips each pupil to actively contribute in the life of the school community.

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clcnetwork.org

4340 Burlingame Avenue SW | Wyoming, MI 49509
p: (616) 245.8388 | f: (616) 243.3662 | e: info@clcnetwork.org

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I. WHY A STANDARD FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICES?

The purpose of this standard is to encourage Christ-centered schools to strengthen their community, their mission, and their educational quality by better serving students at all levels of ability. High quality educational services support all students, increase enrollment, and demonstrate faith. Although public schools also endorse belonging and inclusion for students with disabilities in certain areas, we believe this is God's direction for Christian education as Biblically expressed in four themes.¹

THEME ONE: WE ARE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD, THE CREATOR.

It is clear that human beings embody many differences — in talent, temperament, sense of purpose, physical characteristics, cognitive abilities, and many others. Humans are unequivocally unequal. Yet, there are fundamental ways in which people are far more than their differences. An essential part of the oneness of human beings is that they share the image of their Creator (Gen. 1). Yes, different folks reflect different aspects of God's image, and yes, all people are “works in progress.” That is, they are being renewed into the image of the Creator (Col. 3:10). Yet, all are alike in that each was created by God, and created something like God, in order to accomplish God's purposes. Each images the Creator by partnering with God to build the Kingdom. Kuitert, the Dutch theologian, coined the term “covenant partners” to capture this kind of image-bearing.

THEME TWO: WE ARE ONE IN THE SPIRIT AND ONE IN CHRIST.

Another dimension of the oneness of believers is that they share the same Spirit despite having different gifts (I Cor. 12:4). The Spirit's call to love God with all our hearts, and minds, and bodies is not inhibited by human differences we choose to measure and label. Level of ability, or acuity of the senses, or impairment of some bodily function are not obstacles to the Spirit. The Spirit works in ways too mysterious for words and in ways that go beyond intellect and verbalized faith. The Spirit moves us to faith we can know but not always express. Believers are bonded together by the Spirit in being loved by, and sharing love for, their Savior.

As Paul reminds us several times in his epistles, we also are “one in Christ” (Gal. 3:28). Because of Jesus, we are no longer strangers. He has broken down barriers that divide us from one another — bond and free, Frisian and Tutsi, disabled and temporarily able-bodied. All believers are members of God's household, “being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit” (Eph. 2:22; see also Eph. 4:4-6).

THEME THREE: WE ARE CALLED TO DISCIPLESHIP.

God's lavish love compels response. God uses His creatures despite their clay-pot imperfections to accomplish His rule. God expects people to use faithfully the gifts that the Creator has given, regardless of how those gifts might be measured on some human scale (Luke 21:1-4, Matt. 25:21). The call to love and serve God and neighbor comes to everyone (Matt. 22:37-40). Each of God's children also is God's agent in the world, carrying on the work of reconciliation and restoration (I Peter 4:10-11).

¹Written by Thomas B. Hoeksema Sr. PhD, Calvin College professor emeritus

THEME FOUR: WE ARE INTERDEPENDENT.

Our ableist world defines people by particular capacities and incapacities. Typically, people who are labeled according to some perceived disability are seen as dependent on others and relatively passive recipients of others' generosity. If each person has agency, as asserted above, and each person is created with purpose and is called to discipleship, then it must mean that each one is necessary (I Cor. 12:27 in The Living Bible). Persons called "disabled," as well as those called "nondisabled," all contribute their gifts to the welfare of the body (Eph. 4:16, Rom. 12). In fact, without everyone's gifts, the body of believers could not do all the things God asks it to do. No one can do all of God's work without the others. People image the Creator together. Humans image God not only as individuals partnering with God to do God's work, but as covenant partners with each other. People collectively form a body that carries God's image. God's household is a web of partnerships between people, all of whom are a mix of strength and weakness, gift and need (II Cor. 12:7-10). Equally broken (I John 1), we also are equally called to be servants of each other (Phil. 2). Human diversity is part of the creation order; God's design is for people to use their diversity to serve each other.

Applying these themes to Christian education, Dr. Thomas B. Hoeksema, education professor emeritus at Calvin College, lists some assumptions and beliefs underlying inclusive Christian education:²

1. All children are valued equally by God, who created them in God's own image and for God's purposes.
2. The responsibility to be "present with" members of the body of believers, in this case children, who are experiencing "not so ordinary" circumstances, is to be carried out not only by the nuclear family but also in other spheres by the congregational family and by the Christian school family.
3. All children must be taught to take seriously the Biblical mandate to love and care for one another, and they must be shown how to do so.
4. Developing spiritually and learning to live the life of discipleship are critical for children with and without disabilities, and schools play an important role in such nurture.
5. Being part of a regular, ongoing community such as a Christian school is important for all children, including those with disabilities; in fact, quality of life is best protected and maintained in community.
6. Voluntary support systems such as "Circles of Friends" are readily formed in schools, and ultimately will result in continuity in the care and support of persons who have unusual needs beyond the school years.
7. Friendship between persons with and without disabilities is mutually beneficial.
8. It is part of the mission of the Christian school community to bring the good news of healing and wholeness, and of shalom, the webbing together of all people in justice and delight, to its own members and to the world.

The above provides a Biblical basis for schools to decide to meet the Christ-Centered Educational Services Standard described in Sections V and VI of this document. While it delineates a theology and philosophy of inclusion, the standards themselves provide a description of what successful educational services look like in practice.

²Drawn from *Nuts & Bolts of Inclusive Education* by Barbara J. Newman. CLC Network, 2013

II. WHY PURSUE THIS ENDORSEMENT?

There are several reasons to pursue The Christ-Centered Educational Services Standard:

To articulate a mission and vision for educational services at your school. The process of self-reflection in response to the standards listed here will encourage you to articulate how you want to serve students. For example, do you wish to welcome whole families with a diversity of learning needs? Will you react to students' lagging skills, or proactively identify weaknesses in learning and teaching? The process of thinking about your response to students' abilities will help you come to agreement about what your schools' approach is today and what you want it to be in the future.

To evaluate and improve your current programs. Pursuing this in-depth endorsement for educational services may identify areas of your programs that are stressed, underutilized, or overtaxed. As a result, you may be able to create plans that help everyone refine their roles and contributions to student success at your school.

To celebrate your achievements in and commitment to educational services. This process is an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate your schools' commitment to learners of all abilities.

To share with other schools your knowledge and experience. As a result of the recognition this endorsement brings to your schools' services, you may be contacted by other schools and organizations looking to learn from your experience. Your contribution to the Christian school community will be a testimony to the health of our schools into the future.

To recruit students and families who want to know they will be served at any level of ability. Parents of students with disabilities often assume that the public school is the only place where their students will be best served. By pursuing this endorsement, you will help them know that a Christian education is within reach for their child, too.

Not only will this endorsement impact your recruitment of families with special needs, it will also strengthen your recruitment of all families. Often, Christian schools enroll students at a young age, only to learn that a disability shows up later in life. All parents want their students to get a quality Christian education, and those expectations do not change with a diagnosis - regardless of the child's age. Your attainment of this endorsement will demonstrate that you have planned for every child to be successful in your school.

III. HOW THIS STANDARD WAS CREATED

This standard builds upon thirty-five years of inclusive education experience in hundreds of faith-based schools across the country. To create these indicators and rubrics, CLC Network drew together a team to represent thriving inclusive Christian schools of various grades and sizes, higher education and teacher training, and CLC Network's staff of consultants and psychologists.

CLC Network, historically known as the Christian Learning Center, seeks to promote the development of people with a variety of abilities and disabilities to live as active, integrated members of their communities. They partner with families and organizations — primarily faith-based schools and churches — to build support systems that enable inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life.

As a nonprofit organization, CLC Network advocates for inclusive Christian education as a demonstration of Christian faith, as an enrollment and admissions tool, and as a way to strengthen the financial viability of Christian schools. These indicators and rubrics are meant to provide a structure for school leaders to strive towards excellence in support services, drawing on the excellence that is already being practiced in hundreds of successful Christian schools.

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IV. HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The Christ-Centered Educational Services Standard is intended to be used as an addition to existing accreditation processes, by a variety of accreditors. To receive a customized copy for your denomination or region, please contact CLC Network at (616) 245-8388 or info@clcnetwork.org.

Our intention is for this document to be a guide through which you can incorporate educational services goals, objectives, and ambitions into your School Improvement Plan. This plan should be submitted to your accreditor of choice as part of the standard accreditation process.

In order to receive an endorsement with The Christ-Centered Educational Services Standard, your overall self-assessment process should show strong achievement in each indicator, and should be strong in each category labeled Commitment, Collaboration, and Culture. Indicators where you rank yourself at Levels 1 and 2 should be minimal, and should be explicitly addressed in your School Improvement Plan.

Any substantial changes to your educational services must be reported to your accrediting authority, who will determine whether your endorsement and accreditation with this standard will continue. In order to measure your progress in this standard, a system for periodic feedback from your schools' stakeholders should be incorporated into your School Improvement Plan.

CLC Network neither charges nor receives any income from use of this document. Any fees associated with this standard should be negotiated with your accrediting authority. To support CLC Network's advocacy work and the availability of this indicator, please make a contribution at clcnetwork.org.

When pursuing accreditation endorsement for these standards, we encourage accreditation teams to seek out certified special educators who have been involved in successfully inclusive schools. For ideas and suggestions of potential participants, please contact CLC Network or its member schools.

V. THE INDICATORS

Standard: A Christ-centered school which fully includes children and young people of all abilities creates a culture that equips each pupil to actively contribute in the life of the school community.

Each Indicator of this Standard is organized into a Category.

COMMUNITY All stakeholders demonstrate an intentional and comprehensive commitment to all learners.

- 1.1 A mission for including and welcoming students is expressed clearly in writing and in person by and to all stakeholders, and reflects a Biblically-based view of the child.
- 1.2 Admissions and enrollment policies seek to enroll whole families, welcoming students with a high level of support needs as well as those with mild accommodations.
- 1.3 General education teachers show a sense of ownership toward students with identified disabilities, fostering a welcoming environment with age-appropriate peers and a desire to support every learner.
- 1.4 Educational services staffing is adequate and appropriate to the size and needs of the school's student body.
- 1.5 The school understands and honors each student as a member of the body of Christ, using descriptive common language and flexible services.
- 1.6 Educational services are provided for every student in a way that is financially equitable.

COLLABORATION School staff functions in a collaborative manner to educate the whole student.

- 2.1 Staff use effective communication strategies within a defined process for collaboration and communication on behalf of individual students.
- 2.2 Personalized student goals are developed and shared collaboratively among teachers, administrators, parents, and the student themselves.
- 2.3 Personalized student support plans address the whole child, including his/her relationships with God and with peers.
- 2.4 A process is in place and followed that provides evidence of progress on personalized student plans.
- 2.5 All staff receive ongoing professional development with purposeful follow-up that equips them to teach students with varied abilities.
- 2.6 School staff and parents are aware of what is available and provided to the students both internally and by outside contractors, whether through public school districts or private partnerships.

CULTURE The school community has developed a culture of belonging.

- 3.1 Students with and without disabilities develop socially and emotionally together with their age-appropriate peers.
- 3.2 The school's physical spaces and usage plans have been designed to take into account accessibility, convenience, and social inclusion of persons with disabilities.
- 3.3 Individuals within the school readily and wholeheartedly celebrate diversity of abilities in their communities.
- 3.4 The community engages in processes of recursive self-assessment to educate all students most effectively.

VI. THE RUBRICS

The rubrics given as levels under each indicator are meant to provide guideposts for self-assessment. Typically, a Level 1 example represents a school beginning its journey of educational services. As the rubrics climb toward Level 4, they are often *evolutions*, or in some cases cumulative, of the previous Levels. For example, if Level 1 represents an informal system for identifying students with learning disabilities, Level 4 would represent a well-structured and well-understood system for identifying and addressing students' needs.

Level 4 Exemplary, in many cases cumulative of levels 1-3

Level 1 Getting Started, exclusive of levels 2-4

Under each indicator, we have provided suggestions of evidence sources. These are meant to be initial ideas and not exclusive of additional sources that may pertain to your school. Ratings on your schools' levels should be gathered from stakeholders as part of your accreditation process.

Finally, we encourage schools to engage the whole school in a self-assessment process using this standard, rather than placing sole responsibility on the educational services staff. Because educational services influence so many areas of a school, it is important to get a holistic view of your school's level of achievement.

COMMUNITY

All stakeholders demonstrate an intentional and comprehensive commitment to all learners.

1.1 A mission for including and welcoming students is expressed clearly in writing and in person by and to all stakeholders, and reflects a Biblically-based view of the child.

May be evidenced within the school mission, vision, policies, job descriptions, newsletters, parent letters, website, and other communications.

Level 4 The mission for students with disabilities is tied to the schools' overall mission and has been embraced by the board of directors and all constituents. It is clearly understood by all stakeholders and repeated often and consistently in daily work. The school widely communicates that learners of all abilities are welcome in the school community. The school's vision for support services reflects a Biblical view of the child.

Level 3 School staff and the board have agreed upon and expressed a written vision for serving students with disabilities. The vision for support services connects to the school's core mission and beliefs, and is well known by support services staff and administrators. The services provided by the school are visible and spoken of in communications as essential to a Biblical view of the child.

Level 2 The school serves students with disabilities as those disabilities are identified. A staff member exists in a support role and is listed on staff rosters and the school website. Board and administration have agreed and acted upon a desire to adequately educate each student by assigning resources to the effort.

Level 1 Students are identified as having disabilities throughout the course of their education utilizing various methods. Determination is made on an individual basis whether they will be served in that school.

COMMUNITY

All stakeholders demonstrate an intentional and comprehensive commitment to all learners.

1.2 Admissions and enrollment policies seek to enroll whole families, welcoming students with a high level of support needs as well as those with mild accommodations.

May be evidenced within admissions policies, interview questions, enrollment forms, websites, and other communications.

Level 4 Admissions and administrative leaders actively extend invitations to families of students with any disabilities, encouraging their enrollment in the school. The entire school expresses a need for the community it serves to be fully represented in enrollment, and clarifies that desire in its policies. Admissions officers are able to accurately represent the school's approach to educating each student, and are able to share an overview of the services available. Educational services staff are available and involved in the enrollment of all students and families.

Level 3 All families receive a warm welcome and opening conversation, in-person when possible, to determine their match with the school. Administration or educational services staff, as well as Admissions staff, are involved in those opening conversations. Policies are in place to encourage families of students with disabilities to enroll all of their children in the school.

Level 2 When families with children with disabilities inquire about enrollment, the school staff responds with a cautious desire to welcome them, depending on the accommodations available.

Level 1 Known constituent families are provided a special welcome to enroll their child with a disability. The school is willing to make minor changes in its program to engage existing families more fully in the life of the school. Students with disabilities are deferred to a single teacher to determine admission.

COMMUNITY

All stakeholders demonstrate an intentional and comprehensive commitment to all learners.

1.3 General education teachers show a sense of ownership toward students with identified disabilities, fostering a welcome environment with age-appropriate peers and a desire to support every learner.

May be evidenced within the yearbook, a special education or resource room services manual, staff handouts, planning and IEP meeting minutes, and staff meeting schedules and minutes.

Level 4 Students with disabilities are seen as equal and full members of the general education classroom by their teacher, other students, administration, and themselves. All staff share responsibility for all students, utilizing generous collaboration time to express concerns and brainstorm solutions. Support services staff are seen in and fill the roles of consulting, coordinating, advocacy, supervisory, and diagnosis. The general education teacher is the first person to consider, brainstorm, and communicate ways for students with disabilities to participate in class activities such as games and field trips.

Level 3 Students with disabilities are considered partial members of the general education classroom by their teacher, other students, administration, and themselves. The general education teacher increases awareness of accommodations and modifications, working with the educational services staff. Students spend as much time as possible in the general education classroom environment.

Level 2 General education teachers learn from example how to make accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities. Support services staff provide generous coaching time to assist in differentiation techniques for specific students. Students are strategically placed in the general education classroom for the parts of the day which will foster greatest social and academic participation.

Level 1 General education teachers allow students with disabilities to participate in their classrooms, with support, for certain periods every day. Students with disabilities store their belongings alongside their age-appropriate peers, regardless of where they spend the majority of their day.

COMMUNITY

All stakeholders demonstrate an intentional and comprehensive commitment to all learners.

1.4 Educational services staffing and resourcing is adequate and appropriate to the size and needs of the school's student body.

May be evidenced within job descriptions, organizational charts, building map, caseloads, budgets, and other materials.

Level 4 Educational services are represented at the highest administrative levels of the school by a primary advocate, whether that is a director of educational services or an administrator who oversees the program. Certified special educators and paraprofessionals are hired depending on the size of the student body and constituent families, and are considered staff, professionals, and administrators where appropriate. The school devotes central, easily visible, and collaborative spaces for educational services activities, and provides for appropriate educational materials and equipment. Data from school-wide assessment is used to inform instructional and educational services decisions.

Level 3 At least one staff member ensures that research-based best practices in teaching are provided to each student, based on individual student need. Paraprofessionals are used when necessary to serve as a bridge from teacher and peers to a student with special needs. A generous space for support services also includes appropriate equipment for sensory and motor skill development. Staffing is determined based on overall enrollment and objective assessment.

Level 2 Staffing is determined for students with disabilities as needs surface, based on teacher and parent determination of need. Some assessments are in place to determine modifications and accommodations. Physical spaces are modified based on students currently attending the school.

Level 1 Educational services staffing is determined as a specific portion and/or percentage of the school's overall budget. Physical space has been identified where student support services may take place.

COMMUNITY

All stakeholders demonstrate an intentional and comprehensive commitment to all learners.

1.5 The school understands and honors each student as a member of the body of Christ, using descriptive common language and flexible services.

May be evidenced within professional development schedules, behavior plans, discipline policies, and student observations.

Level 4 The school community demonstrates its understanding of students through use of common, appropriate language that describes students' strengths and weaknesses as children of God. This language emphasizes that every person has strengths, weaknesses, and the ability to contribute actively to the school community. All staff, parents, board members, and students are aware of the need for and use person-first language when describing persons with disabilities. All students are equal members of one body.

Level 3 Staff and students receive training on a common framework for describing students, and utilize this language when raising concerns or praises. Most staff and students use person-first language when describing students with disabilities. Services are wrapped around every student, instead of students being defined by the program into which they fit.

Level 2 Staff receive training on several ways to understand students' challenges in school, and utilize those descriptors as they see fit. Some staff and students use person-first language to describe students with disabilities. Programs may exist for students of various abilities.

Level 1 The school has laid plans to develop a common descriptive framework through professional development. A few leaders demonstrate person-first language on a daily basis, encouraging others to do the same. Services for students at various abilities are offered outside of the context of the school's core programs.

COMMUNITY

All stakeholders demonstrate an intentional and comprehensive commitment to all learners.

1.6 Educational services are provided for every student in a way that is financially equitable.

May be evidenced within admissions policies, fundraising activities and communications, enrollment forms, and tuition rates or invoices.

Level 4 All constituent students and families are invited to attend at the same tuition rate, regardless of ability or disability. Educational support services are considered equally deserving of donor funding and tuition dollars as all efforts of the school. Donors are regularly engaged to provide financial support for ongoing and extraordinary support services needs at the school. An official policy is in place to confirm tuition equity, which protects the school by defining constituent students as those with eligible siblings attending or planning to attend.

Level 3 Most constituent students and families are invited to attend at the standard tuition rate. Donors or churches are engaged to financially support the services provided to students with more significant needs, such as students who require professional medical staff. The school works creatively with families, the board, and donors to make it possible for those students to attend.

Level 2 Most students are not charged an additional fee for tuition expenses, but those who need significant support pay some level of fee for that assistance.

Level 1 Support services are provided, but students who utilize these services are charged an additional fee beyond tuition expenses.

COLLABORATION

School staff functions in a collaborative manner to educate the whole student.

2.1 Staff use effective communication strategies within a defined process for collaboration and communication on behalf of individual students.

May be evidenced within professional learning community meeting agendas and notes, intervention group agendas and notes, parent communications, and enrollment forms.

Level 4	All staff and parents utilize healthy communication habits, such as those outlined in Matthew 18, in order to support individual students with a sense of shared responsibility. Students see faith and responsibility in action by watching their parents, teachers, and administrators work together for the good of the body of Christ. School and staff have defined and can identify the system of assessment and progress monitoring that allows for students to be flagged for further attention.
Level 3	An overarching framework has been defined by support services staff, school leaders, and general education teachers through which students may be identified as needing additional support or assistance. General education staff have been trained in this system and are becoming more familiar with it. Collaboration on behalf of specific students is encouraged and enabled with adequate scheduling.
Level 2	A system has been identified in order to serve students with unique needs. As students progress, they may receive varying perceptions of their own gifts and abilities. Collaboration is encouraged among all teachers and administrators.
Level 1	Students become eligible to receive services from support staff through a variety of means, such as teacher or parent requests.

COLLABORATION

School staff functions in a collaborative manner to educate the whole student.

2.2 Personalized student goals are developed and shared collaboratively among teachers, administrators, parents, and the student themselves.

May be evidenced within assessment records, data, student plans and planning sessions, report cards, 504 plans, and goals matrices.

Level 4	Student learning targets are clearly identified for all students; and, if needed, taught in an explicit way. For students with individualized student plans, all of the influencers on that student have a role in developing the student's plan, building in collaboration and shared responsibility for key concepts. Teachers and administrators who may interact with that student are aware of their part in that student's progress, hold that student accountable to their goals in every content area, and understand the purpose of accommodations or modifications being made.
Level 3	Objective observations and data are collected from all perspectives impacting the student - self, teachers, and parents. Based on that data, a plan is developed by a team of teachers and support staff, perhaps with input from parents and/or the student themselves. That team then implements supports, with periodic re-assessments of effectiveness. Should it be determined that the plan is ineffective, adjustments are made immediately.
Level 2	One or two staff members and/or administration members observe a student and develop a proposal for the student's progress. They build buy-in from the student and teacher and follow up at predetermined points throughout the school year to discuss progress.
Level 1	One staff member takes responsibility for observing a student and developing the student's plan. That staff member then distributes the plan to all teachers, parents, and/or the student involved.

COLLABORATION

School staff functions in a collaborative manner to educate the whole student.

2.3 Personalized student support plans address the whole child, including his/her relationships with God and with peers.

May be evidenced within student plans, peer-to-peer group schedules (like Circle of Friends, Connections, LINKS, etc.), IEP's, 504 plans, accommodations, modifications, report cards, and goals.

Level 4	Plans help the student see him/herself as a child of God and an equal member of community by focusing on strengths before weaknesses. Teachers are aware of student's strengths and weaknesses, and plans support student progress in their self-perceptions, their relationship with God, and their social contributions to their communities and classmates. When appropriate, peers provide feedback and guidance to improve social relationships or recognize strengths.
Level 3	Age-appropriate peers have been equipped with a Biblical, faith-based understanding of disability and inclusion, seeing each other as made in the image of God regardless of ability or disability. Students are assigned or included into social inclusion groups led by adult staff or volunteers. Students with disabilities play an active role in contributing to corporate worship.
Level 2	Plans allow for some students to participate in the schools' faith development activities. Student plans support their progress in several areas of life, such as motor skills, vocational training, and life skills. A Biblical view of the child underpins all student plans.
Level 1	Plans include ways for all students to learn and succeed in Bible courses and in school-wide worship, whether through pull-out or paraprofessional support. Staff are aware of students' non-academic goals, whether they are pursued within or outside of the school environment.

COLLABORATION

School staff functions in a collaborative manner to educate the whole student.

2.4 A process is in place and followed that provides evidence of progress on personalized student plans.

May be evidenced in progress reports/report cards, parent feedback, general education teacher feedback, teacher logs, student success team schedules/agendas, formative and summative assessments, screening tools, and revisions to personalized student plans.

Level 4	Personalized student plans are created with systems for measurement and frequency which the student understands. Formative assessment processes are used to gather, analyze, and evaluate data, which is shared with all those impacting the students' success in order to make instructional decisions. Staff take advantage of a personalized timeline for progress, adjusting the feedback schedule as needed.
Level 3	Formative and summative assessments are used to determine student progress and inform instructional decisions. School staff gather feedback from all of that student's teachers, parents, and the student themselves. This feedback is used to adjust interventions, set new goals, and encourage the student in their growth. All meetings of stakeholders review both the student's successes as well as their challenges.
Level 2	Teachers use ongoing assessments to measure student progress and inform whether or not the learning goal has been met. A teacher gathers input about student learning from that student's parents, teachers, and other staff, and shares that information with the student. Assessments are qualitative and quantitative in nature.
Level 1	Teachers provide summative reports on student progress alongside other summative reporting procedures. Students with personalized support plans receive notes or anecdotal feedback in written form.

COLLABORATION

School staff functions in a collaborative manner to educate the whole student.

2.5 All staff receive ongoing professional development with intentional follow-up that equips them to teach students with varied abilities.

May be evidenced within professional development schedules, staff meeting schedules and minutes, Title II funding proposals and awards, and other meeting minutes.

Level 4 Students see changes and improvements to their classroom learning as a direct result of professional development efforts. All staff understand how professional development priorities will impact students at every level of ability. Teachers and staff are held accountable for adapting and utilizing professional development for the benefit of every student. Professional development is clearly linked to the mission of the school.

Level 3 Professional development opportunities are chosen based on input from staff and students. All staff participate in professional development together, building a common language and common proven best practices for understanding students. Staff hold each other accountable whenever possible to implement best practices.

Level 2 Select staff receive professional insight into students with unique learning needs, and share that information with other staff. Professional development is provided at specific times of year, and staff are expected to implement changes for the good of all students in their classrooms.

Level 1 School-wide professional development priorities take into account the needs of students with particular disabilities. Support staff customize professional development for the students currently enrolled in the school.

COLLABORATION

School staff functions in a collaborative manner to educate the whole student.

2.6 School staff and parents are aware of what is available and provided to the students both internally and by outside contractors, whether through public school districts or private partnerships.

May be evidenced within schedules, internal communications, and support services policies.

Level 4 Working together as a team on behalf of a student who struggles, parents and teachers share relevant information about the student’s progress and struggles, as provided by professionals such as occupational therapists, speech specialists, physical therapists, social workers, psychologists, and/or psychiatrists. A staff member at the school intentionally cultivates positive working relationships with these providers, whenever possible, whether through the public school or through private clients.

Level 3 The school has developed a policy to clarify when a student should see professionals provided by the school or outside professional specialists. All staff members at the school understand the importance of these providers’ presence, the availability of specialized services for students, and how students may qualify for these services.

Level 2 The school is aware of and solicits some outside assistance in serving students who qualify for special services. Qualification is determined based on public school criteria or internal determination. The school may provide or make arrangements for some of these services.

Level 1 Students become eligible for outside specialist services on an as-needed basis, as decided by staff, teachers, administrators, or parents. In special cases the school may provide these services for the student.

CULTURE

School staff functions in a collaborative manner to educate the whole student.

3.1 Students with and without disabilities develop socially and emotionally together with their age-appropriate peers.

May be evidenced within lesson plans, extracurricular rosters, activity plans, and social group plans.

Level 4	Students with disabilities are seen as belonging in the school. Each student, with and without disabilities, can point to an area in which they are contributing meaningfully to others and to the community. Students with disabilities participate equally and meaningfully in extracurricular activities, such as sports teams. Concepts of social inclusion are taught to all students and reflected in discipline practices.
Level 3	Students have opportunities to provide support and assistance <i>to</i> others as well as receive support and assistance <i>from</i> others. Students with disabilities participate in some ways in extracurricular activities. Staff have opportunities to collaborate on behalf of the social and emotional development of their students.
Level 2	The school has formed social inclusion groups, such as Circle of Friends, to intentionally cultivate an inclusive community. Students with disabilities are welcome to participate in some extra-curricular activities, depending on the staff of that program.
Level 1	Students with disabilities are placed with their age-appropriate peers as often as possible. Their social and emotional development is discussed with some peers. Accommodations are made for students with disabilities to engage in select extracurricular activities operated through the school.

CULTURE

School staff functions in a collaborative manner to educate the whole student.

3.2 The schools' physical spaces and usage plans have been designed to take into account accessibility, convenience, and social inclusion of persons with disabilities.

May be evidenced within the building plan, fire drill plan, field trip checklist, and design processes.

Level 4	Physical spaces allow for and foster various abilities in movement, sensory, attention, social, vocation, and other areas, as they apply to students, staff, and parents. Support services are placed in a convenient, central location to foster collaboration and social involvement. Persons with disabilities have provided input into any building or renovation plans. Sensory and attention tools are readily available for students who may benefit from them.
Level 3	Physical spaces allow access for students with disabilities, provide a welcoming environment, and encourage active participation in community. Support services are provided a welcoming, spacious environment for both one-on-one and collaboration work. Sensory and attention tools are assigned to specific students in each classroom.
Level 2	All areas of the building and/or campus are physically accessible for students and staff of varying levels of ability. Spaces allow for pull-out services as well as some collaboration among teachers and educational services staff. Some students utilize sensory and/or attention tools in their general education classrooms.
Level 1	Ramps and/or elevators are available for students with physical disabilities, making most of the building and/or campus accessible. When students qualify, they utilize sensory and/or attention tools in some classrooms. A space has been assigned for pull-out services.

CULTURE

School staff functions in a collaborative manner to educate the whole student.

3.3 Individuals within the school readily and wholeheartedly celebrate diversity of abilities in their communities as a natural expression of faith.

May be evidenced within chapel programs, special events, career day plans, award ceremonies, peer partnerships, and other discussion records.

Level 4	The whole school community engages in celebrations of each other's diversity of abilities in the body of Christ, and express this understanding as part of their faith. At least some of these celebrations are launched and run independently of the support services department, whether by parents, students, or staff. Students, parents, and all staff can explain why inclusive community is Biblically based.
Level 3	All students in the school have gone or go through a process of understanding one's own strengths and weaknesses in relationship to community. Celebrations of all abilities are welcomed and encouraged by school leadership, and occur at least annually.
Level 2	Some effort is made to celebrate diversity of abilities within the whole school community. This is led by and/or endorsed explicitly by school leadership, referring to a written policy of educational services that is linked to the school's faith.
Level 1	Educational support staff plans at least one school-wide educational event to foster a more inclusive environment for students with disabilities. A Biblical foundation for inclusive communities is expressed as part of that educational effort.

CULTURE

School staff functions in a collaborative manner to educate the whole student.

3.4 The community engages in processes of recursive self-assessment to educate all students most effectively as the body of Christ.

May be evidenced within performance reviews, parent feedback, site studies, interview questions, and student surveys.

Level 4 The board, administrators, and other school leaders can point to the ways in which they define and evaluate their inclusive education programs. Students, faculty, staff, board, parents, and other members of the community are tapped for input into the success of students with disabilities at the school. Performance reviews for all staff include a component affecting their support of students with disabilities.

Level 3 The school continues to define success in terms of inclusive education for all students, and has identified the next step in becoming a more inclusive community. Inclusive education programs are evaluated as part of the school's broader self-improvement initiatives, with extra focus on intentionally cultivating community among all students.

Level 2 The school assesses inclusive education programs as part of the school's broader measures of performance. These refer to best practices and identifying the progress made to date.

Level 1 The school has plans to assess their inclusive efforts at a defined point in the near future.

VII. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

504 Plan – A legal document prepared for students who have an identified disability which impacts their performance in school, yet the student does not qualify for special education services. The 504 plan is intended to identify reasonable accommodations that must be given to the student in order to prevent direct or indirect discrimination.

Accommodations – Supports and services provided to help a student with an identified disability access the general education curriculum and demonstrate learning. Accommodations do not alter the content standards or benchmarks.

Circle of Friends – A network of student volunteers who make a commitment to surround and support a child with a disability or a child who is lacking in social skills.

Constituent students and families – The community the school is pledged to serve and nurture, whether the student is currently enrolled or a potential enrollment.

Inclusive/Inclusion – Students with disabilities are “owned” or belong in the general education classroom, educated with his/her peers, and viewed as valuable members of the class.

Inclusion Specialist – One job title meant to refer to a professional certified specialist who facilitates the support provided to students who struggle in class.

Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) or Non-Public Services Plan (NPSP) – The document, written by the public school, which describes the special education eligibility and services appropriate for a child with an identified disability.

Modifications – Individualized changes made to the content and benchmark standards in order to set new performance expectations for students.

Ownership – The understanding that the primary ownership of a student with a disability belongs within the general education department. The student identifies the general education teacher as “their teacher,” and the special educator is viewed as the case manager and additional person in the student’s life.

Peer-to-Peer Groups – See Circle of Friends.

Resource room – Traditional name for support services provided to a student who requires academic remediation due to a specific learning disability or other identified need.

Special education services – Federally funded supports which schools provide to meet the individual needs of a student who qualifies with an identified disability.

Support Services/Educational Support Services – A term used in private schools describing the range of services provided to students who struggle including assessment, consultation, tutoring, and direct services, and are typically provided as part of the general school budget.

Tuition Equity – A school makes a commitment to include students with varying abilities without added cost to families who have enrolled a child with a disability.

QUESTIONS?

For questions regarding the accreditation endorsement options and process, please contact your accrediting authority. For questions regarding this document and its availability to accreditors, please contact CLC Network at (616) 245-8388 or info@clcnetwork.org.

CLC Network is a nonprofit organization eager to partner with faith-based schools and churches across North America to support students at all levels of ability. For more information about consulting services, educational evaluations, and professional development, please contact us at (616) 245-8388 or info@clcnetwork.org.

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clcnetwork.org

4340 Burlingame Avenue SW | Wyoming, MI 49509
p: (616) 245.8388 | f: (616) 243.3662 | e: info@clcnetwork.org

Creating Inclusive Communities for Persons at All Levels of Ability