

Analysing the whole policy framework to identify barriers towards inclusion

USA – TASH: School Wide Integrated Framework for Transformation (SWIFT) Policy Alignment

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

SWIFT provides a comprehensive package of tools to support schools in analysing policies that are relevant to transform them towards Inclusive Education. The process looks at state statutes, funding principles, professional development, student discipline, eligibility for special education services, and much more. The goal is to improve the academic and behavioural outcomes of all children, including students living in poverty, English-language learners, and students with disabilities – especially those with significant disabilities and support needs.

QUOTE

“The SWIFT Policy Alignment approach improves sustainability beyond a time-limited initiative and improves the academic and behavioural outcomes of ALL children.”

—Ms. Jenny Stonemeier, TASH (**TASH** is an international [advocacy](#) association of [people with disabilities](#))

FACTS & FIGURES

- The project is being conducted in five U.S. states, involving 16 school districts and 64 schools.
- 25,644 students have benefited from the programme during its first three years.

PROBLEMS TARGETED

Dozens of education reform initiatives have been implemented in the United States. However, education reform has shown minimal impact on outcomes for students with disabilities, especially students with the most significant support needs, students living in poverty, and English-language learners. In the long-term, these low outcomes extend far beyond the classroom. In fact, individuals with disabilities experience some of the highest rates of adult poverty.

SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

The SWIFT policy team developed a protocol that calls for a review of publicly available policy documents, including state statutes, regulations, and guidance describing funding, professional development, student discipline, eligibility/placement for special education services,

assessment/accountability, and stakeholder (family and community) engagement. From this review, preliminary facilitators and barriers to Inclusive Education are identified and recommendations are established. Stakeholder interviews are conducted with teachers and school district administrators as well as with parents and families including parents of students with disabilities. The goal of this analysis is to build capacity within education systems to critically examine the impact policies affecting educational outcomes.

OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY

This project is intended to be easily replicable, scalable, and adaptable for any organization or country to implement. The cost of implementation is accrued mainly through human resources. In many instances, it takes a significant amount of time to locate and cross-reference publically available policy documents, something that would be especially true in developing countries. However, the benefits of highlighting the need for publically available documents to align with inclusive practices is a vital element of the project. As a part of the project's five-year programme agreement, during 2015–2016 states are expected to develop a sustainable and scalable plan that will include their current and developing efforts towards policy alignment. This will provide further data regarding the implementation progress, technical assistance needs, and on-going evaluation of the project.

Photo: Yes

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