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Modified Consent Decree
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Re: LAUSD Site Visit Report

Dear Drs. Rostetter, Hernandez, and Mr. Alleman

Thank you for the opportunity to present this report to the Office of the Independent Monitor. Dr. David Rostetter asked that we conduct a review of records and make site visits to four co-located sites and two sites who received students with disabilities (for comparative purposes) in relation to Outcome #7 of the Consent Decree. The purpose of this report is to inform the parties of our review of *Outcome #7: Part 1: Placement of Students at Special Education Centers and Part 2: Students at co-located sites will participate 12% of instructional day with non-disabled peers*. We also inform the parties of the progress with integration in the buildings and discuss needs to further the advancement of integration.

Briefly, it is notable that all sites visited demonstrate an awareness of the need for inclusive educational practice and speak fluently about the challenges of physical and ideological inclusion of students with disabilities. In our site visits we observed burgeoning positive practices and see the potential of exemplary inclusive practices given - and this is essential - support from the LAUSD in the form of financial and ideological supports for building leaders.

It is obvious from our review that the LAUSD is moving in the right direction in providing integrated opportunities and the possibility of realizing best practices in inclusive education is present. The challenge and opportunity facing the LAUSD related to *Outcome #7 Part 1: Placement of Students at Special Education Centers* is to continue to support inclusive practices after the Consent Decree monitoring is complete.

We reviewed a variety of documents provided by the LAUSD, including but not limited to the Modified Consent Decree, Outcome 7.2 LRE Analysis (10-13-14), and Fall Integration Schedules for the co-located sites.

We met with the Monitor, Chief Analyst, and Research Director on October 30, 2014. We conducted site visits on October 30 and 31, 2014.

What follows are headings for site reports, a site visit summary, site recommendations for co-located sites, and a summary for outcome #7 Part 1-2.

Site Reports

Six sites were visited on October 30 and October 31, 2014; the four co-located sites and two additional sites who received students with disabilities. The four co-located sites are Grand View Boulevard Elementary School, Van Ness Avenue Elementary School, Avalon Gardens Elementary School, Miller Career and Transition Center. Sites visited that are not co-located were Thomas Alva Edison Middle School and Irving STEAM Magnet School.

Each site visit was oriented around the opportunity to tour the buildings and facilities and interview administrative and teaching staff. Visits ranged in length from 45 - 60 minutes.

Three open-ended queries were posted to LAUSD staff. School staff interviewed included principals, assistant principals, integration specialists, and classroom teachers.

1. Tell us about integration in this building.
2. What highlights or positives have you seen here related to integration?
3. What supports would help improve integration in this building?

Each site report includes a brief introduction to the site, followed by three headings: status of integration, highlights of integration efforts, and additional supports needed. These sections reflect what interviewees reported.

List of Sites: Co-located Sites

Grand View Boulevard Elementary School, 3951 Grand View Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90066

Avalon Gardens Elementary School, 13940 South San Pedro Street, Los Angeles, CA 90061

Van Ness Avenue Elementary School, 501 North Van Ness Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90004

Miller Career and Transition Center, 8218 Vanalden Ave, Reseda, California 91335

List of Sites: Non Co-located Sites

Thomas Alva Edison Middle School, 6500 Hooper Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90001

Irving STEAM Magnet School, 3010 Estara Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90065

Pio Pico Middle School, 1512 South Arlington Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90019

Co-located Sites

Grand View Boulevard Elementary School

A site visit was conducted on October 30, 2014 by the Office of the Independent Monitor. The Principal and Assistant Principal were interviewed. There are approximately 700 students at the site, including 101 students with disabilities. For those 61 students, there are 6 special education teachers. Of those students with disabilities, 47 originated at McBride in four classrooms. The four classrooms include two for students with intellectual disabilities (one lower elementary, one upper elementary) and two for students with autism (one lower elementary, one upper elementary)

The school has a Spanish immersion program and is intentionally focused on celebrating diversity. The Principal commented that adding students with disabilities was “only an extension of that.” He noted that during the previous school year when staff were presented with the opportunity of including students from the McBride school, they were open but apprehensive about integration. He commented that when integration with McBride was presented to him, he welcomed it: “not knowing the kids was weird! It meant not knowing our neighbors.” Now that the physical sites of McBride (Elementary) and Grandview are shared, Principal moves between sites as a matter of course.

Reported Status of Integration

- The fence separating McBride and Grandview has been removed.
- Both facilities are being used for instruction, and five first grade classrooms were moved from the Grandview facility to the McBride facility for the 2014-2015 school year.
- *Shane’s Inspiration* was mentioned related to an accessible playground space.
- The Principal noted that integrating students with disabilities “is something that you don’t do ad hoc. You need a framework.”
- The Principal noted that two things that make integration efforts successful are
 1. a vision
 2. asking for help (this includes grant writing)
- The Principal noted that teachers’ initial panic - based on concerns about how to work with students with moderate to severe disabilities - were easy to address through the vision of disability as a form of diversity.

- Last year, the biggest barrier was the need for common spaces for all students. With the removal of the fence and moving general education first grade classrooms to McBride, this is no longer the case.
- Students with and without disability labels encounter each other routinely in the hallways and playground.
- There is a shared use recreational space on the McBride campus equipped with bolsters, mats, sand/water/ball tables, and developmentally appropriate toys for elementary age students. This space is available for both campuses to use.
- The gardening program includes outside boxes at various heights which allows access to gardening by young children and those who use wheelchairs for mobility in addition to older children and students who walk.

Reported Highlights of Integration Efforts

- Consolidation of the two facilities occurred and created common spaces for all students.
- Reassignment of the all of the first grades to the former McBride building so both facilities are being used for general education and special education classrooms
- The gardening and cooking program compliments the integration agenda, encouraging the varied participation of all learners.
- In addition to the arts curriculum, several students are also integrated into content areas such as science and circle time.

Reported Additional Supports Needed

- More time to allow the integration to naturally take place; the Principal would like a year to document the growth of more meaningful integration.
- Grants

Avalon Gardens Elementary School

A site visit was conducted on October 31, 2014 by the Office of the Independent Monitor. The Principal and Assistant Principal were interviewed.

Avalon Gardens is a kindergarten through sixth grade building with approximately 218 students, including 64 students with disabilities. Avalon Gardens merged with the special education center, Banneker, to become a co-located school. The Principal reported that integration is happening for recess for all K-2 students, but not consistently in the other grades. The Principal also noted that “integration activities need to be realistic,” and that training for the teachers needs to continue, including MOVE Training, to encourage more integration opportunities. Several classrooms have been moved to different areas of the campus to encourage more natural integration opportunities. The biggest obstacle for this initiative has been the physical barriers on

the campus that has made it difficult to care for the needs of the students with severe disabilities, but the progress with removing these structural barriers has been ongoing.

Reported Status of Integration

- There has been an ongoing problem with assigning the right music teacher to the integrated classes. At the beginning of the school year, music was offered three days a week, but the decision was made to scale back to one day per week until the right teacher was placed. It was noted that there was an adequate supply of musical instruments, but no one to correctly instruct how to use them.
- There is an integrated dance program, and it is reportedly going well.
- Integrated art has not been successful at this point, so currently there are no integrated art opportunities at this time.
- The Principal would like to integrate theatre class, but she needs support from the district in finding a teacher who wants to take on this challenge.
- Integrated physical education is taking place and is very successful.
- Staff meetings are conducted inclusively with everyone together, and then general education and special education staff break off into separate groups for targeted planning.
- Creating common behavioral expectations for students with disabilities remains a challenge. The Principal stated that “If students with disabilities are doing something wrong, they need to be disciplined,” but this is not consistently occurring in all classrooms.
- There are three students who are integrated for language arts with the support of a one-to-one aid.

Reported Highlights of Integration Efforts

- Parents of students with disabilities are very excited to be in a general education setting, and their emotional response to being a part of a bigger community has been very rewarding for the principal.
- Many bathrooms have been redesigned and relocated so they are more accessible.
- The sensory room is a well-equipped resource that the teachers and students enjoy.
- The integrated physical education classes are engaging and interactive for all of the involved students and showcase the integration efforts.
- During integrated dance class, a buddy system is used, pairing a student with a disability with a typically developing student to encourage full participation in reaching district goals for dance.
- General educators are now attending the IEP meetings for the integrated students in their classes.

Reported Additional Supports Needed

- Allowing for common planning time for teachers involved in integration classes.
- The development of a rubric to calibrate the socialization of the students who entered from area centers.
- District support in finding and placing “the right teachers” to teach the integrated music, art, and theatre classes.
- Continual training in differentiation, positive behavior management, and inclusion best practices.

Van Ness Avenue Elementary School

A site visit was conducted on October 31, 2014 by the Office of the Independent Monitor. The Principal was interviewed. Van Ness is co-located with Blend, and there are approximately 260 students, including 38 students with disabilities. Integration is taking place in adapted PE, braille, gardening, music and dance, and dance and music classes throughout the day in addition to integration in circle time and with reading buddies. The Principal has been very pleased with her building’s integration efforts, and is always looking ahead for opportunities for “real integration” to take place with all of the students.

Reported Status of Integration

- The school is experiencing more “natural integration,” which includes at lunch and recess with integrated play stations that are very popular with the students.
- All students now take field trips, which was not happening at Blend.
- All programming is integrated.
- Beginning in third grade, all students are learning Braille.
- A library aid was recently hired to begin integrating library time.
- By next year, all of the classrooms will be housed at Van Ness.
- The typically developing students are becoming better versed in how to support their peers with disabilities, not “over help” them as sighted aids.
- Challenges still remain in faculty collaboration around planning for integration. Faculty meetings are held jointly, but the Common Core curriculum teachers and alternate curriculum teachers still meet separately for professional development and planning.

Reported Highlights of Integration Efforts

- The students are truly becoming friends through natural integration opportunities.
- School culture is becoming one that is recognizing what all students are able to do, not what they can’t do in a community-focused environment.
- There is some academic integration occurring, and this is on an increase.

Reported Additional Supports Needed

- Support for sustainability of the integration efforts, including a consistent administrative presence.
- Trust from the district that requests from the principal are merited and should be supported and not micromanaged.
- Implementation of integrated dance and music two times per week instead of just once per week.
- Full-time assistant principal guaranteed every year.

Miller Career and Transition Center

A site visit was conducted on October 31, 2014 the Office of the Independent Monitor. The Principal was interviewed. Miller Career and Transition Center (CTC) is co-located with Cleveland High School. The Principal noted that there is little integration between the two schools. In the previous school year, students from Miller went to Cleveland High School for Physical Education, and it did not work well. This year 60 students from Cleveland come to Miller, and that integration will continue after the decree. Students attend a class in job readiness, which has been very successful and something the Cleveland administrators value highly. This is due in part to an increase in the number of students on the autism spectrum at Cleveland who benefit from such instruction.

Reported Status of Integration

- At this point, there is a small group of approximately 30 students who are under age 18 attending Miller CTC. These students are the last to be under 18 year olds; once they turn 18, only students 18-22 years old will be enrolled. The total enrollment is 234 students, of those approximately 90 have the label autism.
- The primary issue for the Principal is to consider what the curriculum should be for young adults with disabilities in the late transition years.
- The integration that happens for students at Miller Center is predominantly with the local community.

Reported Highlights of Integration Efforts

- The Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES) lab is one of 16 in the district - it is a vocational assessment lab that includes 264 jobs in 5 categories, and students leave the lab with an assessment of their strengths.

- The many programs students can work in is a highlight. Those include: landscaping, a bakery, auto detailing, culinary arts, graphic arts, an EBay class, and fundamentals of construction (includes framing, wallboard, and painting).
- Students in these programs do not earn diplomas. When parents consider Miller CTC, they have to consider a diploma program versus work readiness; Miller CTC provides work readiness.
- The curriculum for 18-22 year olds should be social skills, independent living. The small group of 17 year olds.
- The Principal developed the Workplace Habits for Success, which guides the development of social and vocational skills. The resource text is reproduced below:

Workplace Habits for Success

Work is not what you see on television; work is not like school; work is not like home; work is like...well, WORK.

Have a positive attitude - Nothing is more important - You are in charge of your attitude! (friendly, kind, courteous and customer oriented).

Dress appropriately and be clean (clean clothes, hair combed, clean nails, deodorant, bath or shower, shave).

Follow all equipment and workplace safety guidelines.

Report to your assigned place of work on time and ready to work.

Take the initiative, stay focused, stay busy and be responsible for your work.

Advocate for yourself. If you don't know or are unsure, ASK!

Follow the lead and instructions given to you by your supervisor.

Take constructive criticism in a professional manner.

Interact productively with your co-workers in a positive manner. You're a team player!

Demonstrate respect to your co-workers and supervisors.

Work is work and not social time. Break time is for social time.

Remember, you're at work and not on a date, so act appropriately.

Focus on Greatness - Believe in yourself - You can do it!

Reported Additional Supports Needed

- Miller Career and Transition Center is a model integration site for 18-22 year old students engaging in local communities and the existing model should be supported and encouraged.
- One support that would benefit students in this program would be a fundamental shift in the way diplomas for students with learning disabilities are awarded. The Principal noted that "I feel for the learning disabled kids - they leave with no work experience and no diploma."

- The Principal noted that there is a need for better education for students related to getting Social Security and/or Medicaid. Many students qualify for one or both and their parents rely on part or all of the funds for housing and food. The young adults in this program need education about how to navigate working for income without jeopardizing needed support.

Non Co-located Sites

Thomas Alva Edison Middle School

A site visit was conducted on October 31, 2014 by the Office of the Independent Monitor. The Principal and Assistant Principal were interviewed.

Reported Status of Integration

- The school has 4 special education classrooms: 2 for students with intellectual disabilities (ID), for students who are using the alternate curriculum and assessment. The Principal reported that the integration of students with disabilities includes two phases of support: the physical changes to the site, such as thresholds and door widening, and the ideological integration.
- The physical integration has not been complete: the front entrance is quite challenging. The front ramp is too steep, and there is no place in front of the school with grading that would allow someone using a wheelchair to access the school.
- The transition of two programs from Banneker has been challenging. The students came without their teachers from the old site – The Integration Specialist was in charge and said no to the teachers coming with the students.
- The Special education assistants noticed a different “vibe” at Edison compared to the old site, but they are finding their groove.

Reported Highlights of Integration Efforts

- The Integration Specialist checks on teachers three times each week. There has been great training from LAUSD, and the result has been excitement about kids coming to Edison.
- Circle of Friends is running, through the Family Center, and both general and special education teachers are involved.
- Co-teaching is in early stages. With all students who have the alternative curriculum, the special education teacher goes to class with the student. In art, co-teaching is a goal. A physical education teacher was sent to two sites to see co-teaching.

Reported Additional Supports Needed

- Changes to the front of the school - the entrance is not accessible.
- The restroom in the nurse's offices needs modifications.
- If more funding were available, teachers would be able to have more training. With more funds, maybe 1070 funds, or 3027 general budget funds, The Principal would send teachers for inservices. A substitute teacher for the day costs \$250 to the building.

Irving STEAM Magnet School

A site visit was conducted on October 31, 2014 by the Office of the Independent Monitor. The Principal, Integration Specialist, Teacher of the Visually Impaired were interviewed. We also toured the interior of the school site and satellite classrooms for the program for students with visual impairments. We did not examine the stairs at the back of the school.

This school runs on a two day block schedule, with periods 1-4 one day, periods 5-8 the next day. There are approximately 650 students in the school.

Reported Status of Integration Process

- The site has long served students with visual impairments in a separate program, which we visited. The focus of this visit was the two classrooms for students with multiple disabilities and visual impairments - "MDV" classrooms.
- In the previous school year, 15 students, 8 in one class and 7 in a second, came to Irving. One student has a catheter, one has a G tube, and one uses a G tube as needed. There are 2 health care aides on campus.
- Last year, when students were at Van Ness, students were integrated into dance, music, field trips, and the library. Now, at Irving, students are integrated into different electives - drama, dance, and leadership.
- When students go to electives a special education teacher joins them. For the dance elective, students go in a group. For next semester (Spring 2015), other electives are being looked at: choir, music, and a film class.
- The students came in with their teachers and 5 teacher assistants for the students. One or two more teacher assistants were hired this year - there were 13 in total last year, and 2 moved up this year with students who aged into high school.
- Lunch integration takes place through a Circle of Friends program. It is a once per week program with general education students who choose the program. There is a Very Special Arts program that is run through the music center - it is a county wide program.
- There is some co-teaching between special education teachers, no co-teaching that includes a general education teacher.

Reported Highlights of Integration Efforts

- The Integration Specialist has been onsite since January as an integration teacher. She came with the students from Van Ness and Irving.
- There is some casual recognition of students with disabilities. For example, in the hallways students in general education greet students from the MDV classroom by name.
- The Integration Specialist shared an anecdotal report of a student in general education changing her perspective about students with disabilities because of being in the dance class with students with disabilities.
- In the dance class, students with disabilities took part in a performance with students in general education.

Reported Additional Supports Needed

- Middle School culture needs to change - for everyone, not only students with disabilities. Here, people are very kind to students with disabilities. But we need more community, we want more integration, and more unstructured ways for students to interact and get to know other students who are not like them.
- Funds: Teachers need co-planning time, and substitute teacher time would allow for that. Right now, the special education teachers have one block of “push in” to general education classes, and a second block for planning. The remaining blocks are for instruction in a self-contained class that implements the Alternate Curriculum. If funds for substitutes were made available, it could be used to give the special education teachers a block to co-plan with general education teachers.

Pio Pico Middle School

A site visit was conducted on October 31, 2014 by the Office of the Independent Monitor. The Integration Teacher, and Resource Teacher were interviewed. Five classes of students moved from Salvin Park Elementary School: Two classes of students with multiple disabilities (MD), two classes of students with autism (alternate assessment), and one class of students with intellectual disabilities. One classroom for students with disabilities was already present on campus; The Resource Teacher provides resource support to those five students.

To prepare for the move, the Integration Teacher prepared the classrooms at Pio Pico and addressed questions from Pio Pico staff.

Reported Status of Integration Process

- The Integration Teacher noted that integration went well.

- Prior to the five classrooms moving to Pio Pico, integration was introduced through ability awareness training for staff and site visits for students from Salvin Elementary School.
- The Division of Special Education (DSE) has an Outcome 7 Team. The team for Pio Pico includes Integration Teachers, Resource Teachers, and Program Specialists.
- Collaborations with Circle of Friends and UC Play are ongoing
- Students with and without disability labels are in physical proximity during nutrition period, lunch, and assemblies.
- Period 2 Music - students from two MD classes are integrated.
- Period 4 Music - students from MRS class are included, but not each day.
- Period 5 Music or Leadership - two students with disabilities are included in each class.
- Structured integration is supported during lunch once each week through the Circle of Friends program. Students in general education in leadership may elect to join Circle of Friends.
- Integration is occurring in the elective programs (music, leadership, and nutrition).
- Integration is planned for other electives, including Spanish, yearbook, and art. The goal is to rotate students through electives.
- The Integration Teacher noted that the special education teacher decides when a student with a disability is ready to be included in an elective, for either a half or full period, and then discusses all options with the general education teacher.
- Faculty meetings with the general education and special education faculty meeting together will begin on November 10th. It has not been happening yet because the early release day varies for the general education and special education teachers. One group has early release on Monday, one group has early release on Tuesday.
- All students were invited to participate in the Halloween activities (including an after-school dance), but none of the integrated students took part in the extracurricular activities.
- The Very Special Arts Festival was held on October 17, 2014, and two students with disabilities participated in two songs.

Reported Highlights of Integration Efforts

- Two students with disabilities from Pio Pico took part in The Very Special Arts Festival together and the performance was well-attended by parents and the community.
- An alternate assessment newsletter was published and distributed to parents.
- Circle of Friends has been established
- Integration in music class is natural and exemplifies best practice.

Reported Additional Supports Needed

- The Integration Teacher noted because partnerships are established and ongoing with two organizations - Shane's Inspiration and Circle of Friends, those partnerships are the current focus for integration efforts
- Add partnership with UC Play
- Schedule additional small group ability awareness trainings for general education teachers and students.
- Schedule faculty meetings so that all faculty can meet together.

Site Visits Summary

Co-located sites are making strides in both physical and ideological integration of students with disabilities. Sites with less support - those that had classes of students imposed on them - are at various stages of physical integration and seem currently underprepared for ideological integration that extends beyond physical proximity.

We saw a range of practices that were, in places, encouraging, and, in places, discouraging. The overall effect was a sense that while much remains to be done, the move toward more inclusive practices is vitally important and should be sustained and fostered. The praxis of inclusion includes hard work on a daily and sometimes hourly basis, and teachers and administrators need consistent, substantive support.

Practically speaking, we strongly suggest that all co-located sites be supported and encouraged to model for others schools what has been effective related to inclusion. We support the release of funds for training and site visits for teachers, teacher assistants, and administrators.

Site Recommendations: Co-Located Sites

Grand View Boulevard Elementary School

- Grand View Boulevard Elementary School is an exemplary site in that building leadership ideologically and practically is working toward inclusive practices. We recommend that any requested support to facilitate continuing inclusion efforts be provided. We strongly encourage that building leadership be trusted to implement sound practice, as the leadership is oriented toward full ideological and physical inclusion.

Avalon Gardens Elementary School

- Some bathroom facilities remain unacceptable and renovation needs to be ongoing to provide a minimum standard of access to both privacy and hygiene.

- It is recommended that ongoing training for all staff is implemented around the philosophy and practice of inclusion. In addition, visiting an exemplary site would be beneficial.

Van Ness Avenue Elementary School

- Van Ness Avenue Elementary School is an exemplary site in that building leadership ideologically and practically is working toward inclusive practices. We recommend that any requested support to facilitate continuing inclusion efforts be provided. We strongly encourage that building leadership be trusted to implement sound practice, as the leadership is oriented toward full ideological and physical inclusion.
- There remain physical barriers to inclusion at Van Ness that need to be remedied. Efforts to integrate the Blend facility should be an ongoing priority.

Miller Career and Transition Center

- Miller Career and Transition Center is a model integration site for 18-22 year old students engaging in local communities and the existing model should be supported and encouraged.
- There is a need for better education for students related to getting Social Security and/or Medicaid. Many students qualify for one or both and their parents rely on part or all of the funds for housing and food. The young adults in this program need education about how to navigate working for income without jeopardizing needed support.

Recommendations for the Central Office

There are positive integration practices from the co-located sites. Therefore, developing a district-wide framework to help all schools work toward effective integration is imperative. To support such a framework, the LAUSD must gather, monitor, and use data about successful integration practices to inform this framework.

This framework should include effective integration practices already present in LAUSD. Effective integration practices observed include:

- Building and sustaining a building culture that embraces students with disabilities.
 - Have all teachers' names on classroom doors
 - Include all children in school publications and communications
 - Create and use common gathering spaces for all children
 - Schedule building-wide meetings so that all faculty can attend
- Consolidation of the facilities, creating common spaces for all students

- Students with disabilities are being integrated into content area instruction, not only special area activities such as arts programming
- Families are being encouraged to attend school wide events and parent trainings
- Physical accessibility is being monitored and improved (such as accessible bathrooms)
- Reverse integration – bringing general education students into settings with students with disabilities (for example, more students accessing a sensory room)
- Buddy systems – pairing a student with a disability with a typically developing student
- Supporting the attendance of general educators at IEP meetings by providing release and record review time

In addition to replicating the positive integration practices already in place, we recommend that the LAUSD:

- Review the SWIFT Schools website at <http://www.swiftschools.org/> for resources to successful integration and inclusion of all students.
- Provide release time for staff from all district sites need release time to visit model schools.
- Provide release time for collaboration between staff from co-located sites and non co-located sites.
- Provide training on co-teaching.
- Provide ongoing training and support needs for the faculty in arts programs.

Summary - Outcome # 7 Part 1

Schools are engaged in the work of integrating students and the praxis is complex and rife with opportunity. There is much work underway, and this is heartening. Physical inclusion is a starting point. Inclusion is not just being in, however.

Grand View Boulevard Elementary School and Van Ness Avenue Elementary School are exemplary sites and as such should be supported and used as models of integration and should be challenged to move towards full inclusion.

Summary - Outcome # 7 Part 2

It is evident from our site visits that three co-located sites meet or exceed the requirement that *students at co-located sites will participate 12% of instructional day with non-disabled peers.*

Miller Career and Transition Center does not meet this standard if non disabled peers are considered peer students in K-12 settings, but exceeds 12% of non disabled peers are considered young adults and adults in the community at worksites. We believe that considering non disabled

peers to be the young adults and adults in the community at worksites is acceptable practice and should be supported.

Respectfully submitted,

Katrina Arndt, Ph.D.

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