

Together We're Better – Inclusive Education Campaign



Students and teachers in Maryland are invited to participate in the 2024–2025 "Together We're Better" Inclusive Education Campaign, a collaborative initiative of The Arc Maryland, Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Department of Disabilities, and Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council.

As part of the "Together We're Better" campaign, The Arc Maryland hosts interactive school assemblies across the state centered around this year's National Inclusive Schools Week theme "Draw Me in!" Presentations are offered year-round at local schools.

These presentations are designed to "demystify" disability by engaging in honest and open dialogue, allowing students to ask questions about people's differences. Students participate in different activities facilitated by the presenters that embrace the diversity and inclusion of everyone. As a result, students develop critical social emotional learning (SEL) skills needed for creating a foundation for equity and inclusion in their learning communities.

Presentations are 20–45 minutes long, based on school interests, needs, and student age group. Activities and discussion topics are designed for students in Pre-K through High School.



To schedule a presentation at your school, contact **Natalie Dohner**, Director of Education Initiatives and Partnerships. Learn more about **Together We're Better**: <http://www.thearcmd.org/programs/twb/>

What is inclusive education?

Inclusive education means that all students are full and accepted members of their school community, where their educational setting is the same as their non-disabled peers, whenever appropriate.

For over 30 years, the philosophy and practice of inclusive schools have grown from minimal awareness to a recognized component of schools around the globe that demands dual standards of excellence and equity for all students. Yet there is still confusion and widely varying definitions of "inclusion." The lack of a common understanding of this important practice actually impedes further progress for students, their families, and the educators who teach them. (Inclusive Schools Network, 2019)

What is inclusion, and what does inclusion look like in classrooms?

Simply stated, inclusion is about ALL students belonging! Decisions are made on the basis of student needs and not on labels or places. (Inclusive Schools Network, 2019)

Whether your school is already embracing a culture of inclusion, or just getting started, the "Together We're Better" program will make a positive impact on your staff and students.

