



# From Framework to Fieldwide Practice: A Policy Implementation Plan for Scaling Special Education Interventions in Underserved U.S. Schools

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This white paper proposes a district-adoptable endeavor titled *Developing and Disseminating Scalable Special Education Intervention Frameworks to Improve Academic, Behavioral, and Inclusion Outcomes for Students with Disabilities in Underserved U.S. Schools*. This policy-implementation framework, developed by Peter Jr. Legaspi, serves as a companion guide to translate the proposed endeavor into a practical national systems blueprint for scaling special education interventions in underserved U.S. schools.

## Executive Summary

This policy-implementation framework presents a national systems blueprint for scaling special education interventions in underserved U.S. schools. It is not a description of routine classroom service. Rather, it proposes a structured, replicable, and scalable implementation model for improving academic, behavioral, and inclusion outcomes for students with disabilities through coordinated intervention design, professional development, fidelity monitoring, data-based decision-making, and district-level adoption.

The central policy challenge is clear: students with disabilities are entitled to meaningful access to public education, appropriate individualized supports, participation in the least restrictive environment, and measurable progress toward educational goals.<sup>1</sup> Yet the delivery of special education services remains uneven across schools, districts, and states. Students with disabilities continue to experience inconsistent access to inclusive instruction, variable intervention quality, discipline disparities, and uneven implementation of evidence-informed academic and behavioral supports.<sup>2</sup>

The need for a scalable framework is national in size and consequence. Federal data show that millions of children and youth receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, representing a significant portion of the public school population.<sup>3</sup> The public education system itself includes tens of thousands of schools and districts, making isolated school-level improvement insufficient to address the scale of the challenge.<sup>4</sup> In addition, special education staffing shortages have intensified implementation pressures, especially in high-need schools where students may require intensive academic, behavioral, and social-emotional support.<sup>5</sup>

This framework responds to those challenges through a multi-layered implementation model. At the foundation is a universal, inclusive core built around Universal Design for Learning, grade-level access, and predictable classroom routines. Above that foundation are targeted academic interventions in



reading, mathematics, writing, and peer-assisted practice; targeted behavioral supports grounded in positive behavioral interventions and class-wide supports; and intensive individualized supports using data-based individualization, functional behavioral assessment, behavior intervention planning, and IEP-linked adaptation.<sup>6</sup> These service layers are supported by progress review, family, and IEP-team decision-making, implementation infrastructure, and dissemination infrastructure.<sup>7</sup>

The model is designed for use by schools, districts, state education agencies, technical assistance providers, and education policy stakeholders seeking to strengthen special education delivery at scale. Its purpose is to convert evidence-informed practices into practical tools, training sequences, coaching systems, fidelity measures, and district-facing materials that can be adopted across multiple educational settings.

## **I. National Policy Problem**

The starting point for this framework is the legal and educational architecture of special education. Federal law requires public agencies to provide a free appropriate public education to eligible children with disabilities and to educate students with disabilities alongside nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate.<sup>8</sup> These requirements are not merely procedural. They reflect a national commitment to educational access, inclusion, individualized support, and measurable student progress.

Despite this legal structure, implementation remains uneven. Inclusive placement varies by disability category, district capacity, instructional resources, staffing availability, and school-level support systems.<sup>9</sup> Some students receive consistent grade-level access and well-coordinated supports, while others experience fragmented interventions, inconsistent progress monitoring, limited behavioral support, or unnecessary removal from general education settings.

The policy problem is therefore not simply whether special education services exist. The deeper challenge is whether schools have the infrastructure to deliver those services consistently, equitably, and effectively. A student's access to high-quality intervention should not depend primarily on the individual capacity of one teacher, one school, or one district. A scalable model is needed to organize, teach, monitor, evaluate, and share effective practices across systems.

A national framework must also address staffing realities. When schools struggle to hire and retain special education personnel, the burden on existing staff increases.<sup>10</sup> In that context, districts need practical systems that help educators use evidence-based routines efficiently, coordinate intervention decisions, communicate with families, and monitor whether students are responding to support. Strengthening implementation infrastructure is therefore both a workforce support strategy and a student-outcomes strategy.

## **II. Purpose of the Framework**

The purpose of this framework is to provide a field-ready model for scaling special education interventions in underserved U.S. schools. It is designed to support three goals.



**First**, the framework seeks to improve student outcomes by aligning universal instruction, targeted academic intervention, targeted behavioral support, and intensive individualized support into a single coherent system. **Second**, it seeks to strengthen educator capacity by providing training modules, coaching routines, templates, decision rules, and practical tools that reduce the burden of creating intervention systems from scratch. **Third**, it seeks to support district-level and state-level dissemination by converting school-based practice into scalable implementation materials.

The framework is organized around the principle that evidence-based practices do not scale automatically. Even strong interventions can fail when schools lack training, coaching, fidelity monitoring, protected planning time, family communication tools, or usable data systems. For that reason, implementation infrastructure is treated as part of the framework itself, not as an optional supplement.

### III. Core Model Architecture

The proposed model is best understood as a multi-tiered inclusive implementation architecture. It begins with access to strong universal instruction and moves toward greater intensity based on student need.

#### A. Universal Inclusive Core

The universal inclusive core includes Universal Design for Learning, grade-level instructional access, supplementary aids and services, and predictable classroom routines.<sup>11</sup> This layer is intended for all students, including students with disabilities. Its purpose is to reduce unnecessary barriers in the learning environment before students require more intensive intervention.

Universal supports may include multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression; clear classroom expectations; structured routines; accessible instructional materials; visual supports; explicit modeling; and opportunities for peer interaction. A strong universal core helps prevent the overuse of pull-out remediation by ensuring that students with disabilities remain connected to grade-level content whenever appropriate.

#### B. Targeted Academic Intervention

The academic intervention layer includes structured supports in reading, mathematics, and writing, critical exploration in science and technology, and peer-assisted practice. Federal practice guides and intervention research support the use of explicit instruction, systematic skill development, progress monitoring, and strategic grouping for students who struggle academically.<sup>12</sup>

Reading interventions should include foundational skills, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and increasingly intensive support for older students with persistent reading difficulties. Mathematics interventions should include explicit instruction, visual representations, problem-solving strategies, fluency-building, and progress monitoring. Writing interventions should include strategy instruction, self-regulation, planning, drafting, revising, and structured feedback. Science and technology include scientific exploration through school-based experiments and testing, and the use of technology through a variety of learning resources and applications with AI support, especially for students with special educational needs.<sup>13</sup>



Peer-assisted learning can extend instructional time and promote inclusive participation. When carefully structured, peer-assisted routines allow students to practice academic skills while building communication, cooperation, and classroom engagement.<sup>14</sup>

### **C. Targeted Behavioral Support**

The behavioral support layer includes Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, class wide routines, reinforcement systems, and targeted interventions such as Check-In/Check-Out.<sup>15</sup> This layer is designed for students who need more than universal classroom expectations but do not yet require a fully individualized behavior intervention plan.

Targeted behavioral supports should be simple, teachable, and data-informed. Schools should define entry criteria, daily feedback systems, adult roles, reinforcement routines, family communication procedures, fade-out decisions, and strong support from the school community. Properly implemented, targeted behavioral support can reduce exclusionary responses, improve student engagement, and preserve instructional time.

### **D. Intensive Individualized Support**

The intensive layer is designed for students who do not respond adequately to universal and targeted supports. It includes Data-Based Individualization, functional behavioral assessment, behavior intervention planning, individualized academic adaptation, and alignment with IEP goals.<sup>16</sup>

Data-Based Individualization provides a repeatable process for intensifying intervention based on student response. It requires validated interventions, frequent progress monitoring, analysis of student data, and systematic adaptation of dosage, method, grouping, or instructional focus.<sup>17</sup>

For behavioral needs, functional behavioral assessment helps identify the purpose or function of interfering behavior. This information supports the development of positive, proactive, and individualized behavior intervention plans.<sup>18</sup> Intensive support should not be treated as a separate track away from inclusion. Rather, it should be used to make meaningful participation more feasible.

### **E. Progress Review and Family/IEP-Team Decisions**

Progress review is the decision-making center of the framework. Student data should be reviewed regularly by school teams and, where appropriate, by families and IEP teams.<sup>19</sup> Progress review should address whether the student is responding to the current support, whether the intervention is being delivered with fidelity, and whether adaptation is needed.

Family communication must be accessible, timely, and understandable. Families should receive clear summaries of student progress, current supports, next steps, and opportunities to participate in decision-making. This strengthens trust and ensures that intervention decisions are not made in isolation.

### **F. Implementation Infrastructure**



Implementation infrastructure includes training, coaching, fidelity checks, leadership teams, protected planning time, data dashboards, and continuous improvement cycles. <sup>20</sup> Without this infrastructure, schools may adopt intervention materials without implementing them consistently.

Training should be role specific. General educators need tools for inclusive instruction and classroom routines. Special educators need intervention intensification tools. Administrators need fidelity and scheduling systems. Coaches need observation and feedback protocols. Families need accessible progress communication.

### **G. Dissemination Infrastructure**

Dissemination infrastructure includes toolkits, webinars, district partnerships, policy briefs, open-access repositories, professional learning communities, and regional technical assistance networks. <sup>21</sup> This component allows the framework to extend beyond one school site.

Dissemination should include both products and processes. Products include templates, guides, rubrics, forms, training slides, dashboards, and implementation manuals. Processes include coaching cohorts, district learning networks, feedback loops, annual evaluation, and revision cycles.

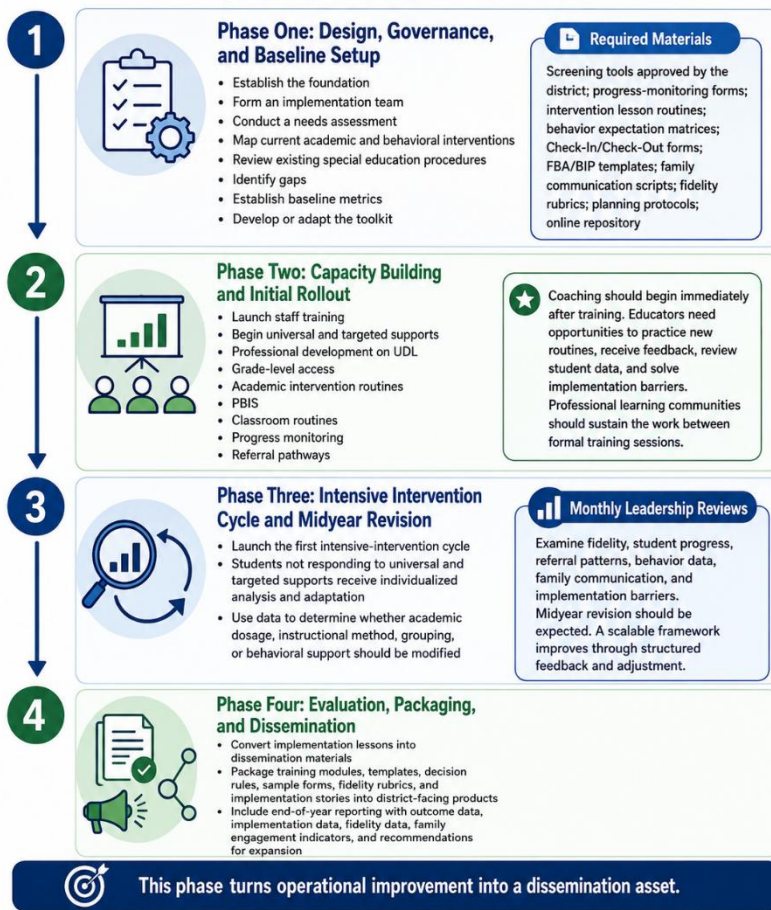
## **IV. Implementation Phases**

Implementation should proceed in four phases.



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### Phase One: Design, Governance, and Baseline Setup

Phase one establishes the foundation. Schools and districts should form an implementation team, conduct a needs assessment, map current academic and behavioral interventions, review existing special education procedures, identify gaps, and establish baseline metrics.

The team should also develop or adapt the toolkit. Required materials include screening tools already approved by the district, progress-monitoring forms, intervention lesson routines, behavior expectation matrices, Check-In/Check-Out forms, FBA/BIP templates, family communication scripts, fidelity rubrics, planning protocols, and an online repository.

### Phase Two: Capacity Building and Initial Rollout

Phase two launches staff training and begins implementation of universal and targeted supports. This phase should include professional development on Universal Design for Learning, grade-level access, academic intervention routines, PBIS, classroom routines, progress monitoring, and referral pathways.



Coaching should begin immediately after training. Educators need opportunities to practice new routines, receive feedback, review student data, and solve implementation barriers. Professional learning communities should be used to sustain the work between formal training sessions.

### **Phase Three: Intensive Intervention Cycle and Midyear Revision**

Phase three launches the first intensive-intervention cycle. Students who do not respond adequately to universal and targeted supports should receive individualized analysis and adaptation. Teams should use data to determine whether academic dosage, instructional method, grouping, or behavioral support should be modified.

Monthly leadership reviews should examine fidelity, student progress, referral patterns, behavior data, family communication, and implementation barriers. Mid-year revision should be expected. A scalable framework improves through structured feedback and adjustment.

### **Phase Four: Evaluation, Packaging, and Dissemination**

Phase four converts implementation lessons into dissemination materials. Schools and districts should package training modules, templates, decision rules, sample forms, fidelity rubrics, and implementation stories into district-facing products.

End-of-year reporting should include outcome data, implementation data, fidelity data, family engagement indicators, and recommendations for expansion. This phase turns operational improvement into a dissemination asset.

## **V. Decision Process**

The operational decision process should be simple enough for school teams to use consistently.

The process begins with screening and referral. Students are matched to interventions based on academic or behavioral need. Validated supports are delivered, and progress is monitored. If the student is on track, the team continues the intervention and fades support when appropriate. If the student is not on track, the team conducts a fidelity check to determine whether the intervention was delivered as intended. If fidelity is adequate, the team conducts problem analysis and adapts the plan. Adaptation may include increasing the dosage, changing the instructional method, adjusting the group size, modifying materials, or developing a function-based behavior plan.

This cycle creates a repeatable structure: identify need, match support, deliver intervention, monitor progress, review fidelity, analyze barriers, adapt support, and continue evaluation.

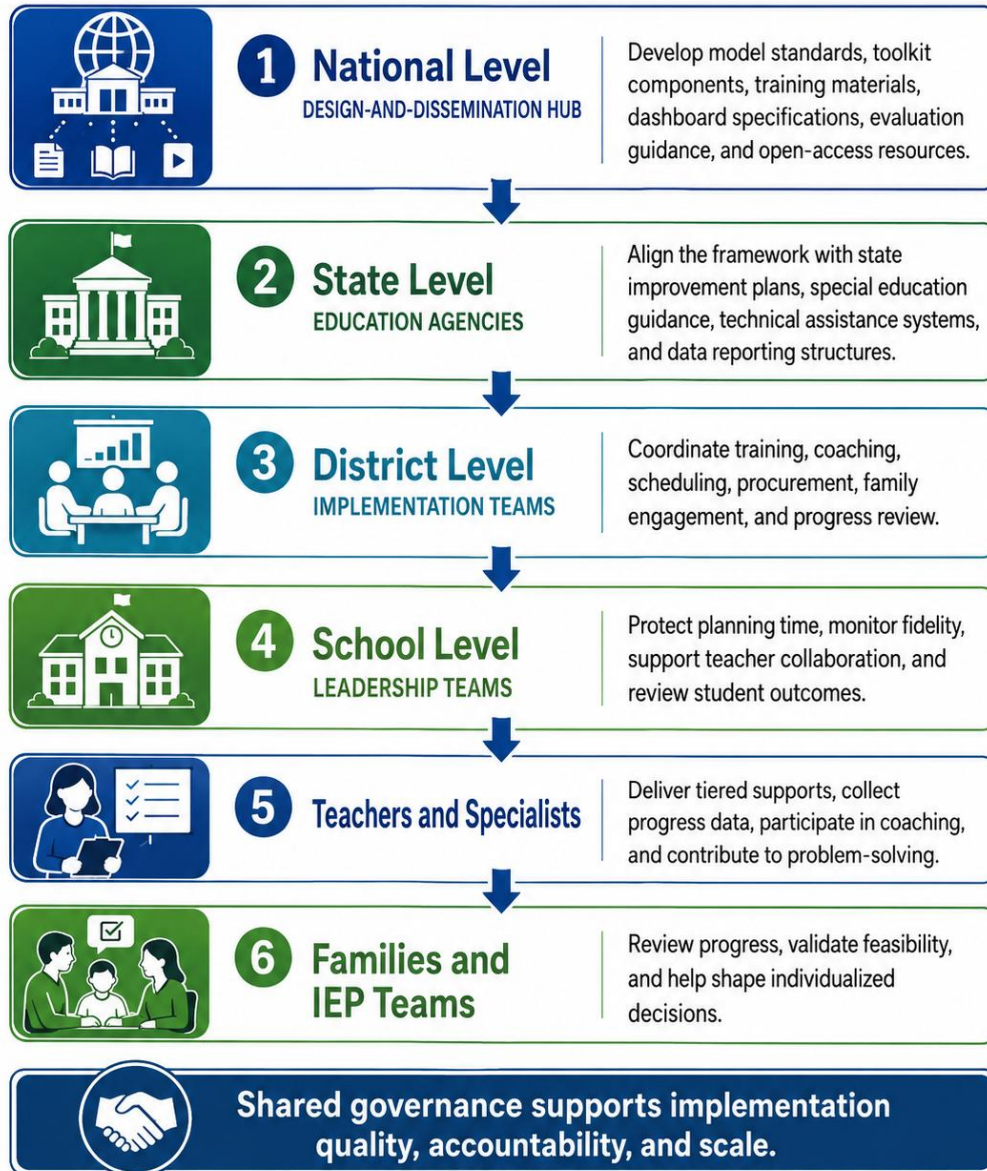
## **VI. Governance Structure**

A national scaling model requires clear role differentiation.



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At the national level, a design-and-dissemination hub should develop model standards, toolkit components, training materials, dashboard specifications, evaluation guidance, and open-access resources.

At the state level, education agencies should align the framework with state improvement plans, special education guidance, technical assistance systems, and data reporting structures.

At the district level, implementation teams should coordinate training, coaching, scheduling, procurement, family engagement, and progress review.



At the school level, leadership teams should protect planning time, monitor fidelity, support teacher collaboration, and review student outcomes.

Teachers and specialists should deliver tiered supports, collect progress data, participate in coaching, and contribute to problem-solving. Families and IEP teams should review progress, validate feasibility, and help shape individualized decisions.

## VII. Evaluation and Measurable Outcomes

Evaluation should measure both student outcomes and implementation performance. Student outcomes may include academic growth in reading, mathematics, and writing; reduced behavioral incidents; improved engagement; increased access to grade-level instruction; and more effective IEP-linked progress review.

Implementation outcomes should include training completion, coaching dosage, fidelity scores, toolkit use, staff satisfaction, family participation, intervention adoption, and sustainability after the initial implementation period.<sup>22</sup>

Evaluation should be conducted at multiple levels: student, classroom, school, district, and state. This ensures that the framework is judged not only by whether a specific student improves, but also by whether the system becomes more capable of delivering high-quality support.

## VIII. Risk Management

Several risks must be addressed.

Initiative overload can reduce adoption if schools view the framework as another disconnected program. This risk can be mitigated by aligning the model with existing MTSS, PBIS, IEP, and school improvement structures.

Staff shortages can limit coaching and intervention delivery. This risk can be mitigated through coach-the-coach models, practical templates, peer-assisted routines, and open-access training resources.

Low fidelity can create the false impression that interventions are ineffective. This risk can be mitigated through fidelity rubrics, observation tools, coaching feedback, and dashboard review.

Weak family communication can reduce trust and weaken decision-making. This risk can be mitigated through accessible progress summaries, translation-ready communication tools, and structured family participation.

Data privacy risks can arise when dashboards integrate academic, behavioral, and IEP-linked information. This risk can be mitigated through role-based access, appropriate authentication, vendor safeguards, and compliance with student privacy requirements.<sup>23</sup>

## IX. Toolkit Components



A practical toolkit should include the following sections:

1. National framework overview
2. Universal inclusive core guide
3. Academic intervention protocols
4. Behavior support package
5. Intensive support manual
6. Family and IEP communication set
7. Fidelity tools
8. Data dashboard specifications
9. Training module library
10. District dissemination package

The toolkit should be designed so that staff do not have to recreate paperwork, routines, or decision rules in every classroom. A framework becomes scalable when it reduces unnecessary variation while allowing local adaptation.

## **X. Training Modules**

The training sequence should include:

1. Inclusive core design
2. Reading intervention
3. Mathematics intervention
4. Writing support
5. PBIS and classwide prevention
6. Check-In/Check-Out implementation
7. Data-Based Individualization
8. Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavior Intervention Planning
9. Family and IEP progress review
10. Coaching and fidelity monitoring

Each module should include learning objectives, practice activities, implementation tools, fidelity criteria, and a competency check.

## **XI. Data Dashboard Fields**

A role-based dashboard should include student profile indicators, academic screening results, intervention tier, progress-monitoring trends, writing rubric data, behavior indicators, inclusion indicators, IEP progress-review dates, family communication logs, training completion, coaching contacts, fidelity scores, and dissemination metrics.

The dashboard should support decision-making, not merely reporting. Its purpose is to help teams identify student response, implementation barriers, equity patterns, and professional learning needs.



## XII. National Dissemination Strategy

Dissemination should proceed through a structured pathway:

1. National design hub
2. State education agency guidance
3. Regional technical assistance networks
4. District implementation teams
5. School leadership teams
6. Teachers, specialists, families, and IEP teams
7. Open-access products and feedback loops

Dissemination products should include toolkits, webinars, policy briefs, dashboard specifications, training templates, fidelity tools, district presentation slides, and implementation case examples.

The feedback loop is essential. Districts should report implementation lessons, fidelity results, adaptation needs, and outcome trends. This data should inform annual revisions to the framework.

## XIII. Budget and Resource Planning

Cost planning should be realistic and scalable. A small pilot may focus on toolkit refinement, staff training, coaching, and dashboard setup. A district implementation may add professional learning communities, broader coaching coverage, family engagement systems, and external evaluation. A national demonstration may require district subgrants, state coordination, technical assistance, open-access resources, dashboard standards, and independent evaluation.

The most important budget principle is that implementation funds should not be limited to materials. Schools need protected planning time, coaching, fidelity review, data support, family engagement capacity, and leadership coordination.<sup>24</sup>

## XIV. Policy Brief Summary

**Title:** Scaling Inclusive Special Education Supports Through Tiered Intervention and Implementation Infrastructure

**Core problem:** Students with disabilities are entitled to meaningful educational access, but implementation remains uneven across schools and districts.

**Proposed response:** A scalable framework combining universal inclusive design, targeted academic intervention, targeted behavioral support, intensive individualized support, progress review, family engagement, fidelity monitoring, and dissemination infrastructure.

**Why it matters:** The model addresses academic gaps, behavioral support needs, inclusion barriers, staffing pressures, and inconsistent implementation capacity in underserved schools.




**What makes it scalable:** Standardized toolkits, training modules, coaching systems, dashboards, fidelity rubrics, district partnerships, webinars, and policy briefs.

**Expected outcomes:** Improved academic progress, stronger behavioral support, reduced exclusionary practices, better inclusion, stronger family communication, and more consistent intervention delivery.

# Policy Brief Summary

**Title: *Scaling Inclusive Special Education Supports Through Tiered Intervention and Implementation Infrastructure***

1




Core problem

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Students with disabilities are entitled to meaningful educational access, but implementation remains uneven across schools and districts.

2




Proposed response

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A scalable framework combining universal inclusive design, targeted academic intervention, targeted behavioral support, intensive individualized support, progress review, family engagement, fidelity monitoring, and dissemination infrastructure.

3




Why it matters

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The model addresses academic gaps, behavioral support needs, inclusion barriers, staffing pressures, and inconsistent implementation capacity in underserved schools.

4




What makes it scalable

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Standardized toolkits, training modules, coaching systems, dashboards, fidelity rubrics, district partnerships, webinars, and policy briefs.


5



Expected outcomes

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Improved academic progress, stronger behavioral support, reduced exclusionary practices, better inclusion, stronger family communication, and more consistent intervention delivery.



A practical framework for improving special education access, implementation quality, and inclusive student success at scale.

## XV. Conclusion

This framework provides a practical policy implementation plan for scaling special education interventions in underserved U.S. schools. Its central contribution is the conversion of school-based intervention practice into a replicable systems model. By integrating Universal Design for Learning, targeted academic supports, PBIS, Check-In/Check-Out, Data-Based Individualization, FBA/BIP processes, IEP-linked progress review, coaching, fidelity monitoring, dashboards, and dissemination



tools, the framework offers a pathway for improving special education delivery across multiple educational settings.

The model recognizes that students with disabilities need more than isolated services. They need coherent systems that support access, progress, inclusion, family participation, and educator capacity. For that reason, this framework is designed not only as an operational improvement process but also as a dissemination asset to support broader educational change.

### About the Author



Peter Jr. Legaspi is an educationalist and special education professional whose work focuses on inclusive instruction, intervention planning, and student support for learners with disabilities. He brings advanced academic preparation in Special Education, professional experience as a Special Education Resource Teacher, and licensure as a Learning Behavior Specialist for Kindergarten through Age 22. His professional interests center on scalable special education intervention systems, differentiated instruction, behavioral support, progress monitoring, family collaboration, and practical tools that help schools improve academic, behavioral, and inclusion outcomes for students with disabilities in underserved educational settings.

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## Endnotes

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