AN OVERVIEW...

- RELATIONSHIPS MATTER
- NATURAL SUPPORTS...
- IMPORTANT ELEMENTS
- EFFORTS OF 14 SCHOOLS
- DISCUSSION & YEAH-BUTS

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

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RIGOR RELEVANCE RELATIONSHIPS
WHAT KINDS OF RELATIONSHIPS DO YOUR STUDENTS HAVE?

THE RELATIONSHIPS WE HAVE...

FRIENDS WITH WHOM WE REGULARLY DO THINGS
FAMILY AND CLOSE FRIENDS
PEOPLE WITH WHOM WE OCCASIONALLY DO THINGS
PEOPLE PAID TO BE THERE

Relationships During Elementary & Middle School
Never visited with friends during the previous year:

- ID: 17%
- Multiple: 21%
- Autism: 32%

Never or rarely receive phone calls from friends:

- ID: 50%
- Multiple: 64%
- Autism: 81%

Relationships During High School
Frequently see friends outside of school:

- ID: 22%
- Multiple: 14%
- Autism: 6%

Never or rarely receive phone calls from friends:

- ID: 42%
- Multiple: 63%
- Autism: 84%

Get together with friends outside of formal groups at least once per week:

- ID: 54%
- Multiple: 38%
- Autism: 24%
WHAT ARE NATURAL SUPPORTS?

- Trees & Underwear?
- Relationships
- Interactions
- Assistance
- Connections
- Resources

ENHANCES INCLUSION, BELONGING, CONTRIBUTIONS, & QUALITY OF LIFE

WHO ARE NATURAL SUPPORTS?

- Friends
- Peers
- Classmates
- Teammates
- Club Members
- Neighbors
- Co-Workers
- Family Members
- Acquaintances
- Congregations
- ________??
- Many, Many Others

USUAL VEHICLES OF SUPPORT

- Special Educators
- Paraprofessionals
- Job Coaches
- Special Transportation
- Service Providers
- “Special” Friends
PROJECT PURPOSE

- **Discover** creative ideas and efforts
- **Provide** ongoing support
- **Challenge** schools to go further
- **Document** lessons learned
- **Share** promising strategies
- **Transform** how we support students

“...to discover, support, and disseminate creative and promising approaches for supporting students to participate more fully and naturally in school, work, and community activities.”

WORKING WITH SCHOOLS

- **Mini-grant competition**
- **Summer institutes or school workshops** (team of students/adults)
- **Technical assistance, visits, & encouragement**
- **Focus groups and research**
- **Repeat!**
IT IS A JOURNEY...

SOME LANDMARKS
(OR IMPORTANT ELEMENTS)

- Shared Activities
- Valued Roles
- Equipping Students and Others
- “Just Enough” Support
- Regular Reflection

THE REAL REASONS YOU GO TO SCHOOL

- No where else has so many kids together in the same place, at the same time, and doing the same activities!

I. SHARED ACTIVITIES
SHARED ACTIVITIES?
SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

★ ARE YOUTH WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES PRESENT IN THE SAME SPACE?
★ ARE YOUTH WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES THERE AT THE SAME TIME?
★ ARE YOUTH WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES ENGAGED IN THE SAME ACTIVITIES?

Activity: Reflecting... On Your School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settings</th>
<th>Shared Time?</th>
<th>Shared Space?</th>
<th>Shared Activities?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cafeteria</td>
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<td>(during lunch)</td>
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<td>Bathroom</td>
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<td>(checking appearances, of course!)</td>
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<td>French Class</td>
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<td>Biology</td>
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<td>Drama Club</td>
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<td>(after school)</td>
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<td>After-School Job</td>
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<td>Field Trips</td>
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</table>
REFLECTING ON OUR SCHOOLS

- What activities tend to be truly shared?
- What activities are not shared?
- Are students with particular disabilities more often left out?
- What changes could be made to have more shared activities?
- What might be your first step?

2. ESTABLISHING VALUED ROLES

VALUED ROLES?
SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Would the tasks done by youth with disabilities be considered “cool and desirable” by their peers?
- Are youth with disabilities contributing in ways that they choose for themselves?
- Are youth with disabilities contributing in different roles over time (versus assuming static roles)?
- Does everyone have the opportunity to both give and receive support?
- Would someone else need to do the task if a student with a disability was not doing it?

ACTIVITY: THE COOLNESS
LINE-UP

- Participant
- Member
- Receiver of help
- Worker
- Leader
- Supervisor
- Giver of help
- Observer
- Tutor
- Tutee
- Not so cool
- Way cool
YOUR REFLECTIONS

- What roles were seen as less cool?
- What roles were seen as more cool?
- What does this depend on?
- What roles do students with disabilities typically assume?

**Potential Problem!!!**

*Perpetual Helper or Designated Recipient*

A camera and a switch

Club Photographer
3. EQUIPPING STUDENTS
   (AND OTHERS)

WHAT CAN HAPPEN IFF?

★ Information
★ Facilitation
★ Fading

4. OFFERING “JUST ENOUGH” SUPPORT

SOME NON-INDICATORS...

- WHEN TEACHERS ARE NAMED AS BEST FRIENDS
- WHEN PEERS USUALLY ASK QUESTIONS BY GOING THROUGH THE ADULT
- WHEN STUDENTS EAT LUNCH WITH ADULTS MORE OFTEN THAN WITH THEIR PEERS
- WHEN PEERS LOOK MORE LIKE MINI-TEACHERS THAN FRIENDS
- WHEN...

YOU MIGHT BE PROVIDING TOO MUCH SUPPORT IF...
CAND A STUDENT DO IT?
- On his or her own?
- If given the right technology or adaptive equipment?
- If given just a little instruction?
- With a little help from a friend or peer?
- With someone else’s help in the setting?
- With occasional help from a teacher or other staff?
- With constant help from a teacher or other staff?

IS IT MORE FUN TO DO IT WITH SOMEONE ELSE?

OKAY INITIALLY...LESS SO LATER

WHAT KEEPS US DOWN HERE?
- On his or her own?
- If given the right technology or adaptive equipment?
- If given just a little instruction?
- With a little help from a friend or peer?
- With someone else’s help in the setting?
- With occasional help from a teacher or other staff?
- With constant help from a teacher or other staff?

EXAMPLES:
- On his/her own
- A little help from a friend
- The right technology
- A little instruction

5. REFLECTION, EVALUATION, AND CELEBRATION
WHAT DID PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS DECIDE TO DO?

- Formed clubs
- Took field trips
- Developed a park
- Designed school-wide disability awareness activities
- Opened a school store
- Team building
CREATED PARTNERSHIPS WITH AREA TECHNICAL SCHOOL

FOCUSED ON SPORTS / EXTRACURRICULAR INVOLVEMENT

PRESENTED IDEAS TO THE COMMUNITY (SCHOOL BOARD, BUSINESS COMMUNITY)

COMMUNITY SERVICE

GETTING STARTED

WAYS TO...

HOLD A KICK-OFF EVENT

- YOUTH PANEL
- PIZZA PARTY
- PANCAKE BREAKFAST
- MEET AND GREET
- VIDEO SCREENING
- FIELD TRIP
- BOOTH AT ORIENTATION
- FLOAT IN HOMECOMING PARADE
Ways to... RECRUIT STUDENTS

- Ask Them!
- Make it Fun
- Offer Food
- Keep Asking...
- Give Students Information
- Tell Other Teachers
- Invite a Friend
- Be Cool (or find an adult who is)
- Offer Credit/Volunteer Hours

Ways to... MAINTAIN A CLUB

- Meet Regularly
- Try Something New
- Use E-mail/Facebook
- Keep It Fun
- Rotate Youth Leadership
- Have Semester/Yearly Kick Off Events
- Recruit New Students
- Document Activities (Photos, Video, Stories)
- Manage Logistics
- Engage in Team Building Activities

ONE STUDENT-LED INITIATIVE

OUR VISION

“We the members of Peer Partners, wish to involve all students in a mutually beneficial partnership based on mutual interests and talents, one that is student driven, to create an open and friendly environment.”
PEERS PARTNERS IS...

- Having fun with others
- Getting to know about people
- Being there for each other

PEER PARTNERS IS VALUABLE BECAUSE...

- "...I'VE REALLY MADE LIFE-LONG FRIENDS THAT I NORMALLY WOULDN'T HAVE MADE."
- "...WE GET TO GO TO THE SCHOOL PLAY TOGETHER. OTHERWISE, WE'D MISS OUT."
- ...IT IS "BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS"
- ...IT'S "FREEDOM FROM BEING ALONE."

HOW DO YOU GET TOGETHER?

- We meet with each other at lunch, in the halls, in the courtyard, at lockers, in the aud...
- We advertised with posters in the hall.
- We changed the content of our freshman advisory.

WHAT DO WE DO?

- Lunch meetings every week
- Annual pancake breakfast
- Eat!
- Boating field trip
- Design, make and wear t-shirts
- Annual homecoming parade
- Go to school plays together
- Planetarium
- Corn maze and pumpkin farm
- Hot cocoa events
FRIENDSHIPS HAVE FORMED

- “It makes school a more comfortable place when you know more people and know what people are about.”
- “People are a lot more accepting of people with disabilities than when I was a freshman.”
- “Reward perfect pride with real terrific friends.”

LISTENING TO YOUTH AND ADULTS
A FOCUS GROUP STUDY

FOCUS GROUPS

Six high schools participated
Groups of adult-related barriers
Groups of students with and without disabilities

- How do participants view relationships among students with and without disabilities?
- What inhibits positive relationships among students with and without disabilities at their school?
- What fosters positive relationships among students with and without disabilities at their school?
- To what extent do youth and adults differ in their perspectives?

ADULT-RELATED BARRIERS

- Too much involvement
  - Discourage interactions
  - Force interactions
  - Provide exclusive/unnecessary support
  - Adults are segregated

- Not enough involvement
  - Limited or no facilitation
  - Overlook peer harassment
  - Overlook preferences
  - Restrict
ENVIRONMENTAL BARRIERS

- Accessibility
- Scheduling or logistics
- Separate locations
- Separate times

STUDENT-RELATED BARRIERS

- Lack of information or connection
- Fearfulness
- Hesitation
- Stares and looks
- Discomfort
- Ignoring/avoidance
- Limited or stereotypical knowledge
- Meanness

ADULT EFFORTS TO FOSTER RELATIONSHIPS

- Creating opportunities
- Educators making introductions
- Extending invitations
- Giving permission
- Nurturing and developing valued roles

- Promoting independence
- Backing off
- Equipping students
- Arranging peer supports

- Facilitation
- Sharing information
- Modeling interactions
- Inviting personality
- Handling logistics
- Treating the same

STUDENT EFFORTS TO FOSTER RELATIONSHIPS

- Extending invitations
- Modeling acceptance
- Peer support initiations
- Raising awareness
- Students making introductions
- Students with disabilities making initiations
FOR MORE INFORMATION...

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