

Department of Exceptional Student Education & Student Services

Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Disability History and Awareness

The first two weeks of October are Disability History and Awareness Weeks! Did you know that one of every five Americans is a person with a disability? A person may be born with a disability, may acquire a disability through an accident or illness, or may acquire a disability simply as a part of growing older. Despite the fact that disability is a natural part of life, people with disabilities have not always had access to equal opportunities. School-aged children with disabilities did not have a right to a free appropriate public education until 1975, with the passage of the Federal Education for All Handicapped Children Act (now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act).

In Hillsborough County Public Schools, we are proud of the accomplishments of our hardworking students, teachers, school and district administrators and support staff who support students with disabilities each and every day. Our teachers are true educators and have an acknowledgment, appreciation, and respect of students' differences. This is what sets us apart. Students' diverse intelligences, talents, skills, interests, and backgrounds enrich our schools and our lives as teachers and as a community. Together, we can (and do) make a difference.

A word from Dr. Antoine Hickman, Executive Director

On behalf of the Department of Exceptional Student Education & Student Services, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing us to meet the needs of our most valuable resources –our students. As a career-long special educator, I have seen both the triumphs and struggles of small, urban, and very large school districts. I have quickly seen in my first few months of working here in Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) the power of community and the impact that parents, teachers, administrators, and support staff have in ensuring our children experience more triumphs.

During the first two weeks in October, we in HCPS are proud to participate in promoting disability history, awareness, and the contributions individuals with disabilities have made in our schools and communities. Disability History and Awareness Weeks will also allow us to recognize and celebrate those who have played a key role in advocating, influencing, and promoting the rights of individuals with disabilities across our nation. I am proud to be an active participant in this important initiative.

Disability History and Awareness

Here are some ideas for your class and school to bring awareness to this important event:

1. Hang banners at your school and/or use the school marquee to recognize Disability History and Awareness Weeks.
2. Allow students to design posters, fliers, and/or buttons related to Disability History and Awareness. Post student-designed posters and fliers in your school.
3. Use school and district websites to promote disability history and awareness weeks.
4. Include biographical information on famous people with disabilities in morning announcements.
5. Recognize the achievement of local and other people with disabilities all year—focus on their abilities and achievements through the district website, newsletters, morning announcements, etc.
6. Involve parents and other members of the community in planning and implementing activities at the district and school level.
7. Encourage student councils/student government in planning and implementing activities in your school.



Resources

Video Links:

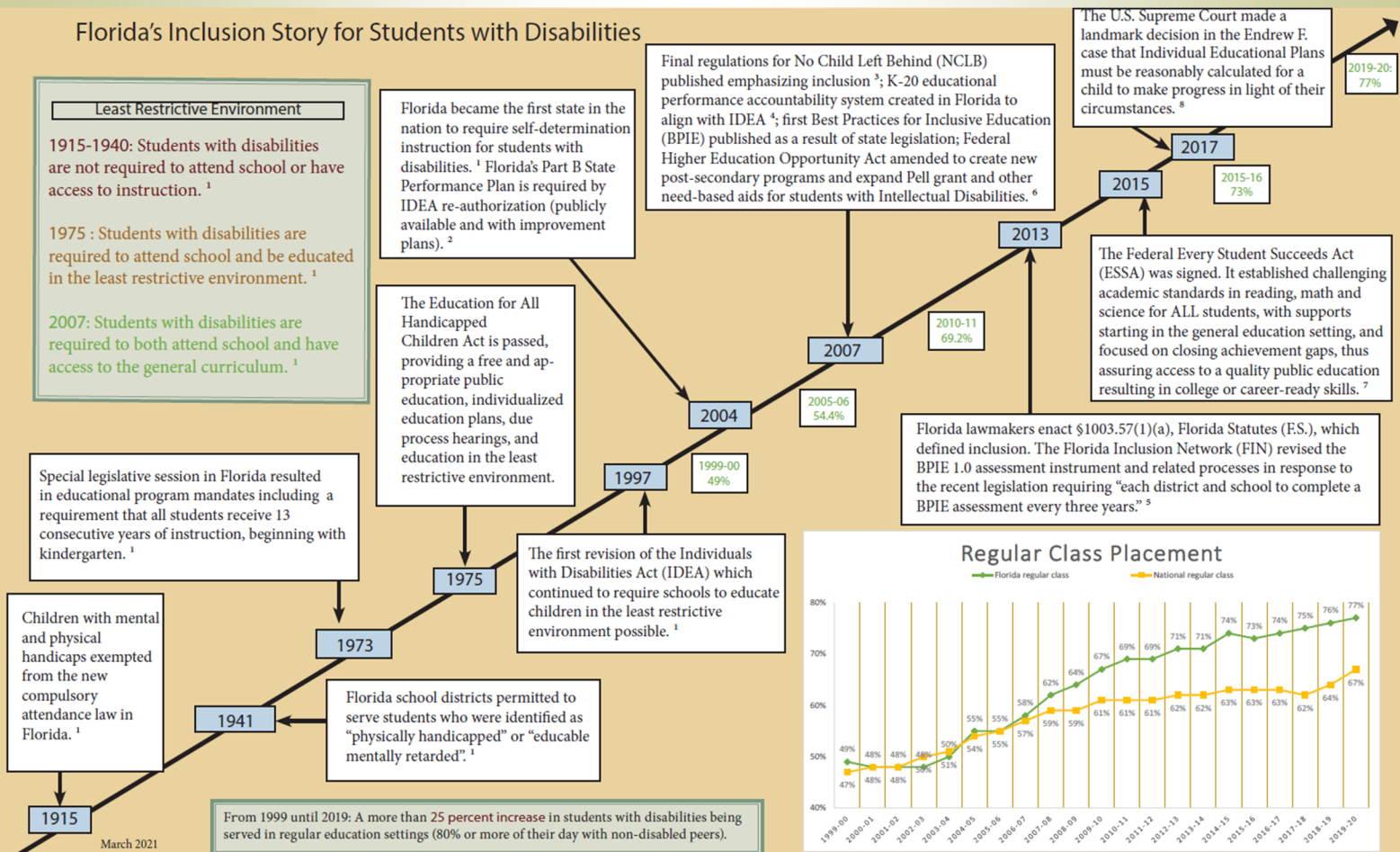
- Person First Language <https://youtu.be/obbwb1bJ5io>
- Florida DOE: <http://www.fl DOE.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu/parent-info/disability-history-awareness.shtml>
- Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (Resources for middle/high): [Publications - FDDC](#)

Trainings: [Click HERE](#) to access information on trainings and other resources in our district

Disability History and Awareness

Florida's Inclusion Story for Students with Disabilities

Florida's Inclusion Story for Students with Disabilities



Regular Class Placement

