

From Candidate to Colleague: Preparing Special Educators with Disabilities

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ABSTRACT

Teacher preparation programs shape not only instructional competence but also professional identity and persistence among future special educators. Candidates with disabilities continue to encounter systemic barriers across coursework, field placements, certification, and entry into the profession. This article examines how teacher preparation programs can support special education candidates with disabilities as they transition from candidate to colleague. We identify program-level factors associated with candidate readiness, belonging, and persistence. Implications are provided for program administrators and instructors focused on aligning preparation structures with candidate outcomes through disability-informed design (Duquette, 2000; Neca et al., 2022; Sokal et al., 2017; Tal-Alon & Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2019).

KEYWORDS

Disability disclosure, disability-informed teacher preparation, educator preparation programs, field placements, special education teacher candidates

A special education teacher candidate with disabilities arrived at her student teaching placement eager to begin. Within weeks, however, she encountered repeated disruptions: unclear communication about accommodation responsibilities, inconsistent supervision expectations, and a lack of coordination between university offices and the placement site. Facing these compounding barriers, she began to question not only her preparedness but also her belonging in the profession, a perception that prior research demonstrates influences persistence and engagement in educational settings (Walton & Cohen, 2011).

Experiences such as this illustrate a persistent and underexamined tension within teacher preparation. While programs are increasingly committed to preparing candidates to serve students with disabilities, they have paid far less attention to how programs prepare and support teacher candidates who are themselves disabled. For candidates with disabilities, particularly those preparing to enter special education, the transition from candidate to colleague may involve navigating layered systems of disclosure, access, evaluation, and professional identity formation within environments that are not always designed with disability in mind. Although scholarship has examined the experiences of teachers with disabilities and teacher candidates with disabilities (Bellacicco & Demo, 2019; Strimel et al., 2023), limited attention has been paid to how preparation systems shape these trajectories.

These concerns are particularly salient in special education preparation. Candidates preparing to become special educators occupy a distinctive dual position: they are simultaneously learning to design inclusive systems for others while navigating the inclusivity of their own preparation contexts. Special education preparation programs, therefore, hold a unique responsibility to model the inclusive systems they expect graduates to implement in P–12 settings. However, teacher preparation programs have rarely been held to the same inclusive standard they expect their candidates to implement.

In response to this gap, we propose a Disability-Informed Teacher Preparation framework to guide programs toward moving from reactive accommodation to proactive structural design. The framework identifies three interconnected leverage points within teacher preparation systems: (1) access infrastructure, (2) field placement systems, and (3) disability-affirming mentorship and evaluation practices. We align these leverage points with four key candidate outcomes: academic readiness, sense of belonging, persistence and retention, and preparedness for professional practice.

Drawing on practice-based vignettes and existing scholarship, this article illustrates how systemic barriers operate across coursework, field placements, licensure processes, and employment transitions and how programs can intentionally redesign these systems to better support candidates with disabilities. By centering disability-informed preparation within special education programs, the framework advances a model in which candidates move from surviving barriers to thriving as colleagues in the profession.

DISABILITY-INFORMED TEACHER PREPARATION

Disability-informed teacher preparation extends beyond compliance-based accommodation models by examining how preparation systems design, communicate, and enact access for candidates with disabilities. Rather than centering access solely at the point of individual disclosure, disability-informed preparation asks how program structures themselves may anticipate variability in candidate experience and proactively reduce barriers across coursework, field placements, licensure processes, and evaluation systems. Research documents significant variability in how accommodations are implemented and communicated across preparation

contexts, leaving candidates to navigate these inconsistent systems independently (Csoli & Gallagher, 2012).

A disability-informed approach reframes preparation as a shared programmatic responsibility rather than an individualized burden. It emphasizes structural transparency, anticipatory access planning, collaborative communication across units, and relational mentorship practices that affirm disability as a valued aspect of professional identity. This orientation recognizes that access is not only a matter of format or modification, but also of belonging, evaluation equity, and participation in professional communities. Disability-informed preparation thus requires programs to align their internal practices with the equity principles they promote externally.

Disability-informed preparation is distinct from, but complementary to, broader inclusive pedagogical frameworks. While inclusive instructional design addresses how programs teach candidates, disability-informed preparation also attends to how these systems position candidates within or outside the norms of professional practice. It considers how policies, placement assignments, supervision structures, and assessment mechanisms may unintentionally privilege normative assumptions about communication, stamina, mobility, or professional presentation. By making these assumptions visible, programs can shift from reactive problem-solving toward intentional system design. This orientation aligns with Disability Studies in Education, which reframes disability as socially constructed and shaped by institutional design rather than individual deficit (Connor et al., 2008).

The following section introduces the conceptual framework guiding this approach, outlining the leverage points and candidate outcomes that anchor disability-informed teacher preparation.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK GUIDING DISABILITY-INFORMED TEACHER PREPARATION

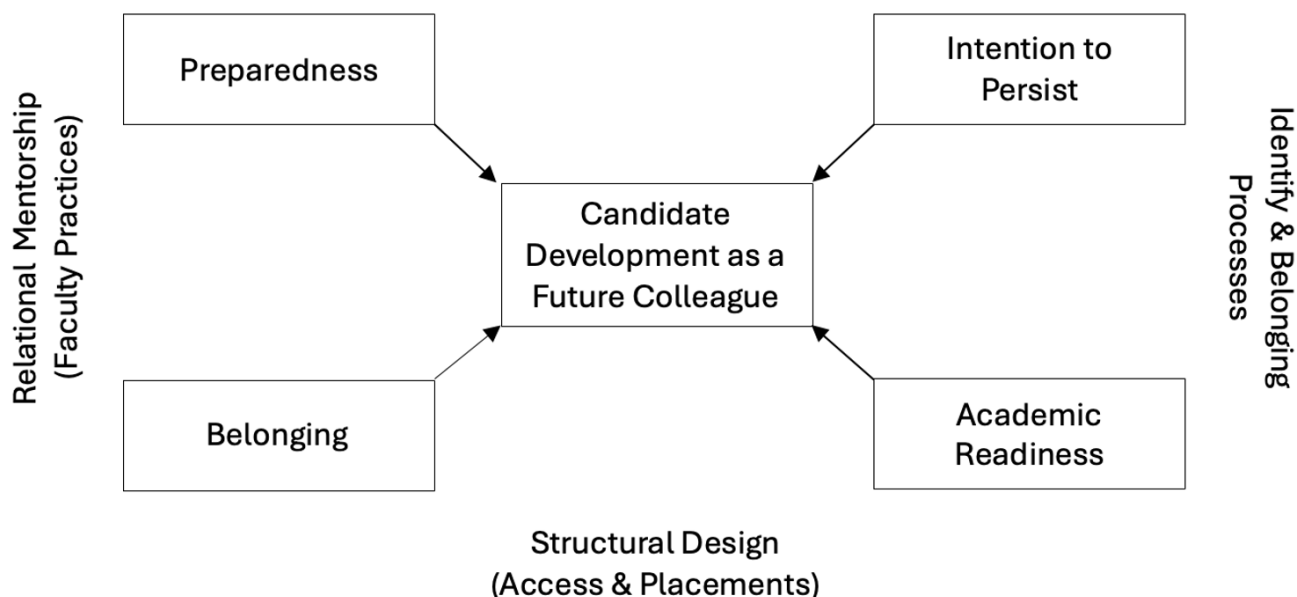
Disability-Informed Teacher Preparation is guided by a systems-oriented framework that identifies how structural design, field coordination, and evaluative practices interact to shape candidate experiences and outcomes. Rather than conceptualizing barriers as isolated incidents, the framework positions preparation as an interconnected system in which policies, communication pathways, placement procedures, and mentoring relationships collectively influence how candidates with disabilities experience and persist through their teacher preparation programs.

The framework centers three interconnected leverage points within teacher preparation programs: (1) access infrastructure, (2) field placement systems, and (3) disability-affirming mentorship and evaluation practices. We selected these leverage points because they are recurring sites where candidates with disabilities encounter systemic friction across programs and institutions. Together, they capture both structural and relational dimensions of preparation.

Access infrastructure refers to the policies, processes, and communication systems that govern how candidates navigate accommodations, certification, and institutional requirements. Transparent communication, anticipatory planning, and cross-unit coordination are central components of this leverage point.

Field placement systems encompass the procedures for assigning candidates to practicum and student teaching settings, as well as the expectations communicated to placement sites and supervisors. Field experiences are often the most intensive and evaluative components of teacher preparation. Misalignment among university policies, school-based expectations, and disabil-

FIGURE 1: Conceptual Framework Guiding Disability Informed Preparation



Note. The framework situates candidate development within interacting layers of Structural Design (access infrastructure and field placements), Relational Mentorship (faculty practices and representation), and Identity/Belonging Processes, informed by Disability Studies in Education and Universal Design for Learning.

TABLE 1: Preparation Leverage Points × Outcomes

Preparation Stage	Disability-Informed Supports	Faculty/Program Action	Targeted Outcomes
Coursework	UDL-based, accessible materials from the start	Proactive design of curriculum and materials for accessibility	Belonging; Academic readiness; Persistence
Certification	Guidance on accommodations and timelines	Early planning and assistance with licensure processes	Academic readiness; Persistence
Field placements	Access-aware placement matching and support plans	Coordinated support across program, disability services, and school site	Belonging; Preparedness to teach with a disability; Persistence
Transition to employment	Coaching on disclosure and interview strategies; connections to disabled educator networks	Mentoring for advocacy in job search and hiring	Preparedness; Persistence

ity-related supports can compound into significant effects on candidate confidence and performance. Because field placements serve as both instructional and gatekeeping contexts, their design exerts disproportionate influence on candidates’ persistence and retention, as well as their professional trajectory.

Disability-affirming mentorship and

evaluation practices address the relational and interpretive dimensions of preparation. Faculty members and supervisors play a central role in shaping how disability is understood within professional contexts. Mentorship practices that normalize disability disclosure, emphasize collaborative problem-solving, and focus evaluations on instructional competence

rather than on normative presentation can significantly influence candidates’ sense of belonging and self-efficacy. Conversely, evaluative frameworks grounded in unexamined assumptions about what professional communication, stamina, or demeanor looks like may unintentionally marginalize candidates. Research examining disability disclosure

and professional normativity suggests that implicit standards may disadvantage candidates whose disabilities affect communication or presentation style (Neca et al., 2022).

These leverage points are not independent domains. Access infrastructure shapes how field placement systems are coordinated; mentorship practices influence how access processes are enacted; evaluation systems interact with both structural and relational conditions. This framework, therefore, conceptualizes disability-informed preparation as an integrated system rather than a series of discrete interventions. These leverage points align with four key candidate outcomes: academic readiness, sense of belonging, persistence and retention, and preparedness for professional practice.

In addition to candidate outcomes, this framework foregrounds faculty and program-level responsibility. Disability-informed preparation requires more than individual goodwill; it depends on intentional program-level design choices. Faculty actions (e.g., syllabus construction, communication practices, supervision expectations, and evaluation criteria) determine how structural policies are experienced by candidates. By situating faculty practice within the broader preparation system, the framework emphasizes shared accountability for creating environments in which candidates with disabilities can thrive.

Leverage Point 1: Access Infrastructure

Access infrastructure refers to the policies, communication systems, instructional design practices, and procedural pathways that shape how candidates navigate coursework, field requirements, certification, and institutional expectations. While accommodations are often conceptualized as individualized adjustments granted after disclosure, access infrastructure emphasizes the broader

programmatic conditions that determine whether candidates can engage fully and predictably in preparation experiences.

Vignette: Navigating Certification and Licensure

Jordan, a visually impaired special education candidate, enters his final semester prepared to complete the state licensure exam. Throughout his preparation program, he has successfully used accommodations such as screen readers and extended time, so he expects the licensure process to be similar. Instead, he learns that the testing vendor requires a separate accommodations request, additional documentation, and an approval process that can take several weeks. The program materials provide little guidance on this process, and no one in the program has walked him through it before. Although the program coordinator expressed sympathy, the responsibility for resolving the situation fell entirely onto Jordan. He had to contact the testing vendor, gather documentation, and navigate the approval system alone. The process delays his testing timeline and creates uncertainty about whether he will be able to complete licensure requirements before graduation. This scenario illustrates how certification and licensure systems can introduce structural barriers even when coursework and program supports function effectively.

Such breakdowns reflect a broader pattern in which access barriers arise from fragmented systems rather than isolated policy failures. Within teacher preparation, access infrastructure encompasses not only classroom materials but also learning management systems, certification procedures, observation documentation platforms, clinical evaluation tools, and cross-unit communication practices. When these systems operate independently or rely on candidates to broker coordination among offices, the burden of navigation shifts to

the individual.

A disability-informed approach to access infrastructure moves beyond reactive compliance to proactive design. One mechanism for operationalizing this shift is the use of accessibility checkpoints—intentional review points within program processes where accessibility is examined prior to candidate difficulty. Accessibility checkpoints may include structured syllabus design standards; prior review of digital materials for compatibility with assistive technologies; transparent timelines for accommodation implementation; pre-placement communication protocols clarifying accommodation responsibilities; and coordination procedures with external certification vendors. These checkpoints function as anticipatory safeguards, reducing reliance on crisis response and minimizing the need for candidates to repeatedly advocate for baseline access.

Importantly, accessibility checkpoints extend beyond format conversion or document tagging. They also encompass the clarity of expectations, alignment across institutional units, and transparency in procedural requirements that determine whether candidates can plan and prepare confidently. For example, clearly delineating which office coordinates field placement accommodations, how supervisors receive information about approved supports, and what steps are required to adjust certification timelines can substantially reduce ambiguity. When programs standardize communication pathways and make responsibilities explicit, candidates can direct their cognitive and emotional resources toward instructional learning rather than administrative negotiation.

Within this leverage point, principles commonly associated with inclusive instructional design, such as providing materials in accessible digital formats, offering multiple pathways for engaging with content, and ensuring compatibil-

ity with assistive technologies, serve as foundational elements. However, disability-informed preparation extends these principles beyond classroom pedagogy to encompass the full ecosystem of preparation systems.

Strengthening access infrastructure directly supports academic readiness by ensuring that engagement with coursework and certification processes reflects competence rather than navigation skills. It also contributes to a sense of belonging by signaling that disability access is anticipated rather than exceptional, a message that is strongly associated with persistence and engagement in higher education settings (Strayhorn, 2019). When programs institutionalize proactive checkpoints and coordinated communication, they reduce systemic friction that can undermine persistence and retention and delay professional entry.

The next leverage point examines how these structural conditions intersect with field placement systems, where coordination breakdowns and evaluative pressures may intensify access challenges.

Leverage Point 2: Field Placement Systems

A teacher candidate entered her student teaching placement expecting structured supervision and clearly communicated support. Instead, she encountered inconsistent expectations between university supervisors and school-based mentors, uncertainty regarding how approved accommodations would be implemented, and delayed responses to concerns about workload adjustments. As misunderstandings accumulated, the candidate began to question her competence rather than the clarity of the system surrounding her.

Field placement systems include the procedures used to assign candidates to sites, communicate expectations to cooperating teachers and supervisors,

coordinate accommodations, and evaluate performance. When these systems lack clarity or coordination, candidates may experience what appears to be individual difficulty but is in fact structural misalignment. For example, unclear delineation of responsibility between disability services and field offices may result in delayed implementation of approved supports. Similarly, inconsistent communication between university supervisors and school partners regarding workload expectations can create conditions in which candidates must negotiate expectations independently. Research confirms that cross-unit coordination failures disproportionately affect teacher candidates with disabilities during field placements, often requiring them to have to negotiate their own support across institutional departments (Bargerhuff et al., 2012).

Within disability-informed preparation, attention to field placement systems involves examining how placement decisions are made, how information flows between institutional units, and how supervisors are prepared to support candidates with disabilities. Placement inequities may arise when candidates are assigned to sites without consideration of accessibility, transportation demands, scheduling flexibility, or supervisor familiarity with accommodation processes. These inequities are often unintentional, but the effects are not, since candidates who require structured coordination often absorb the consequences of systems not designed with them in mind.

Field placements also intensify evaluative pressures. Observation protocols, performance rubrics, and professional disposition criteria are frequently applied in high-stakes contexts. If evaluative expectations are not transparently communicated or if accommodation implementation varies across sites, candidates may experience compounded stress that

affects instructional performance and self-efficacy. In such cases, what is interpreted as individual underperformance may reflect environmental instability rather than instructional capacity.

Strengthening field placement systems, therefore, requires proactive coordination across program offices, structured communication with school partners, and explicit alignment between accommodation documentation and supervisory practice. Clear timelines for placement confirmation, pre-placement meetings that address accommodation logistics, and supervisor preparation regarding disability-informed evaluation practices are system-level design decisions that shift the burden of coordination from the candidate to the program.

Attention to field placement systems directly influences candidates' sense of belonging and persistence. When supervision is consistent and expectations are transparent, candidates are more likely to interpret challenges as part of professional growth rather than as signals of exclusion. Conversely, fragmented systems may undermine confidence at precisely the stage when candidates are consolidating professional identity. By stabilizing field placement processes, programs strengthen the relational and structural conditions that support successful transition into the profession.

The following section examines how mentorship and evaluation practices further shape these experiences, particularly regarding professional identity, disclosure, and perceptions of legitimacy within preparation programs.

Leverage Point 3: Disability-Affirming Mentorship and Evaluation Practices

During her practicum, a candidate disclosed her disability to a faculty supervisor who responded by collaboratively reviewing expectations, clarifying how accommodations would operate within

observations, and inviting ongoing dialogue about workload and pacing. The candidate later described this interaction as pivotal in affirming her professional legitimacy.

In contrast, another candidate reported that after disclosing, she was advised to “avoid drawing attention” to her disability and to demonstrate greater stamina in order to meet professional expectations. Feedback emphasized tone, eye contact, and physical presence without clarifying how these criteria related to instructional competence. The candidate began to interpret routine supervisory feedback as evidence that she did not belong in the field.

These contrasting scenarios illustrate how mentorship and evaluation practices shape not only candidate performance but also the development of professional identity among individuals with disabilities (Forber-Pratt et al., 2017). Within teacher preparation, faculty members and supervisors function as gatekeepers, interpreters of professional norms, and validators of competence. Their responses to disclosure, accommodation implementation, and performance feedback significantly influence candidates’ perceptions of belonging and legitimacy.

Disability-affirming mentorship extends beyond interpersonal warmth. It explicitly acknowledges disability as part of the professional landscape and recognizes that equitable evaluation requires careful attention to how programs define and apply performance criteria. In many preparation programs, faculty evaluate professional dispositions using broad descriptors such as “professional communication,” “appropriate demeanor,” or “responsiveness to feedback.” Although programs intend these constructs to ensure readiness for practice, they may inadvertently rely on normative assumptions about speech patterns, physical presence, eye contact,

affect, or stamina. Critical scholarship has questioned how professional disposition frameworks may encode normative assumptions about ability and professionalism (Bialka, 2015).

A disability-informed approach encourages programs to examine how professional standards are operationalized. For example, when programs evaluate “professional communication,” they can clarify whether the construct refers to clarity of instructional explanation, responsiveness to student questions, timeliness of communication, or specific nonverbal behaviors. When programs define criteria primarily through normative presentation expectations, candidates whose disabilities affect voice, movement, processing speed, or sensory engagement may be evaluated on dimensions unrelated to instructional effectiveness.

Providing multiple means of demonstrating professional dispositions does not lower standards; rather, it refines evaluation to align standards with essential competencies. For example, candidates might demonstrate preparedness through varied artifacts such as structured lesson rationales, reflective analyses, family communication logs, co-planning notes, or recorded instructional segments that demonstrate pedagogical decision-making rather than physical presentation. Similarly, observation protocols can emphasize instructional clarity, responsiveness to student need, and collaborative practice rather than unexamined behavioral norms.

Mentorship also influences how candidates interpret challenge. When supervisors frame feedback as part of iterative professional growth and explicitly separate access barriers from instructional skill, candidates are more likely to maintain academic confidence and persistence. How candidates respond in these moments can be shaped

by the complex risk–benefit calculus candidates must weigh when deciding whether to disclose (Valle et al., 2004), a decision that research shows is highly strategic and context-dependent (Cole & Cawthon, 2015). Conversely, when feedback conflates accommodation needs with competence or suggests that disability itself is incompatible with professional standards, candidates may internalize systemic friction as personal deficiency.

Disability-affirming evaluation practices, therefore, contribute directly to belonging and preparedness for professional practice. Candidates who experience transparent expectations and collaborative problem-solving are more likely to envision themselves as long-term members of the profession. They are also better positioned to navigate future workplace disclosure decisions and advocate for access in employment settings. By situating mentorship and evaluation within a disability-informed framework, programs can align professional standards with equitable assessment and identity affirmation.

Vignette: Disclosure Decisions During the Job Search

Elena, a wheelchair user completing her student teaching placement, begins applying for teaching positions with strong evaluations and a record of classroom success. Although she has been open about her disability during her preparation program, she has received little guidance about navigating disclosure during the hiring process. When Elena asks a mentor for advice, she is told that disclosure is a personal decision but receives no concrete strategies for discussing accommodations with potential employers. During interviews, she encounters mixed reactions—some administrators focus on her teaching experience, while others appear uncertain about accessibility

TABLE 2: Barrier ▶ Impact ▶ Opportunity Leverage Points for Disability Informed Teacher Preparation

BARRIER	IMPACT ON CANDIDATES/PROGRAM	OPPORTUNITY (PROGRAM-LEVEL ACTION)
Accommodation processes unclear	Candidates experience uncertainty and anxiety; faculty and field partners are unsure of roles and timelines.	Publish a standardized accommodation pathway with clear timelines and points of contact; revisit at key milestones.
Inaccessible course materials	Candidates spend disproportionate time remediating access, reducing time for learning.	Adopt an accessibility checklist for all courses and embed routine checks into course development.
Disclosure stigma	Candidates may hide access needs, delay requests, or experience burnout.	Create confidential consultation channels and normalize disability as a dimension of professional diversity.
Untrained mentors/supervisors	Support varies widely; candidates may be evaluated on disability-related behaviors.	Provide brief micro-trainings on disability-affirming supervision and bias mitigation.
Inaccessible field placements	Access needs are misunderstood; placement quality and learning suffer.	Conduct preplacement accessibility checks and jointly plan supports with candidates and school sites.
System misalignment across units	Supports fall through gaps between disability services, programs, and field offices.	Establish a triad communication protocol (candidate-program-disability services).
Program culture favors nondisabled norms	Lowered belonging and pressure to mask disability.	Increase visibility of disabled educators and explicitly discuss disability as part of professional diversity.
Noninclusive evaluations/dispositions	Candidates are penalized for irrelevant behaviors.	Redesign rubrics to center job-relevant competencies and allow multiple means of demonstration.
Low representation / isolation	Constrained identity development; candidates feel alone.	Create intentional mentorship networks and affinity spaces.
Field site resistance	Placements may break down when accommodations are resisted.	Use preplacement agreements clarifying legal/ethical responsibilities and problem-solving steps.

or accommodations. Without clear preparation for these conversations, Elena must decide independently when and how to discuss her disability. This vignette illustrates how disability-affirming mentorship extends to preparing candidates for the transition into the profession by explicitly addressing disclosure decisions and workplace advocacy.

Together with access infrastructure and field placement systems, mentorship and evaluation practices complete the interconnected structure of disability-informed teacher preparation. The next section considers how these leverage points collectively inform program-level implications and faculty practice.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION PREPARATION PROGRAMS

The Disability-Informed Teacher Preparation framework offers a systems-level lens through which special education programs may examine and redesign preparation structures. Rather than locating access challenges at the level of individual accommodation requests, the framework invites programs to evaluate how structural design, field coordination, and evaluative practices collectively shape candidate outcomes.

First, programs may examine access infrastructure as a shared responsibility across faculty, field offices, and institutional units. Establishing program-wide

accessibility checkpoints, such as standardized syllabus expectations, prior review of digital platforms for compatibility, transparent timelines for accommodation implementation, and coordinated communication protocols with certification entities, can reduce variability across courses and supervisors. When access processes are predictable and proactively designed, academic readiness becomes a function of instructional engagement rather than administrative navigation. Programs that institutionalize clarity signal that disability access is anticipated and integrated rather than exceptional.

Second, programs may strengthen field placement systems by formalizing

coordination between university supervisors, cooperating teachers, and disability services. Clear delineation of roles, structured pre-placement conversations addressing accommodation logistics, and supervisor preparation regarding disability-informed evaluation practices can stabilize high-stakes clinical experiences. Because field placements function as both learning environments and gatekeeping contexts, alignment across institutional and school-based partners is essential to supporting persistence and belonging. Programs that proactively address accessibility considerations in placement assignments and supervisory training reduce the likelihood that candidates will interpret systemic friction as personal deficiency.

Third, preparation programs may recalibrate mentorship and evaluation practices to ensure that professional standards are defined in competency-based rather than norm-based terms. Clarifying the essential instructional competencies embedded within professional disposition frameworks, distinguishing presentation style from pedagogical skill, and encouraging collaborative dialogue around disclosure can strengthen candidates' professional identity development. By providing multiple, clearly articulated pathways for demonstrating competence, programs reinforce preparedness for professional practice while maintaining rigorous standards.

Across these leverage points, the framework underscores the importance of program coherence. When faculty share common language regarding access processes, field coordination, and evaluative criteria, candidates encounter consistency rather than fragmentation. Such coherence strengthens the interdependence of academic readiness, sense of belonging, persistence and retention, and preparedness for professional practice—factors that higher education research consistently links to student

persistence (Tinto, 1993). Importantly, these implications do not require programs to create parallel structures for candidates with disabilities. Instead, they call for intentional examination of existing systems to ensure that equity principles embedded in special education philosophy are reflected in preparation practice.

Finally, the framework may serve as a reflective tool for continuous program evaluation. By asking how access infrastructure, field placement systems, and mentorship practices align with candidate outcomes, programs can move beyond episodic accommodation toward sustained structural alignment. In doing so, special education preparation programs not only support candidates with disabilities but also model the program-level equity they expect graduates to enact in P–12 settings.

CONCLUSION

Preparing special educators to design inclusive systems for P–12 learners requires parallel attention to the inclusivity of their preparation programs. Candidates with disabilities do not enter teacher education as peripheral participants; they enter as future colleagues whose experiences within preparation systems shape both professional identity and long-term engagement in the field. The Disability-Informed Teacher Preparation framework advances a systems-oriented approach for aligning preparation structures with the equity principles that special education programs espouse.

By identifying three interconnected leverage points (i.e., access infrastructure, field placement systems, and disability-affirming mentorship and evaluation practices), the framework situates disability access within the design of preparation systems rather than within isolated accommodation transactions. When these leverage points are intentionally aligned with the outcomes of

academic readiness, sense of belonging, persistence and retention, and preparedness for professional practice, programs create conditions in which candidates can demonstrate competence without disproportionate administrative or relational burden.

Importantly, disability-informed preparation does not call for reduced expectations or parallel standards. Instead, it requires clarity in defining essential competencies, coherence in coordinating institutional processes, and consistency in mentorship practices. In special education programs, where candidates are simultaneously learning to advocate for inclusive systems and to navigate their own professional formation, this alignment is not only a pedagogical imperative but also an ethical one. Ultimately, disability-informed teacher preparation begins within the programs that cultivate future educators.

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