

FIGURE 1. Dimensions of Belonging in Schools

Factor	Summary	Indicators for Students	Indicators for Staff
Welcomed	The way we are greeted each time we meet signals importance and fosters belonging.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greeting students • Showing enthusiasm for students' return to class each day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greeting colleagues • Asking authentic questions • Engaging in authentic conversations
Invited	The way people are invited signals their value and fosters a sense of belonging.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking peers to play • Peers extending invitations to others for extracurricular events and clubs • Modeling inviting behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inviting colleagues to meetings and professional learning events • Extending invitations to colleagues for other professional opportunities (advising, club sponsorship, etc.)
Present	Who is in attendance and fully present.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong student attendance rates • Participating in class activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong staff attendance rates • Participating in team meetings and learning activities
Known	The depth to which we know others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pronouncing peers' names correctly • Strong teacher-student relationships • Focusing on peers' strengths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing biased and stereotyped language • Emotional intelligence and positive dialogue with colleagues
Accepted	Ways we are recognized and celebrated as a member of the group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive body language and non-verbal messages from teachers and peers • Symbols of respect for all student groups • Culturally sustaining instructional materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive body language and non-verbal messages toward colleagues • Inclusive beliefs and actions about students, staff, and the community
Involved	We participate in the tasks and workflow of the group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating opportunities for collaborative learning • Using academic language in discussions with peers • Students setting goals for their learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating with colleagues in team meetings • Contributing to tasks required to operate the school (e.g., visible and present during passing periods)
Heard	Actively listening to others communicates a message that they are valued and that they have ideas worth considering.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active listening (and teachers talking less) • Teachers soliciting feedback from students • Student choice and decision making in how they demonstrate understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff involvement in decisions • Distributed leadership • Leaders engaged in dialogue, not monologue
Supported	Recognition of our uniqueness and systems to aid our participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong instructional scaffolds in place • Sophisticated tiers of support • Modeling and demonstrating, not just telling information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional learning is practical and responsive to staff needs and interests • Peer coaching and feedback • Restorative conversations
Befriended	Being friendly and encouraging and facilitating friendships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured opportunities for students to interact with a wide range of peers • Integrated peer relationship development in the curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social opportunities for staff to interact • Collegial and friendly interactions in hallways, restrooms, and classrooms
Needed	We know that our contributions are valued because others rely on us for consequential work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping each other • Peer tutoring • Collaborating with peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer coaching • Peer-to-peer conversations • Sharing resources and ideas
Loved	There are many types of love, and some people are cynical about loving their students and colleagues. When it comes to school, we're talking about agape, or the selfless, unconditional love that conveys compassion and empathy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing patience, effort, and unity • Providing comfort • Building meaningful relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making statements of empathy • Giving words of grace and forgiveness

Source: Adapted from Carter, E. W. (2021). Dimensions of belonging for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In J. L. Jones & K. L. Gallus (Eds.), *Belonging and resilience in individuals with developmental disabilities* (pp. 13–33). Springer Nature.