



TASH recognized by international disability rights group for education work

It is easy to forget in the day-to-day business of creating [IEPs](#) and attending [due process](#) hearings that special ed is actually an international phenomenon and that rights taken for granted here are not universally honored.

To buttress that movement, a group called [The Zero Project](#) last year issued a call for nominating inclusive education programs and developing inclusive information and communication technologies, and received 337 responses from 98 countries.

The Zero Project gets its name from wanting to have zero barriers to the participation in society of people with disabilities.

The list of nominated projects, which will be featured in a forthcoming report, was recently narrowed to 100 items, including work that [TASH](#) is doing with the [SWIFT Center](#) at the [University of Kansas](#).

The recognition is much appreciated, according to TASH Executive Director Barb Trader.

"We're excited about this chance to share with other nations," she said in an email.

SWIFT focuses on creating systems that bring services to the student rather than pushing students with IEPs into separate classrooms.

TASH's role is to look at how policies can be aligned to support those efforts. At [Fox Prairie Elementary School](#) in Stoughton, Wis., for example, administrators wanted to give paraeducators a greater role in working with students who were grouped by ability level rather than disability status.

To pull that off, the district had to help the paraeducators get special ed certification, but the result was an integrated program, according to a [brief](#) on the policy alignment work.

"This dual certification allowed the district to access a wider variety of funding streams to support the use of these staff as an integral part of the integrated instructional framework," the brief said. "This strategy had the added benefit of providing a slight pay raise for the paraeducators."

Attempts to reach The Zero Project were not successful at press time, but clues to what is being done on the international front can be found in a [position statement](#) issued last year by the [International Disability Alliance](#). And if it sounds familiar to U.S. special educators' ears, it is because the themes are truly universal.

All nations must ensure that "schools welcome all students from their community and arrange for individualised supports," it says, including "a no-rejection clause . . . legal remedies to enforce the right to inclusive education [and] inclusive pre-school programs."

See also:

- [Judge approves settlement in Oregon sheltered workshop case](#) (Jan. 4)
- [Groups demand role in negotiations over Georgia disability network](#) (Dec. 1)
- [OSEP officials defend early childhood statement, cite IDEA's preference for inclusion](#) (Sept. 18)

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