Letter to the Editor Templates:

The following are sample letters to the editor that we hope will help you in drafting and submitting letters in your own community to help draw attention to *National Inclusive Schools Week*. We have tried to draft one that is strictly celebratory and one that challenges folks to recognize the work that lies ahead. We urge you to submit a letter to your local, metro or regional newspaper. Please refer to the following tips when doing so:

- **Word counts.** Most newspapers have a word count limit for letters to the editor – try to stay within the allotted word count. Most are around 200-250 words. We tried to honor word count limits here while also providing you with some room to add your own content.
- **Make it personal.** Newspapers prefer when they can integrate a local flavor to a national issue. Use the **[ ]** as place holders for locally relevant information like a personal anecdote, recent test results or student achievement data, education funding controversy, or news coverage.
- **Include the www.inclusiveschools.org** Web site on a signature line. For example,

  Sincerely,
  John Smith
  Director, ABC Organization
  National Inclusive Schools Week Partner
  Address
  Phone
  www.inclusiveschools.org

- **Submit your letter early.** Some publications require a significant lead time prior to publication. The more lead time you give a newspaper or especially a magazine, the greater the likelihood that your letter will be published.
- **Share the news.** Please be sure to share any news coverage you receive as a result of your letter to the editor with us at www.inclusiveschools.org

National Inclusive Schools Week

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Sample Letter #1:

To the Editor:
Stories appear daily about the state of our schools and their failure to meet the educational needs of our children**. [e.g. Date – article name, page]** While there is much to be done, we have made progress toward including more children into the nation's academic agenda. Not that long ago, many of our children were excluded from our classrooms, with children left out due to race, language, economic status, or mental or physical challenges. In the past 20 years, our schools have worked toward access for ALL to public education. Children who were once isolated and marginalized are now thriving, productive members of a larger school community. Children who were routinely denied educational opportunities are now discovering, exploring and, most importantly, achieving. Schools that were once homogeneous are servicing a rich array of students, and while these inclusive practices have been, at times, difficult to implement, their positive impact is clearly demonstrated through each individual success. These successes will be celebrated during *National Inclusive Schools Week*, December 4-8. While noting that there is so much more to be done, let's all applaud the progress being made every day toward building more inclusive schools and communities. To celebrate, please visit www.inclusiveschools.org.

Sample Letter #2:

To the Editor:
December 4-8, 2006 marks the 6th Annual *National Inclusive Schools Week*. The *Week* calls attention to the work our schools are doing to realize academic success for ALL students. For example, **[insert a specific local example of success]**. The adoption of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has focused much needed attention on developing a system of accountability and achievement standards. The resulting data **[date, article name page]** highlight some real challenges facing our schools. The most important of which is the significant gap in achievement for minority students, students of low socio-economic status, and students with disabilities. While many schools are making inroads in narrowing this gap, others face seemingly insurmountable obstacles in meeting the improvement goals for these students. *National Inclusive Schools Week* not only challenges all of these schools to examine their school environments and teaching practices but also offers free tools and resources to help them adopt more inclusive teaching practices. Inclusive teaching practices means presenting information in ways that are relevant and meaningful to each and every student. I challenge each school in **[insert the name of your school district, county, or state**] to join me in celebrating *National Inclusive Schools Week* and recognizing those teachers who are already making curriculum relevant for **ALL**. To celebrate, please visit www.inclusiveschools.org.

Sample #3:

To the Editor:
December 4-8th marks the 6th Annual *National Inclusive Schools Week.* During this *Week*, school districts across the country are working to educate their staff, students and parents about what it means to be inclusive. Inclusive is not about being politically correct. It is about making sure that our country's educational system works for all students including minorities, students of low socio-economic status, and students with disabilities. Research has consistently demonstrated that inclusive teaching practices are not about "dumbing down" the curriculum or teaching to the lowest common denominator but rather ensuring that the classroom offers opportunities for **ALL** children to succeed. Inclusive teaching means presenting information in ways that are relevant and meaningful to each and every student. Discussion, hands-on learning experiences and inquiry-based projects are all examples of inclusive teaching practices that have, again and again, been shown to improve academic achievement for all students. I challenge each school in **[insert the name of your school district, county, or state**] and across the nation to join me in celebrating *National Inclusive Schools Week* and recognizing those teachers who are already making their curriculum relevant for each and every child. To celebrate, please visit www.inclusiveschools.org.