RE-INVENTING SPECIAL EDUCATION: LEADERSHIP PRIORITY FOR THE NEXT TEN YEARS

Missouri Council of Administrators of Special Education

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Special Education Advisory Panel
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Fundamental Question:

- Does special education need to be re-invented in order to stay relevant and responsive in our current educational environment?

- "Take two": What do you think? Are schools today different than they were in 1975—before PL 94-142?
Major changes in the nature of school

- All students with disabilities have full access to schools & most spend most of their day in regular classrooms

- Inclusive mindset among most educators; strong awareness of the range of student needs; schools include this in planning, programming, improvement efforts

- NCLB created accountability for all students—including SWD

- Increasingly diverse student needs—mobility, poverty, non-traditional families, LEP

- Fewer students with mild learning impairments identified for special education; MTSS and RTI is replacing “wait to fail” eligibility model

- Instructional research and technological innovations have changed the nature of teaching & learning (What does FAPE look like in an on-line classroom?)
- Increasing incidence of students with autism and significant medical impairments

- Common Core Standards & College/Career Ready Expectations apply to all

- Performance-based Assessments (Smarter Balance) include all students

- Educator evaluation/retention tied to student growth
Why is MO-CASE asking this question?

- Special education operates much as it did 30 years ago, despite fundamental changes in today’s schools.

- General and special education still function as parallel systems in many schools, districts, states, and nationally.

- Educator time spent on compliance driven, legalistic sped process instead of planning/implementing specialized instruction.

- Missouri data confirms that most students with IEPs spend most of the school day in the regular education classroom—not in special education settings.

- Missouri data confirms that 70% of students with IEPs are not proficient in reading or math when they graduate—not good enough.

- Classroom & special education teachers report being inadequately prepared to meet the diversity of educational needs in today’s classrooms.
National Discussion: CASE Re-invention

Big 6 Components

- School & teacher accountability based on student growth instead of performance on a state-wide test

- Teacher competency in diagnosing learning needs & prescribing instructional interventions core areas & behavior as key certification requirements

- Universal Design for Learning and Multi-tiered Systems of Support as Foundational Frameworks for responding to the needs of all learners

- Flexibility for principals in how they use local, state, federal funds/resources

- Individual Growth plans for all students below 35%tile

- Special education eligibility only for students whose disability has significant, adverse impact on learning & development
MO-CASE Goal: Provide leadership for creating a new vision for special education in Missouri
How are we doing this?

- Step one—start with the people doing the work now
  - Interview educational leaders and key stakeholders across Missouri about their best case scenarios for the re-invention of special education
    - General education administrators—superintendents, district administrators, principals
    - Special education administrators & leaders—district, state, national
    - General and special education teachers
    - Parents of students with disabilities
    - Recent graduates or non-completers who participated in special education services
Step Two: Learn from the work of *other states currently engaged* in the re-invention of special education

- Colorado
- Florida
- Kansas
- Iowa
- Ohio
- Illinois
- Michigan
- Step Three: Identify *key practices* being implemented in MO schools/districts demonstrating success in *moving the numbers* for students within key subgroups—students with disabilities, low SES, LEP, racial minorities
Step Four: Partner with other professional educational organizations in creating the **vision**

- MASA, MAESP, MCSA, MASSP
- DESE/SEAP
- CEEDAR and IHE
- MO-CASE LASE groups
- Parent Advisory Councils
- MO CEC
- MSBA
- MSTA/MNEA
Step Five: Develop a blueprint for building the vision
Our work so far

- Building Partnerships
  - DESE
  - MASA
  - MAESP
  - CEEDAR & IHE

- Interviews with Stakeholders and Leaders
  - Over 100 individual or small group
    - State leaders
    - District leaders
    - Principals
    - National leaders in special education policy/research
    - Classroom & special education teachers

- Looking for recurring Big Ideas
SEAP ideas on the Re-invention of Special Education
1-2-4 Group Think

- Is there a need to re-invent special education (practices, policies, requirements) to better meet the needs of students in today's schools? Why or why not?

- What current special education practices/policies/requirements work well and should be continued as part of re-invention?

- What current practices/policies/requirements do not work well and need to be abandoned or re-worked?

- If you could clear the slate and create the **best case scenario** for how special and general educators work together to support students with disabilities and other special needs, what would it be?
  - How would classroom, special education, other specialists & parents work together?
  - How would classrooms and schools look/function differently?
  - What effective practices would be implemented in all schools?
  - What training/competencies would classroom/special education teachers need?
Elements of the Emerging Vision

- Single, unified educational system in which educators demonstrate the heart, mindset, skills, and confidence to teach all learners

- General education classrooms & schools as the primary learning environment for all learners

- Educational staff working in collaborative teams & using data to monitor student progress and identify/plan for students who need more than core instruction

- Universal standard of practice based on "what works" research for core and intervention instruction

- Content teachers & specialized intervention staff as full participants in school-based multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) which intervene early—as soon as we know a student is going off-track academically or behaviorally

- All students achieve the academic, social-emotional, life skills and knowledge necessary to transition into college and other post-secondary schools and/or careers as productive citizens and contributors to our global society
Missouri Collaborative Work: Focused on Effective Teaching/Learning Practices
Bridging Professional Development to Practice

WHY?
Improve learning for all students, especially students with disabilities, and improve teaching, by:
- establishing and implementing effective and efficient collaborative data teams,
- implementing with fidelity and a high degree of effectiveness a variety of teaching/learning practices which have been proven to have a high effect size on student outcomes,
- developing and administering common formative assessments to measure the effectiveness of teaching/learning practices as evidenced by student mastery of learning objectives, and
- using data-based decision making to guide decisions about classroom teaching/learning practices.

HOW?
Statewide collaborative teams developed "Learning Packages." A 'learning package' is a focused approach to professional development content that:
- addresses adult learning principles,
- upholds specific characteristics of high quality professional development, and
- focuses on implementation at the classroom level.

WHO?
Nine Regional Professional Development Centers deliver professional development using Learning Packages to over 250 Missouri buildings in over 105 districts.

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Your thoughts about the emerging vision & key components
Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead