

School District of Elmbrook

Analysis of Special Education Services

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I. Introduction

The following is a comprehensive review of special education programs and services for the School District of Elmbrook. This review includes the following areas:

- Review the infrastructure of the District to proactively serve all students
- Review of quantitative and qualitative data for students with disabilities
- Recommendations for best practice to proactively support all students

Elmbrook, like districts across the country, is responding to federal and state legislative requirements. As of 2010, more than 6 million students with disabilities were receiving special education services in the United States. Fifty-seven percent of children with disabilities were educated in general education classrooms for at least 80% of the school day and early intervention services were provided to more than 300,000 infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.¹ Yet, challenges still persist despite progress in improving achievement and reducing dropout rates. The gaps in achievement between students, with and without disabilities, persist nationally and by the vantage point of this author has reached epidemic proportions. This gap widens depending on the cultural, linguistic, and economic backgrounds of the students. African American and Hispanic students have the highest rate of being identified as in need of special education services compared to any other racial/ethnic group.² This story is true for the School District of Elmbrook, as well.

Concurrently, across the country, school districts are moving from a deficit-based model of supporting students who struggle to a proactive service delivery model. A deficit-based model is typically indicative of a wait-to-fail practice where the student is the problem and needs to be “fixed.” A proactive model is defined as one where leadership and teachers are able to cast a wide net of supports in a comprehensive and cohesive manner through high-quality universally designed instruction for all students.

In this report, district equity data will be presented, followed by a hypothesis of why such results occur, a discussion of best practices, and recommendations for the School District of Elmbrook.

¹ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. (2010). Thirty-five years of progress in educating children with disabilities through IDEA. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

² Blackorby, J. Schiller, E., Mallik, S., Hebbeler, K., Huang, T., Javitz, H., . . . Williamson, C. (2010). Patterns in the identification of and outcomes for children and youth with disabilities. Executive Summary (NCEE 2010-4006). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

II. District Demographics

The following is an overview of pertinent data for the School District of Elmbrook. The sections are divided into general demographics across elementary, middle, and high schools. Student discipline data as well as data by race, poverty, linguistically diverse, and disability is provided.

Depicted in Exhibit 1a, at the Elementary level there are 2754 students, of which 378 have disabilities (13.7%). As in most school districts across the country, a higher percentage of boys have disabilities than girls in special education (SPED).

Exhibit 1a: Elementary Demographics Relative to Disability

	District #	District %	SPED #	SPED %
All students	2754	38.7	378	13.7
Female	1369	49.7	121	32.0
Male	1385	50.3	257	67.9

African American students make up 3.1% of the district's student population, but 26.7%, or more than a quarter, of the students who are African American at the elementary level are identified with a disability. Students who are Hispanic make up 6.2% of the elementary student population, but of those students, 12.2% are identified with a disability. Students of low Social Economic Status (SES) make up almost 12% of the elementary population, but 21% of those students are identified with a disability. In addition, 5.3% (145) of the elementary students are identified as advanced students, but only 2.8% (4) of the students with disabilities are identified as gifted and talented. Thirty-one percent of the students at the elementary level are advanced in math, yet only 4% of students with disabilities are scoring in advanced in the area of math. In the area of reading, 16.2% of the elementary students are advanced, while only 5.5% of the students with disabilities are advanced.

Exhibit 1 b: Elementary Disability Demographics Relative to District

	District #	District %	SPED #	%
American Indian or Alaska Native	10	0.4	*	*
Asian Pacific Islander	376	13.7	45	11.9
Black African American	86	3.1	23	26.7
Hispanic	172	6.2	21	12.2
Multiple	87	3.1	9	10.3
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*
White	2020	73.3	279	13.8
All Students of Color	731	26.6	99	13.5

	District #	District %	SPED #	% to District
Linguistically Diverse	209	7.7	37	17.7
Low SES/Students of Poverty	328	11.9	69	21.0
Advanced Students	145	5.3	4	2.8
*Advanced in Math at Elementary level (1344 tested)	954	31.8	17	4.0
*Advanced in Reading at Elementary level	218	16.2	12	5.5

**Advanced Based on NAEPized Scores in 2011-12*

In Exhibit 2a, 1659 students are of Middle School age; of those students 12.1% are identified with a disability. Again, as in the Elementary School level, more boys are identified than girls.

Exhibit 2a: Middle School Demographics Relative to Disability

	District #	District %	SPED #	SPED %
All students	1659	23.3	201	12.1
Female	813	49.0	69	34
Male	846	51.0	132	66

At the Middle School level, 11.3% of the students are Asian Pacific Islander; only 4.3% are identified with disabilities. Yet, 5.1% of the students at the Middle School level are African American and 17.9% of those students are identified with a disability. For students who are Hispanic, 12.4% are identified as having a disability out of 4.9% of the students. Of the students, 2.4% identify as multiple ethnicities and races, and 15% are identified as eligible for special education. Students of poverty or low SES make up 11.3% of the Middle School students, but 21.8% of these students are in special education. Yet, as in the elementary schools, 10.9% are identified as advanced students and only 3.3% of students with disabilities are identified as advanced students. Twenty-nine percent of the students at the Middle School level are advanced in math, yet only 2.8% of students with disabilities are scoring in advanced in the area of math. In the area of reading, 10.1% of the Middle School students are advanced, while the percentage of students with disabilities scoring in advanced is too low to make up a subgroup.

Exhibit 2a: Middle School Demographics Relative to District

	District #	District %	SPED #	% to District
American Indian or Alaska Native	*	*	*	*
Asian Pacific Islander	188	11.3	8	4.3
Black African American	84	5.1	15	17.9
Hispanic	81	4.9	10	12.4
Multiple	40	2.4	6	15.0
	District #	District %	SPED #	% to District
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*
White	1261	76.0	162	12.8
All Students of Color	398	24.0	39	9.8
Linguistically Diverse	44	2.6	6	13.6
Low SES/Students of Poverty	188	11.3	41	21.8
Advanced Students	181	10.9	6	3.3

*Advanced in Math at Middle Level (1618 tested)	469	29.0	13	2.8
*Advanced in Reading at Middle Level	164	10.1	*	*

***Advanced Based on NAEPized Scores in 2011-12**

There are 2642 students in Elmbrook High Schools of which, 10.7% are identified as having disabilities.

Exhibit 3a: High School Demographics Relative to Disability

	District #	District %	SPED #	SPED %
All students	2642	40.0	283	10.7
Female	1351	51.1	104	7.7
Male	1291	48.9	179	13.9

Delineated in Exhibit 3b, 8.8% of the students at the High School are Asian Pacific Islander; of that population of students, the number of students meeting eligibility for special education is too low to make up a subgroup. Students who are African American make up 5.6% of the High School student population, yet 15.5% of those students are eligible for special education. Students who are Hispanic make up 3.6% of the High School student population, yet 16.8% of those students are eligible for special education. Students of poverty, or low SES, make up 11.2% of the High School student population of which 22.7% are identified with a disability. Students who are gifted and talented make up 10.8% of the High School student body, yet only 2.1% of those students with disabilities are identified as gifted and talented. Just a little over 20.8% of students at the High School level are advanced in the area of math, yet only 7% of the students with disabilities were advanced in the area of math. In the area of reading, 13.8% of the High School students scored in advanced, while the percentage of students with disabilities scoring in advanced is 8.8%. It is important to understand that students who meet eligibility for special education do so under a range of disabilities. Yet out of all the areas of eligibility, less than 2% of the students with disabilities have a mild to a significant intellectual disability that could impede academic performance and impact the percentage of students with disabilities enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Ninety-eight percent of the seniors took the ACT, but only 10% of the seniors with disabilities took the ACT. In addition, over 40% of the seniors took Advanced Placement (AP) courses, but only 1.3% of the students with disabilities took AP courses. Moreover, 100% of the students in alternative settings are identified as eligible for special education.

Exhibit 3b: High School Demographics Relative to District

	District #	District %	SPED #	% to District
American Indian or Alaska Native	7	0.3	0	0
Asian Pacific Islander	233	8.8	*	*
Black African American	148	5.6	23	15.5
Hispanic	95	3.6	16	16.8
Multiple	43	1.6	*	*
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*
White	2115	80.1	232	11.0
All Students of Color	526	19.9	51	9.7
Linguistically Diverse	22	0.8	*	*
Low SES/Students of Poverty	295	11.2	67	22.7

Gifted	285	10.8	6	2.1
Graduation Rate (2011-12)	631	98.7	86	97.6
Drop Out Rate	7	1.1	*	*
*Advanced in Math at High School 11-12	639	20.8	57	7.
*Advanced in Reading at High School 11-12 graders	639	13.8	57	8.8
Took the ACT/SAT (Seniors only - 663)	579/47	98.4	30.0	10.0
Percent in Advanced or AP courses	1068	40.9	14	1.3
Alternative School	33	0.5	33	100

****Advanced Based on NAEPized Scores in 2011-12***

Across the district, a larger percentage of students with disabilities moved or left the district than those who did not have disabilities. Overall, about 33.4% of the students in the district were identified as special education, alternative education, gifted and talented or English as a second language. That is, one third of the district population was labeled or identified to receive alternative services other than, or in addition to, the general education curriculum.

Exhibit 4: Demographics Relative to Students who Moved

	District #	District %	SPED #	SPED %
Students who moved <i>into</i> the District	878	12.3	97	11.0
Students who moved <i>out</i> of the District	128	1.8	10	7.8
All students labeled	2771	38.9	928	33.5

****Advanced Based on NAEPized Scores in 2011-12***

Total number of in-school suspensions at the K-8 level was 1.4% of those students, 50% were of poverty and 50% had disabilities. Forty-six percent of the K-8 students given an in-school suspension were African American. At the High School level, 3.6% students were given an in-school suspension, of which 32.3% had disabilities, 35.4% were of poverty, and 15.6% were African American. Out-of-school suspensions ranged from 0.5% to 1.6%, for K-8 and High School, respectively. However, almost 28% of those students were African American at the High School level. Forty to fifty percent of the out-of-school suspensions were children of poverty across the district, in a district with only 11.6% poverty.

Exhibit 5: District Discipline Data

Students	District	Truancy %	K-8 by Number and % - Duplicate Counts (224 Suspensions Total)				High School By Number and % - Duplicate Counts (224 Suspensions Total)				
			In School # (62)	In School %	Out of School # (23)	Out of School %	In School (96)		Out of School (43)		Expelled
As of March 17, 2013		≥ 5 days absent in Sem 1									
All Students	100%	24.2	62	1.4	23	0.5	96	3.6	43	1.6	0
Female	49.9	25.6	10	16.9	*	*	27	28.1	16	37.2	0
Male	50.1	23.3	49	83.1	17	73.9	69	71.8	27	62.8	0
Students with Disabilities	13.0	29.0	31	50.0	10	43.5	31	32.3	7	13.3	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.3	47.6	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	0
Asian Pacific Islander	11.2	18.9	*	*	*	*	10	10.4	*	*	0
Black African American	4.5	27.8	29	46.8	*	*	15	15.6	12	27.9	0
Hispanic	4.9	32.3	*	*	*	*	7	7.3	0	0	0
Multiple	2.4	25.1	*	*	*	*	*	*	0	0	0
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White	76.6	24.3	25	40.3	16	69.6	56	58.3	29	67.4	0
Linguistically Diverse	4.8	24.9	*	*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Low SES/ Students of Poverty	11.6	37.2	31	50.0	*	*	34	35.4	18	41.8	0
Gifted	8.6	63.8	0	0	0	0	*	*	0	0	0
Alternative School	0.5										

Students who are African American make up about 5% of the District; however, 8.5% of those students have disabilities and only 1.2% of those students are gifted and talented. Students who are African American perform about 50% less than their white peers in math and reading.

Exhibit 6. Data for Specific Students: African American

School	African American		Graduation Rate		Alternative /At Risk Education		Students with Disab.		Students who are Identified as Gifted		Adv in Math		Adv in Reading	
	AA# Not White	AA% Not White	Grad %	AA% Not White	Alt Ed#	AA% Not White	Dis %	AA% Not White	Gift-ed%	AA% Not White	Adv%	AA% Not White	Adv%	AA% Not White
District	349	4.99	96.9	96	35	5	12	8.5	10.4	1.2	75.3	34.7	54.7	21
Elementary	105	3.7	NA	NA	4	0	12.1	7.4	7.6	.04	75.8	38.6	51.7	15.8
Middle	95	5.5	NA	NA	3	0	12.2	9.5	10.8	1	75.1	33.1	54.4	23.9
Secondary	149	5.7	96.9	96	28	5	11.4	9.1	12.9	1.8	68.8	32.3	62	22.6

**Advanced Based on NAEPized Scores in 2011-12*

Students who are Hispanic make up about 4% of the District; however, 4% of those students have been identified for special education, and only 2% of the students are gifted and talented. Students who are Hispanic perform better than those students who have identified themselves as African American, but not as well as those students who are white.

Exhibit 7: Data for Specific Students: Hispanic

School	Hispanic		Graduation Rate		Alternative /At Risk Education		Students with Disab.		Students who are Identified as Gifted		Adv in Math		Adv in Reading	
	Hispanic # Not White	Hispanic % Not White	Grad %	His% Not White	Alt Ed #	His # Not White	Dis. %	His% Not White	Gift-ed%	Hi% Not White	Adv%	His% Not White	Adv%	His%Not White
District	286	4	96.9	100	35	1	12	4.5	10.4	2	75.3	59.5	54.7	36.8
Elementary	154	5.5	NA	NA	4	0	12.1	4.3	7.6	3.3	75.8	69	51.7	47.1
Middle	62	3.7	NA	NA	3	0	12.2	5.2	10.8	2.2	75.1	54.3	54.4	26
Secondary	70	2.7	96.9	100	28	1	11.4	4.4	12.9	1.2	68.8	40.9	62	36.4

**Advanced Based on NAEPized Scores in 2011-12*

Students who are linguistically diverse made up just fewer than 4% of the student population, yet they made up 17% of the students with disabilities at the Elementary School level, and too small of a number to be a subgroup at the High School level. Such a difference at the elementary level could be because of an influx of students who are linguistically diverse, movement across levels of English proficiency, or the identification of children who are linguistically diverse at the elementary level. There is a higher dismissal rate between Middle School and High School.

Exhibit 8: Data for Specific Students: Linguistically Diverse

School	Ling. Diverse	Ling. Diverse	Graduation Rate		Alternative /At Risk Education		Students with Disabilities		Students who are Identified as Gifted		Adv in Math	Adv in Reading		
	Number	% Ling. Diverse	Grad %	Ling. Diverse	Alt Ed%	Ling. Diverse	Dis. %	Ling. Diverse	Gifted%	Ling. Diverse	Adv%	Ling. Diverse		
District	276	3.9					12.0	16.7	8.6	0.3	28.6	*	13.0	0
Elementary	209	7.9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	13.7	17.7	5.3	1.4	31.8	*	16.2	0
Middle	44	2.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	12.1	1.4	10.9	0	29.0	*	10.1	0
Secondary	22	0.8	98.7	100			10.7	*	10.8	0	29.9	*	13.5	0

The District averages about 11.6% students who are economically disadvantaged. Yet, 21.5% of students with disabilities are from families who are economically disadvantaged. Only 2.3% of the students who are gifted and talented are those from economically disadvantaged families. In addition, about 28.6% of the students function in the area of advanced on the WKCE, but less than 1% of students of economic disadvantage functioned in advanced on the WKCE. Only 13% of the students

across the district functioned in advanced in reading, and less than 0.4% of students of economically disadvantaged families functioned in advanced. When reviewing the results at the elementary through secondary level, similar findings exist.

Exhibit 9. Data for Specific Students: Economically Disadvantaged or of Poverty Data

School	Students of Poverty		Graduation Rate		Alternative Education		Students with Disabilities		Students who are Identified as Gifted		Adv in Math		Adv in Reading	
	Number	Percentage	Grad %	Pov.%	Alt Ed%	Pov.%	Dis. %	Pov.%	Gifted%	Pov.%	Adv%	Pov.%	Adv%	Pov.%
District	823	11.6					12.0	21.5	8.6	2.3	28.6	0.9	13.0	0.4
Elementary	328	11.9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	13.7	21.0	5.3	2.1	31.8	0.6	16.2	0.1
Middle	188	11.3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	12.1	21.8	10.9	0.6	29.0	0.9	10.1	0.3
High School	295	11.2	98.7	91.8			10.7	22.7	10.8	3.5	29.9	0.8	13.5	0.8

**Advanced Based on NAEPized Scores in 2011-12*

Given the discrepancies between students who are white, not disabled, or of poverty, as compared to those students with disabilities, African American, and those of poverty, a proactive service delivery model must be addressed to better meet the needs of all students in Tier 1. See Appendix A for a comprehensive article. As stated in the Universal Education Project study completed in Ohio:³

When participant districts began to review available disaggregated data regarding their student populations, almost all of them recognized a marked distinction between regular education and special education student achievement. In virtually all cases, these distinctions resulted from inequitable access to the general curriculum. Growing directly out of paradigmatic shifts away from separate educational experiences for students with divergent needs, curriculum and instructional practices were changed to ensure all students gained equal access. These changes were characterized by:

- Common professional development on core content for all teaching and coaching staff such that special educators became both content and pedagogy specialists
- Physically moving students onto common campuses (across grade-levels and among students with and without disabilities)
- Supporting classroom teachers to meet the needs of students, including coaching on literacy strategies and interventions
- Realignment of district administration to reflect the unification of regular education and special education curriculum
- Increased communication of district expectations for high levels of achievement among all students
- Standardization of curriculum and textbook adoption practices for all students, common evaluation processes, and regular opportunities to practice high-stakes assessments
- Co-teaching among special and general education specialists, team-teaching, and strategic coaching
- Increased adoption of assistive technology designed to meet the needs of students across ability levels

³ Silverman, Hazelwood, & Cronin (2010). Ohio Improvement Process White Paper

- Accountability shared among all teaching staff for high levels of proficiency among all students, regardless of ability

III. Focus Group Analysis

Focus groups were used to obtain current data from teachers, student services staff, parents/guardians, administrators, as well as offered to members of the school board. Focus groups are widely recognized as an effective means of learning about people's experiences and perspectives; they are particularly effective in obtaining a breadth of information relative to a specific issue,⁴ enabling participants to express themselves in an open and flexible process.⁵ This format provided interviewees the opportunity to participate in either one or more focus groups. More than 100 personnel were interviewed. The following two general questions were asked to open the discussion:

1. What is working well for students with diverse learning needs, such as students with disabilities, in the School District of Elmbrook?
2. What are the perceived challenges regarding students with diverse learning needs, such as students with disabilities, in the School District of Elmbrook?

The interview and focus group data were coded with the research questions in mind. Coding is a systematic process whereby the data is analyzed "for regularities and patterns, as well as for topics."⁶

According to Lincoln and Guba, "[S]teps should be taken to validate each [piece of information] against at least one other source."⁷ Steps might include a second interview and/or a second method (i.e., an observation in addition to an interview, review of policy and procedures, or demographic data). Focus group members discussed their views with one another as they responded to the questions. An advantage of this process was that participants often helped each other recall details (such as the culture of the District), or they disagreed with another participant's perspective, allowing for differing perspectives to surface. Individual interviews with key participants provided the opportunity to ask follow-up questions to key issues that arose during focus group interviews.

⁴ Madriz, E. (2000). Focus groups in feminist research. In N. Y. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 835–850). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. McLeskey J., & Waldron, N. L. (2000). *Inclusive schools in action: Making differences ordinary*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Curriculum Development.

⁵ Krueger, R.A., & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

⁶ Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. (2003). *Qualitative research in education: An introduction to theory and methods* (p. 161). Needam, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

⁷ Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry* (p. 283). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

As a result of the analysis of the qualitative data, the areas of focus demarcated into three major themes:

- Theme A: Infrastructure
- Theme B: Teaching and Learning
- Theme C: Vision

Within each theme, specific categories were recognized as subthemes, followed by best practices and recommendations. See Exhibit 10 below for specifics.

Exhibit 10. Themes based on District Special Education Evaluations

A. Infrastructures Sub-Themes from Focus Group Discussions	B. Teaching and Learning Sub-Themes from Focus Group Discussions	C. Vision Sub-Themes from Focus Group Discussions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. District Office b. Building structures/clustering programs and scope classes c. Least Restrictive Environment d. Response to Intervention (RtI) e. Gifted and Talented f. Students with Significant Disabilities g. Paraprofessionals h. Student Services Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. General Education Curriculum b. Interventions c. High School Block d. Student Discipline/Behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. District Vision
Infrastructure <i>Best Practice</i> Sub - Themes	Teaching and Learning <i>Best Practice</i> Sub - Themes	Vision <i>Best Practice</i> Sub - Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. District Office b. Service Delivery c. Evolving Roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Collaborative Instruction for Large Group, Small Group and 1:1 b. Universal Design for Learning c. Co-Planning/Co-Teaching d. Personalized Learning Plans and IEP's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Vision for All Children b. Non-Negotiables c. Teaming Structures to Create Proactive Services

As stated in the Strategic Plan, the School District of Elmbrook strives to be a great place to learn, work and be viewed as such from the community and others. The district Strategic Plan addresses the following three key initiatives:

- Students and Parents recognize Elmbrook as a **Great Place to Learn** by
- Employees recognize Elmbrook as a **Great Place to Work** through
- The Community will recognize Elmbrook as a **Great School District** as we pursue and strengthen

Where appropriate, best practice sections of this report have been supported by specific key indicators delineated in the Strategic Plan.

A. Infrastructure

Current Practices

a. District Office

Many teachers interviewed, shared the changes in district office and that such changes had positively impacted school and district culture. The perception across the District was that the current administration was very supportive, concurrently set high and consistent expectations. Others discussed the increased visibility and how quickly the administration responded to needs and have increased communication in both directions. Yet, that being said, as one teacher said, “We need an entire infrastructure change. Our entire model forces more segregation.” Another stated, “Our kids are not making as much progress as they should be making.”

Currently, the School District of Elmbrook is evolving from a traditional organizational structure with a superintendent leading 6 distinct district departments: human resources, business, educational services, student services, technology, and communication to one enveloped under a teaching and learning umbrella. Each department is perceived by staff to operate under its own agenda, yet over the past year have stated that they are beginning to see a vision of excellence – with a perception of more inclusion and increased ability for all students to be successful. However, at the building level, it was clear that there were few leaders who understood the difference between creating educational supports for all students to be successful, and stating that each child has access to high quality education if they choose such opportunities.

b. Building Structures/ Clustered Programs and Scope Classes

Special educators across the district shared a level of apprehension relative to co-teaching. Concerns were raised about the need for double doses, or the opportunity to offer additional time for instruction in areas where students may struggle. Many staff saw proactive service delivery as too time consuming or laborious; therefore, leaning toward pull-out instruction. Other special educators discussed the importance of knowing what general education teachers are teaching to better parallel instruction in their self-contained classes.

At the Middle School level, some of the special education teachers discussed the importance of looping with their students to better support continuity in services and more proactive support. In addition, Middle School teachers talked about the importance of a multi-categorical unit and that parents were also interested in more self-contained classroom time at the Middle School level.

The type of service delivery across the high schools is very different. Brookfield Central High School (BCHS) is less inclusive than Brookfield East High School (BEHS). BEHS discussed how they have evolved and the importance of guided study halls and co-teaching. Many discussed how special education teachers were assigned to co-teach, but then needed to leave to support a student with behavioral needs. There were mixed reviews across every grade level and school as to whether general education “owned” all children.

Many stated that the district needs to be on the same page. Therapists and Student Services staff needs to be part and parcel of the movement to develop a model that brings the best of special education, at-risk, ELL, and advanced learning for all students. Others stated that when different disciplines are on different pages, it makes it difficult to move forward. General educators discussed the importance of continuity and gave an example that within an hour, three different adults were in their room to provide support and gave three different messages to one child. In one elementary

school, teachers added a special education classroom in order to have a room closer to the grade level of children that they were serving. General education teachers discussed the many different directions that students are pulled throughout their day.

Across the district, current caseloads for special education teachers are typically mixed grade levels and arranged by comparable disabilities such as, Significant Learning Disability (SLD), Cognitive Disability (CD), etc., often describing the most self-contained environment as multi-categorical. Many talked about resources spread too thin and not enough to do anything with but offer band-aides. Caseload worksheets are used to determine staffing patterns. Special education teachers are to describe the level of service, weight factor, and hours per week needed to support students through the IEP. In addition, some students who are eligible for early childhood services are not served in their natural environments, others are served at Burleigh Elementary school.

c. Least Restrictive Environment

Teachers talked about their reservations of serving all students; that is, “if I am being judged by the performance of my students, why would I not strive to teach the best and brightest?” Others discussed that they had many tools in their tool box, but high class sizes, behavioral needs, etc., which made it difficult to move forward. Some teachers thought since the students from Milwaukee were gone, there would be less behavior concerns and that they could be more effective.

Only 16% of students with significant learning disabilities at the elementary level are segregated between 40% and 79% of the day. However, by the time students with significant learning disabilities arrive at Middle and High School, 37% of the students receive pull-out instruction often more than 50% of their day. Students with more significant disabilities (autism and cognitive disabilities) spend the majority of their time at both the elementary and secondary levels in pull-out or self-contained classrooms. Visiting their age-appropriate classrooms “happens as often as we can make it happen given our caseloads” was the common theme.

Exhibit 11. Least Restrictive Placement

<i>Disability</i>	<i>Elementary 80-100%</i>	<i>Elementary 40-79%</i>	<i>Elementary 0-39%</i>	<i>Secondary 80-100%</i>	<i>Secondary 40-79%</i>	<i>Secondary 0-39%</i>
Autism	19	10	6	20	21	11
Cognitive Disability	1	8	7	1	7	26
Emotional Behavior Disability	11	2	1	28	14	8
Hearing Impairment	4	0	2	5	0	0
Orthopedically Impaired	4	0	2	1	2	2
Other Health Impairment	24	5	4	50	17	7
Significant Developmental Delay	3	0	8	0	0	0
Specific Learning Disability	71	14	0	140	79	3
Speech or Language Impairment	117	0	48	25	1	0
Traumatic Brain Injury	0	0	0	0	1	0
Visual Impairment	2	0	0	1	0	0

Transition services for students ages 18 to 21 with significant disabilities, or Project STRIVE, offers many opportunities for students for community-based instruction, as well as vocational training. The District works with DVR to provide paid work opportunities and transition to the world of work for many students with significant disabilities.

d. RtI

Based on focus group discussions, Response to Intervention (RtI) was described by teachers as a substitute for the Child Study Teams (CST) or Problem Solving Teams (PST). That is part of a tiered process to a special education referral. The manner in which RtI has been implemented has placed a significant concentration of effort on practices in Tier 2 and Tier 3, versus Tier 1. Others stated that RtI, "is coming," but stated that they have had little direction and did not understand RtI in its application phase, even though the School District of Elmbrook has been working on the RtI process much longer than most districts across Wisconsin.

Many teachers were completely unfamiliar with the terminology of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Discussions retreated immediately back to the importance of responding to students after they were not successful in Tier 1 or general education. Teachers often described such practices as differentiation, even though they are often implemented in reaction to a child being unsuccessful. Other teachers talked about how Tier 1 is often used to discuss who will need Tier 2 and Tier 3 based on their progress monitoring results, but little attention was given to redesigning Tier 1 to better meet the needs of all students initially. In addition, many teachers did not know if there was any difference between Tier 2 and 3 and if so, was Tier 2 general education and Tier 3 special education? In the end, many teachers discussed RtI as a band-aid model.

Response to Intervention (RtI) was intended as a framework for a proactive model. In the School District of Elmbrook, as throughout the country, RtI has been understood through a diagnostic lens; thus it is a reactionary process and has created more separate programs through interventions in addition to the programs already in place. Such models assume that skill building, remediation, and ability grouping are best practice, often requiring the least capable children to have the least cohesive and comprehensive instructional periods throughout their day. That is, the students who require information to be synthesized for them are required to synthesize the information provided to them by a range of teachers and from multiple classrooms, and even information that is missed (when pull-out interventions are being offered). Such a model has resulted in major achievement gaps between students, with and without academic needs, across the county and minimized the importance and data on acceleration (McNulty, 2012).

Little to no discussion revolved around the importance of teaching all students in the manner that they learned the first time in Tier 1 in order to maintain accelerated instructional patterns and high student achievement. In addition, many teachers reported the need for an increase in referrals to better serve students who were not successful in general education, thus increasing the number of students receiving pull-out instruction.

Referrals for special education across the district are average and typically supported by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), but also shows that the referral practices in the School District of Elmbrook remain similar to those of districts prior to RtI legislation. Districts that have moved to proactive services in Tier 1 or general education in the core curriculum find diminished referrals. In addition, the number of students meeting eligibility diminished, as student needs are met through Universal Design for Instruction within the general education curriculum.

Exhibit 12: Referral Rate by School

<i>School/Program</i>	<i>Initial Referrals</i>	<i>Completed Evaluations Resulting in Placement</i>
Birth to 3	10	10
Preschool	49	41
Brookfield El	17	10
Burleigh	17	6
Dixon	2	0
Swanson	23	15
Tonawanda	10	5
Pilgrim Park	14	5
Wisconsin Hills	10	4
Central	7	3
East	5	2
Totals	164	101

e. Gifted and Talented

Teachers raised concerns regarding the nature of services for students who are gifted and talented and stated that in some schools, students miss the last 15 minutes of math in order to receive instruction for gifted and talented support. Many felt more pull-out was needed, as it was very difficult to meet the range of student needs in the classroom. Other teachers stated that students who were gifted and talented were not getting as much as they should in “extra” support, versus discussing opportunities to develop teacher capacity so that students who are gifted and talented could benefit from high quality instruction throughout their day.

f. Students with Significant Disabilities

Below is a delineation of the number of students alternatively placed out of the district for services due to behavior, autism, and other health impairment. Out of the 11 students, almost 50% are

students of color. The district pays a total of \$183,958.00 a year to educate and transport 11 students out of the district.

Exhibit 13: Students Alternatively Placed Out of the District

Placement	School	Grade	Tuition	Transportation	Disability	Race
Kradwell	BEHS	12	15,463	District Van	EBD	
Kradwell	BCHS	11	15,463	District Van / parent	Autism	AA
Kradwell	BCHS	12	15,463	District Van	EBD	
Kradwell	BEHS	12	10,280	330	EBD	AA
Kradwell	BCHS	11	15,463	District Van	EBD	
Kradwell	BCHS	12	15,463	District Van	OHI	
Norris	WHMS	9	20,700	16,900	EBD	H
Norris	BEHS	11	20,700	16,700	EBD	AA
Kradwell	BCHS	10	7,731	District Van	LD	
Kradwell	BEHS	11	1,727	459	LD	AA
Lowell	Burleigh	EC	6,500	4,616	Hearing Imp.	
TOTAL			144,953	39,005		

There are 21 students with disabilities from the School District of Elmbrook attending Fairview South, a segregated school for students with disabilities, which Elmbrook functions as the fiscal agent. Two-thirds of the students are of high school age, and the other third are primarily elementary age. Almost 1.25 million dollars is allocated to supporting 21 School District of Elmbrook students per year at Fairview South.

Exhibit 14: Fairview South Placements

Placement	School	Grade	DOB:	Tuition	Disability	Transportation	Race
FVS - as of 11/12/12	PPMS	8	8/3/98	\$44,235.45	Autism		AA
FVS	BCHS	10	10/12/96	\$44,235.45	CD		
FVS	BEHS	9	3/26/98	\$44,235.45	moved		
FVS	BEHS	4	8/25/01	\$44,235.45	CD		
FVS	BEHS	5	7/5/02	\$44,235.45	TBI		
FVS	BCHS	12	12/20/94	\$44,235.45	OHI		
FVS	BEHS	9	5/27/98	\$44,235.45	CD		
FVS	BEHS	10	12/11/95	\$44,235.45	CD		
FVS	BEHS	9	8/13/97	\$44,235.45	Autism		
FVS	BEHS	7	9/4/99	\$44,235.45	CD		
FVS	BEHS	12	12/6/93	\$44,235.45	CD		
FVS	BCHS	5	6/8/02	\$44,235.45	CD		
FVS	BEHS	4	5/15/02	\$44,235.45	CD		
FVS	PPMS	6	6/19/00	\$44,235.45	Autism		
FVS	BEHS	10	4/4/96	\$44,235.45	Autism		
FVS	BEHS	12	2/9/93	\$44,235.45	CD		
FVS	BEHS	9	11/3/97	\$44,235.45	CD		
FVS	BEHS	10	11/18/96	\$44,235.45	CD		

FVS	BEHS	12	10/1/94	\$44,235.45	Autism		
FVS	BCHS	12	9/11/92	\$44,235.45	CD		
FVS	BEHS	9	11/3/97	\$44,235.45	CD		
FVS	BCHS	11	9/22/93	\$44,235.45	moved		
FVS	BEHS	12	3/30/94	\$44,235.45	OHI		
				\$1,017,415.35		231,451.20	

Many examples of the separation of students, with and without disabilities, within the School District of Elmbrook were discussed during the focus groups. Some examples showed the intent of inclusion, but other examples showed students being segregated and not included. For example, the program defined for students with significant disabilities at BEHS are also involved in managing a program called *Joe on the Go*, which is a coffee shop in the school. This program is managed and supported by students with significant disabilities, but could be part of an economics class where all students could be involved in managing and operating a business.

g. Paraprofessionals (Special and General Education Supports)

Paraprofessionals are currently indentified as program or child-specific support. Many special education teachers and parents stated that there was not enough paraprofessional support for students. Yet, in the schools, there were no less than six paraprofessionals in a school. Many special education teachers discussed the time it took to coordinate such a large number of paraprofessionals. Many general education teachers stated that the paraprofessionals are responsible for moving between general education rooms and wondered if that was providing appropriate support. In addition, they questioned how it would lead to teaming. Often additional staff is needed when teachers are not able to co-plan and provide each child with the appropriate support to meet his or her needs the first time – in Tier 1.

h. Student Services Staff

Student Services staff reported that they do not see themselves as part of a team for proactive services for all students. They actually described their positions as very detached and separate from each other. The school nurse reported that she is not part of the Problem Solving Teams (PBT) or Response to Intervention Teams (RtI). In general, Student Services staff did not see themselves as part of the solution to better support students who are struggling outside of what they are already doing. Many Student Services staff stated that mental health needs of students are “swept under the carpet”, as they do not fit the norm within the district. They all viewed their roles as separate from teaching and learning.

Best Practice Supported by the District Strategic Plan

FLEXIBLE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPERIENCES DESIGNED TO DEVELOP AND EMPOWER OUR EMPLOYEES, BUILD LEADERSHIP CAPACITY, AND SUPPORT ADVANCEMENT WITHIN THE DISTRICT

a. District Office

Given the district’s data summarized earlier in the report, and the fact that teachers are reportedly inconsistently providing proactive services, a deficit or unintentionally reactionary model has evolved in serving all students, especially those who struggle. The transformation from a deficit-based

program model to a proactive service delivery model is not easy or often smooth. The departments of Curriculum and Instruction, Special Education, and Student Services must be reorganized to meet the needs of each student. They must be unified under teaching and learning for each and every child to address his/her specific gifts and challenges. The District is beginning this process, and thus, modeling what they want to see within the schools. The work of the district office in providing a consistent message and role within the schools in support of all students has been greatly appreciated and noticed. In the end, both functionally and symbolically, the importance of creating an infrastructure where there is a department for Teaching and Learning for all students will be essential as the district moves forward to develop proactive services.

b. Service Delivery

The following exhibits, by school, provide a general guide for proactive staffing models by grade level and cross-categorical for special education supports for each building (assuming each school is serving the students they would serve if not labeled). In this manner, grade level or teacher-based teams can then be developed using one special education teacher to 10 students for Elementary School, one special education teacher to 12 students for the Middle School, and one special education teacher for 14 students for the High School. Assigning support staff by grade level allows teachers to develop each other's capacity at each grade level through horizontal teaming, as well as, by like-disciplines with vertical teaming. In addition, using support staff such as speech, reading, ESL, and academic support by grade level versus pull-out, continues to increase an adult capacity building model. That model better allows all children to be served all day in a proactive manner, rather than during pull-out times only. For more information regarding evolution of staff roles, see Appendix B.

Understanding that all students are attending the schools they would attend if not labeled, in Exhibits 16 – 24, an example of how staff could be aligned to create a cross-categorical teaming model by grade level is provided. In addition, support staff is aligned to grade levels to provide an example of how they could be attached to teams to better support the capacity development of all teachers. Staff that could be reallocated to other schools or positions is indicated by an asterisk. For example, some schools may need to add a special education teacher to stay within the teacher and student proactive ratios. In addition paraprofessionals are added in response to a deficit based system. In order for the system to be proactive, educational supports may need to be added to the core of instruction versus auxiliary services. As the system becomes more proactive, such deficit based responses would dissipate. Some students may continue to require additional 1:1 support throughout the day, but it is choreographed into the day proactively versus *pulling the child out* or *pushing-in* support.

Exhibit 15: Example of Grade Level Ratio of Students with Disabilities to Staff for Brookfield Elementary

Brookfield Elementary School	Number of Students /Number of Students with Disabilities	Number of Students with Disabilities by grade (not including speech only students)	Number of Students Speech and Language	Number of Special Education Teachers Recommended by Grade	Number of Para-professional	Ratio - students with disabilities/ number of Faculty*	Other support staff by building
EC	7/7	0	7	0	0		Speech
K	70/10	6	4	.5	1	.5:6	Speech
1	82/8	3	5	.25	1	.25:3	Speech
2	88/9	5	4	.5	1	.5:5	Reading
3	102/10	7	3	.5	1	.5:7	Reading
4	94/13	10	3	1.0	2	1:10	1.0 Academic Support
5	108/10	9	1	.75	1	.75:9	1.0 Academic Support
		40		3.5 total	7/10 total*	1:11	

*3 Paras that could be used differently for proactive support

Exhibit 16: Example of Grade-Level Ratio of Students with Disabilities to Staff for Burleigh Elementary

Burleigh Elementary School	Number of Students /Number of Students with Disabilities	Number of Students with Disabilities by grade (not including speech only students)	Number of Students Speech and Language	Number of Special Education Teachers	Number of Para-professional	Ratio - students with disabilities/ number of Faculty	Other support staff by building
EC	54/54	24	30	2	2	1:12	Speech
K	80/8	3	5	.5	1	1:6	Speech
1	104/16	5	11	.5	1	1:10	Speech
2	110/11	3	8	.5	1	1:6	Speech/ESL
3	117/12	7	5	.5	1	1:14	Reading
4	120/16	11	5	1.	1	1:11	Reading
5	143/20	13	7	1.	1	1:13	ESL
				3 current need 4*	6*	53.3 total	

* As an example, an additional special education could be added by exchanging paras for teachers – 2 at Burleigh and 3 at Brookfield

Exhibit 17: Example of Grade Level Ratio of Students with Disabilities to Staff for Dixon Elementary

Dixon Elementary School	Number of Students /Number of Students with Disabilities	Number of Students with Disabilities by grade (not including speech only students)	Number of Students by grade/by disability	Number of Special Education Teachers	Number of Para-professional	Ratio - students with disabilities/ number of Faculty	Other support staff by building
EC	8/8	0	8	0	0	?	
K	148/8	2	6	.5	2	1:4	
1	54/4	1	3	.5	1	1:2	
2	52/8	5	3	.5	1	1:10	
3	76/9	3	6	.5	1	1:6	
4	83/12	10	2	1.	1	1:10	
5	80/9	6	3	.5	1	1:12	
				3.5*	7	29.0 total	

* Given current numbers Dixon may need to add a .5, but one less paraprofessional or possibly more.

Exhibit 18: Example of Grade-Level Ratio of Students with Disabilities to Staff for Swanson Elementary

Swanson Elementary School	Number of Students /Number of Students with Disabilities	Number of Students with Disabilities by grade (not including speech only students)	Number of Students Speech and Language	Number of Special Education Teachers	Number of Para-professional	Ratio - students with disabilities/ number of Faculty	Other support staff by building
EC	7/7	0	7	0	0		
K	113/16	6	10	.5	1	1:12	ESL
1	101/11	7	4	.5	1	1:14	ESL
2	106/13	7	6	.5	1	1:14	ESL
3	123/13	8	5	1.	0	1:8	1.Academic Support
4	117/11	9	2	1.	0	1:9	1.Academic Support
5	120/20	19	1	1.5	1	1:8.5	
				5 total	4 total	45.32 total	

* Given current numbers Swanson may need to add a 1.0 special education teacher and reduce 3 paraprofessionals.

Exhibit 19: Example of Grade-Level Ratio of Students with Disabilities to Staff for Tonawanda Elementary

Tonawanda Elementary School	Number of Students /Number of Students with Disabilities	Number of Students with Disabilities by grade (not including speech only students)	Number of Students Speech and Language	Number of Special Education Teachers	Number of Para-professional	Ratio - students with disabilities/ number of Faculty	Other support staff by building
EC	6/6	1	5	0	0	?	
K	58/7	3	4	.5	0	1:6	.5 Academic Staff
1	67/8	3	5	.5	0	1:6	ESL
2	67/5	3	2	.5	0	1:6	.5 Academic Staff
3	84/10	7	3	.75	1	1:9	
4	63/3	3	0	.5	1	1:6	
5	62/2	1	1	.25	0	1:4	
				3 total	2 total	27.4 total	

* Given current numbers Tonawanda may need to add a 1.0 special education teacher and reduce 3 to 4 paraprofessionals.

Exhibit 20: Example of Grade Level Ratio of Students with Disabilities to Staff for PPMS

PPMS School	Number of Students /Number of Students with Disabilities	Number of Students with Disabilities by grade (not including speech only students)	Number of Students Speech and Language	Number of Special Education Teachers	Number of Para-professional	Ratio - students with disabilities/ number of Faculty	Other support staff by building
6th	250/40	34	6	3	2	1:11.3	Counselor Speech Reading
7th	280/43	42	1	3	2	1:14	Counselor Academic Support
8th	268/24	22	2	2	2	1:11	Counselor Speech Academic Support
				8 total *	6 total*	57.20total	

*Given current numbers PPMS may need to add a 2.0 special education teacher and reduce 5 paraprofessionals.

Exhibit 21: Example of Grade-Level Ratio of Students with Disabilities to Staff for WHMS

WHMS School	Number of Students /Number of Students with Disabilities	Number of Students with Disabilities by grade (not including speech only students)	Number of Students Speech and Language	Number of Special Education Teachers	Number of Para-professional	Ratio - students with disabilities/ number of Faculty	Other support staff by building
6th	284/31	27	4	2	2	1:13	Counselor Speech Reading
7th	299/24	21	3	2	2	1:11	Counselor Academic Support
8th	283/26	35	1	3	3	1:12	Counselor Speech Academic Support
				6.5 total	7 total	62.45 total	

*Given current numbers WHMS may need to add a .5 special education teacher and reduce 3 paraprofessionals.

Exhibit 22: Example of Grade-Level Ratio of Students with Disabilities to Staff for BCHS

BCHS School	Number of Students /Number of Students with Disabilities	Number of Students with Disabilities by grade (not including speech only students)	Number of Students Speech and Language	Number of Special Education Teachers	Number of Para-professional	Ratio - students with disabilities/ number of Faculty	Number of Students in Other Locations/ Locations/ Estimated Cost
9 th	348/41	38	3	3	2	1:12	Counselor Speech RtI G&T
10 th	310/28	28	0	2	2	1:14	Counselor Rti G&T
11 th	339/29	29	0	3	2	1:14.5	Counselor RtI
12 th	296/33	33	0	3	2	1:16.5	Counselor RtI
				11 total	8 total	86.03 total	

* Given current numbers BCH may need to add a 2 special education teachers and reduce 2 paraprofessionals.

Exhibit 23: Example of Grade-Level Ratio of Students with Disabilities to Staff for BEHS

BEHS School	Number of Students /Number of Students with Disabilities	Number of Students with Disabilities by grade (not including speech only students)	Number of Students Speech and Language	Number of Special Education Teachers	Number of Para-professional	Ratio - students with disabilities/ number of Faculty	Number of Students in Other Locations/ Estimated Cost
9th	324/31	27	4	2	2	1:13.5	Counselor Speech RtI G&T
10th	333/44	43	1	3	3	1:14	Counselor Rti G&T
11th	311/24	24	0	2	2	1:12	Counselor RtI
12th	334/42	41	1	3	3	1:13.6	Counselor RtI
				10 total	10 total	86.34 total	

* Given current numbers BEHS may need to add a .5 special education teacher and reduce 2 paraprofessionals.

c. Early Childhood

For children 3 and 4 years old, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) supports and encourages placement of students 3 through 5 in integrated community settings. Such placements are not limited to specific disabilities. The Department of Public Instruction began collecting district data on integrated placements in community settings during the 2009-10 academic year. The following DPI indicator 6 supports the current move to integrated placements:

Preschool Educational Environment: Percent of preschool children with disabilities who received special education and related services in settings with typically developing peers (e.g., early childhood settings, home, and part-time early childhood/part-time early childhood special education settings).

c. Paraprofessionals

Although parents are pleased with the support of many paraprofessionals, much work should be completed to create proactive structures, as the role of paraprofessionals often becomes one of responding to student failure. Parents are of the mind that for their child to receive appropriate instruction they have to have a paraprofessional. There is a culture that permeates throughout the district that gifted and talented students or those students with disabilities or perceived needs cannot get their needs met within the core curriculum, therefore a separate “house” must be set-up to support what does not happen within the general education classroom. Interestingly, the district office understands that the core is the most essential place for learning to occur for all children and therefore must be strengthened, versus additional paraprofessionals added on to remediate what should have been provided prior to any child having to experience failure. Paraprofessional roles must transform to work as part of a proactive structure at the core of teaching and learning through professional development (Zehnder, 2009).⁸

⁸ <http://csus-dspace.calstate.edu/bitstream/handle/10211.9/682/ZEHNDER%2c%20NATALIE%20ANN%20SPRING%202009.pdf?sequence=1>

d. Student Services Staff

All systems must function in a proactive manner, including school nurses, counselors, and school psychologists in order to move into a proactive service delivery system for all students, summarized in Appendix A of this report. According to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, “*Collaborative pupil services* refer to how pupil services professionals work together to meet the needs of all students. School districts are struggling to move from the traditional approach of pupil services programming with professionals from each discipline working in isolation to pupil services staff working as a team and in conjunction with teachers, administrators, parents/families, and community partners. To support an integrated comprehensive service delivery system of support, all student service personnel must work in conjunction with leadership and teachers. See Appendix B & C for evolution of roles. As the Department of Public Instruction has stated, “a collaborative model increases the effectiveness of the services provided by utilizing available resources most efficiently”⁹.

The goals of a collaborative pupil services system are to:

- Increase academic achievement
- Help students to become confident, caring, and contributing citizens
- Provide students with comprehensive, coordinated, integrated, and customized supports that are accessible, timely, and strength-based
- Involve families, fellow students, educators, and community members as integral partners in the provision of a supportive, respectful learning environment
- Integrate the human and financial resources of public and private agencies to create caring communities at each school.¹⁰

Program Support Teachers/Diagnosticians

Currently, the district has four diagnostic teachers who provide support to each building. The primary roles of each diagnostic are aligned in the following manner:

- Transition Coordinator for secondary
- One elementary Program Support Teacher/Diagnostic
- One secondary Program Support Teacher/Diagnostic
- One Speech and Language Program Support Teacher/Diagnostic

The evolution of diagnostic teachers to provide facilitation and coaching must go hand-in-hand with a capacity building model. In this way, they become a leader of reform. Such positions are necessary on the building service delivery teams, as well as district-wide service delivery team. Special education teachers must become more comfortable to complete their own assessments and analysis of results in order to better develop proactive IEP's.

School Counselors

The role of the *School Sounselors* must also evolve as any school or district moves from a deficit-based model to a proactive service model. Such a transformation is in alignment with the National Center for Transforming School Counselors, as reflected in the following excerpt:

⁹ <http://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/pdf/psscandc.pdf>

¹⁰ *Enhancing Wisconsin's Learning Support Systems: Students Ready to Learn, Wisconsin Alliance of Pupil Services Organizations*

Educational equity in a democratic society requires that all children have equal access to high-quality teaching and curricula—and all the support they need to succeed. But low-income students and students of color continue to be systemically denied access to an education that ensures they are ready for both college and a career. The gaps in opportunity and achievement that separate low-income students and students of color from other young Americans remain unacceptably wide. ...These education professionals, through advocacy and active concern, create transformative conditions and systemic change.

According to *transforming School Counselors*, “school counselors must focus attention on students for whom schools have been the least successful—low-income students and students of color. Counselors must concentrate on issues, strategies, and interventions that will help close the achievement gap between these students and their more advantaged peers. School counselors are accountable and measure success by demonstrating how their activities contribute to increasing the numbers of all students completing school academically prepared to choose from a wide range of substantial postsecondary options, including college.” See Appendix C for more information.

English and Second Language Students

The faculty and staff at large, not merely the responsibility of bilingual specialists, should also share an integrated and comprehensive approach for students with English as a Second Language. While some language support models (e.g., developmental bilingual and dual language) promote bilingualism, all language support models attempt to cultivate proficiency in English.

Since academic English needs to develop in the content areas, general education teachers must play a central role in fostering this. However, these teachers benefit from consultative and co-teaching arrangements with colleagues who may have more extensive expertise in bilingual and bicultural education. Instead of simplifying tasks or reducing the curriculum, such arrangements can help classroom teachers scaffold students as they develop language proficiency (Gibbons, 2002). Such collaborative practices are essential so that students develop language proficiency within linguistically heterogeneous settings. As Wong Fillmore and Snow (2000)¹¹ asserted, to develop academic English, students “must interact directly and frequently with people who know the language well enough to reveal how it works and how it can be used” (p. 24). In addition to directly supporting English language proficiency, this collaboration, when possible, should simultaneously support native language fluency, since research shows that native language literacy promotes the development of English language proficiency (Goldenberg, 2008; Slavin & Cheung, 2005; United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 1953)¹².

Content-based English as a Second Language is an approach making use of instructional materials, learning tasks, and classroom techniques from academic content areas as the vehicle for developing language, content, cognitive and study skills. English is used as the medium of instruction. A part-time teacher is available with a wide variety of other supports in place based upon specific student need.

¹¹ Wong Fillmore, L., & Snow, C. (2000). What teachers need to know about language. Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics.

¹² Goldenberg, C. (2008, Summer). Teaching English language students: What the research does—and does not—say. *American Educator*, 8-23, 42-44.
Slavin, R. E., & Cheung, A. (2005). A synthesis of research on language of reading instruction for English language students. *Review of Educational Research*, 75, 247-284.

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. (1953). *The use of vernacular languages in education*. Paris, France: Author.

School Nurse

The National Association of School Nurses position for registered professional school nurses, is “the leader in the school community to oversee school health policies and programs”. The school nurse serves in a pivotal role to provide expertise and oversight for the provision of school health services and promotion of health education.

- The school nurse provides health care to students and staff
- The school nurse performs health screenings and coordinates referrals to the medical home or private healthcare provider
- The school nurse serves as a liaison between school personnel, family, community and healthcare providers to advocate for healthcare and a healthy school environment (National Association of School Nurses / American Nurses Association [NASN / ANA], 2005)¹³.

Educator roles in pull-out programs are based on teacher specialization and student labels. In pull-out programs, staff adheres to their professional, expert roles that limit adult learning opportunities and professional growth. Moreover, when structures isolate students, they also isolate educators. When educators are isolated from each other, they do not share knowledge and expertise with each other, precluding the development of teacher expertise across a range of students. For example, support staff in a program model may be comfortable teaching segregated math and adapted language arts classes, while hesitant to provide support in general education classes in science and math because they are unsure about their ability to do so. Therefore, students with needs are placed in segregated math classes due to the teaching abilities of staff, and denied a rich curriculum in the regular math content classes. In turn, students performed quite poorly on the math section of the state-wide accountability assessment.

A persistent assumption that fuels this adherence to expert roles is a belief that certification in a specialty area means that an educator possess highly specialized, “magical,” esoteric skills that no one else can ever learn. Professional associations and professional accrediting or certification bodies reinforce this expert view (Skrtic, 1995)¹⁴. For example, in pull-out programs, a social worker can be the only person who conducts personal history reviews with students and makes contacts with families, and no other staff person volunteers or is assigned to share in those duties. Likewise, in pull-out programs, a middle school guidance counselor provides career guidance to individual and groups of students, facilitates support groups for students, and for students with various problems meets with these students individually. Rarely do other staff members currently share these duties, but in order to function in a preventative and transdisciplinary manner, they must share expertise.

As schools transform into institutions that are responsible for the advancement and failure of all students, all roles must evolve from those that have traditionally been defined to those moving beyond what has been defined as inclusive education to what we now know as integrated comprehensive services for all students. Such a shift of roles allows for a much smoother transition to proactive services discussed earlier in this report.

¹³ National Association of School Nurses / American Nurses Association [NASN / ANA], 2005

Recommendations for Infrastructure

1. *District office should continue to merge the leadership for Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, and Support Services to proactively support all students under a Teaching and Learning structure for all students.*
2. *All students should attend the school and classroom they would attend if not labeled:*
 - A. *Students attending schools outside of the district will be brought back at the natural transitions or grandfathered through their current placement*
 - B. *Students attending Fairview South will be grandfathered through Fairview. Elmbrook will make a strong effort to serve all students in the schools and classroom they would attend if they did not have a disability.*
 - C. *Elmbrook Schools will provide services for students with significant disabilities in the schools and classrooms they would attend if not disabled (see Appendix D for further discussion).*
3. *Caseloads for special education should be developed by grade-level as much as possible, across all disabilities (including students with cognitive disabilities).*
4. *All students should receive instruction within the core curriculum and electives, supported by teacher-based teams or grade-level teams.*
5. *Paraprofessionals should be part of each grade-level or teacher-based team to provide proactive services based on the co-developed lesson plans from the grade level teams.*
6. *Rtl or Child Study Teams should stay intact for vertical support team process.*
7. *All Student Services staff should be used to lead proactive services for all students through providing support to the teacher-based teams at Tier 1 as well as serving on the building and district level service delivery or leadership teams in support of proactive services.*
8. *All staff should receive professional development to move from a traditional deficit-based or reactionary system to a proactive system of supports:*
 - A. *How their current model is linked to a deficit-based system, resulting in outcomes discussed throughout this report*
 - B. *Evolution of their individual roles and responsibilities from a traditional model to a proactive service delivery model*
 - C. *Goals and objectives to create a proactive system through the teaming structure defined under Vision*

B. Teaching and Learning

Current Practices

a. General Education Curriculum

The district has implemented a scope and sequence framework for Language Arts with the other content areas to follow suit. Special education staff stated that they were not included in the professional development provided in the area of Language Arts. Many special education teachers believed that there was a lack of curriculum for students with disabilities in segregated programs that often negate the importance of core curriculum. General educators spoke of differentiation, but when asked to provide an example, differentiation was often described as ability grouping or tracking. Tracking is highly practiced across the district and

perceived to be the most effective means of instruction. Yet, clearly the data for students who are struggling continues to be problematic, most likely due to the use of ability grouping or tracking, versus the use of acceleration for all children. As McNulty and Hattie have clarified, acceleration has the most impact on student learning over enrichment and ability grouping.

Exhibit 24: Relative Impact on Student Learning



Hattie, 2009,2012; McNulty 2012

b. Interventions

Teachers discussed the importance of not pulling students out of math or reading and that Tier 2 interventions would be offered using programs like Early Reading Intervention (ERI), Jolly Phonics, SRA Number Worlds, Wilson Reading System, and Just Words; a Wilson language training method. Double doses are offered for students who are struggling in the areas of reading and math. Often students are pulled from science and social studies, beginning at 4th grade, to receive intervention in those specific areas of concern. High School teachers raised concerns that students were entering 9th grade with little to no instruction in the areas of science and social studies from 3rd grade on. Consistently, teachers ask the question of whether an accommodation or an intervention was needed in place of discussion about how to provide Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Other teachers discussed the fact that children were leaving their room for intervention and often were not their most *neediest* of children. In addition, the amount of pull-out was making it difficult to offer comprehensive instructional time. Many discussed the differences between special education interventions and general education interventions, which is just as confusing as it sounds. Special education teachers believed that general education teachers were very accommodating in that they would “try some differentiation, then special education teachers would come in and do more differentiating.” Staff discussed the need for accommodations and modifications, which is part and parcel of a reactive model. That is, a model where teachers teach to a normed group of students and then accommodate or modify after-the-fact to assist students who were not able to receive the instruction in the manner it was provided the first time. Teachers discussed the importance of teaching a discrete skill set, but little discussion occurred in regards to how to integrate that skill set into the general education curriculum. Once students are identified for

math support in elementary school they are tracked throughout the entire system. Teachers have the will and desire to be successful, yet will require professional development to move out of a system, which has evolved over decades, to better meet the needs of all students in a proactive manner.

Wilson Reading System

Wilson Reading System dominated many discussions with both special and general educators and has become the “cure all.” Teachers are specifically trained in the Wilson Reading System (WRS), and when students have complications with reading they are offered Wilson. Many teachers spoke of concerns regarding how long students were in the Wilson series, as in years. Some students began Wilson in 3rd grade and continue to use the Wilson system in Middle School. Others spoke of the poor fit to the child’s reading needs and the language program, or that the system was set up for specific students, but used with students identified for special education throughout the district. Based on the district data, all students receiving Wilson reading instruction are eligible for special education. Concurrently, others spoke of the benefits and how they need to create more time for students to have reading time using Wilson. Another teacher stated that there is little carryover from reading and writing in the classroom.

Exhibit 25. Summary of Wilson Reading Program Data

School	Number of Students	Least to Most Years	Average Gain	Time/Week
BCHS	3	2	1.1	3x/week
BEHS	5 DATA INCOMPLETE	1		4-5
PPMS	22	1-3	4.0	3-5
WHMS	23 DATA INCOMPLETE	1-5		5x/week
BURLEIGH	17	1-4		5x/week
BROOKFIELD ELEM	11	2	1-2	3-5
DIXON	5	1-2	.5-1	3-5
TONAWANDA	6 DATA INCOMPLETE	1-2		3-5
SWANSON	16	2-3	1-2	3-5
TOTAL	108	Average 2	Average 1	Average 4

There is a perception, among those interviewed, that 50% of the students with disabilities are being provided Wilson Reading System; however, it is closer to one third of the students with disabilities are not receiving instruction within the general education curriculum. Teachers stated that when students have had “Wilson for over three years, we should be seeing progress in the classroom in the areas of reading and writing.” Other’s discussed that there was no connection to text or even carryover. The program is disconnected from the MAP scores and running record.

c. Co-Teaching

Teachers discussed that they have little scheduled shared planning time and find that they co-plan on “the fly” for teaming situations. Many discuss co-teaching as the only way to include students with disabilities. Both general and special education teachers defined co-teaching as the answer to “inclusion” but have not challenged the notion that the lack of natural proportions of students in need, in one class, goes against best practice. Many general

education teachers are asking for more information as to what is in the child's IEP. The lack of alignment of all staff makes it very difficult for staff to co-plan and share expertise, to better develop each other's capacity.

Teachers at BEHS talked about co-teaching and the benefits, but felt it was difficult to co-plan and co-teach every class. In addition, at the High School, special education teachers believe that the block schedule was too long for students with disabilities to be in specific content courses and that it was difficult to arrange for pull-out instruction during the day. However, teachers at BEHS found it very useful, as an intervention block, as the time is used to support student learning from a range of content experts. Others believed that they had to pull a student for 90 minutes to provide a 15 minute intervention.

d. Student Discipline/Behavior

Within the current model of co-teaching, special education teachers discussed how they are often pulled from the general education classroom to "sit" with a student with high behavioral needs. Little discussion occurred regarding teaching appropriate behavior. Positive Behavioral Intervention Systems (PBIS) are referred to differently depending on the school. Many stated that the School Psychologists work with teachers on Functional Assessments (FAs) and Behavioral Intervention Plans (BIPs). Teachers believe that the School Psychologists are the behavioral experts.

Currently, of the students receiving in-school suspensions, 32% at the High School level and 50% at the Elementary Level, have disabilities. In addition, a significant percentage of African America students and students of poverty receive a disproportion of discipline referrals. Often there is a relationship between how students are engaged in their academics and how they behave in school. For example, in Exhibit 5, 30% of the school suspensions at the High School were African American and 50% were students of poverty, yet when cultural relevance was discussed in the focus groups, few teachers understood how to teach in culturally relevant ways.

Best Practice Supported by the District Strategic Plan

PROVIDING A STANDARDS-BASED, PERSONALIZED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT THAT FLEXIBLY MEETS THE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS AND INSPIRES OWNERSHIP OF LEARNING.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR STUDENTS TO PURSUE EXCELLENCE IN THE AREAS OF ACADEMICS, ARTS, ATHLETICS, AND ACTIVITIES

a. Collaborative Instruction for Large Group, Small Group and 1:1

To develop a capacity building model, students with a range of disabilities from mild to significant, must be placed in natural proportions in grade level classrooms with their nondisabled peers. In this manner, personalized or individualized instruction is seamlessly tied to and grounded in the core curriculum and instruction of the school. Much work must be completed to assist in changing perceptions of who is "of value" and who is not. Cultural relevancy will be imperative. Cultural relevance is not a curriculum, but a way of knowing different cultures and how we have come to be a society where inequities are cultivated

through our educational system. When this understanding occurs, educators are better able to be culturally relevant¹⁵ and differentiate curriculum.¹⁶ Culturally relevant means that the curriculum addresses the various families, cultures, races, and ethnicities of students in the classroom, community, and globally—not as an added component but seamlessly woven into the curriculum. Differentiated curriculum is curriculum that is designed to address a range of student needs and achievement levels. Such curriculum is developed under the principle of universal access.¹⁷ Universal access means that a lesson is initially designed for a range of student needs and ability levels within the classroom using large group, small group, and 1:1 flexible and heterogeneous grouping patterns versus developing a lesson or curriculum and then deciding after the fact how students with significant disabilities may benefit. When supports are arranged through an integrated service model rather than one that is driven by programs and student labels, special and general educators are able to develop a blend of different co-teaching options and proactively support students with significant disabilities without defying what we know as natural proportions of all students, discussed earlier in the report.

b. Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

There seems to be a lack of connection between instructional practices, referrals, and eligibility. The application of the Response to Intervention (RtI) could be useful, but most likely will not solve the issue without major infrastructure changes, as teachers often refer to the supports as “The RtI Program” and the importance of “identifying students who need help and get them to the RtI people”. There continues to be a perception of IQ scores, and that when students have low IQ’s, teachers cannot *fix them*. Such thinking creates a cloud of perception that if a child is referred and found eligible, he will go away to receive services that can help him academically or behaviorally. As long as this perception is in place, the lack of ownership and understanding that all teachers need to work together to support children will continue. Thus, the School District of Elmbrook, must ask, “what can we do to meet the needs of this child” versus, “based on this child’s challenges, where does he need to go to get services”. When this occurs, the capacity of all educators evolves on a daily basis formally and most often informally through the expertise of others. The changes need to occur at the location level (where children receive instruction), the philosophical level (who is responsible for instruction), and the procedural level (how will such an endeavor occur and be sustained).

David H. Rose is a useful source for information regarding Universal Design for Learning through the website (www.cast.org), as well as a collection of articles and videos on the practical classroom dimensions of the UDL revolution in education. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) stands at the forefront of contemporary efforts to create universal access to educational curricula for all students, including those with disabilities. The “universal” in UDL does not mean there is a single optimal solution for everyone. Instead, it underscores the need for flexible approaches to teaching and learning that meet the needs of different kinds of students. In this way, insights on student differences, the capacities of new media in the classroom, and effective teaching and assessment practices can be provided to assist teachers

¹⁵ Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The dream keepers: Successful teachers of African American children*. Jossey-Bass Publishers. San Francisco, CA.

¹⁶ Tomlinson, C. (2001). *How to differentiate instruction in mixed-ability classrooms* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

¹⁷ Bremer, C. D., Clapper, A. T., Hitchcock, C., Hall, T., & Kachgal, M. (2002, December). Universal design: A strategy to support students’ access to the general curriculum (NCSET Information Brief Vol. 1 No. 3). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, National Center on Secondary Education and Transition

in creating universal access to education for all students (Harvard University Press)¹⁸.

The will to be effective with all students is clearly a desire for all teachers. Some teachers and administrators believed that tracking practices were working. In the end, there was a resounding affirmation that “*expectations are minimized the minute a student meets eligibility for special education.*” Yet, there were others who discussed the need for tracking to accommodate the range of students in order to assist each child.¹⁹

Jeannie Oakes (2000),²⁰ is a professor, who has completed research on the effects of tracking for decades. The following are common and predictable variables of tracking according to Oakes:

The intellectual performance of students is judged, and these judgments determine placement with particular groups.

Classes and tracks are labeled according to the performance levels of the students in them (e.g., advanced, average, remedial) or according to students' postsecondary destinations (e.g., college-preparatory, vocational).

The curriculum and instruction in various tracks are tailored to the perceived needs and abilities of the students assigned to them.

The groups that are formed are not merely a collection of different but equally-valued instructional groups. They form a hierarchy, with the most advanced tracks (and the students in them) seen as being on top.

Students in various tracks and ability levels experience school in very different ways.

Two primary assumptions support tracking. First, that tracking promotes overall achievement and second, less academically successful students will suffer instructionally and emotionally in courses with peers who are more capable (Oakes, 2008). Many believe that tracking is the only instructional option and provides differentiation to assist all students in being successful; however, the data does not support such contention:

Although existing tracking systems appear to provide advantages for students who are placed in the top tracks, the literature suggests that students at all ability levels can achieve at least as well in heterogeneous classrooms.

Students who are not in top tracks--a group that includes about 60% of Senior High School students--suffer clear and consistent disadvantages from tracking. Among students identified as average or slow, tracking often appears to retard academic progress. Indeed, one study documented the fact that the lowered I.Q. scores of Senior High School students followed their placement in low tracks.

Students who are placed in vocational tracks do not even seem to reap any

¹⁸ Rose, D. H., & Meyer, A. (Eds.). (2006). *A practical reader in universal design for learning*. Boston, MA: Harvard Education Press

¹⁹ Jeannie Oakes (2008). Keep track: Structuring Equality and Inequality in an Era of Accountability may be a useful resource for Indian Prairie educators

²⁰ Jeannie Oakes (2000). Keeping Track, Part 1: The Policy and Practice of Curriculum Inequality in Equity Materials.

benefits in the job market. Indeed, graduates of vocational programs may be less employable and, when they do find jobs, may earn lower wages than other High School graduates.

Most tracking research does not support the assumption that slow students suffer emotional strains when enrolled in mixed-ability classes. Often the opposite result has been found. Rather than helping students feel more comfortable about themselves, tracking can reduce self-esteem, lower aspirations, and foster negative attitudes toward school. Some studies have also concluded that tracking leads low-track students to misbehave and eventually to drop out altogether.

The net effect of tracking is to exaggerate the initial differences among students rather than to provide the means to better accommodate them. For example, studies show that senior high school students who are initially similar in background and prior achievement become increasingly different in achievement and future aspirations when they are placed in different tracks (Oakes, 2008).

b. Co-Planning/Co-Teaching

In pull-out programs, the limited expertise of staff contributes to where students are placed. Whereas, where students are placed limits the expertise of staff. All students require small and large group instruction, and at times, one on one instruction, as part and parcel of a co-planned lesson using the general education curriculum, rather than expecting students with educational or behavioral needs to leave the classroom to receive instruction. A proactive service model requires educators to share their knowledge across disciplines (special education, at-risk, bilingual, Title I reading, etc.) with their peers and with the students they teach in a range of educational environments through co-planning and co-teaching. See Appendix E for a sample common template.

As such, with an integrated model, staff roles pivot around developing teacher capacity to teach a range of students in their classrooms. Given that only 21% of teachers feel well prepared to address the needs of labeled students (U.S. Department of Education, 2000²¹); building teacher capacity becomes the primary goal. All staff development and all decisions about service delivery are aimed toward building staff capacity to work with a range of student needs. See Appendix A for more information – specifically Middle School schedule example, as well as Appendix D for Grade Level Teaming Responsibilities.

c. Student Personalized Learning Plans/Individualized Educational Plans (IEP)

Many, but not all, parents in the focus group stated that they did not always believe that they were equal members at the IEP table. In addition, parents believed the IEP was not always data

²¹ -U.S. Department of Education (2000). *To assure the free public education of all children with disabilities*. Twenty-second Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

driven and there were concerns about the timely return for IEP drafts. The building principals function as the LEA on the IEPs, but may or may not know the student's situation well. As the District eases into personalized learning plans (PLP) for all students, the proactive usage of all individualized plans will become more consistent. It will be important to have flexible meeting times for families as well, or better incorporate into parent-teacher-student led conferences using PLPs and IEPs at a glance for all teachers.

Recommendations for Teaching and Learning

1. *All students should receive instruction based on universal design for learning principles within the common-core. The more proficient teachers become, the less pull-out and tracking will occur, which will result in less marginalization of students with disabilities, color, and poverty.*
2. *Interventions, such as Wilson, Read 180, etc. should be used in Tier 1, if in fact such methodologies match the learning styles of the students receiving the instruction.*
3. *Response to Intervention (RtI) should be used to drive high quality accelerated instruction for all students based on "how" they learn within the core-curriculum, or in Tier 1.*
4. *A strong emphasis on teaching appropriate behavior should occur in the context of a welcoming climate for all students while adhering to the tenants of PBIS.*
5. *Students with significant behavior should receive the most proactive instruction from the most highly qualified staff.*
6. *Proactive behavioral plans should be written for each child who falls into the 30% to 50% of the students of poverty receiving in-school and out-of school suspensions.*

C. Vision and Non-negotiables

Current Practices

a. District Vision

In the end, many teachers discussed how successful the district has been for the majority of students, yet how it perpetuates a very antiquated approach for students who are struggling. Thus, unknowingly creating the potential for more struggling students. Staff appreciated the listening sessions throughout the district with the district office administrators and believed very positive changes were in store for the district. Although, all focus groups stated that the district did not have a consistent vision; however, they believed that there was more consistency now with the change in district office administration. Yet, what permeated the

focus groups the most was an underlying perception that specific groups of students either could not learn, were not “fitting in” to the Elmbrook norm, or that discipline data was better after the district made a decision to stop taking students from Milwaukee Public Schools, under Chapter 220 legislation. Such underlying perceptions and belief systems mirrored the district data of those students who were and were not successful. Therefore, although teachers stated that they really want to help all children succeed, there was a strong perception of who can achieve and who cannot achieve. Such a perception may negatively impact student achievement when reinforced with the perception that the district is doing the best that they can around the majority of children – the *Elmbrook way*.

The *Elmbrook norm* perception was reinforced during teacher discussions of how important their work is and the need to do well for all students, followed by a *but*; we can only do what we can for *those students* who are not successful. Many staff talked about their needs over the needs of children, as stated by one administrator, *we are a teaching organization, but need to be a learning organization*. There is a perception that gifted and talented and student athletes are valued more than other children. Others stated that, “high flyer kids take all the time. Hard to check on the other kids because of numbers.”

Students with disabilities, poverty, and those who are African American continue to struggle behaviorally and academically within the School District of Elmbrook. Although teachers and administrators have the interest to be successful with all students, there are unacknowledged low expectations for students with disabilities and African American students that may inhibit, if not deter, the progress of these students. The burden is often beyond a child’s control when adults have low expectations for students with disabilities and/or students of color. The act, unintentional as it may be, of marginalizing students, as reported by Murray and Clark (1990)²², is a significant contributing factor to the disparate achievement gap and success rates between students of color and their white peers (as cited in Theoharis, 2002, p.2.)

First person language is also important. Yet, many educators used the words such as normal, resident students, our students, their students, intervention students, SLD students, CD students, our low students, speds, etc. Many felt uncomfortable with their terminology and apologized for their language but did not know how to refer to students who they believed did not fit the *Elmbrook norm*.

Best Practice

a. Vision for All Children

The School District of Elmbrook is asking the necessary questions to address the needs of all students and setting the expectation that they can and will be successful with *all* students. That being said, one of the first steps forward is to develop a unified vision. The District has a reputation of excellence within the Milwaukee metropolitan area and the state of Wisconsin. Yet, over the past two decades the school district has, as some interviewees stated, become “*a visionless district*” and responded to new legislation (Response to Intervention –RtI) with an increase in pullout and self-contained programs. Teachers, administrators, and families articulated their desire to learn from the past but, more importantly, to address the disparities

²² Murray, C. & Clark, R. (1990). Targets of racism. *American School Board Journal*, 30-39

in achievement across students who are academically and behaviorally successful and those who are not and sustain such a course of action.

A proactive integrated service delivery approach has been called for by a number of researchers in the field (Burrello, Lashley, & Beatty, 2000²³; McLeskey & Waldron, 2000²⁴; Will, 1986²⁵). This approach requires schools to align educational services for students with special educational needs, English as a second language, at-risk, gifted and talented, and Response to Intervention (RtI) within the existing structures (grade-levels, multi-age groupings, looping, etc.) rather than through special and pull-out programs. Professional staff is organized by the needs of each student rather than clustering students by label. In this model, staff are not assigned to a “unit or program” and placed in a separate classroom. Instead, specialist and general education teachers work in collaborative arrangements designed to bring appropriate instructional supports to each child in the general school environment or Tier 1. In this manner, an integrated home base for all students in support of their right to belong within general education is established (Brown, 1989). Moreover, a variety of curricular and pedagogical options are employed to maximize student learning in large group, small group, and one to one teaching arrangements in environments which can be accessed by all students, not just those with specific disabilities.

The importance of language cannot be overlooked. If the district uses deficit-based language, or language where a child is described by their area of need, it will maintain a perception of those who can and cannot succeed. That is, children are people before their label and should be defined as such. For example, a child with autism versus the autistic child, or a child who is linguistically diverse versus the ELL’s, or the Tier 2 kids versus students who are receiving such and such instructional opportunities.

b. Non-Negotiables

The School District of Elmbrook must determine their non-negotiable or core convictions to assist in determining appropriate service delivery options. The following are offered as examples:

- Developing a vision where the system is responsible for student failure and continued advancement behaviorally and academically.
- Confirming that the primary goal of education is to prevent student failure and that goal is specifically communicated, implemented, monitored, and promoted.
- Valuing students and staff and seamlessly tying instruction to and grounded in the core of teaching and learning beginning with how each child learns and how each student shows what they know the most often.
- Developing and sustaining a culture where all teacher teams (comprised of teachers supporting general and special education, ELL, at-risk, and instruction for advanced students) consider and plan for the range of students within every classroom and across the grades – before they even enter the room, ensuring an inclusive and proactive equitable instruction using heterogeneous grouping patterns.

²³ Burrello, L. C., Lashley, C., & Beatty, E. E. (2000). *Educating all students together: How school leaders create unified systems*. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin.

²⁴ McLesky, J. & Waldron, N. (2002). Inclusion and school change: Teacher perceptions regarding curricular and instructional adaptations. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 25*(1), 41-54.

²⁵ Will, M. (1986). *Educating students with learning problems: A shared responsibility: report to the secretary*. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

- Creating change in a continuous monitoring and evaluating manner through non-negotiables for proactive integrated, comprehensive services.
- Making organizational and infrastructure decisions based on the district vision to support all students through a lens of teaching and learning for all (even those with significant disabilities, linguistically diverse, and advanced students) to receive services with neighborhood peers or at school of choice (no child will have to go an alternative place in district or in school to get services).
- Confirming that no rooms/schools/offices that are set aside for labeled students/staff (e.g., LD, ED, special education, resource, linguistically diverse, at-risk, advanced students, discipline schools). Therefore, students are not segregated or pulled-out to receive services.
- Developing an understanding our own personal identities and provide culturally relevant curriculum and instruction through Universal Design for Learning (UDL) for all students.
- Using the principles of universal access—curriculum is differentiated for needs of all students versus developed and then adapted after the fact.
- Teaming across disciplines aligned and supported by grade level teams or teacher-based teams to increase teacher capacity in support of a community of students who do not have to qualify or be labeled to receive an education that meets their needs within Tier 1.
- Orchestrating heterogeneous flexible learning patterns of grouping based on how students learn and show what they know the most often throughout the day for every student.
- Supporting all students (who are identified or labeled) proactively in natural proportions in all classrooms, committee's, activities, etc.
- Using legislation, policy, and social context to leverage the district vision for proactive, integrated, and comprehensive services for all students and teachers in the general education curriculum and electives.
- Using these principles or non-negotiables to disallow the political, social, legal, and cultural context to derail the vision of proactive, integrated, and comprehensive services for each and every student.

Without the ownership of all students, especially those with disabilities, by both the general education and special education, ELL, Title, At-Risk staff, students with disabilities and/or perceived needs will continue to be pushed to the margins of the system. The belief that all students can learn will be a significant change for the School District of Elmbrook. Proactive system changes must be supported and modeled top-down and bottom-up to allow for a comprehensive integrated service delivery model that is systemic and increases the capacity of all teachers under agreed upon principles or non-negotiables.

c. Teaming Structures to Create Proactive Services

The development of three types of teams (Appendix F for more details) is often helpful in order to move forward in a manner that is top-down supported through bottom-up reform. Three essential teams are necessary to develop a clear vision and process to move toward proactive service delivery where all children receive the services they need to be successful without being marginalized.

District-Wide Service Delivery Team is responsible for:

- Define/Clarify Non-Negotiables
- Align the District Mission, Vision, Strategic Plan to Non-Negotiables
- Collect equity data for leveraging and evaluation purposes
- Confirm attendance – all students attend the schools and classrooms they would attend if not labeled or by parent choice
- Develop an infrastructure at the District office that mirrors what we want to see in the schools under *Teaching and Learning for All Students*
- Realigns funding to support all students (co-mingle at the point of the child)
- Provides the staffing allocation model (e.g., 1:10, 1:12, 1:14)
- Revise all district and school policies relative to the Non-Negotiables
- Provide support to School Teams to move forward
- Human Resource practices aligned to Non-Negotiables
- Technology Department

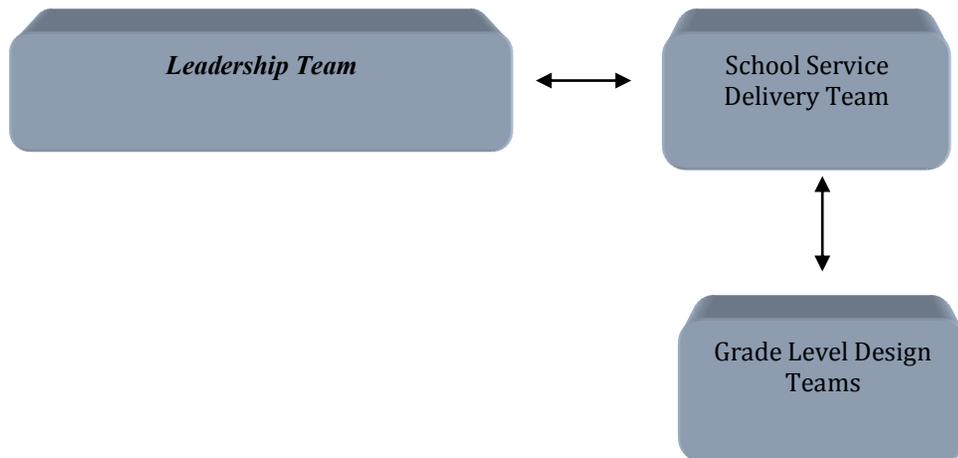
School-Based Service Delivery Teams are responsible for:

- Define/Clarify Non-Negotiables at the building level
- Align the building plan with the Non-Negotiables
- Confirm all students are attending the schools and classrooms they would attend if not labeled, or by parent choice
- Determine service delivery model by aligning staff to grade level, unit, academy
- Trouble shoot (e.g., new student moving in and staffing patterns, etc.).
- Determine and provide appropriate Professional Development
- Assist with Grade-Level Team/Teacher Team scheduling and other needs

Grade-Based Teams are responsible for:

- Determine how to support large group, small group, and 1:1 instruction.
- Develop schedules
- Develop lesson plans based on how a child learns and his/her needs
- Intentionally share expertise for all instructional arrangements
- Share in student assessment and progress monitoring
- Share in professional development
- Share in equity audit and evaluation practices
- Understand the different types of collaborative team arrangements – proactive services is not co-teaching

Exhibit 26. Teams For Shared Decision-Making, Staff Design, and Student Support for Proactive Integrated Services



In summation, a district-wide proactive service delivery model would address the needs of each and every student in a preventative manner. This proactive service delivery model would support collaborative arrangements as well as an extensive increase in content-based education. Current state assessment results for students with disabilities and those who are African American are disturbing. There is no choice but to restructure a model in support of “all hands (general and special educators) on deck” at the core of teaching and learning, beginning with the District-Wide Service Delivery Team and the School-Based Service Delivery Teams.

Recommendations for Vision and Non-Negotiables

1. *The district should develop core belief statements/non-negotiables for all students to show “how” the District holds high expectations for all students.*
2. *The District and schools should develop three types of teams (or integrate with current teaming structures) to develop an infrastructure that can complete the work of inverting the system from a reactionary system to a proactive system of support. See Appendix F for more details.*
3. *The district and schools should expect “First Person language” to assist in the movement of students are children before we define their needs or eligibility.²⁶*

²⁶ http://www.inclusionproject.org/nip_userfiles/file/People%20First%20Chart.pdf

IV. Summary of Recommendations

A. Recommendations for Infrastructure

1. *District office should continue to merge the leadership for Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, and Support Services to proactively support all students under a Teaching and Learning structure for all students.*
2. *All students should attend the school and classroom they would attend if not labeled:*
 - i. *Students attending schools outside of the district will be brought back at the natural transitions or grandfathered through their current placement*
 - ii. *Students attending Fairview South will be grandfathered through Fairview. Elmbrook will make a strong effort to serve all students in the schools and classroom they would attend if they did not have a disability.*
 - iii. *Elmbrook Schools will provide services for students with significant disabilities in the schools and classrooms they would attend if not disabled (see Appendix D for further discussion).*
3. *Caseloads for special education should be developed by grade-level as much as possible, across all disabilities (including students with cognitive disabilities).*
4. *All students should receive instruction within the core curriculum and electives, supported by teacher-based teams or grade-level teams.*
5. *Paraprofessionals should be part of each grade-level or teacher-based team to provide proactive services based on the co-developed lesson plans from the grade level teams.*
6. *Rtl or Child Study Teams should stay intact for vertical support team process.*
7. *All Student Services staff should be used to lead proactive services for all students through providing support to the teacher-based teams at Tier 1, as well as serving on the building and district level service delivery or leadership teams in support of proactive services.*
8. *All staff should receive professional development to move from a traditional deficit-based or reactionary system to a proactive system of supports:*
 - i. *How their current model is linked to a deficit based system, resulting in outcomes discussed throughout this report.*
 - ii. *Evolution of their individual roles and responsibilities from a traditional model to a proactive service delivery model.*
 - iii. *Goals and objectives to create a proactive system through the teaming structure defined under Vision.*

B. Recommendations for Teaching and Learning

8. *All students should receive instruction based on universal design for learning principles within the common-core. The more proficient teachers become, the less pull-out and tracking will occur which will result in less marginalization of students with disabilities, color, and poverty.*
9. *Interventions, such as Wilson, Read 180, etc. should be used in Tier 1, if in fact such methodologies match the learning styles of the students receiving the instruction.*

10. *Response to Intervention (RtI) should be used to drive high quality accelerated instruction for all students based on “how” they learn within the core-curriculum, or in Tier 1.*
11. *A strong emphasis on teaching appropriate behavior should occur in the context of a welcoming climate for all students while adhering to the principles of PBIS.*
12. *Students with significant behavior should receive the most proactive instruction for the most highly qualified staff.*
13. *Proactive behavioral plans should be written for each child who falls into the 30% to 50% of the students of poverty receiving in-school and out-of school suspensions.*

C. Recommendations for Vision and Non-Negotiables

15. *The district should develop core belief statements/non-negotiables for all students to show “how” the District holds high expectations for all students.*
16. *The district and schools should develop three types of teams (or integrate with current teaming structures) to develop an infrastructure that can complete the work of inverting the system from a reactionary system to a proactive system of support. See Appendix E for more details.*
17. *The district and schools should expect “First Person language” to assist in the movement of students are children before we define their needs or eligibility.²⁷*

²⁷ http://www.inclusionproject.org/nip_userfiles/file/People%20First%20Chart.pdf

Appendix A

Segregated Programs Versus Integrated Comprehensive Service Delivery for All Learners

Assessing the Differences

ELISE FRATTURA AND COLLEEN A. CAPPER

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to address the principles of a comprehensive whole-school restructuring to serve not only students with disabilities educated in inclusive environments but also all learners who have been labeled to receive services from federally mandated programs, such as special education, limited English, at risk, or Title I. The number of students who qualify for such services is growing. Unfortunately, these students often spend the largest part of their day leaving their classroom to receive special instruction, resulting in a disconnected and fragmented day. We address the outcomes of traditional programs and the underlying principles necessary to support inclusive services versus creating segregated programs. The principles are classified into four cornerstones: core principles, location of services, curriculum and instruction, and funding and policy.

IN THE PAST DECADE, THE RESEARCH LITERATURE ON inclusive education has significantly increased (Peterson & Hittie, 2003). Most of this literature has focused its unit of analysis at the classroom site—for example, on the social and academic outcomes of integrated education (Peterson & Hittie, 2003; Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002), collaborative teaching arrangements (Thousand, Villa, & Nevin, 2002), the role of paraprofessionals (Doyle, 2002), the inclusion of students with disabilities in district and state assessments (Thurlow, Elliott, & Ysseldyke, 1998), or ways to

integrate curriculum (Rainforth & Kuglemass, 2003). Others have offered a conceptual and ideological analysis of the literature in support of and against inclusive education (Brantlinger, 1997). However, the literature that focuses specifically on the role of school leaders with students who typically struggle (Riehl, 2000) or on the organizational, structural, and cultural conditions necessary for inclusion is significantly less comprehensive. Even book-length works whose title suggests a focus on whole school restructuring to serve students (Sailor, 2002) do not address the school or district level organizational and structural implementation intricacies of serving students in heterogeneous classrooms. The aforementioned literature focuses primarily on students with disability labels and does not take into account how providing services for students with disability labels is similar to and different from addressing the needs of other students who may struggle in school; such as those students for whom English is not the primary language; students considered “at risk”; students considered gifted; or students with lower reading levels. Exceptions to this include works by Burrello, Lashley, and Beatty (2000), Capper, Frattura, and Keyes (2000), and McLeskey and Waldron (2000).

The recent comprehensive school reform (CSR) models, by design, come closest to taking such a whole school approach to raise the academic achievement of all students (Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2003). However, CSR continues to not set standards for integrated comprehensive

services. Although the literature explains how lower achieving students can experience academic success, it does not articulate how students with disability labels have experienced similar success, nor do we know from this literature to what extent students with disabilities are included in heterogeneous class environments in these models of reform. Furthermore, none of the CSR models take disability as a focus.

The purpose of this article is to address this gap in the literature by taking each school as the unit of analysis and focusing on specific school level organizational conditions necessary for schools to deliver what we call *integrated comprehensive services* (ICS) in heterogeneous environments for all learners. *Integrated* environments are the settings that all students—regardless of need or legislative eligibility—access throughout their day in school and nonschool settings. That is, in these settings (e.g., classroom, playground, library, field trips), students with a variety of needs and gifts learn together in both small and large groups. *Comprehensive services* refers to the array of services and supports centered on a differentiated curriculum and instruction that all students receive to ensure academic and behavioral success. By all learners, we mean especially those learners who have been labeled to receive services, such as students labeled with a disability or labeled “at risk,” “gifted,” “poor reader,” or English language learner (ELL). We will first address why changes in service delivery are vitally necessary, pointing to the current status of special education, including the growing incidence of students labeled with disabilities, the historically poor school and postschool outcomes of special education efforts, and the enormous outlay of financial and other resources into activities with such poor outcomes (Oakes, 2000). We then describe the differences between providing programs for students and bringing services to students via ICS and the principles that should guide the delivery of educational services to all students. What we mean by *service delivery* are the ways in which students are provided with educational services, including curriculum, instruction, assessments, and any additional supportive services that are necessary for the student to be successful in heterogeneous learning environments.

OUTCOMES OF SEGREGATED PROGRAMS

The number of students labeled with a disability has increased 151% since 1989 (Ysseldyke, 2001). Moreover, students of color are significantly overidentified for and overrepresented in special education (Donovan & Cross, 2002; Hosp & Reschly, 2002; Losen & Orfield, 2002; *Quality Counts*, 2004; Zhang & Katsiyannis, 2002). Unfortunately, these students often spend the largest part of their day leaving their classroom to receive special instruction, resulting in a disconnected and fragmented school day (Capper, Frattura, & Keyes, 2000). Moreover, these special programs have failed to result in high student achievement, as measured by postschool out-

comes or standardized scores. For example, in the United States, despite extensive efforts at providing special education for more than 25 years since the implementation of federal disability law, 22% of students with disability labels have failed to complete high school, compared to 9% of students without labels (National Organization on Disability, 2000).

Equally alarming are the poor long-term outcomes of these special education efforts. For example, according to a study by Blackorby and Wagner (1996), “nearly 1 in 5 youth with disabilities out of school 3 to 5 years still was not employed and was not looking for work” (pp. 402–403), whereas 69% of students from the general population over that same period of time found employment. After providing special education to students for at least 18 years in public schools—and in many cases for 21 years as mandated by the special education law—these school and postschool outcomes are indeed dismal.

Not only are the special education outcomes dismal, but the amount of money that educators have put forth to support these failing efforts is staggering. Special programs cost 130% more than general education. That is, if a school district spends \$5,000 per student, then each student labeled for special programs costs that district \$11,500 (Odden & Picus, 2000). In the 1999–2000 school year, “the 50 states and the District of Columbia spent approximately \$50 billion on special education services, amounting to \$8,080 per special education student” (Chambers, Parrish, & Harr, 2002, p. v). In comparison, in 1998, total instructional expenditures for students at the elementary and middle school level who were served in the general education classroom was \$3,920 (Chambers, Parrish, Lieberman, & Wolman, 1998).

On a related point, the more students are served in more restrictive, segregated placements, the higher the cost of their education. For example, Capper, Frattura, and Keyes (2000) noted that

If we serve students with disability labels 25%–60% outside the regular class, then the cost for this education increases to \$5,122. If we provide a program for these students in a separate public facility, like many charter and alternative schools, then the cost increases to \$6,399 per student. (pp. 7–8)

That is, the data are clear that the more students are segregated from their peers for instruction, the more costly that instruction. The reason for this is that “a separate program means that students often require separate space, separate materials and infrastructure, a separate teacher, and an administrator not only to manage the program but also to spend time and money on organizing the program (Capper, Frattura, & Keyes, 2000, p. 7).

Similarly, during the 2000–2001 school year, 10,900 public alternative schools and programs for so-called “at-risk” students were in operation, and 59% of these programs

were housed in a separate facility. Districts with high percentages of students of color and low-income students tended to have higher enrollments in alternative schools (National Center on Education Statistics, 2002, p. 33). Moreover, educators spend an inordinate amount of time and resources deciding exactly for which program a student may qualify. In the Verona (Wisconsin) school district in 1999, "it cost more than \$2,000 to evaluate one student to determine eligibility for special education. [In this case,] a district of 4,500 students averages 225 (5%) evaluations per year for a total of \$443,713 spent on evaluations alone" (Capper, Frattura, & Keyes, 2000, p. 7).

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2000), "Slightly under half [of students with disability labels] between the ages of six and seventeen are served in general education settings with their [typical] peers for more than 89% of their school day . . . and the number of students served in general education classrooms is increasing each year" (cited in Causton-Theoharis, 2003, p. 7), due in part to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997, which created "a legal presumption in favor of [general education] placement" (Huefner, 2000, p. 242; Causton-Theoharis, 2003). Research has suggested that educating students in these general education environments results in higher academic achievement and more positive social outcomes for students with and without disability labels (McLeskey & Waldron, 2000; Peterson & Hittie, 2003, pp. 37-39; Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002), not to mention that it is the most cost-effective way to educate students.

Although more of these students are being educated in heterogeneous educational environments than in previous years, increasingly, students who are being labeled at risk are being placed in segregated alternative classrooms and schools

compared to previous years; many students are not served in their neighborhood schools (i.e., the school they would attend if they did not have the disability or other separate program label) and spend large parts of their days out of the general education classroom. These practices are not only failing to meet the needs of these students by resulting in significantly high percentages dropping out of school or not achieving employment after secondary education, but these practices exact an exorbitant financial toll on schools and school districts.

BRINGING SERVICES TO STUDENTS

To overcome these costly, dismal outcomes of segregated programs, school leaders (principals, school-based steering committees, site councils, etc.) must focus their efforts on preventing student struggle and must change how students who struggle are educated. In so doing, fewer students will be inappropriately labeled with disability or at-risk labels, and more of these students will be educated in heterogeneous learning environments, resulting in higher student achievement and more promising postschool outcomes.

Placing students in special programs is quite the opposite of providing services to or with students (i.e., ICS). The two approaches differ in four primary ways, defined here as *cornerstones* of integrated comprehensive services. Those four cornerstones are presented in Figure 1.

THE FOUR CORNERSTONES OF ICS

In our work with educators across the country and with our students, we also hear persistent assumptions about the fac-

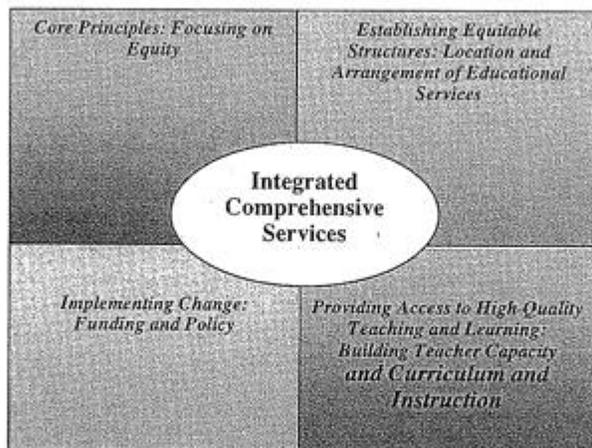


FIGURE 1. Four cornerstones of ICS.

tors that inhibit change toward ICS. As we describe the differences between special programs and ICS, we also identify these assumptions and describe the evidence-based practices that refute these assumptions.

Core Principles

One core principle of segregated special programs is that students do not receive help for their learning needs until after they have failed in some way. This practice is analogous to parking an ambulance at the bottom of a cliff to assist people who fall off the cliff. Special programs are like the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff. Students are placed in them after they fail academically, socially, or behaviorally.

In contrast, with ICS, the primary aim of teaching and learning in the school is the *prevention* of student failure. Referring again to the analogy, ICS works at the top of the cliff, setting up supports not only to prevent students from falling off the cliff, but to prevent them from nearing the edge of the cliff in the first place. It is astounding to us that so few educational practices are considered preventative. One activity we conduct in our classes is to have students write out on newsprint their response to the following question: "What happens in your school or classroom when a student struggles, academically, socially, or behaviorally? What are all the practices in place to address this?" Invariably, students easily list an entire conglomeration of "ambulances," numbering usually a dozen items even in small schools and districts. The list includes items such as homework club, learning centers, peer tutors, adult volunteers, Title I reading, Reading Recovery, school within a school, small-group tutoring, Saturday morning remedial club, summer school, calling parents, in and out of school suspension, and the list goes on. Then we ask our students to list all the actions their school or district takes to prevent student academic or behavioral failure or struggling in the first place. This question is usually followed by several minutes of quiet, as such efforts do not readily come to students' minds. Finally, students will list a few practices such as focused, intensive reading instruction in the early grades or differentiating instruction.

According to Deschenes, Cuban, and Tyack (2001), historically, public schools have dealt with student failure in similar ways—by blaming the student. With ICS, the onus of student failure is on the school, and any student failure is viewed as something that is askew in the educational system. The way educators frame student failure (i.e., whether student failure is seen as a student or a systems issue) is the pivotal point of all the remaining assumptions and practices in schools.

As such, the primary aim of ICS is the prevention of student failure, and student failure is prevented by building teacher capacity to be able to teach to a range of diverse student strengths and needs—a second core principle. Every single decision about service delivery must be premised on the question to what extent that decision will increase the capac-

ity of all teachers to teach to a range of students' diverse learning needs. Segregated special programs, by definition, diminish teacher capacity. When the same student or group of students are routinely removed from the classroom to receive instruction elsewhere, the classroom teacher is released from the responsibility of learning how to teach not only those students, but all future students with similar needs over the rest of that teacher's career. At the same time, students with and without special needs are denied the opportunity to learn and work with each other, and the students who leave the room are denied a sense of belonging in the classroom.

A third core principle of separate programs is that their efforts do not address individual student needs. Instead, students are made to fit yet another program. Even the language that is used often reflects this idea. That is, we use language such as "We need to program for this student," "We held a meeting to program for this student," "We can place the student in the CD program," "That school houses the ED program." Finding students to fit into a program is a supreme irony of programs that are created under the assumption that students do *not* fit into general education, and hence they need something unique and individual—only to be required to fit into yet another program. A persistent assumption with this principle is that it is administratively easier to plug a student into an existing program than to creatively plan how to best meet a student's academic or behavioral needs (both of which are mandated in special education legislation).

When educators in a school have made significant progress toward restructuring based on ICS principles, one practical way to avoid placing students in prepackaged programs and to meet individual student needs can take place in Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings. In these meetings, practitioners who are working toward dismantling segregated programs and moving to ICS have found it helpful to assume that *no* separate programs exist in their schools. They ask themselves the question, "If no such program existed, how would we best meet this student's needs? And how can that decision ultimately build teacher capacity?"

In addition to the core principles that distinguish ICS from segregated programs, these two different models of service delivery also differ from each other based on location (i.e., where students are taught), curriculum and instruction, staff roles, and funding. We discuss these next.

Establishing Equitable Structures

Location—where students are physically placed to learn—is a central distinction between segregated programs and ICS. Under a segregated program model, educators believe that the primary reason for student failure is the student him- or herself, that students cannot be helped until they fail and receive a label of some sort (e.g., at risk, disability, poor reader), and that the student is then best placed into a separate program that is removed from the core teaching and learning of the school. These beliefs and practices then require students to be

separated from their peers by requiring students either to leave the general education classroom to attend a pullout program or to attend a school not in their neighborhood or a school they would not attend if they did not have a special label.

Furthermore, students with a particular label are clustered in a classroom or program in numbers greater than their proportion in the school. In the case of students with disabilities, typically, a special education teacher is assigned to support the students in this classroom and perhaps two to three other classrooms where students with disabilities are clustered. In one of the high schools we studied, students considered "at risk" were all placed in the same "transition" English and "transition" Math classes in their freshman year, taught by a "transition" teacher in a "transition" room. For ELL students, the students are often clustered together and assigned a bilingual or English as a second language (ESL) teacher for nearly their entire day.

The problem with clustering students is that often special education or student services staff are assigned to the students with labels in these classrooms. Although the special education or student services staff may assist other students in the classroom without labels, his or her primary role is student support. That is, in a segregated, clustering arrangement, the primary goal is student support, not building the teaching capacity of general education teachers to teach to a range of students. The result of such an arrangement is increased dependency. Students with labels and the general education teacher become increasingly dependent on the student services staff. Including students with their peers is dependent on the presence of student services staff. In nearly every situation we have studied, when (e.g., because of budget cuts) student services staff time in these classrooms must be reduced, general education teachers claim that they cannot fully meet the needs of students with labels in their classrooms. This occurs especially in coteaching models, where a special education and general education teacher are assigned to coteach a class or course together—arguably one of the most common and most expensive practices in schools today.

In addition to educator convenience, segregated practices persist because many educators believe that it is more cost effective for educators to cluster students with similar labels in particular classrooms or particular schools. Research cited previously in this article has refuted this belief. Moreover, this particular administrative arrangement makes little sense with the current federal support for cross-categorical services. Now, state departments of education are issuing special education teaching licenses for teachers to be able to teach across categories, because these teachers are expected to be able to teach to a range of student needs. Thus, school districts can no longer use the argument that only particular teachers can provide particular support for particular students.

Moreover, with segregated programs, educators persistently assume that they can only provide individual attention and support to students with labels in a setting or situation

separate from those students' peers. Reasons for this assumption include several arguments—for example, that a middle school student would feel embarrassed to receive speech articulation training in front of his or her peers, or that if elementary students require intensive reading instruction, then this instruction requires a separate setting, like a Title I or Reading Recovery room. Educators reason that this saves students embarrassment about reading in front of their more able peers and that a separate room cuts down on classroom distractions. To be sure, it may be appropriate at times, when a student requiring speech articulation skills could benefit from individual instruction outside of the classroom that does not disrupt his or her school day. At the same time, when schools and classrooms function with teams of diverse educators in support of flexible groupings, a student's need for one-on-one instruction is part of the general movement of the day and does not force the student to be the only student exiting the classroom, for example, during a science class. In the reading example, at the elementary level, successful teachers are able to meet the individual needs of students without those students needing to be pulled from an integrated environment.

At the middle school and high school level, when teachers are faced with students with low reading levels, at times, these students may need intensive reading instruction separate from their peers. The use of a computer-assisted reading program such as *Read 180*, is one such example. However, based on ICS principles, students *choose* to access this course or class and are not unilaterally placed in it. Moreover, students who receive this instruction do so not by virtue of their label (e.g., all "at-risk" students assigned to the course, or all "LD" students assigned); rather, a heterogeneous group of students receives the instruction based on need, not label. More important, rather than this same group of students being assigned to other classes together (e.g., they are all assigned to take the same science class), these students are not grouped together for any other part of the school day.

Referring again to a high school example, educators have argued that placing all the students "at risk" in language arts together in a freshman "transition" English class will allow the teacher to use curriculum materials suited to the reading levels of these students and, in so doing, raise the English achievement of these students, enabling them to be integrated with their peers after their freshman year. Aside from the fact that we have yet to find special programs that collect sufficient outcome data, teachers in highly successful schools in the context of ICS are able to teach language arts and other subjects to a range of different learners in heterogeneous classrooms (Jorgensen, 1998).

Ironically, under segregated program assumptions, we have seen inclusive practices evolve into another segregated program—that is, the segregation of inclusion. Segregated inclusion happens when students with disabilities are disproportionately assigned to or clustered in particular classrooms. For example, in a school with four third-grade classrooms, students with disabilities are clustered into one or two of

these classrooms, in numbers that result in a higher percentage of students with disabilities in these classrooms than their overall percentage in the school. Educators have argued that these practices are legitimate, because it then becomes more convenient for special education staff to support students across fewer classrooms. We have witnessed educators in these schools calling these particular classrooms "the inclusive classrooms" or "inclusion programs" and the students with disabilities in these classrooms "inclusion" students. In so doing, these classrooms and students, in the guise of inclusion, inherit yet another set of labels. Educators reason that if a practice is more convenient for staff, then students will receive higher quality services in these segregated arrangements. In the schools we have studied, unfortunately, although clustering students may be more convenient for staff, this model does not build teacher capacity. That is, although the "inclusion" and "transition" teachers increase their capacity to teach to a range of students, all the *other* teachers in the school are "off the hook," with no incentive to gain these skills, resulting in higher costs and less effectiveness in the long run.

In contrast, under ICS, all students attend their neighborhood school, or the school they would attend if they did not have a label. This is a basic civil right. Students do not have to leave their peers in their classroom, school, or district to participate in a curriculum and instruction that meets their learning needs. All students are then afforded a rich schedule of flexible, small-group and large-group instruction based on learning needs, interests, and content areas. With ICS at the district level, particular schools would not be designated "the ESL school" or "the school that all the elementary students with severe disabilities attend" or "the middle school that houses the students with severe challenging behaviors." At the school level, ICS does not preclude students with labels from being clustered in particular classrooms, but only to the extent that the number of these students in any one classroom does not represent a higher percentage than found in the school. Accordingly, with ICS, a school does not have rooms labeled the "resource room," the "LD room," the "CD room," the "ESL room," or even the "at-risk room." With ICS, students are flexibly grouped based on the individual needs of the group of learners in the particular classroom and grade.

Accordingly, with ICS, *all* students' learning takes place in heterogeneous environments. This means that students are never grouped by similar characteristics in the same way all the time. Teachers use flexible grouping patterns throughout the day, depending on the instructional content and student needs. Hence, when a group of students travels on a field trip, it should not just be students with disabilities or students who are "at risk" who are attending. Nor should it just be students without labels attending. The leader will look at any situation and always ask if there is a mix of students involved and, if not, why not?

Under ICS, students are placed in classes according to their natural proportions in the school. For example, if ELL

students constitute 20% of the students in a school, then any classroom in the school (e.g., special education) should be composed of no more than 20% of ELL students. If students with disabilities represent 15% of the school population, then no classroom should have more than 15% of its students labeled with a disability. Likewise, using these same numbers and the principle of natural proportions, at least 20% of the student council, 20% of the band and other extracurricular programs, and 20% of the advanced placement courses or gifted programs should be composed of ELL students, and 15% of these same curricular and extracurricular areas should be composed of students with disabilities. To further illustrate, in one of the integrated middle schools we studied, students who were ELLs were clustered in two of the four seventh- and eighth-grade classrooms. However, the percentage of ELL students in these classrooms was less than their percentage in the school. In the high school example, students in need of additional support are dispersed amongst the freshman English classes. When students are placed in natural proportions, it sets the expectation that all school staff be able to teach a range of students. The goal of support staff becomes initially to support students in these settings, but ultimately to build the general educator capacity to teach to a range of students. Over time, one goal of support staff is to fade their involvement in the classroom, because the general classroom teacher has strengthened her or his teaching and learning strategies to meet a range of student needs.

We cannot overemphasize the critical role that location—where students are placed—plays in ICS. As long as segregated settings, classrooms, courses, and schools exist, educators will find reasons to place students in these settings. With segregated programs, these settings reinforce negative assumptions about students and teaching and learning, and not only does this model not build teacher capacity, it breeds teacher and student dependency. Even more important, segregated programs are the most expensive and least effective way to serve students. ICS becomes a proactive means to break the vicious cycle of negative beliefs that then require segregated programs that in turn reinforce negative assumptions and beliefs. When the core principles of ICS suggest that the system needs to adapt to the student, that the primary aim of teaching and learning is the prevention of student failure, that the aim of all educators is to build teacher capacity, and that all services must be grounded in the core teaching and learning of the school, then students must be educated alongside their peers in integrated environments. Student location dictates teacher location, and the location of teachers and students in integrated environments lays the groundwork for all the other aspects of ICS.

Building Teacher Capacity and Curriculum and Instruction

Location. Educator roles in segregated programs are based on teacher specialization and student labels. In segre-

gated programs, staff adhere to their professional, expert roles, which limits adult learning opportunities and professional growth. Moreover, when structures isolate students, they also isolate educators. When educators are isolated from each other, they do not share knowledge and expertise with each other, precluding the development of teacher expertise across a range of learners. For example, in one of the urban high schools we studied, the support staff in a program model were comfortable teaching segregated math and adapted language arts classes, but they were hesitant to provide support in general education classes in science and math, because they were unsure about their ability to do so. Therefore, students with special needs were placed in segregated math classes due to the teaching abilities of staff and denied a rich curriculum in the general education math content classes. In turn, the students performed quite poorly on the math section of the statewide accountability assessment.

A persistent assumption that fuels this adherence to expert roles is the belief that certification in a specialty area means that an educator possesses highly specialized, "magical," esoteric skills that no one else can ever learn. Professional associations and professional accrediting or certification bodies reinforce this expert view (Skrtic, 1995). For example, in segregated programs, a social worker can be the only person who conducts personal history reviews with students and makes contacts with families, and no other staff person volunteers or is assigned to share in those duties. Likewise, in segregated programs, a middle school guidance counselor provides career guidance to individuals and groups of students, facilitates support groups for students, and meets individually with students with various problems. Rarely do other staff members share these duties.

In segregated programs, if other staff not certified in these areas assumed some of these duties, the social worker or guidance counselor would view these persons as undermining the professionalism of their careers and perhaps even threatening his or her job security. With these assigned duties, neither the social worker nor the guidance counselor is involved in the core curriculum and instruction of the school. In this context, professional development is often targeted to particular staff (e.g., all special education staff), whereas other staff are excused, which further segregates staff from each other and prevents the sharing of expertise.

In contrast, with ICS, in one of the middle schools we studied, the principal drastically changed the roles and responsibilities of the guidance counselors and school social workers. One guidance counselor was assigned to support the sixth grade, and the other was assigned to support the eighth grade, whereas the social worker was assigned to support the seventh grade. The role of the guidance counselors and the social worker changed to include the following tasks: making home visits; sharing door duty; readmitting students; representing on all special education team meetings; supporting staff; collecting and disseminating data on achievement, attendance, and behavior; handling all special education re-

evaluations; teaching units on identity (e.g., race, ethnicity) and bullying; coordinating interns; and coordinating mentoring with local high school students. These roles and shared expertise, tied to the core curriculum and instruction, stand in great contrast to what typically occurs in segregated programs.

Location is where students are assigned and how staff roles are inextricably linked. In segregated programs, the limited expertise of staff contributes to where students are placed, and where students are placed limits the expertise of staff. All students require small- and large-group instruction, and, at times, one-on-one instruction for a student with more severe needs. However, rather than expecting students with educational or behavioral needs to leave the classroom to receive instruction, ICS requires educators to share their knowledge across disciplines (special education, at risk, bilingual, Title I reading, etc.) with their peers and with the students they teach in a range of educational environments.

As such, with ICS, staff roles pivot on developing teacher capacity to teach a range of learners in their classrooms. Given that only 21% of teachers feel well prepared to address the needs of labeled students (U.S. Department of Education, 2000), building teacher capacity becomes the primary goal in ICS. All staff development and all decisions about service delivery are aimed toward building staff capacity to work with a range of student needs.

Curriculum and Instruction. In segregated programs, the curriculum and instruction are separate from the core teaching and learning in the school. For some programs, at one end of the spectrum, it is assumed that the curriculum and instruction have not succeeded with a student; hence, the student needs an entirely different curriculum and instruction. Again, the assumption made is that the school curriculum does not need to change, that it works for most students, and that there is something inherently different about some students who need something entirely different. Moreover, this principle assumes that staff are incapable of teaching to a range of students, that schools are incapable of changing to meet student needs, and that students are more alike than different. Segregated programs also assume that students need to be identified and labeled to access a curriculum that meets their needs. In so doing, these programs deny students access to a content-rich curriculum, which in turn negatively affects student achievement and results in poor performance on standardized assessments. Instruction is based on the classroom majority rather than on individual needs. Alternative schools—whether within schools or out of school buildings—are often created on this assumption. Students who receive "specialized" math, English, or other academic subjects in resource rooms or in classrooms tracked for this purpose are also supported by this assumption.

At the other end of the spectrum in special programs, special education staff assist students who struggle by helping them learn the general education curriculum, but this

learning takes place outside the general education classroom—in resource rooms, study centers, or study halls. It could be argued that these practices are not separate from the core teaching and learning of the school. However, again, these practices typically do not build teacher capacity to teach to a range of students. Although students are assisted, support staff typically do not share ideas with classroom teachers, who then do not learn new strategies that would prevent their students from needing additional assistance in the first place. Students are then denied access to a content-rich curriculum. In contrast, in ICS, students receive their instruction with their peers in large and small, flexible, heterogeneous groups in integrated school and community settings and are supported to do so. As such, ICS is seamlessly tied to and grounded in the core curriculum and instruction of the school.

In ICS, the curriculum and instruction are built on a culturally relevant (see Ladson-Billings, 1995) and differentiated curriculum (Tomlinson, 2001). *Culturally relevant* means that the curriculum addresses the various families, cultures, races, and ethnicities of students in the classroom not as an added component but seamlessly woven into the curriculum. *Differentiated curriculum* is designed to address a range of learner needs and achievement levels. Such curriculum is developed under the principle of universal access (Bremer, Clapper, Hitchcock, Hall, & Kachgal, 2002). *Universal access* means that a lesson is initially designed for a range of learner needs in the classroom—rather than developing a lesson or curriculum and then deciding as an afterthought how students with different learning needs may access the curriculum. With these curriculum principles, students do not have to qualify or be labeled to receive access to a rich and engaging curriculum.

Implementing Change

In segregated programs, separate funding sources are accessed, and policies are written to support each program for each eligibility area, causing replication of services and soaring costs. These policies and programs are focused on fixing student deficits. Often, these policies are compliance driven and not quality driven, meeting the letter of many nondiscrimination regulations but never attaining the spirit in which these regulations were written. As discussed previously, separate programs are costly due to the cost involved in identifying students and the duplication of staff and materials between schools and programs and across programs.

Educators persistently assume that particular funds or resources cannot be commingled, thus reinforcing the creation of segregated programs. For example, in one of the high schools we studied, educators established a learning center that any student could access throughout the day to receive additional support. The center included processes to enable teachers who assisted in the center to provide feedback to students' teachers on effective strategies to assist students in the classroom and to provide suggestions for curriculum changes

to reduce the number of students who accessed the center. However, the principal was concerned that because students with disability labels also accessed the center, this practice in some way violated special education law or the use of special education funds (which it did not). Hence, he dismantled this service and, in its place, established a separate support program for students with disabilities.

With ICS, funding sources and policies are merged, with a focus on the prevention of student struggle. Resource reallocation forms the basis of funding decisions (Odden & Archibald, 2001). That is, a school leader takes into account sources of funding at the federal, state, district, and school levels (e.g., minority student achievement, gifted and talented, alcohol and other drug abuse, special education, Title I, at risk, bilingual, special education) and then combines these funds in such a way as to best serve students in heterogeneous learning environments. Staff are also viewed as resources, staff skills and expertise are considered, and staff are assigned to students and classrooms based on ICS core principles.

SUMMARY

To summarize, segregated programs result in some students receiving support, while others do not. With segregated programs, those students who need the most routine, structure, and consistency in their day experience the most disruptions when placed in separate programs, become fringe members of their classroom community, and miss valuable instructional time when traveling to and from separate programs. Once in these programs, students are denied access to a rich and engaging curriculum that could boost their academic achievement. Segregated programs inadvertently blame and label students and marginalize and track students of color and low-income students. Segregated programs prevent the sharing of knowledge and skills by educators, prevent any particular educator from being accountable to these students, and enable educators not to change their practices. The programs themselves and the identification of students for these programs are quite costly.

In contrast, the principles and practices of ICS contribute to five nonnegotiable requirements for service delivery: least restrictive, least intrusive, least disruptive, least expensive, and least enabling. These five nonnegotiable points refer to location, or where students are placed, the curriculum and instruction they experience, and the role of educators in their lives.

All students should have the opportunity to attend their neighborhood school (or the school of their choice in school choice programs) and be placed in heterogeneous classrooms at their grade level alongside their peers. This placement is the least restrictive, least intrusive, and least disruptive in their daily lives; encourages independence in learning and not being overhelped (i.e., least enabling); and ultimately is the least expensive. The curriculum and instruction that students

receive in these environments should address their learning needs and, at the same time, open the window to a rich, creative, nonrestrictive learning experience. With ICS, their individual learning needs are met; they are met in the least intrusive, most respectful, and least disruptive way; and they are challenged to reach their maximum learning potential (i.e., least enabling). A curriculum and instruction that bears these four nonnegotiable characteristics is ultimately the least expensive option as well.

Finally, with ICS, educators themselves move out of segregated, restrictive teaching environments and provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in ways that tap each learner's gifts (i.e., least intrusive and least disruptive), that foster student self esteem, and that encourage the student's positive sense of self as a learner (i.e., most enabling). Again, educators engaged in teaching this way save district resources that can be reallocated to the benefit of all in the school community.

Given the high cost of special education in times of budget crises and the dismal outcomes of segregated programs, educators can no longer ethically justify segregated service delivery. Continuing to label students and place them in segregated programs is indefensible. This is particularly so when these programs are not effective academically and socially and draw resources away from other effective practices. Supported by research, ICS can meet the needs of all students. The core principles, combined with the indisputable importance of location, the curriculum, and the way educators move out of their traditional roles—all supported by the creative reallocation of resources—can pave the way to educational success for all students. ■

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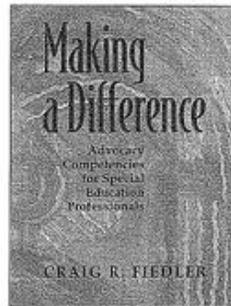
Making a Difference Advocacy Competencies for Special Education Professionals

Craig R. Fiedler

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Staffing Configuration	Block 1: 8:15-9:45 Mat/Sci	Block 2: 9:45-11:15 FamilyEd/Spanish	Block 3: 11:15-12:30 Lunch/Tech	Block 4: 12:30-2:00 Lang./History	Block 5: 2:00-3:30 PhyEd/ health
Special Educator	Support across two rooms supporting 9 students (7 with LD and 1 at risk and 1 with behavioral needs. Some large and some small group instruction in integrated spaces.	Meeting – followed by Support in Spanish	Lunch/Community Prep with student with autism and 1 student with LD-significant	Team teaching – both classrooms are moved together.	Teaming in Health
Assistant	Community with one student with CD and one with behavioral needs. Prep in the school library followed by instruction in the community.	Assistant supporting in Family and Consumer Ed.	Lunch/Supporting lunch room – to assist in friendships/ lack of bullying, etc.	Community Instruction for Vocational with 1 other teacher from the HS and 1 other HS student.	Assisting in Phy Ed.
Other Support (Bilingual Resource Assistants/psych, Reading Resource, etc.)	Student with CD working in the office – supported/supervised by the school psych.	Other student with CD is working at the elementary school attached – guidance counselor at the el. Supervising.			Resource Reading Teacher working in small group with student with autism and 3 students who are academically gifted and one student at-risk of failure to develop a school project.

N B S I C S C S C

Appendix B:

Traditional Roles to Integrated Comprehensive Services²⁸

Position Title	Traditional Responsibilities	Integrated Comprehensive Services
School Principal	<p>Manages the general education program</p> <p>Shifts responsibility for special programs to special education administrators, although special programs are “housed” within general education facilities</p>	<p>Leads toward the merger of all services to wrap around all students based on needs</p> <p>Builds the vision with the staff and provides emotional support to staff as their roles evolve to meet better the needs of all students</p> <p>Participates as a member of collaborative problem-solving teams that invent solutions from the ground up in support of all students; does not wait for students to fail</p> <p>Secures experienced staff to assist others in meeting the needs of all students</p>
General Education Teacher	<p>Refers students who do not “fit” into the traditional program for diagnosis, remediation, and possible removal</p> <p>Teaches students who “fit” within the standard curriculum</p>	<p>Shares responsibilities with teachers with expertise in a range of areas to support all students</p> <p>Creates a proactive preventative curriculum within climates that ensure student success</p> <p>Works with educators who have a range of expertise to problem-solve around curriculum, climate, and social and behavioral supports to meet the needs of students experiencing difficulty in learning</p> <p>Collaboratively plans and teaches with other members of the staff and community to meet the needs of all students</p> <p>Sets a classroom climate that assumes expectations of peer supports (students understand their role is to be supportive for each other in academic, social, and behavioral areas)</p>
Special Educator	<p>Provides instruction to students eligible for services in resource rooms, special classes, and special schools</p>	<p>No longer defined as a special educator, but a math, reading, behavioral, instructional facilitator.</p> <p>Collaborates with all educators to develop curriculum and classroom climate to meet the needs of all students</p> <p>Shares responsibility for all students through teaming, individualized instruction, small and large group instruction through heterogeneous flexible learning groups</p> <p>Continues to model and support peer, academic, social, and behavioral mentoring.</p>

²⁸ Capper & Frattura (2009). *Meeting the Needs of Students of ALL Abilities: How Leaders Go Beyond Inclusion* (2nd. Edition). Corwin Press

Position Title	Traditional Responsibilities	Integrated Comprehensive Services
Psychologist	<p>Test, diagnoses, assigns labels, and determines eligibility for students' admission to special programs</p>	<p>Collaborates with teachers to troubleshoot for the success of each student</p> <p>Provides staff development for teachers to assist teachers in understanding human behavior and child development of even the students with the most significant needs.</p> <p>Collaboratively and creatively designs integrated interventions based on heterogeneous flexible learning groups.</p> <p>Shares teaching time in support of each student for psychological needs</p> <p>Provides social skills training to classes of students</p> <p>Conducts authentic and individualized assessments</p> <p>Teaches students to be conflict mediators, peer tutors, and supports for one another</p> <p>Offers counseling to students</p>
Support staff (PT, OT, Orientation and Mobility)	<p>Diagnosis, labels, and provides, direct services to students in settings other than the classroom</p> <p>Provides support only to students eligible for a particular special program</p>	<p>Is moving into grade-level support personnel for a specific percentage of time during the day</p> <p>Is collaborating with other staff and exchanging information and teaching each other skills</p>
Teaching Assistant	<p>Works in segregated programs</p> <p>If working in general education classrooms, stays in close proximity to, and works only with, students eligible for special services</p>	<p>Provides services to students in individualized, small group, and large group instruction in a heterogeneous manner.</p> <p>Facilitates natural peer supports within all settings</p>
Gifted and Talented Teacher	<p>Assess and determines eligibility in the areas of academic, musical, arts, leadership, creativity, and so on for those students who excel in specific areas</p> <p>Provides pull-out instruction for only those students who meet eligibility</p>	<p>Moves into new roles that redefine her or his titles and responsibilities; staff become part of each educational team (e.g., grade-level support) either to provide services to a heterogeneous group of students or to work with teachers to build the curriculum from the ground up to meet better the range of students in all educational situation.</p>

Position Title	Traditional Responsibilities	Integrated Comprehensive Services
At risk	<p>Assesses and determines eligibility in the areas of truancy, academic success, delinquency, parent status, and so on</p> <p>Provides pull-out instruction for only those students who meet eligibility</p>	<p>Moves into redefined titles and roles that provide services to a heterogeneous group of students or works with teachers to build the curriculum from the ground up to meet better the range of students in all educational situations</p>
Reading specialist	<p>Assesses and determines eligibility in reading</p> <p>Provides pull-out instruction for only those students who meet eligibility</p>	<p>Works with all teachers to assist in the teaching of reading, as well as to provide individualized, small-group, and large-group instruction in the classroom</p>
Director of student services	<p>Functions in isolation from other central office administration</p> <p>Sets up categorical programs for students with disabilities and other needs</p> <p>Assists in developing at-risk programs and/or schools</p> <p>Completes mandatory state and federal reports</p>	<p>Shares roles with other central office administration in support of all students</p> <p>Works with building principals to move from a program-based model that separates and segregates to a service delivery model that unifies support for all students</p> <p>Continues to work with teams of educators to develop supports based on needs versus isolated funding mechanisms</p> <p>Shares the responsibility across administrators in district office for all students under a division of Teaching and Learning</p>
Speech and language pathologist	<p>Assesses students for language and speech disorders</p> <p>Sets up individualized and small-group instruction for students meeting eligibility</p> <p>Pulls students out of general education on the basis of teacher schedules to meet the needs of 35 to 40 students</p>	<p>Moves into new roles that redefine her or his titles and responsibilities; may become part of a grade-level team for a specific amount of time each day to support heterogeneous flexible grouping patterns, develop teacher capacity to build curriculum from the bottom up, and to better meet the range of students in all educational situations.</p>
School counselor	<p>Serves as a “gatekeeper to information about post-secondary and occupational opportunity” (Smith-Maddox & Wheelock, 1995, p. 224)</p> <p>Steers students into academic tracks</p> <p>Provides classroom guidance (often used by the general educator for prep time)</p>	<p>Typically ignored in the inclusive literature</p> <p>Role virtually does not change</p>

Appendix C

In April of 2011, the Journal of Educational Leadership featured an article entitled, *Why Guidance Counseling Needs to Change*. They report that only 3% of high school students do not have a school counselor, yet just fewer than 50% of the students reported that their counselor was not helpful. Many students surveyed discussed that some students were assisted with post secondary options, and then there “was everyone else.”²⁹

According to the state of Wisconsin for School Counselors,

The intention of *The Wisconsin Comprehensive School Counseling Model: A Resource and Planning Guide [WCSCM]* for school-community teams is to elaborate on the relevance of *comprehensive* (emphasis added), sequential developmental curriculum, programming and service in schools. The components that make for a comprehensive school counseling program are: school counseling curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, and system support services.

The Wisconsin Model is premised on nine academic standards to be delivered in collaborative between school personnel, parents, and community, provides students with the skills necessary for them to become successful lifelong students, good citizens, and productive workers. School counselors and other student service staff are asked to act on the standards to guide the development, implementation and evaluation of a culturally relevant and comprehensive school reform.

The state of Wisconsin expects school districts to support a “comprehensive school counseling” program described as, “the process of leading, directing, and advising students through a program of experiences, which provides information, support, instruction, and encouragement to assist in developing academic, personal/social, and career development skills. Academic, personal/social, and career development skills represent the domains that comprehensive school counseling programs address. That being said, the National Center for Transforming School Counselors out of Washington D.C. views the school counselor’s role as being in the ideal position to serve as social justice advocates on behalf of students. That is,

- They can assess and interpret student needs, recognizing differences in culture, languages, values, and backgrounds.
- They can be liaisons between students and staff, setting high aspirations for all students and developing support to help them succeed.
- They can assess barriers that impede learning, inclusion, and academic success.
- They can coordinate school and community resources for students, families, and staff to improve academic achievement.
- And they can provide leadership for school officials to view data through an equity lens.

In summary, “the many facets of the school counselors position the ability to help ensure educational equity for all students, particularly those traditionally underserved by the system.”³⁰ See Exhibit 26 for a delineation of transforming facets.

Exhibit 25: Facets of Transforming School Counselors

²⁹ Johnson, J., Rochkind, J., Ott, A. (2010). *Why Guidance Counseling Needs to Change*. Educational Leadership. (67)7.

³⁰ National Center for Transforming School Counselors. http://www.edtrust.org/sites/edtrust.org/files/Social%20Justice_2.pdf

Leadership	Advocacy	Team And Collaboration	Counseling And Coordination	Assessment And Use of Data
Promote, plan, and implement prevention programs; career and college readiness activities; course selection and placement activities; social and personal management activities; and decision-making activities.	Make data available to help the whole school look at student outcomes.	Work with problem solving teams to ensure responsiveness to equity and cultural diversity issues as well as learning styles.	Hold brief counseling sessions with individual students, groups, and families.	Assess and interpret student needs, recognizing differences in culture, languages, values, and backgrounds.

Leadership	Advocacy	Team And Collaboration	Counseling And Coordination	Assessment And Use of Data
Provide data on student outcomes, showing achievement gaps, and provide leadership for schools to view data through an equity lens.	Use data to affect change, calling on resources from school and community.	Collaborate with other helping agents (peer helpers, teachers, principals, community agencies, businesses).	Coordinate school and community resources for students, families, and staff to improve student achievement.	Establish and assess measurable goals for student outcomes from counseling programs, activities, interventions, and experiences.
Arrange one-on-one school mentoring to provide students additional support for academic success.	Advocate for student experiences to broaden students' career awareness.	Collaborate with school and community teams to focus on rewards, incentives, and supports for student achievement.	Be liaison between students and staff, setting high aspirations for all students and developing plans/supports for achieving these aspirations.	Assess barriers that impede learning, inclusion, and academic success for students.
Play a leadership role in defining and carrying out guidance and counseling functions.	Advocate for students' placement and school support for rigorous preparation for all students.	Collaborate with others to develop staff training on team responses to students' academic, social, emotional, and developmental needs.	Coordinate staff training initiatives to address student needs on a school wide basis.	Interpret student data for use in whole school planning for change.

Appendix D

Students with Severe Disabilities and Best Practice

Chapter from Frattura, E. & Capper, C. (2007) *Leading for Social Justices: Transforming Schools for All Students*

Providing Access to High-Quality Teaching and Learning

Students Who Significantly Challenge Our Teaching

We have found that students in our courses and educators with whom we work agree with the principles and practices of ICS, until our attention turns to students who significantly challenge our teaching such as those with severe physical and cognitive challenges. At that point, heads shake, utterances are mumbled out of our range of hearing, while others outright take us to task and argue that students who significantly challenge our teaching should not be part of the proactive integrated conversation. Even educators who claim to work in so-called “inclusive” schools argue that their schools are inclusive, even though some of their students are segregated from their peers for the majority of the school day.

Durtschi’s (2005) study of elementary school principals in one Midwestern state illustrates our point. These principals were positive about inclusion in general (86.3%), and 98.9% stated that they “support including students in general education classrooms.” However, these same principals drew the line for students with severe disabilities. Nearly one-third (31%) of these principals supported separate schools or classrooms for students with severe/profound disabilities. More than half of the principals (56.6%) would oppose a law that required students with severe disabilities to be integrated with general education students. More than 10% (12.8%) believed that students with severe disabilities are too impaired to benefit from the activities of a regular school. In short, most educators agree with inclusive practices but only for particular students in particular ways—a clear contradiction to inclusion (Chin & Capper, 1999).

Who are these students with severe disabilities? We draw from Dr. Lou Brown throughout this chapter, as he was one of the first educators to assist families and school personnel in developing appropriate services for students with significant disabilities in integrated school and community environments. Since then, others have supported his concepts through universal access to curriculum, and “least harmful” assumptions (Donnellan, 1984). In 1988, Brown explained that students who comprise the lowest intellectually functioning 1% of a particular chronological age are referred to as significantly disabled. Often such measures of intellectual functioning are used to categorize people and make assumptions about their needs. The phrase “significant or severe disabilities” should signify particular direct instructional strategies for individual students. Instead, the label “severe disabilities” is used to isolate and categorize students into subgroups of people who are denied rights and privileges.

For the past 20 years, many educators have been involved in a shift to provide an integrated education for students with severe disabilities. If we define success by the number of students with a range of disabilities attending general education schools, we have been reasonably successful at 96% (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). What this statistic does not address, however, is that although more students with a range of disabilities are provided an education in public schools, students who significantly challenge our teaching continue to be placed in segregated environments or are not allowed to attend their neighborhood school or school of choice. In this chapter, we examine the

current state of education for students with severe disabilities and principles in support of integrated education for these students.

Current State of Education for Students With Severe Disabilities

We know from research conducted over 20 years ago that students with severe disabilities need instruction in four domains (community, vocational, recreational, and domestic), and that this instruction should occur in the natural environment (the environment the activity naturally occurs within for individuals without disabilities) or setting (Brown, 1988). Though students with severe disabilities are included in public schools more often today, we see educators engage in five practices that severely diminish the potential of these students.

First, many educators continue to believe that these students need to be warehoused in the “special room” down the hall. Often, directors of student services and special education are actually relieved when they have enough students with a particular label—for example, autism—that they can then cluster these students in one classroom in a building with extra space, or better yet, in someone else’s school.

Relatedly, educators point with pride at their special classrooms with a washing machine and other home furnishings constructed just for students with severe disabilities. We know, however, from research that students with severe disabilities cannot take skills learned in segregated environments, like these classrooms, and generalize these skills to other environments (Brown et al., 1983).

Third, schools continue to provide separate busses or transportation for students with severe disabilities and take these students in isolated groups on community field trips. When we place people with severe disabilities in groups with others who are only like themselves, we take away their individual identities and dignity and deprive students without disability labels the opportunity to learn with and develop friendships with students of all abilities.

Fourth, because it is sometimes difficult to plan individual employment opportunities for students with severe disabilities, schools are resorting to teaching vocational skills to these students as a clustered group within their buildings. We have heard educators claim they are engaged in inclusive practices while also explaining they are preparing these students for segregated vocational sites after high school. This practice again points to a contradiction in inclusion. Moreover, often these students are asked to complete vocational tasks that would be demeaning for a peer without a disability to complete. In so doing, we elicit pity for these students that in turn undermines their dignity and self-respect.

Finally, if a student with severe challenges is included in the general education classroom, he or she is often assigned an individual teaching assistant, and then the child’s education becomes the responsibility of the teaching assistant and general education classroom teacher, neither of whom may have seen the child’s individualized educational plan, or may not be able to implement that plan. These ineffective, unethical practices are initiated and continue because they are administratively convenient or philosophically supported without regard for the quality of life of the individual student. None of these five practices aligns with the principles of ICS.

Principles and Practice in Support of Integrated Education for Students With Severe Disabilities

Research and practice has shown that it is possible to educate children with severe disabilities in the schools and classrooms they would attend if not disabled. Here we describe 11 principles and practices that educators must consider to support an integrated education for students with severe disabilities: neighborhood schools, integrated classrooms, age-appropriate placements and activities, non-school and community environments, partial participation, natural proportions, functional skills, prioritization of skills to be learned, student/family preferences, opportunities for real work, and determining an appropriate education.

Neighborhood Schools

Years ago, we wrote that students should attend their home or neighborhood schools, or those schools that they would attend if not disabled (Brown et al., 1989) for three reasons. First, being able to attend one's home school is a basic civil right and is of benefit to all students. Students cannot learn to be comfortable with peers who may appear different from them if they do not interact with each other on a daily basis. Students will not learn compassion and the ability to make decisions that include all people if they are not in proximity to all people.

Second, in their neighborhood school, students with severe intellectual disabilities may receive community-based functional instruction in the environments where their families live. This will increase their opportunities for using these skills in their natural environments.

Third, when children with severe intellectual disabilities attend the school they would attend if not disabled, they have opportunities to interact with and form friendships with the same peers and families that they will interact with in their own neighborhoods. The students and their families become part of the larger school and neighborhood family network and the associated social activities. For example, if they play with and go to school with their neighborhood peers, it is more likely these peers will invite students with severe disabilities to birthday parties and other peer functions. Relatedly, attending their home school keeps families together. It is a travesty when one child in the family walks up the block to school, and the other child must wait for a little yellow school bus to pick him up and take him to a school away from his home.

Integrated Classrooms

Within their home schools, students with severe intellectual disabilities must be based or enrolled in regular education classrooms (Brown et al., 1989) with peers of similar age. This type of situation is not extreme or radical if the goals for the students with severe disabilities are clear, and if natural and artificial supports are clearly articulated and provided. We now know that such placements do not adversely affect non-disabled students (Peterson & Hittie, 2003) and can in fact benefit all students.

Age-Appropriate Placements and Activities

Students with significant disabilities also need to be placed in age appropriate situations and activities for their learning (Brown et al., 1979). That is, if a student is 15 years old, but functioning at a 3-year-

old level, this student needs to be placed with and engaged in similar activities to other 15-year-old students. Too often, we see high school-aged students with severe disabilities placed in classrooms at the elementary or middle school level out of administrative convenience. Or, as another example, we have seen middle or elementary school-aged students with severe disabilities placed at the high school level when school administrators attempt to group all students with severe disabilities in their school district together. These students are placed in this age-inappropriate settings out of administrative convenience, not student need. It is important for students with significant disabilities to be educated with their same-aged peers for three reasons.

First, all students have a basic civil right, regardless of the severity of their disability, to be educated with same-aged peers. Second, we can use the activities of same-age peers as a benchmark for teaching content for students with significant disabilities. For example, if 15-year-old students are using an iPod music device, then perhaps learning to use an iPod music device would become a means to achieve IEP goals for the 15-year-old with severe disabilities. As another example, if students from the high school forensics club raise funds by selling concessions at a basketball game, then a high school student with significant disabilities could participate as well, again completing tasks tied to his or her IEP goals. In contrast, having a group of high school students, all with disabilities, running the high school concession stand would not be in agreement with ICS principles, because this activity is not integrated with students with and without disabilities. In addition, the number of students with disabilities participating in this activity at one time (in this example, 100% of the students involved are labeled with a disability) is not a natural proportion of students with disabilities. The number of students with disabilities actually participating should not exceed the percentage of those same students in the entire school.

Third, being placed in age-appropriate environments can foster true friendships between students with and without disability labels. These friendships can be nurtured both within the school and in the students' neighborhoods.

Brown et al. (1979) discusses four interrelated hypotheses that often prevent instruction that is age appropriate. First, the mental age and chronological age discrepancy hypothesis—that is, educators presumably determine a child's mental age and then teach to that instead of the individual's chronological age. If, however, we teach the skills appropriate for a 3-year-old to a student who has a 3-year-old mental age, but who is 18 years old chronologically, we will deny that individual a lifetime of opportunities to belong because there will not be enough time for that student to "catch up" to an 18-year-old skill level.

A second hypothesis that prevents age-appropriate instruction is the earlier stage hypothesis—that is, educators believe that they must teach skills to students with severe disabilities at a slower pace and in a sequential order based on the developmental milestones of typical students. Again, however, if educators teach an 18-year-old student with a mental age of 3, based on this hypothesis, it will take them over 60 years to teach this student, and the student may never proceed beyond the mental age of 5. Therefore, educators must target skills that students with intellectual disabilities need and teach them in a way that these students can acquire these skills within a reasonable time frame.

A third hypothesis that mitigates against age-appropriate teaching is the "Not ready for" hypothesis. This hypothesis assumes that we need to wait to teach particular skills until the student is mentally ready. However, if we wait to teach functional skills to a person with severe disabilities until we deem them capable by mental age standards, it will never happen.

Finally, the artificial approximation hypothesis suggests that educators teach approximations of

a skill out of the context of the activity and the appropriate environment. For example, if we teach someone to cross a street in a classroom using artificial stop and go lights and then expect the student to be able to generalize the approximations to a four-lane automated walk signal in the real world, we are placing that

individual in harm's way. Not only have we wasted the student's time, we have also denied him or her the opportunity to learn in the natural environment.

Non-School and Community Environments

When educators understand that students with severe disabilities must be fully considered in the ICS process, they often assume we mean that these students must spend 100% of their day within the general education classroom, regardless of their age or needs. In fact, ICS does require that students with severe disabilities spend 100% of their day in integrated education environments, but these environments include both school and non-school settings.

Brown et al. (1983) agree that serving students with significant disabilities in age-appropriate regular schools and classes they would attend if not disabled is necessary but not totally sufficient for an effective education. Their education must also include access to integrated vocational, domestic, recreation/leisure, and general community environments. Brown and colleagues contend that it is necessary to take into consideration the learning needs of the student to determine the balance between non-school activities and instruction in the child's home school. As with all students, those with significant disabilities require direct, individualized, longitudinal, comprehensive, and systematic instruction in a wide variety of integrated environments.

Brown et al. (1991) delineate factors to consider when determining time spent in regular education classrooms and elsewhere. First, the number of environments in which a student with severe disabilities spends time should be similar to the number of environments in which a non-disabled peer spends time. These learning environments must provide a range of different learning opportunities and stimuli, increasing the probability for skill acquisition with minimal support.

Second, the chronological age of the student is important to determine how much time should be available for instruction, how much the student has to learn, and where are the most appropriate environments and sub-environments for the student to learn specific activities and skills. In general, the older the child, the more time the students should spend learning functional skills in the environments those skills actually occur such as in the community.

Hence, students with severe disabilities may learn in a general education classroom some of the time, but will learn in integrated environments with typical peers 100% of the time. Additional factors to consider when deciding how much learning should occur in school and non-school environments are the skills a student can learn; the amount of time the student has to learn them; and the student's ability to generalize, recoup, and retain information. These factors will help determine specifically what skills, activities, and environments will maximize the student's independence.

Usually, concrete, practical skills can be taught more effectively in a non-school environment than in a school environment. However, community-based instruction must not be confined to occasional field trips. When students with severe disabilities participate in a range of different field trips per week with little to no attention to particular skill learning, then these trips are not of value. Community-based instruction is an individually choreographed instructional technique to teach skills that are necessary for the student to be as independent as possible as an adult.

Therefore, educators need to provide a balanced school and community schedule for a student with significant disabilities. The older the individual, and the less they generalize, recoup, and transfer information, the more opportunities they must have to receive instruction in the environments in which those activities actually occur. That is, a student at the elementary level with a significant disability may spend a large part of their day in the general education classroom with instruction in the community included as part of the typical third-grade curriculum and its community service projects. As the student gets older, the student receives an increasing amount of instruction in the community—for example, during the last periods of the day, three days a week, with a student without disabilities, perhaps as part of a community service project.

To illustrate, we offer the case of Miguel, a high school student with severe disabilities. Miguel is on the ninth-grade support teacher's caseload. The grade-level support teacher and IEP team will examine the individual needs of Miguel, and determine the skills he must learn to be independent and what skills and activities are the most important for students in ninth grade to know. Given the age of Miguel and the amount of time he has remaining in school, the staff may determine that Miguel will require community instruction in the areas of banking, food prep, shopping, housecleaning, and public transportation. Other information about Miguel includes the fact that, he likes U.S. History, especially information on wars.

Therefore, Miguel's weekly schedule will include community instruction in the morning at an off-campus job site, completing food prep with one other student with whom he rides the city bus and then returns to school for lunch and U.S. History. During the morning community instruction time, on Mondays, Miguel receives instruction for shopping and banking. On Tuesdays, he receives instruction in housekeeping at his own house. On Wednesdays and Fridays, he will visit the local health club to exercise and learn new lifelong health habits with a non-disabled high school student involved in community service and one other student with mild disabilities.

During the time Miguel is in history class, the general educator and grade-level support staff will develop universal access to the curriculum—that is, the history curriculum will address the range of student skills in the classroom. Then, if necessary, adaptations may be made to address Miguel's more specific needs. For example, the instructional arrangements, the lesson format, teaching strategies, curricular and social goals specific to the lesson, the instructional materials, the level of natural supports, the supervision arrangements, and the physical and social aspects of the classroom can all be designed to support the specific needs of Miguel (Udvari-Solner & Thousand, 1995).

Partial Participation

Sometimes, a student with a severe disability may not be able to fully participate in an activity with peers who do not have a disability label. For this reason, educators may exclude the student with severe disabilities from the activity. However, the principle of partial participation suggests that though a student with severe disabilities may not be able to fully participate in an activity, he or she may be able to partially participate, thus allowing the student to be included.

The ability to partially participate (Meyer, Peck, & Brown, 1991) in chronological age-appropriate environments and activities is educationally more advantageous than exclusion from such environments and activities. Students with severe disabilities, regardless of their degrees of dependence or levels of functioning, should be supported to partially participate in a wide range of school and non-school environments and activities. The kinds and degrees of partial participation should be increased through direct and systematic instruction. Partial participation in school and non-

school environments and activities will result in a student learning more skills and thus gaining greater independence. Systematic, coordinated, and longitudinal efforts must be initiated at a young age to prepare students with severe disabilities for partial participation in as many environments and activities as possible with chronological age-appropriate, non-disabled peers.

Natural Proportions

As we defined the term in Chapter 1, “natural proportion” means that the numbers of students of a particular label or need in any school setting should reflect the numbers of such students in the overall school setting. Students with severe intellectual needs comprise about 1% of the school population (Brown et al., 1988). Therefore, we need to be cognizant of how many students with severe disabilities are clustered into one environment and ensure that no more than 1% of that setting is composed of these students. Typically, if students with severe disabilities are not railroaded into institutions or “clustered educational placements,” the proportions of students with and without disabilities will maintain a natural balance. When such a natural balance occurs, people are treated, viewed, and respected as individuals and not as a group of people to be circumvented and denied privilege (Brown, Udvari-Solner, Long, Davis, & Jorgensen, 1990).

Functional Skills

It is reasonable to expect that students with intellectual disabilities will acquire fewer skills during an educational career than approximately 97% of their chronological-age peers. If such a relatively limited number of skills are to be learned, it seems prudent that a reasonable proportion of these should be “functional.” Functional skills are those that someone else would have to do for the individual with a disability if he or she could not complete the activity on his or her own. For example, if a student with disabilities does not learn to open the door to the school, the chances are that someone else will need to assist. If a person with significant disabilities does not learn to wash the dishes, someone else will have to wash the dishes. However, if a person with significant disabilities does not learn the capitals of all the states, the chances are that no one else will have to learn the capitals for him or her. When considering what skills to teach, it is important to balance functional skills with the individual’s interest, with the social importance of the skill, and with the preparation for adulthood, as well as the recreational significance of the skill. For example, if an individual does not swim, the chances are that no one else will have to swim for him or her; however, the individual with the disability will gain much from the physical activity of swimming for lifelong fitness.

Prioritization of Skills to Be Learned

Students with significant disabilities learn less than 99% of their peers, recoup less, retain less, and generalize less. Therefore, educators must consider three factors when deciding which skills to teach students with severe disabilities that will result in as much adult independence as possible. First, educators need to consider the number of skills that should be taught. Brown et al. (1983) state that there are thousands of skills that can be acquired by others that either cannot be acquired by students with severe intellectual disabilities or are extremely cost-inefficient when the return for educational investment is considered. Completing long-division worksheets and memorizing multiplication tables or the presidents of the United States are a few examples. Therefore, it is essential to look at the skills that will assist children with significant disabilities to be productive members of society and help them as they become young adults to be as independent as possible in the community, home, workplace,

and when recreating. When teaching a child with severe disabilities, the complexity of such skills must be minimized to increase independence.

A second consideration for teaching skills is the number and kinds of opportunities a student will have to learn these skills. For example, making eggplant parmesan may be a wonderful skill to have, but if the individual does not know how to make a sandwich for lunch, the Teen Living class that teaches how to cook gourmet dishes may not be the most appropriate use of the student's time. However, if in fact the high school foods class is teaching survival cooking skills and the student has the opportunity to make everyday foods in an integrated class, during instruction in a domestic environment, and at home in the evening, the chances of acquiring the skills for those specific activities have now tripled in probability due to the increase in opportunities. Students with severe disabilities must be provided opportunities to repeatedly practice these skills in natural environments with meaningful performance criteria. Repeated practice is important, as a student might not recoup a skill that was learned if it is used infrequently.

Accordingly, Brown (1988) cautions teachers about "time-determined progressions" or unit instructional practices. That is, educators may decide, for example, that in February, student will learn grocery shopping skills. However, students with severe disabilities may need teaching related to grocery shopping to occur over a period of 3–5 years and at regular intervals throughout the year. This instruction can progress from the most basic shopping patterns (following a picture list), to higher-order experiences of developing a picture grocery list based on the items necessary for the projected meals for the week, to staying within a weekly budget based on the individual's earnings.

A third consideration involves practicing the skill in the natural environment in which the skill is needed. If we do not ensure such practice, we are expecting students who have the least ability to generalize, to generalize across many different environments. The worse case example of this is teaching a student to practice a skill in the isolation of the classroom, and then expecting that student to be able to use that skill in a completely different natural environment. To repeat, the skills being taught must enhance the student's functioning within the school, home, community, work, and recreational environments.

Student and Family Preferences

Students with intellectual disabilities, like all students, are less successful at learning skills they are not interested in than they are in learning skills in which they have a high level of interest. Given the importance of the desire to learn and its relationship to motivation and determination, students with severe disabilities and their families must have an opportunity to be involved in the decisions about what skills the students will learn based on the students' preferences.

Opportunities for Real Work

Educators often opt to place students with significant disabilities into segregated work crews or segregated enclaves with other students with significant disabilities to acquire work experience and vocational skills. Brown (1988) rejects these practices, and instead insists on the importance of placing students with significant disabilities in work situations that reflect the natural proportions concept. Thus, enclaves and crews are unnecessarily restrictive. Thus, when supporting students with disabilities at community vocational sites, it is imperative to attend to natural proportions. As we previously discussed, because approximately 1% of the individuals in society could be labeled with

severe intellectual disabilities, student learning environments, including vocational environments, should have a similar proportion of individuals with severe disabilities. In addition, these environments require the presence of students without disability labels—that is, an individual without a disability should be within sight, hearing, and touch of a person with a significant disability for the vocational environment to be defined as an integrated one.

Determining the Most Appropriate Education

To determine the most appropriate education for students with significant disabilities, Brown et al. (1983) suggest using the ecological inventory and discrepancy analysis strategy. This inventory and strategy can assist teachers, students, and parents to develop instructional goals, and to determine the most appropriate skills, activities, and environments for students to reach those goals.

First, educators determine the activities and skills that a same-age, non-disabled peer would be learning, as well as the environments where the same-age, non-disabled peer would be learning these skills. These skill areas focus on five curricular domains: school, vocational, community, recreational, and domestic.

Second, educators then determine if the child with significant disabilities can perform any of these skills independently. That is, the educator determines the discrepancies between the skills and activities that a child without a disability is able to do and those that a child with a disability is capable of completing. Then, the educator makes recommendations as to which skills, activities, and environments will be the primary focus for that particular time period. Appropriate academic and functional objectives can then be determined that are pertinent to the recommendations. It is essential during this process to keep in mind the current and future learning environments that the individual will function within (Brown et al., 1983).

Conclusion

In schools and districts where the educational leaders believe in and implement Integrated Comprehensive Services, students with severe disabilities are educated in the same classrooms, schools, and community environments where they would be educated if not disabled. We have heard administrators say, “We actually do Integrated Comprehensive Services in our district.” Then we ask, “Do you have students with severe disabilities on the general education teachers’ caseloads at the grade level to receive a range of individualized integrated instruction?” Most often, administrators respond by saying, “Oh, well, we don’t do it for our students with severe disabilities—they go to a special school or are clustered into special classes in schools around our district.” If students with severe disabilities are segregated, then educators are only perpetuating the notion that some students meet our criteria for belonging and other students clearly do not.

Some educators claim that they base their decision to segregate particular students on those students’ “individual needs,” when in fact the decision is based on the degree of educator creativity and willingness to do what it takes to include students based on the principles described in this chapter. For example, we have witnessed students who have been placed in a segregated, self-contained classroom all day, in a school that is not their home school, and the educators in this district claim the decisions are based on the students’ needs. When the family of one of these students moved to a different district that practiced ICS, this student attended the home school and received a balance of integrated school and community instruction. As this example shows, it is not the extent of a student’s disability or individual student needs that should determine the degree to which a student will be educated with his or her peers, but rather it is educator creativity and will. If we want to provide

integrated school and community instruction for a student with severe disabilities, we will. We cannot claim to be “inclusive” or claim to be practicing ICS when in fact we draw the line to only include particular students at particular times. We must move beyond denying the civil rights of students with severe disabilities. We must walk our talk, and this means putting into practice the principles in this chapter to ensure that literally every single student in the school community, including students with severe disabilities, are full participating members of that school community.

Appendix E

Reflective Planning Framework for Differentiating Instruction

- Step 1: Determine how each child learns and document based on specific content (Silver)
- Step 2: Identify key concepts, standards, guiding principles or essential questions, and desired outcomes.
Sample reflective question: *What do I want students to know (e.g., concepts, facts, vocabulary words) and understand (e.g. generalizations, links with prior knowledge or experiences) at the end of this unit.*
- Step 3: Differentiate levels of student understanding
Sample reflective questions: *Given the core concepts, relevant applications, key generalizations, and critical skills that I want all students to learn, how can I extend the knowledge and skills for those students ready to move further? How can I ensure that students needing a more basic level also receive enriching opportunities to learn about the key concepts?*
- Step 4: If relevant to your particular context, identify which essential standards might interface with the unit or topical area.
Sample reflective questions: *In context of the intended learning from this unit, how can I blend district objectives and/or state standards?*
- Step 5: Determine which skills are important for the students to learn, review, and apply.
Sample reflective questions: *What do I want students to be able to do at the end of this unit? What new skills will students need to learn for this unit? What opportunities are present for students to review and apply skills they have already learned?*
- Step 6: Select product options that will encourage students to apply their learning from the unit as well as integrating the knowledge and skills from the unit previous knowledge and experiences.
Sample reflective questions: *What kinds of products will allow students to demonstrate what they have learned relative to the key concepts, principles or questions? What products would show integration and applications? How can individual student strengths be used to guide demonstrations? How might student choice be incorporate into product selection? In what ways can students best share what they have learned?*
- Step 7: Select formative and summative assessment approaches that can be used throughout the unit to provide helpful feedback to both students and staff.
Sample reflective questions: *How can I best assess what students already know about the topic? What kinds of feedback do I want throughout the unit to help me determine the effectiveness of lessons and activities? How can I best design assessment tools that will be sensitive to varied levels of student proficiency? How can I actively involve students in self-assessment?*
- Step 8: Given the range of student needs, abilities, strengths, and experiences, determine how students can best learn about the identified concepts, principles, or essential questions.
Sample reflective questions: *What activities can be used that will maximize student strengths, interest, abilities, and experiences? What do students already know about this topic? What additional support needs will some of the students have? How can the activities best accommodate those additional support needs? How best can I group students for the activities in this unit?*

Adapted from York-Barr, Sommers, Ghere, Montie (2006). Reflective Practice to Improve Schools

Stage I: Student Learning Style: Math

(Refresher Reference: So Each May Learn - Harvey Silver)

Step 1:

Student	Interest	Learning Styles	Assessment Needs
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Stage II Desired Results	
Step 2: Standard: <i>Relevant goals – (e.g., content standards, course or program objectives, learning outcomes) will this plan address.</i>	
Step 3: Students will Understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What are the big ideas</i> • <i>What specific understandings about them are desired</i> • <i>What misunderstandings are predictable?</i> 	Step 4: Essential Standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What proactive questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?</i>
Step 5: Students will know: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result if this unit?</i> • <i>What should they eventually be able to do as a result of such knowledge and skill?</i> 	Step 6: Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result if this unit?</i> • <i>What should they eventually be able to do as a result of such knowledge and skill?</i>
Stage III: Assessment Evidence	
Step 7: Performance Task: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Through what authentic performance tasks will students demonstrate the desired understandings?</i> • <i>By what criteria will performances of understanding be judged</i> 	Step 7: Other Evidence: <i>Through what other evidence (e.g., quizzes, tests, academic prompts, observations, homework, journals) will students demonstrate achievement of the desired results?</i> <i>How will students reflect upon and self-assess their learning?</i>
Stage IV: Learning Plans for Heterogeneous Flexible Groupings	
Step 8: Learning Plans <i>Based on the needs of the students in your class how will you group students?</i> <i>What learning experiences and instruction will enable students to achieve the desired results?</i> <i>How will the design:</i> <i>W=Help students know Where the unit is going and What is expected? Hel the teacher know Where the students are coming from (prior knowledge, interests)/</i> <i>H= Hook all students and Hold their interests?</i> <i>E= Equip students help them Experience the key ideas and Explore the issues (Use grade band content standards)?</i> <i>R= Provide opportunities to Rethink and Revise their understandings and work?</i> <i>E=Allow students to Evaluate their work and its implications</i> <i>T= Be tailored (personalized) to the different needs, interests, and abilities of students?</i> <i>O= Be Organized to maximize initial and sustained engagement as well as effective learning?</i>	

Adapted from Understanding by Design

Stage II Desired Results	
Step 2: Standard:	
Step 3: Students will Understand:	Step 4: Essential Standards:
Step 5: Students will know:	Step 6: Students will be able to:
Stage III: Assessment Evidence	
Step 7: Performance Task:	Step 7: Other Evidence:
Stage IV: Learning Plans for Heterogeneous Flexible Groupings	
Step 8: Learning Plans (See cloud unit as an example).	
Stage II Desired Results	

Step 2: Standard:	
Step 3: Students will Understand:	Step 4: Essential Standards:
Step 5: Students will know:	Step 6: Students will be able to:
Stage III: Assessment Evidence	
Step 7: Performance Task:	Step 7: Other Evidence:
Stage IV: Learning Plans for Heterogeneous Flexible Groupings	
Step 8: Learning Plans (See cloud unit as an example).	

Appendix F



New Teacher Teams to Support Integrated Comprehensive Services

Elise M. Frattura • Colleen A. Capper

Most educators agree that students with disabilities should spend as much time as possible in the general education classroom. However, this expectation frustrates many educators because they do not receive support in ways that ensure the success of students. This article describes an integrated comprehensive service (ICS) delivery model that uses four teams to provide educator support for the benefit of all students in general education.

Our extensive research and practice with an ICS delivery model over the past 12 years—in 10 different schools, at the elementary, middle, and high school levels and located in rural, suburban, and urban districts—indicates that educators need to rethink the team structures in their schools to implement and sustain ICS (see box, “What Is an Integrated Comprehensive Service Delivery Model?”). These new team structures are necessary because research suggests that sustaining inclusive practices over time is difficult. For example, in their 4-year-long study of a middle school, Sindelar, Shearer, Yendol-Hoppey, and Liebert (2006) focused on the sustainability of inclusive education. The study indicated that changes in leadership, teacher turnover, and changes in state and district assessment policies resulted in failure to sustain inclusion. Those

changes, in turn, led to a reduction of resources and philosophical commitment to inclusion.

Our research and practice suggests that sustaining ICS is possible when teachers are full participants in school decisions through membership in four specific teams. Three of these teams are at the school level: a planning team, a service delivery team, and a grade-level design team; the fourth team, the districtwide service delivery team, functions at the district level. These teams engage in

- Shared decision making, that is, providing opportunities that allow individuals in the school community to be involved in implementation decisions.
- Staff design, that is, strategically assigning teachers and staff to students and classes in ways that build teacher capacity and maximize student learning.
- Student support, that is, strategically assigning students to classes in ways that do not segregate them, that maximize students’ opportunities to learn in heterogeneous groups, and that create the conditions for optimal student learning.

Educators frequently focus on instruction and curriculum and assume

that they do not have control over structure, policy, or procedures. The work of these four teams disrupts this assumption. In this article, we first briefly describe each team. Then, in the following sections, for each team, we delineate team goals, team membership, steps that the team can take to implement ICS, and ways to evaluate their efforts.

The Teams

Overview

In schools with shared leadership, a schoolwide team—often known as a school learning team, site council, school planning team, shared decision-making team, or educational planning committee—frequently functions as an oversight committee for many school decisions. In this article, we use the term *school planning team*. In a school with shared decision making, such a team must be one of the essential teams that deals with the entire school. The school planning team is primarily responsible for collecting student-performance data and school-specific data, as well as setting annual or long-term goals for school improvement.

The second key decision-making team for initiating and implementing ICS is the school’s service delivery team. This team functions as an off-

shoot of the school planning team specifically to analyze and redesign the way that services are offered. The service delivery team is also responsible for identifying the necessary changes in school and district-based policy and procedures for implementing ICS.

The third type of key decision-making team consists of grade-level design teams. These teams include teams of teachers at each grade level who are responsible for setting up the specific staff design for each grade level, as well as the instructional and curricular services for that grade level.

The districtwide service delivery team represents the fourth key decision-making team. This team's primary function is to ensure that service delivery is consistent across the district. The team's primary responsibility is to share information from the individual school teams to develop consistency and fluidity across the district for all students. For example, the team may want to confirm that a child moving from fifth to sixth grade is able to maintain services that are similar to those in the fifth grade and are based on his or her individualized service plan (ISP) or individualized education program (IEP). This team is the glue that holds the service delivery model together in Grades K–12.

A primary consideration for all four teams is team membership. The teams must represent a broad range of individuals who typically support students who struggle in the school. Such individuals might include the English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, an at-risk teacher, Title I staff, and special education teachers. In addition, team membership should ensure that teams consist of individuals who are demographically representative of the proportion of culturally and linguistically diverse people in the school and district. That is, all the teams should include the same proportion of students of a specific minority group as the proportion of members of that minority group in the school and in the district. Obviously, for example, if only 1% of the students are culturally and linguistically diverse, then 1% of the committee membership should be culturally and linguistically diverse. When teams—for example, the

What Is an Integrated Comprehensive Service Delivery Model?

An integrated comprehensive service (ICS) delivery model is a model that organizes professional staff by the needs of each learner instead of clustering learners by label (Frattura & Capper, in press). An ICS model does not assign staff members to a unit or program and place them in separate classrooms. Instead, support staff and general education teachers work collaboratively to bring appropriate instructional supports to each child in integrated school and community environments. This model thereby establishes an integrated home base in support of belonging for all learners (Frattura & Capper).

The word *integrated* refers to the environments that all students, regardless of need or legislative eligibility, access throughout their day in school and nonschool settings. That is, in integrated environments, students with a variety of needs and gifts learn together in both small and large groupings that are flexible in nature. A school that uses an ICS delivery model has no spaces that are designated only for those students with disabilities.

The term *comprehensive* refers to the array of services and supports, in addition to a differentiated curriculum and instruction, that accommodate the various learning needs of children to ensure their success in school. ICS results in the sharing of resources and choreographed services on the basis of the needs, strengths, and interests of each learner.

school planning team—include community members or families, these community members and families should represent the cultural, linguistic, and income diversity of the school and district. To encourage families or community members to participate, schools should consider providing transportation, child care, and language interpreters if needed (Lopez, 2003).

All four of these teams must set ground rules for discussion and decisions. In addition, the teams must all decide in what ways and how frequently they will communicate the progress of the team with the other three teams and with other school personnel. Further, the teams must decide how they will receive specific feedback from the other three teams and from other school personnel about their work.

School Planning Team

As previously mentioned, the school planning team is responsible for collecting and analyzing student data, as well as school-specific data. Frattura and Capper (in press) suggests a set of questions that can guide the evaluation of services for students. The school planning team can facilitate this evaluation. Team membership must include representatives from all stakeholders of the school community, including the school administrator, teachers, parents, stu-

dents, other staff, and community members. A school planning team typically does the following (Conzemius & O'Neil, 2001):

- Focuses on student learning at the site.
- Serves as a forum for diverse perspectives from the school, home, and community to ensure the exchange of a variety of viewpoints.
- Provides participatory shared decision making at each site to create the individual school's structure and culture (within the district mission).
- Promotes communication among parents, community members, professional and support personnel, students, and administrators.

The school planning team can be responsible for curricular, instructional, and personnel budgets and can then make difficult decisions in support of the school and district mission. Often, a school planning team analyzes students' scores, discusses areas of concern and resolution, and then creates comprehensive school goals.

While the school planning team is addressing the goals on the basis of the data analysis, it can define and evaluate progress. The other three teams will also have their own goals and evalua-

tion strategies that they will share with the school planning team.

School Service Delivery Team

The school service delivery team consists of teachers and administrators whose primary focus is to assess how services are being offered to and for all learners. The primary responsibility of the school service delivery team is to assess the quality of ICS on an ongoing basis, with emphasis on equity, structure of services, access to high-quality teaching and learning, and development of appropriate funding mechanisms and policies (Frattura & Capper, in press).

Services and programs provided within the school form the basis for membership on the school service delivery team. The team needs a representative from each unit, grade level, department, or academy to give voice to all stakeholders and to represent all children in the school. In addition, teachers representing the different programs offered in the school (e.g., ESL, Title I, at risk) should constitute the remainder of the teacher leaders on the committee. As many studies confirm, the participation of the school administrator is essential to the operations of the team (Fullan, 1999). The school administrator should be an equal member of the team, with little or no veto power but with the opportunity to use his or her skills of persuasion. In many schools that have functioning school service delivery teams, the districtwide administrator for student services and special education and the director of curriculum and instruction may participate as equal members of the team. These individuals often have the ability to obtain and reallocate resources to assist in the movement from programs to services; for example, they can facilitate the commingling of funds in support of all learners. The school service delivery team should not have more than 10 to 12 members, primarily so that all members can participate in decisions. Individuals on the team should have strong opinions about educational services for all learners.

The goals of the school service delivery team are simple:

- To better meet the needs of each learner in a comprehensive manner in integrated school and community environments.
- To take a clear look at the structural barriers to providing the most comprehensive integrated services possible and to reconstruct a model of service delivery that will provide students with minimal fragmentation within the school day.
- To attend to any symbolic and procedural practices that perpetuate the division between the haves and the have-nots, for example, field trips, school ceremonies, and banquets.

Seven specific steps and processes help this team achieve its goals:

1. The team must have the opportunity to discuss what integrated comprehensive services are and what they are not. They may want to share readings about ideas related to ICS (see Peterson & Hittie, 2003, for a comprehensive list of research in support of ICS). The team can then reflect and think about what it means to move toward ICS for all learners and decide by consensus what moving toward ICS could mean.
2. All team members must agree about the importance of adopting a philosophy of ICS. Many school teams make decisions concerning the core principles of ICS without reaching a consensus. Unless teams make such decisions by consensus, they default to a traditional structure of programs and compliance-driven policy that undermines growth and education for students who require additional services. The team should not force change. If team members cannot generate enough interest in ICS at the school, they should continue to ask such questions as the following:
 - Why do the children who have the least ability to generalize have the most fragmented schedules?
 - Could we do more for all learners if we worked together instead of in our own separate silos?
 - When we say all learners, do we really mean *all*?
3. The team next draws a picture describing how the school currently meets the needs of children who are challenged—or the needs of children who challenge how we teach. That is, they draw a picture of the school's current program delivery model. This picture should address the question: What programs are currently in place for students who struggle in our school? The picture of this current delivery model must be as detailed as possible.
4. The team uses the information developed in the preceding steps to conduct a gap analysis. The team compares the current service delivery model with the principles of ICS and evidenced-based practices. The team can then determine the locations of any gaps between what ICS entails and what is currently happening with the service delivery picture in the school.
5. Participants then list current practices in their school that focus on prevention and determine whether these practices are comprehensive, integrated, and effective enough to build success for every learner. If these practices align with the ICS principles, then the school should continue these practices in the new service delivery model.
6. The team members brainstorm their vision and hopes for service delivery in their school, basing these visions and hopes on the principles of ICS. Team members then draw a picture of the future service delivery model on large paper. They list this vision and these hopes without considering any budgetary concerns, since such concerns can limit recommendations. Although every district has budget limitations, administrators and facilitators are often able to creatively address financial concerns to support an ICS model by commingling funds or by reallocating them. Limiting the model by using a financial formula can also limit recommendations. Often staff members find that drawing the picture of the new model is difficult and instead use a table or diagram to outline it.

7. The school service delivery team then moves on to the final step, which is to develop a plan for achieving the new service delivery model. At this point, the decision making needs to move to the grade-level design teams that will be responsible for turning the vision into reality.

**Limiting the model by using
a financial formula can also
limit recommendations.**

The school service delivery team meets as often as necessary at the beginning of the change process but may reduce its meeting schedule when the grade-level design teams begin their work. The school service delivery team is then primarily responsible for evaluation activities and may reconvene to discuss feedback or major concerns regarding the efficacy of the model. In so doing, the members of the school service delivery team should examine what is working and what is not and determine options for creative solutions without reverting back to an old model of segregating children. To prevent the marginalization of any child, all educators have a responsibility to educate the next generation of children together—structurally, symbolically, and academically. Therefore, the pendulum must not swing back to segregation. Nonetheless, we cannot discount the possibility of strife in the process. Change is difficult, and there will be times when teachers and administrators need support from the school service delivery team members.

Grade-Level Design Teams

As previously discussed, most school service delivery teams provide recommendations that result in a grade-based model of service delivery. For example, one team of teachers and staff may work with a range of learners at 8th grade and other teams may work with a range of learners at 10th and 11th grade. If grade level is the primary basis for school structure, structuring the sup-

port model by grades makes sense. If the school uses a structure that consists of small learning academies, then providing services that are based on the academy structure makes more sense. Either way, it is not logical to continue a model by specialization (ED, LD, at risk, English language learners [ELL], Title I, etc.) in a school that uses a structure by grades, houses, academies, or some other configuration. Educators should therefore avoid configuring support in a manner that makes particular teachers responsible for groups of labeled students across grades; that is, the school should not configure support so that one teacher is responsible for all students with the ED label across three, four, or more grades. That practice disconnects teacher specializations and the graded structures of schools and results in fragmentation and failure-based programs.

A primary responsibility of the grade-level design teams is to assign students and staff in ways that support ICS principles. The school planning team completes the ICS analysis; but the school service delivery and grade-level design teams develop, implement, and evaluate the service delivery design. These latter two teams are the ones that bring the vision to life. The school service delivery team suggests to the grade-level design teams possible ways of supporting students. The grade-level design teams are responsible for the actual implementation. These grade-level design teams make big schools small, make large numbers of students individuals, and minimize such bureaucratic measures as programming students en masse or clustering students by label or by statutory regulations.

The grade-level design teams should include all individuals who are assigned to a specific grade level or have volunteered at that level to provide service to students with disabilities, students who speak English as a second language, students who are deemed at risk of failing to complete school, and other students. Each grade-level design team must include the general educators, special educators, at-risk teachers, ESL teachers, and other teachers assigned to the grade-level team by the process that the

school service delivery team has completed. In addition, school social workers, guidance counselors, the school psychologist, teachers of gifted and talented students, speech and language pathologists, and other support may focus on particular grade levels for a variety of reasons. For example, guidance counselors may become part of a grade-level design team and provide service only to students at that particular grade level, or a speech and language clinician might be assigned to a kindergarten–first grade cluster, since the language needs are high in those two grades. The grade-level design team specifies the role of these personnel, but the role should include direct support to students in heterogeneous groups. Finally, a representative of the school service delivery team should serve on each grade-level design team as a liaison between the two teams.

The goals of the grade-level design teams are to meet the individual needs of each learner, from children with mild learning disabilities or third-year ESL students to students with severe and profound cognitive disabilities or extreme behavioral challenges caused by mental illness, as well as children with average or above-average abilities and skills. These teams therefore strategically assign staff to courses and classrooms and place students to ensure that students are not segregated and to maximize student learning.

The grade-level design teams have three additional functions. First, they must determine the professional development that is necessary to build the ability of teachers to teach a range of learners in their classrooms. Second, they must help staff include planning time in their work days and weeks so that staff members can collaborate to meet student needs. Third, they must help secure the resources to carry out these first two functions. A representative of each grade-level design team then takes the professional development, planning time, and resource needs to the school service delivery team, which can then coordinate professional development and planning time, as well as obtain resources for

Student Placement in Classrooms

The concept of natural proportions should guide all decisions about student placement in classrooms. For example, if 12% of the students in a school have special needs, then no more than 12% of the students in a single classroom should have special needs. If English language learners (ELLs) comprise 10% of the school population, then the proportion of ELLs in any single classroom or course should be no more than 10%. Educators should balance the percentage of students with special needs across classrooms, in the same proportion as in that grade.

In addition, a continuum of support should guide student placement decisions. That is, not all students who require support need direct support from a specialist. Some students need the support of a team-taught classroom where a general education teacher and a support teacher (e.g., a special education teacher or a bilingual teacher) teach the course together. The goal of such a teaching arrangement should be to build the teaching capacity of the general teacher so that team-teaching support is not necessary. Some students may require direct instruction from a support teacher for part of the school day in the general education classroom. Others may benefit from the support of a teaching assistant or school volunteer for part of the school day. Still other students may only require a support teacher to check in with the general education teacher on a regular basis for feedback and assistance or for on-call support. Some students can receive high-quality support from their peers in collaborative learning classrooms. Educators should not place students in particular classrooms with the assumption that they all need direct support from a specialist; the primary purpose of support teachers is to build the capacity of general educators to teach to a range of student needs in their classrooms. Also, the school should not place students in different classrooms at a grade level in a manner that does not allow them to receive the support that they may need.

these needs in collaboration with the school planning team.

The grade-level design teams use 10 processes and steps:

1. The school service delivery team first determines the membership on each grade-level design team. For example, if all first-grade teachers in a school comprise the first-grade-level design team, then the school service delivery team may suggest assigning a special education teacher and a bilingual specialist to serve all first-grade students. As the planning process continues, team membership may change, depending on the configuration of the new service delivery.
2. The grade-level design team lists the students within that particular grade level who struggle. This list includes students eligible for special education, Title I students, at-risk students, ELLs, and other students who are struggling but have not met eligibility criteria for a program.
3. Each of the students who is eligible for special education must have an

IEP. To assist the team in determining needs and calculating the optimal amount of individual, small-group, and large-group support, the grade-level design team should create an ISP for each of the struggling students who is not eligible for special education.

4. The grade-level design team then strategically assigns students to particular classes or courses. Grade-level team members often divide the group of students into smaller caseloads to enable each staff person to better determine specific needs. Most teams attempt to place students with teachers whose expertise matches the students' needs or to place students with a staff member who is familiar with the student and is willing to continue with that student, as long as students are naturally placed into integrated classrooms and caseloads are balanced (see box, "Student Placement in Classrooms"). For example, placing all students with high behavioral

needs in the caseload of one teacher is not logical, because the teacher will never be able to proactively support 10 or more students with significant high needs in two or three different classrooms. However, placing 1 or 2 students with high behavioral needs on the caseload of a teacher with 8 other students who do not have such needs is logical.

5. After determining the primary areas of need and the necessary support, the team determines the schedule for each student, on the basis of the typical learner's schedule at that grade level. For each student's schedule, the team identifies areas where the student is receiving individual, small-group, or large-group instruction with or without support. Students with the greatest needs often have the most transitions. Therefore, to prevent later problems and to allow students to begin their year with a schedule that is likely to remain unchanged, educators at the middle school and high school levels should hand-schedule students with specific needs before they begin the mass scheduling by grade level and subjects.
6. After developing a schedule for each student, the team drafts a teacher schedule to determine when and where teachers need to provide appropriate support. Where conflicts occur, the team members decide how they can work together to support and resolve the conflicts.
7. After support staff members have identified their caseloads and outlined schedules for students and staff, the real work begins. Support teachers and general educators need to determine exactly how their work together will look, including determining when they will team teach, when the support teacher will be in the room for support only, and when the support teacher will assist with flexible groupings. After organizing the teaming schedule, support teachers

and general educators need to develop the curriculum and assessment for each section of the day.

8. Each grade-level design team should meet at least weekly to evaluate its efforts, including determining how the support is working and discussing where more support may be necessary. Teams at one grade level may need to meet with teams at other grade levels if they cannot work out the necessary small-group or individual support within their grade level. Such meetings can help give students full support across their grade levels (horizontally) and throughout all the grades (vertically).
9. If the school service delivery team has recommended that grade-level design teams follow their students to the next grade and return to their original grade in the third year (called *looping*), then teams should begin planning for the next school year in February by using the steps outlined in the preceding paragraphs and by using feedback obtained from data analysis.
10. Grade-level design teams frequently collect student achievement data as a prime determinant of their success. They also work with the school service delivery team to obtain feedback that shows how parents, students, and staff experience the evolving changes of the service delivery structure for all learners. In addition, they update the school service delivery team on their progress and any concerns that they should take to the school planning team.

Districtwide Service Delivery Team

Students may receive services in an elementary school that meets their individual needs (such as time in the day for sensory integration or inclusion with peers for most of the day). However, when these students advance to the next grade level or school, their ISP or IEP may change because the staff has designed a model that cannot meet those individual needs. Educators at every school must be responsible for

developing a service delivery model that meets the needs of every possible student. When implementing ICS, districts should therefore institute a districtwide service delivery team to work through issues that may affect the district as a whole.

The districtwide service delivery team should include a representative from each school service delivery team throughout the district. In addition, the district director of special education or student services and the district director of instruction should also be team members.

Educators at every school must be responsible for developing a service delivery model that meets the needs of every possible student.

The goal of the districtwide service delivery team is to “take care of the whole.” That is, the districtwide team is responsible for clarifying differences across school service delivery teams and working toward developing a continuous model for kindergarten through 12th grade throughout the district. Students then do not need to fit into different models that each individual school develops.

Districtwide service delivery teams typically meet four times each year. After the team clarifies areas of need or concern, the team sets its agenda and moves forward. At times, the team may ask staff or administrators to join it so that the team can obtain more detailed information regarding a specific concern. An example might be determining how an elementary school uses a sensory room and how such a room might work at the middle school level.

The districtwide service delivery team monitors the status of service delivery at each school. The members of the school service delivery team on the districtwide committee use the ICS evaluations to assess their progress toward ICS.

Final Thoughts

If ICS is to become a reality in schools, educators need to be deliberate about decision making and team structures. ICS moves far beyond typical team structures in schools; it can use general education-based grade-level teams, department teams, or strategic planning teams. In addition, team structures that support ICS also move beyond typical special education teams. Such structures can use prereferral intervention teams and special education evaluation teams. The simple structure and function of the three school-based teams and the district-level service delivery team described in this article can transform how decisions are made, who is involved in the decisions, how the school uses its resources, how it assigns teachers, and how it serves students. This transformation can move far beyond compliance—it can result in a high-quality education for every student in the school.

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