

Oconomowoc Area School District
Special Education Analysis

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Background

In the spring of 2011, the Oconomowoc Area School District (hereinafter referred to as OASD) contracted Elise Frattura to conduct a comprehensive review of programs and services offered to students with disabilities.

Dr. Elise Frattura is an Associate Professor and Department Chairperson for the Department of Exceptional Education and Administrative Leadership in the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Dr. Frattura researches and publishes in the area of nondiscrimination law, integrated comprehensive services for all learners, and the theoretical underpinnings of educational segregation. Dr. Frattura works with school districts across the nation to assist administrators in developing comprehensive organizational structures to better meet the individual needs of all learners. Dr. Frattura had been a K–12 public school director of student services and special education for 12 years. During that time, she functioned as an adjunct professor at University of Wisconsin-Madison, teaching courses related to diversity in elementary and secondary administration of services for students with disabilities. Dr. Frattura has written educational articles in the area of administration and leadership in support of inclusion for all learners and is coauthor of two books, *Leaders for Social Justice: Transforming Schools for All Learners* (2007) and *Meeting the Needs of Students of All Abilities: How Leaders Go Beyond Inclusion* (2009). See Appendix A for Vita.

Focus groups were used to learn about the experiences and perspectives of teachers, parents, and administrations to obtain a breadth of information relative to a specific issue or educational practice.¹

This report is organized beginning with best practice, followed by an introduction and core findings within thematic sections, and concluding with a summary of recommendations. The three thematic sections evolved as a result of analysis of district documents, data, and interviewee/focus group responses. Each section is then organized by the sub-themes, followed by theme-specific recommendations.

¹ -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. McLeskey J., & Waldron, N. L. (2000). *Inclusive schools in action: Making differences ordinary*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Curriculum Development.

Background

There has been much progress in the education of children with disabilities since the passage in 1975 of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA) (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2010)². Before the enactment of this legislation, the majority of individuals with significant disabilities were placed in institutions with a focus addressing basic care needs rather than on rehabilitation, education, or training for employment. Children were consistently denied the opportunity to be appropriately educated in their home schools with their nondisabled peers. Approximately, one in five children with disabilities were educated in schools (primarily segregated) or were legally excluded from school based on their disabilities (e.g., deafness, blindness).

Federal legislation addressed the denial of these basic rights to individuals and children with disabilities, provided protections for the rights of families to be involved in decision-making about their children, addressed post-secondary transition needs, and advocated for a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) educating children with disabilities to the greatest extent possible in the least restrictive environment (LRE) with their nondisabled peers. Support for meaningfully including children with disabilities in general education classrooms, was strengthened. In 1997, IDEA reminded educators that special education was not a place, but a service. In 2004, amendments to IDEA were made to strengthen provisions for holding schools, districts, and states responsible for effectively identifying and educating children with disabilities. These provisions were aligned with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), amended in 2001 and renamed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). These accountability provisions addressed the participation of children with disabilities in statewide assessments and their proficiency rate.

Both IDEA and NCLB are up for reauthorization. Many congressional conversations revolve around strategies for better aligning these acts. Specific areas where alignment is supported include the preparation of quality special education professionals, inclusion of students with disabilities in equitable and accessible curriculum and assessment systems, more balanced and effective accountability systems, and effective school reform initiatives that do not negatively impact students with disabilities³.

The National Picture

As of 2010, more than six million students with disabilities receive special education services. Fifty-seven percent of children with disabilities are educated in general education classrooms for at least 80% of the school day and early intervention services are provided

² 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, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

³ Council for Exceptional Children (2010). CEC's ESEA reauthorization recommendations. Arlington, V.A.: Council for Exceptional Children.

to more than 300,000 infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families⁴. Challenges still persist despite progress in achievement and dropout rates. There is still a significant achievement gap between students with and without disabilities and the gap widens depending on the cultural, linguistic, and economic backgrounds of students. African American and Hispanic students had the highest rate of being identified as in need of special education services compared to any other racial/ethnic group.⁵ Significant numbers of students with disabilities dropout of high school and the percentage of students with disabilities who do graduate from high school with a regular diploma lags far behind those students not identified with a disability, as illustrated by the following quote “Nationwide, 46 percent of children identified for services under IDEA and estimated to be enrolled as of 4 years prior completed secondary school with a regular diploma in 2005. This graduation rate is 29 percentage points below the rate for children in the total population nationwide who received a regular diploma.”⁶

Currently, across the country, school districts are moving from a deficit-based model of supporting student who struggle to a proactive service delivery model. A deficit-driven model is typically indicative of a wait-to-fail model where the student is the problem and needs to be “fixed.” A proactive model is defined as one where leadership is able to cast a wide net of supports in a comprehensive and cohesive manner through high quality technical assistance and professional development. Such support is often aligned with cohesive position descriptions across general and special education that can be used as an individual professional development tool to develop the capacity of all teachers.

What We Know of Best Practice

(adapted from Frattura and Capper, 2006 – See Appendix B for full additional detail)

For decades, special education services in the United States have been arranged categorically based on the students’ eligibility status for an educational disability and by the type of program model available (i.e. self-contained, resource, mixed categorical, etc.). A program model is one that is arranged by units or programs (e.g., cognitive disability unit, learning disability unit, autistic unit, teen age parents, etc.) and then populated by students who seemingly are homogenously grouped. Students are placed in particular special education classrooms for part or all of a student’s day as determined by their assigned categorical special education label (i.e. learning disability, cognitively disabled, etc.). Instructional techniques and curricular materials are often developed according to a group norm rather than through specific goals and objectives based on individual student educational needs. Student needs are primarily driven by availability of supports, classes, instructional resources and/or teacher preference and students often move as a group to

⁴ 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, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

⁵ Blackorby, J. Schiller, E., Mallik, S., Hebbeler, K., Huang, T., Javitz, H. Marder, C., Nagle, K., Shaver, D., Wagner, M., and Williamson, C. (2010). Patterns in the identification of and outcomes for children and youth with disabilities. Executive Summary (NCEE 2010-4006). Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

⁶ Ibid (pg. ES-25)

lunch, art class, and adapted physical education, etc., and are, in most cases, situated apart from the general education system.⁷

Such program models are all too common in the United States, despite more than three decades of outcry from parents, teachers, advocates and scholars in the field. These critics maintain that a program model delivery systems leads to isolated and inferior learning opportunities for students and a lack of access to resources for students within the general educational setting. Program models, critics assert, have thwarted equity and the potential for excellence in academic achievement for a significant number of children with and without disabilities.⁸ Others maintain that teachers in program models suffer from isolation since segregation of programs impedes the sharing of knowledge and expertise in teaching.⁹

Some argue that pull-out models have led to an increase in the number of students labeled with a disability. In addition, students of color are significantly over-identified for special education and over-represented in special education.¹⁰ Equally important is the fact that the program model approach and the practice of labeling students have failed to result in high student achievement as measured by post school outcomes or standardized scores. In the United States, 22% of students with disabilities fail to complete high school compared to 9% of those without assigned labels.¹¹ Finally, program models have also contributed to expensive duplications of services.¹²

Conversely, an integrated service delivery approach has been called for by a number of researchers in the field.¹³ This approach requires schools to align educational services for students with special educational needs within the existing structures (grade-levels, academies, multi-age groupings, looping, etc) rather than through special and pull-out programs. Professional staff are organized by the needs of each learner rather than clustering learners by label. In this model, staff are not assigned to a “unit or program” and placed in a separate classroom. Instead, special and general education teachers work in collaborative arrangements designed to bring appropriate instructional supports to each child in the general school environment. In this manner, an integrated home base for all learners in support of their right to belong within general education is established.¹⁴ 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 learners, not just those with specific disabilities. Integrated comprehensive services fits neatly with the recently reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Educational Improvement Act passed in the United States in 2004, an act

⁷ Burrello, Lashley, & Beatty, 2000; Capper & Frattura, 2009; Sailor & Roger, 2005

⁸ Friend & Bursuck, 2002; Oakes & Lipton, 1999

⁹ Thousand, Villa, & Nevin, 2002; Lipsky & Gartner, 1997

¹⁰ Donovan & Cross, 2002; Hosp & Reschly, 2002; Losen & Orfield, 2002; Zhang & Katsiyannis, 2002

¹¹ National Organization on Disability, 2000

¹² Odden & Picus, 2000; Odden & Archibald, 2001

¹³ Burrello, Lashley, & Beatty, 2000; Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; McLeskey & Waldron, 2000; Sailor, 2002; Stainback & Stainback, 1985; Will, 1986

¹⁴ (Brown, 1989)

that has, ostensibly, reaffirmed a national commitment within the US to the education of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment.

The following core principles are offered to set a reference point between programs for students with disabilities and services. For the purpose of clarification, one core principle of segregated special pull-out is that students do not receive help for their learning needs until after they fail in some way. This practice is akin to the analogy of parking an ambulance at the bottom of a cliff to assist people who fall off the cliff. Special pull-out are the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff. Students are either placed in them after they fail, or go to different rooms for academic, social, or behavioral support.

In contrast, integrated service models, the primary aim of teaching and learning in the school is prevention of student failure. Referring again to the analogy, integrated services proactively works at the top of the cliff, setting up supports to prevent students from not only falling off the cliff, but preventing them from nearing the cliff in the first place. It is astounding, how few educational practices are considered preventative. The list of reactionary supports includes items such as homework club, learning centers, peer tutors, adult volunteers, Title 1 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. Preventive practices are minimal, yet are increasing under Response to Intervention (RtI), such as focused, intensive reading instruction in the early grades or differentiating instruction.

According to Deschenes, Cuban, and Tyack (2001),¹⁵ historically, public schools have dealt with student failure in similar ways—blaming the student. Within an integrated service delivery model, 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 educator's frame student failure (i.e. whether student failure is seen as a student or a systems issue) is the pivot point of all the remaining assumptions and practices in schools.

As such, the primary aim is the prevention of student failure through the development of teacher capacity to be able to teach to a range of diverse student strengths and needs. Every single decision about service delivery must be premised on to what extent that decision will increase the capacity of all teachers to teach to a range of students' diverse learning needs. Segregated special pull-out, by definition, diminishes 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 responsibility for 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, while the students who leave the room are denied a sense of belonging in the classroom.

A third core principle of separate programs is that these efforts do not address individual student needs. Instead, students are made to fit yet another program. Even the language

¹⁵ Deschenes, Cuban, and Tyack (2001)

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, 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).

Location, where students are physically placed to learn is a central distinction between pull-out programs and integrated services. Under a segregated program model, educators believe that the primary reason for student failure is the student his/herself, that students cannot be helped until they fail and receive a label of some sort (e.g., at-risk, disability, low reader), and then the student is 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 either by requiring students to leave the general education classroom to attend a pull-out 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.

Further, clustering means that 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 then 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 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 ESL teacher for nearly their entire day.

The problem with clustering students in special or general education classrooms is that often student services staff are assigned to the students with labels in these classrooms. Though the special education or student services staff may assist other students in the classroom without labels, his/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, because of budget cuts, student services staff time in these classrooms must be reduced; general education teachers then claim that they cannot fully meet the needs of students with labels in their classrooms. This occurs especially in co-teaching models, where a special education and general education teacher are assigned to co-teach 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 it is more cost effective for educators to cluster students with similar labels in particular classrooms or particular schools. Moreover, this particular administrative arrangement makes little sense with the current federal support for cross-categorical services. That is, now across Wisconsin and other states, 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. In addition, other categorically licensed teachers are being grandfathered through as highly qualified for cross-categorical support. Thus, no longer can school districts use the state that only particular teachers can provide particular support for particular students.

Moreover, with pull-out programs educators persistently assume that they can only provide individual attention and support to students with labels in a setting or situation separate from a student's peers. Reasons for this assumption include several arguments that, for example, an intermediate school student would feel embarrassed to receive speech articulation training in front of his/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 this saves student 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 student requiring speech articulation skills could benefit from individual instruction, outside of the classroom that does not disrupt his/her school day. At the same time, when schools/classrooms function with teams of diverse educators in support of flexible groupings, a student's need for one-on-one 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 science class. In the reading example, at the elementary level, successful teachers are able to meet the individual needs of students without students needing to be pulled from an integrated environment.

At the intermediate 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 popular program, Read 180, a computer-assisted reading program is one such example (<http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/read180>). However, based on principles of inclusion, students choose to access this course or class, and are not unilaterally placed in it. In addition, 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), but a heterogeneous group of students receive the instruction based on need, not label. Importantly, rather than this same group of students then assigned to other classes together (e.g., they are all assigned to take the same science class, etc.), these students are not grouped together for any other part of the school day.

Referring again to a high school example, educators argue 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

pull-out that collect sufficient outcome data, teachers in highly successful schools in the context of integrated services are able to teach language arts and other subjects to a range of different learners in heterogeneous classrooms.¹⁶

Ironically, under segregated program assumptions, inclusive practices evolve into another segregated program—i.e., 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 percentage in the school. Educators argue that these practices are legitimate because it then becomes more convenient for special education staff to support students across a fewer number of classrooms. Educators in such situations call 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, while clustering students may be more convenient for staff, this model does not build teacher capacity. That is though 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 an integrated service model, 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, interest, and content areas. At the district level, particular schools would not be designated the “ESL school” or “the school where all the elementary students with severe disabilities attend” or “the middle school that houses the students with severe challenging behaviors.” At the school level, integrated and comprehensive services does not preclude students with labels from being clustered in particular classrooms, but only to the extent that the numbers 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,” “CMC,” the “CD Room,” the “At-Risk Room.” In integrated comprehensive schools, students are flexibly grouped based on the individual needs of the group of learners in the particular classroom and grade.

Accordingly, with integrated services, 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

¹⁶ Jorgensen, 1998

students travels on a field trip, it should not just be students with disabilities or 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 are a mix of students involved, and if not, why not?

The critical role that location plays in to this cannot be overemphasized. As long as segregated settings, classrooms, courses, and schools exist, educators will find reasons to place students in these settings. With pull-out programs (Such as CMC), 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 importantly, pull-out programs are the most expensive and least effective way to serve students. Integration becomes a proactive means to break the vicious cycle of negative beliefs that then require pull-out programs that in turn reinforce negative assumptions and beliefs. When the core principles of inclusion 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 along side their peers in integrated environments. Student location dictates teacher location and the location of teachers and students in integrated environments lay the groundwork for all the other aspects of ICS.

Educator roles in pull-out programs are based on teacher specialization and student labels. In pull-out programs, staff adhere 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 learners. For example, support staff in a program model may be comfortable teaching segregated math and adapted language arts classes and 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 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.¹⁷ 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,

¹⁷ Skrtic, 1995

facilitates support groups for students, and for students with various problems meets with these students individually. Rarely do other staff members share these duties.

Location is where students are assigned and how staff roles are inextricably linked. In pull-out 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. An integrated 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.

As such, with an integrated model, staff roles pivot around 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.

In pull-out programs, the curriculum and instruction is 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 did not succeed 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 students are more alike than different. Pull-out 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 student 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 individual needs. Alternative schools, whether within schools or out of school buildings are often created on this assumption. Such an assumption supports implementation of “specialized” Math, English, or other academic subjects in a resource room, or in a classroom tracked for such a purpose.

At the other end of the spectrum in special pull-out, special education staff assist students who struggle by helping them learn the general 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. Though students are assisted, support staff typically do not share ideas with classroom teachers who then do not learn new strategies that would

prevent students from needing additional assistance in the first place. Students are then denied access to a content rich curriculum. In contrast, in an integrated model, 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, integrated instruction is seamlessly tied to and grounded in the core of curriculum and instruction of the school.

Using integrated service model, the curriculum and instruction are built on a culturally relevant¹⁸ and differentiated curriculum.¹⁹ 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 is seamlessly woven into the curriculum. Differentiated curriculum is when that the curriculum is designed to address a range of learner needs and achievement levels. Such curriculum is developed under the principle of universal access.²⁰ 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 after-fact, 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.

In pull-out programs, separate funding sources are accessed and policies are written to support each program for each eligibility area causing replication of services and cost to soar. These policies and programs are focused on fixing student deficits. Often policies are compliant driven and not quality driven, resulting in meeting the letter of many nondiscrimination regulations but never reaching the spirit in which the regulations were written. With integrated services, funding sources and policies are merged with a focus on prevention of student struggle. Resource reallocation forms the basis of funding decisions.²¹ That is, a school leader takes into account sources of funding at the federal, state, district and school levels (i.e., 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 a way to best serve students in heterogeneous learning environments. Staff are also viewed as resources and staff skills and expertise are considered and staff are assigned to students and classrooms based on such core principles.

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

¹⁸ see Ladson-Billings, 1995

¹⁹ Tomlinson, 2001

²⁰ Bremer, Clapper, Hitchcock, Hall, & Kachgal, 2002

²¹ Odden & Archibald, 2001

OASD
Review of Programs and Services to Students with Disabilities
REPORT – August 2011

Given the high cost of special education in times of budget crises and the dismal outcomes of pull-out programs, educators can no longer ethically justify segregated service delivery. Continuing to label students and placing them in pull-out 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 the research, integrated comprehensive services can meet the needs of all students. The core principles, combined with the indisputable importance of location or where students learn, the curriculum, and the way educators move out of their traditional roles, all supported by creative reallocation of resources can pave the way for educational success for all students.

Section I: Introduction

1. General Demographics

There are 5044 students within the Oconomowoc Area School District. About 7% of the students are of color, while 92% of the students are white. Twenty percent of the students are of poverty, while 14.2% of the students are eligible for special education services.

Exhibit 1. General Demographics 2010-2011

General Demographics	District #	District %
All students	5044	100%
Female	2431	49.2%
Male	2612	50.8%
American Indian or Alaska Native	25	0.5%
Asian Pacific Islander	55	1.1%
Black African American	86	1.7%
Hispanic	192	3.8%
Pacific	5	0.1%
White	4661	92.4%
Other	20	0.4%
ELL	5	1%
Low SES	1004	19.9%
Special Education	721	14.2%

*WINNS Data

Oconomowoc Area School District has experienced a slow change from a rural farm community to a more metropolitan community reflective in the change of wealth, racial diversity, and development. OASD has shown a total disability rate of 14% over the past four years. Interestingly, the highest concentration of disability typically is in the area of *other disability*. Other disability includes those categories of disability that are high need/low incident; such as, but not limited to students identified with vision and mobility needs, deaf and hard of hearing, orthopedically impaired, traumatic brain injury, and other health impaired.

Exhibit 2

Year	Cognitive Disabilities	Emotional Disability	Significant Learning Disability	Speech and Language	Other Disability	Total
2010-11	1%	1.2%	3.6%	3.6%	4.9%	14.4%

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2009-10	1.1%	1.4%	3.9%	3.5	4.6	14.5%
2008-09	1.1	1.3%	4.4	3.1	4.8	14.7
2007-08	1	1.6	5.3	2.5	4.3	14.7

OASD consistently identifies students at from .5% to 1.6% higher than the state averages. That being said, the percent of students meeting eligibility increases from intermediate grades to high school.

Exhibit 3. District Disability Percentages Compared to State Percentages 2010-11

			Combined		Students w/o Disabilities	
	School Type	Total Fall Enrollment (PK-12)**	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
District	Elem	2,203	296	13.4%	1,907	86.6%
	Intermediate	1,401	209	14.9%	1,192	85.1%
	High	1,440	213	14.8%	1,227	85.2%
State	Elem	434,284	60,572	13.9%	373,712	86.1%
	Intermediate	153,583	20,507	13.4%	133,076	86.6%
	High	271,411	35,960	13.2%	235,451	86.8%

B. Qualitative Data Collection

In this section, data were gathered from the perceptions of parents, school principals, special and general education teachers, paraprofessionals, school psychologists, social workers, and student services personnel, and district office administration. Over 200 OASD personnel and parents were interviewed.

The focus group interview format included opportunities for teachers, principals and other professional staff delineated above, to participate in one focus group or interview for at least one hour.

Three primary questions were asked to better understand the current state of affairs and the barriers and supports to best practices for students with disabilities.

1. *What is working well for students with disabilities in Oconomowoc Area School District*
2. *What are the perceived challenges regarding students with disabilities in OASD?*

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 (Madriz, 2000)²². Focus groups enable participants to express themselves in an open and flexible process (Kruger & Casey, 2000)²³. Focus groups were used to assist in the initial insights followed by IEP and policy review.

C. Data Analysis

Interview and focus group data were coded with the research questions in mind. Coding is a systematic process, whereby the data are analyzed “for regularities and patterns, as well as for topics” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 161)²⁴.

Triangulation of data.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985)²⁵, “[S]teps should be taken to validate each [piece of information] against at least one other source.” (p.283). For example, 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. Participants discussed their views with one another as they responded to focus group questions. An advantage of this process was that participants often helped each other recall details (such as the culture of the District), or 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. Additionally, as noted above, information was also obtained through district data, policies and procedures, and other district documentation.

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

- Theme I: Infrastructure
- Theme II: Service Delivery
- Theme III: Teaching and Learning

Within each theme, specific categories were recognized as subthemes. See Exhibit 4 below for specifics.

²² -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. McLeskey J. & Waldron, N. L. (2000). *Inclusive schools in action: Making differences ordinary*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Curriculum Development

²³ Krueger, R.A. & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishers

²⁴ Bogdan, R. & Biklen, S. (2003). *Qualitative research in education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Needam, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

²⁵ -Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Exhibit 4. Themes Based on District Special Education Evaluation

Infrastructure	Service Delivery	Teaching and Learning
1. Unified Vision 2. Organization 3. Identification of Disability	1. Home School and Clustered Programs 2. Least Restrictive Environment 3. Staffing and Caseloads	1. Achievement 2. Response to Intervention 3. Pedagogy and Co-Teaching 4. Students with Severe Disabilities 5. Professional Development

Limitations of the study include areas that were part and parcel of a Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction special education procedural compliance self-assessment completed with corrective action requirements completed over the past two years.

Section II: Infrastructure

Positives:

1. District leadership is very interested in moving forward in a cohesive and pragmatic manner to proactively support each and every learner, with a specific eye on those students who struggle the most.
2. Both general and special educators are interested in understanding a more collaborative means to jointly support all learners.
3. There is a positive and intentional tone of good “will” throughout the district to proactively serve all learners in a comprehensive and cohesive manner.

1. Unified Mission and Goals

The Oconomowoc Area School District, in partnership with the community, demonstrates its commitment to excellence by challenging students with a visionary innovative curriculum in a positive learning environment so that each student develops lifelong learning skills, values and knowledge to become a self-reliant, positive contributor to our community, democratic society, and the world.

The District will continue to focus on student achievement and success, to manage our resources responsibly and to develop healthy relationships with one another. The three areas may sound simple on the surface but our success is dependent on collective effort and dedication.

During focus groups, participants were asked what the District mission/vision was for all students. That is, what is the perception that all students can learn and whether or not staff have high expectations for all learners. Leadership reported that “we do not have anything to tie our ship to. ... we do not have any sort of vision or plan K-12. All of that is missing.” Therefore, when a teacher is sitting down at an IEP meeting, there is no structure to philosophically and proactively support students.” Teachers shared that the superintendent had made it clear in past presentations that all students should be included, but reported confusion about the how they should move forward in their day-to-day work. Given what we know of best practice stated earlier in this report, there is clearly a deficit-based model for students with disabilities in Oconomowoc that was established over two decades ago that continues to be “tweaked,” but has not evolved to a proactive service delivery model in alignment with what we know of best practice.

In addition, many interviewees discussed students with disabilities in a manner that emphasized their status as disabled. That is, “the autistic child,” such language reinforces the disability before the child. It is important that educators reinforce the expectation that “Person First Language²⁶” will be used (e.g., we have two 5th graders with autism), as opposed to identifying students by the type of classroom in which they receive services or by their disability category (e.g., the autistic 5th grader).

Necessary Action:

There must be a united approach to moving forward based on unified mission and goals defined through best practice. Two primary concerns are:

- 1) the shared responsibility for children with disabilities by all personnel, and
- 2) the perception that children with disabilities may need to go some place else to have their needs met.

To fully embrace, a proactive and comprehensive integrated service delivery system, the importance of OASD addressing the principle that *all* means *all* is essential. Secondly, it is essential that educators in the district consider their values regarding self-contained and segregated educational environments (see Section III). One of the greatest deceptions schools create is that of belonging. As we know, more than fifty years have passed since Chief Justice Warren delivered the opinion that “separate facilities are inherently unequal . . . [and that] segregation, with the sanction of law, therefore, has a tendency to [retard] the educational and mental development of children and to deprive them of the benefits they would receive in an integrated school system.²⁷” Yet we continue to place students in separate classrooms and schools with limited access to content teachers and curricula even under current requirements through No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The perception that every child with a disability should be educated with their nondisabled peers is usually not

²⁶ Snow, Kathy (2010) People First Language. <http://www.disabilityisnatural.com/images/PDF/pfl09.pdf>

²⁷ Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954)

discussed when referring to students with cognitive disabilities or those students tuitioned-out of the district for educational services.

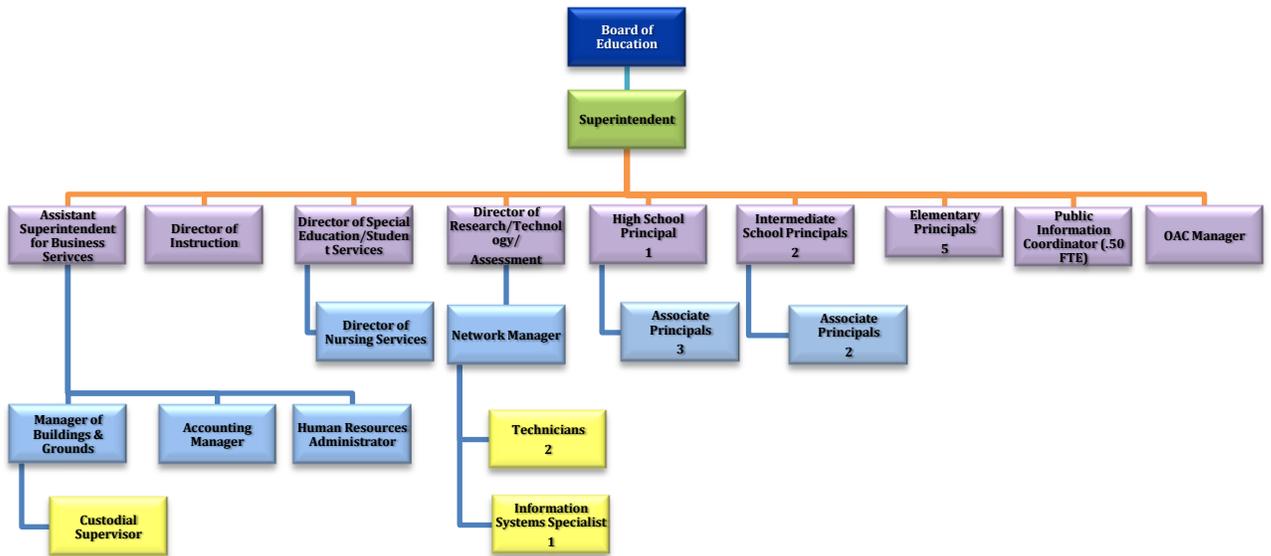
From the School Board to both general and special education teachers, a unified vision must be developed in support of a service delivery model that is proactive versus reactive. In this manner, all students will benefit from core content to minimize, if not eliminate the gap between students with and without disabilities and students of poverty. Often such common core beliefs in support of best practice for students with disabilities are integrated into a district belief statement. For example:

1. All students with and without disabilities will attend the schools they would attend if not disabled.
2. All students with and with out disabilities will be “based” in the classrooms they would attend if not disabled.
3. All students with and without disabilities will be afforded large group, small group and individual instruction based on their individual learning needs from a general education base.
4. All students with and without disabilities will receive universal access to curriculum through the use of differentiated instruction.
5. All students with and without disabilities will receive culturally relevant instruction and curriculum from content licensed teachers.

2. Organization

Significant knowledge has evolved in the field of special education and general education for the past 20 years. The current organizational structure clearly divides the education of students with disabilities from that of students without disabilities, by separating curriculum and instruction from pupil services and special education. This reinforces a silo model at the District level depicted in Exhibit 5. That is, special education is generally working independently from other departments throughout the district, most importantly curriculum and instruction. Interestingly, teachers within the schools are merging the silos that will then need to be merged at the district level.

Exhibit 5. OASD Organizational Chart



Necessary Action:

Alignment of special and general education needs to occur through a comprehensive service delivery system from early childhood through 12th grade that serves all students in the schools and classrooms they would attend if not disabled. Based on best practice, all personnel must “own” all students. In an address to the American Association of People with Disabilities U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan stated that, “all children must learn and can learn”. In describing a school that he thought had done an extraordinary job at including students with disabilities he noted: “Their philosophy there is as profound as it is simple. They told me repeatedly that they’re preparing all their students for success in one ²⁸society, not a general education society and not a special education one. That world simply doesn't exist.” In order for such a vision to become a reality, all leadership must have responsibility and hold high expectations for all students, including those with disabilities, and share in their successes.

The Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Student Services and Special Education, along with Technology should be placed under a structure of *Teaching and Learning* for all students. In this manner, all district office leadership will be deemed responsible for the learning of students with and without disabilities. See Exhibit 6 for a comparison of typical roles of Instructional Services and Special Education Administration relative to Administration of Teaching and Learning. In addition, the role of the school principal is key in reform at the building level and uniquely may merge both the curriculum and instruction and student services and special education in how they lead in support of all learners.

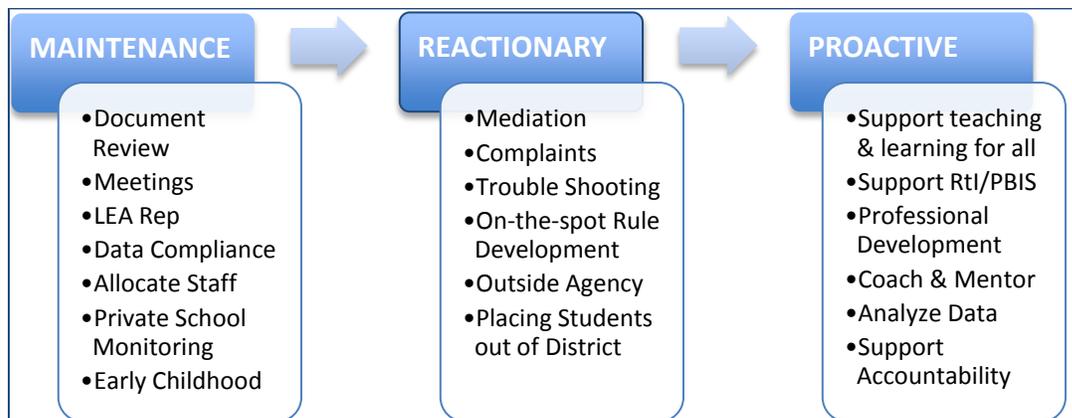
²⁸ <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/all-means-all-secretary-duncans-remarks-american-association-people-disabilities>

Exhibit 6. Traditional Roles Compared to Administrators for Teaching and Learning

<i>Student Services Director</i>	<i>Curriculum and Instruction Director</i>	<i>Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning K-5, 6-8, 9-12</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Education Programs • Student Health Services • Student Enrollment/Transfer/Residency • Student Records • Interdistrict Programs • Group Orphanage Programs • Elementary Counseling • Title III/Bilingual • Safe Schools • 504 Plans • Medicaid • Policy about • School social work services • School psychologist services • Screening for special education and early entrance • At-risk programs • English as a second language services • Gifted and talented services • Extended school year services • Occupational therapy and physical therapy • special transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum and instruction committee • Library programming • All K-12 curriculum areas • Media services • Summer school • Staff development • Textbook selection • Title I • Student trips • Program evaluation • Standards and assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum for Each Learner Facilitate growth of a differentiated curriculum devoted to teaching and supporting a range of learners • Media and Technology Supports for Each Learner Facilitate the use of technology and other media that can be used across all students (e.g., for students with English as a second language, for students with vision and hearing loss, for students with processing difficulties, auditory learners, visual learners) • Policy Development in Support of Each Learner Nondiscrimination language in support of all Learners Multi-Tiered Systems of Support • Support Services for Each Learner Development, implementation, and evaluation of support services for all students (e.g., guidance, social work, curriculum and/or behavioral facilitators) • Content, Proficiency, and Performance Standards for Each Learner Development, implementation, and evaluation of standards and benchmarks (from highly theoretical to extremely functional) in support of all learners • Standardized and Individualized Educational Evaluation Procedures for Each Learner Development, implementation, and evaluation of normative and individualized assessment for all students • Staff Development in Support of Each Learner Facilitation of inservice, technical assistance, and other informative sessions in support of all students • Financial Support for the Education of Each Learner Assist in the merger of resources to meet the needs of each learner

In addition, current Program Support Teachers should be reassigned as Educational Facilitators based at District Office and supervised by the Administrator for Teaching and Learning with a focus on Pupil/Personnel Services and Special Education. In this manner, they can support both special and general education teachers through universal design of content instruction to better meet the needs of each learner. Issues and concerns regarding communication and site support from the district office would then decrease, allowing for questions/concerns at the school-level to be answered efficiently and consistently. Such positions may be viewed as moving from a compliance or maintenance role past reactionary to a proactive role for teaching and learning of all students, see Exhibit 7.

Exhibit 7.



3. Identification of Disability

As stated in the general demographics, OASD is currently identifying 14.4% of their children as disabled. Such identification practices are over the state norm. Interestingly, according to Exhibit 8, Elementary schools seemingly are identifying at a pretty typical rate while intermediate and secondary schools are well over the state average. Other school districts using a proactive service delivery model were able to move from a 18% identification rate to under 10% of their students meeting eligibility (see Stoughton Area School District).

Exhibit 8. Secondary Disability Identification

	Total Fall Enrollment Elementary	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
2010-11	2,203	296	13.4%	1,907	86.6%
2009-10	2,126	300	14.1%	1,826	85.9%
2008-09	2,063	298	14.4%	1,765	85.6%
2007-08	2,440	345	14.1%	2,095	85.9%
2006-07	2,273	322	14.2%	1,951	85.8%

OASD
Review of Programs and Services to Students with Disabilities
REPORT – August 2011

	Total Fall Enrollment Intermediate	Number of Students with Disability	Percent	Number of Nondisabled Students	Percent
2010-11	1,401	209	14.9%	1,192	85.1%
2009-10	1,308	203	15.5%	1,105	84.5%
2008-09	1,246	197	15.8%	1,049	84.2%
2007-08	683	113	16.5%	570	83.5%
2006-07	696	111	15.9%	585	84.1%

Alarming are the rates of identification for Other Health Impaired (OHI), sometimes as high as 1/3 of the population of students with disabilities at the secondary levels. Such rates could be a result of the changing criteria for Specific Learning Disability (SLD) or areas of family duress and pediatrician recommendation for ADHD and ADD. At the time of this writing, individual education plans were not reviewed as State onsite review was recently completed.

Exhibit 9. Other Health Impaired

	School Type	Total Fall Enrollment (PK-12)**	Number	Percent OHI	Number	Percent Other Disability	Number	Percent Nondisabled
2010-11	Elem	2,203	33	1.5%	263	11.9%	1,907	86.6%
	Middle	1,401	65	4.6%	144	10.3%	1,192	85.1%
	High	1,440	68	4.7%	145	10.1%	1,227	85.2%
2009-10	Elem	2,126	29	1.4%	271	12.7%	1,826	85.9%
	Middle	1,308	68	5.2%	135	10.3%	1,105	84.5%
	High	1,422	49	3.4%	149	10.5%	1,224	86.1%
2008-09	Elem	2,063	33	1.6%	265	12.8%	1,765	85.6%
	Middle	1,246	66	5.3%	131	10.5%	1,049	84.2%
	High	1,418	43	3.0%	155	10.9%	1,220	86.0%
2007-08	Elem	2,440	60	2.5%	285	11.7%	2,095	85.9%
	Middle	683	27	4.0%	86	12.6%	570	83.5%
	High	1,493	40	2.7%	167	11.2%	1,286	86.1%

Necessary Action:

In a proactive service delivery model all students receive the appropriate support based on their individual needs without the need for identification. In this manner the need to assess for placement before meeting the child’s individual needs is minimized. In the true sense of a Response to Intervention (RtI) model (discussed in detail in Section IV.), students would receive the instruction necessary based on how they learn through universal design to pedagogical practices and curriculum.

Fourteen percent of the student population is too high for OASD. Often such a high rate of eligibility is due to a need to better meet the needs of individual learners within the general education classroom through RtI – where the first intervention is the effective intervention. In this manner, OASD should work toward an eligibility rate of 10 to 11%.

Recommendations for Infrastructure:

1. *All staff should use person-first language for students with disabilities*
2. *From the Board to general and special education teachers, a unified vision must be developed that takes into consideration how OASD will show how they hold high expectations for all learners through common core belief statements that support district policy and procedures.*
3. *Leadership for Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Technology, and Special Education must be merged to proactively support all learners under a Teaching and Learning structure for all students.*
4. *Teaching and Learning Facilitators for all learners should be created out of the current Program Support positions and supervised by the Administrator for Teaching and Learning with a focus on Pupil/Personnel Services and Special Education.*
5. *Reciprocal communication efforts from District Office must increase and be consistent to proactively support both general and special educators at the school level.*
6. *All leadership and teachers must own, hold high expectations, and share in the problem solving and success of all students, especially those with disabilities as part and parcel of their position descriptions and evaluation practices.*
7. *Action must be taken to determine why students in the area of Other Health Impaired are being over-identified, as a means to provide services to struggling learners through RtI, especially at the secondary levels.*
8. *OASD should work toward an eligibility rate of 10 to 11%.*

Section III: Service Delivery

Positives:

1. General and special educators are working hard at co-teaching and serving a range of students with disabilities within the schools and classrooms they would attend if not disabled.
2. Many special education teachers are serving a broad range of students using a cross-categorical model.
3. Most teachers and administrators reported a push-in model across the district as a step toward integrated comprehensive services.

Challenges:

1. Home School and Clustered Programs

As stated earlier in this report, where students with disabilities are educated defines “how” they are educated. According to IDEA, students with disabilities should attend the schools they would attend if not disabled. The importance of natural proportions affects how all students are educated. That is, the percent of students with disabilities attending any one school should mirror the natural percentage of students with disabilities within the community or demographic pool. When specific schools do not accept or perceive that they cannot provide the appropriate education for a specific student or students with disabilities, the natural proportion of students in need increase in one school over another.

OASD educates the majority of their students in the schools they would attend if not disabled with the exception of those students with more significant needs at the elementary and intermediate level. According to data provided by the district, students with disabilities are concentrated at Greenland, Park Lawn, and Silver Lake Intermediate Schools. However, teachers reported pros and cons to sending students with disabilities back to their home school and a possible option would be to create multiple sites, where students with more significant needs could still have a group of peers and a more restrictive environment.

Interestingly, many special education teachers support a student identified as speech and language only, causing an increase to the caseload. Typically speech and language only students are supported by the speech pathologist.

There are 43 students currently tuitioned-out to other schools or locations for educational services at the cost of over \$600,000.00. See exhibit 10 for specifics.

Necessary Action:

Often, when students with disabilities are educated within the school they would attend if not disabled, a more proactive service delivery model occurs where other students also benefit from the availability of and access to specialized personnel. The resources spent on both transporting students to other programs is often better used to develop proactive services for each learner in the schools and classrooms they would attend if not disabled for the following reasons:

Sending children with disabilities to a school other than the school they would attend if not disabled accentuates difference and communicates to the child, that child's family, and others that they do not belong. In addition, all other children learn that students with particular needs have to go somewhere other than the schools their brothers, sisters, and peers attend. Neighborhood friendships and sibling relationships are severed or altered on a basis of differences. In general, separate programs fragment family life, forcing siblings to attend different schools and ride different buses, and parents to attend different back to school nights and parent/teacher/student conferences.

Special programs become separate systems unto themselves with separate funding; separate staff and materials, and learning environments separate from other students. Certainly "one size" of instruction does not fit all students. Too often, we use the phrase "one system cannot do it all" as a reason to segregate students into separate programs. Providing separate programs is quite costly, often pitting program advocates against each other over scarce resources. Consequently, educators spend an inordinate amount of time and resources deciding on the programs for which a student may qualify and parents with the means spend an excessive amount of time and resources lobbying to get their child into one program over another. Currently, parents and teachers in OASD reported seeking specific labels in order to be placed in specific schools. In the end, separate programs result in some students receiving services and other students did not which, in turn, creates an atmosphere of mistrust and increases the potential for due process filings and threats of litigation. In addition, the cost of transportation is often higher when children with disabilities do not attend the schools they would attend if not disabled.

Special programs often serve an enabling function; that is, teachers and administrators look to these special programs for solutions to "fix" students. Such a practice enables these educators to perpetuate their own roles, policies, and practices in educating students and, therefore, need not make any changes to their classroom practice or school culture. Some parents, too, come to believe the special programs are equivalent to a quality education for their children and, despite inconvenience or cost, do whatever they can to have their children deemed eligible. As a result, others work very hard to make *special programs*

more efficient or more coordinated, without questioning the need for the programs in the first place.

A related problem with special programs is the lack of transfer of educator and student knowledge and skills from the separate program to other settings (i.e., the classroom, the school, the community). This is not to deny that teaching and learning can occur in small group instructional arenas, but that such learning opportunities must be offered to a range of students as part of the instructional practices within the school. The lack of transfer from separate programs back to integrated environments results in students who struggle and/or fail when they return to these settings.²⁹

Moreover, integrated environments teach educators that they, too, can succeed with a wide range of students, and that success is not dependent on a few specialists who engage in some “magic” with a few students. Many well-meaning educators who are often advocates for students who struggle in school can become trapped in the enabling aspect of special programs. The 1997 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act states:

The education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by... coordinating this Act with other local, educational service agency, State, and Federal school improvement efforts in order to ensure that such children benefit from such efforts and *that special education can become a service for such children rather than a place where they are sent* [italics added].

2. Least Restrictive Environment

Fifty-eight percent of the students with disabilities in OASD receive instruction in the general education environment 80% or more of the time, though the percentages vary greatly by disability. Reportedly, 6.8% of the students with disabilities receive instruction within the general education environment less than 40% of the time that is less than the state average. However, 3.64% of the students receive instruction in out of district placements compared to 1.21% of the state which is significant and potentially impacts district staffing patterns with dollars being reallocated to support students outside of the schools and classrooms they would attend if not disabled.

Often at the high school, students with disabilities are tracked in lower classes forcing a range of classes to exceed 40% students with disabilities. Especially in the arts, as often students with disabilities in specials, are not receiving support in such classes. Often general education teachers then may work with 3 to 4 special education teachers for one class. Therefore, sometimes the individual special education teachers may not know how many students with disabilities are clustered into one class at the high school level.

²⁹ Frattura, E. & Capper, C (2006).

Students with disabilities at the intermediate level are clustered into specific houses or classes and special education teachers are assigned cross-categorically by grade level and by disability for students with more specific disabilities, skewing the natural proportion of students in need in specific classrooms across each school.

All the schools continue to use the CMC, which historically was a content management center (CMC). Many schools discussed the past model and feeling ill equipped to move out of such an out-dated model that supports a deficit service delivery system. That is, the practice of sending the student away to be “fixed” and then hoping he returns to the classroom with a better sense of understanding. At the high school level, at least two certified teachers and two paraprofessionals support the CMC every hour. In the intermediate schools and elementary schools a special education teacher typically supports the CMC every hour. In OASD the CMC is designed to provide individual and small group instruction for students identified with exceptional education needs. The intent of the CMC was initially to assist students with disabilities in mastering the general education curriculum. However, to date they have faded in schools as they are used as resource centers forcing students with disabilities to transfer and generalize knowledge from one environment to the next.

Exhibit 11. Least Restrictive Environment and Disability

		Local	State	Target
A.	Percent of students with disabilities ages 6-21 served inside the regular class 80% or more of the day.	57.91 %	54.58 %	At or above 57.50 %
B.	Percent of students with disabilities ages 6-21 served inside the regular class less than 40% of the day.	6.80 %	10.97 %	At or below 10.30%
C.	Percent of students with disabilities ages 6-21 served in separate schools, residential facilities, or homebound/hospital placements.	3.64 %	1.21 %	At or below 1.05%

Necessary Action:

Those students who can synthesize the most information are the students within schools who receive the most cohesive instruction. The students who often need the most structure, routine, consistency, and predictability in their day are often those students who must leave in the middle of a class to attend a special program or receive a specialized service. As a result, students with disabilities most often receive the least cohesive instructional time and spend more time in transitions than their nondisabled peers.

Evolving to flexible learning environments allows each student to receive large group, small group, and 1:1 instruction based on their needs. That is, if a child has a severe disability, he or she may have a larger part of their day in sensory integration activities in a 1:1 situation or with a small group of students (who do not all have disabilities) without being self-contained or segregated into a program where all students the child interacts with have similar disabilities.

Integrated instruction (where general educators and special educators are working together and sharing expertise) was offered periodically across the district, but it was not the norm and was truly based on the leadership and teacher preferences of both general and special educators. The District vision must support the proactive services as the norm versus the outlier. In this manner the ability to develop culturally relevant curriculum, that is provided in the manner that a child can receive it and retain it, is undeniably important to prevent student failure, over-identification of students with disabilities (especially in the area of OHI), over representation, and the perpetuation of a default model.

3. Staffing and Roles

According to Exhibit 9, general caseloads range from 14 students to one teacher at the elementary schools, to 19 students to one teacher at the intermediate level, and 21 students to one teacher at the high school. Actual caseloads range from 8 students (with more significant disabilities) to 20 students (cross-categorically placed) at the elementary level. At the intermediate level, caseloads range from 10 students (with more significant disabilities) to 31 students (cross-categorically placed). At the high school, caseloads range from 9 students (with more significant disabilities) to 30 students (cross-categorically placed). Case managers are often aligned to specific departments at the high school level (but may not have students in those department classes on their caseloads).

The FTE for each case load ranges based on the minutes of service, but is either reported inconsistently as the caseloads for students with increase disabilities does not always result in a more significant FTE. Elementary caseloads are high and cross-categorically, general education teachers believe that they are serving a wide-range of students with very little special education support to no fault of the special educator. They then wonder if it is appropriate to cluster students with needs in less general education classrooms. In addition, over the years students identified from SLD to EBD and OHI have been placed in what a program for students with cognitive disabilities, often students who did not “fit into the traditional classroom.” environment? Intermediate Schools have one paraprofessional per grade level but also use the paraprofessionals for lunch and recess duty.

Speech and Language Clinicians

At the elementary level there are 369 students identified as eligible for speech and language services. That means that out of the 721 students eligible for special education,

50% are eligible for speech and language services. According to district data, caseloads for speech and language therapist average about 34 students.

Exhibit 12. Speech and Language Clinicians

Speech and Language	Speech and Language Therapist	Number of Students	Grade Range	FTE	Ratio of Teacher to Students
Summit	1	45	4K-4	1	1:45
Park Lawn	2	66	4K-4	2	1:33
Meadow View	1	34	4K-4	.8	.8:34
Ixonia	1	29	4K-4	.6	.6:29
Greenland	2	62	4K-4	2	1:31
Silver Lake	2	67	5-8	1.8	1:37
Nature Hill	1	21	5-8	.5	.5:21
High School	1	28	9-12	.7	.7:28
Private Schools	1	17	K-8	.4	.4:17
TOTAL		369	EC-12	10.8	34

Necessary Action:

Teachers K-12 discussed the need for clarification of roles of both special education teachers and paraprofessionals. This clarification could be completed during service delivery teams, understanding the necessary infrastructure and co-teaching goals to increase teacher capacity across all educators. In Section II, the need to support students in a proactive manner through universal design and differentiation – is essential. Such a proactive approach will minimize the number of referrals and students meeting eligibility. Often students meet eligibility for special education when general educators are not responsible for the learning of all students and assume a “fix it” model with special education. That being said, even if OASD reduced their eligibility rate to 10%, a shortage of special education teachers, remains. As the District makes significant strides to better serve all learners in a collaborative manner between special and general education, and students are returned to their home district, dollars should be reallocated to increase special education staff to be more aligned with a model that serves students cross-categorically using a 1:10 elementary, 1:12 middle, and 1:14 high school.

According to Exhibit 12, there has been an increase in students in OASD meeting eligibility for speech and language services while a decrease in students meeting eligibility for SLD has occurred, most likely related to SLD criteria changing. Caseloads are reasonably low for speech and language clinicians compared to state averages of 40 students or more, one must ask the question of whether students are being identified based on available caseload space and good intent to assist each student – yet, nevertheless resulting in over-identification of students in the area of Speech and Language.

It is important for professional development to be on-going and include a range of activities. The professional development activities for the SLPs can include consultation,

workshops, in-services, conferences, and review of literature on best practices, such as the documents that comprise the “Scope of Practice in Speech-Language Pathology” (ASHA, 2007), which can be accessed via the following link:

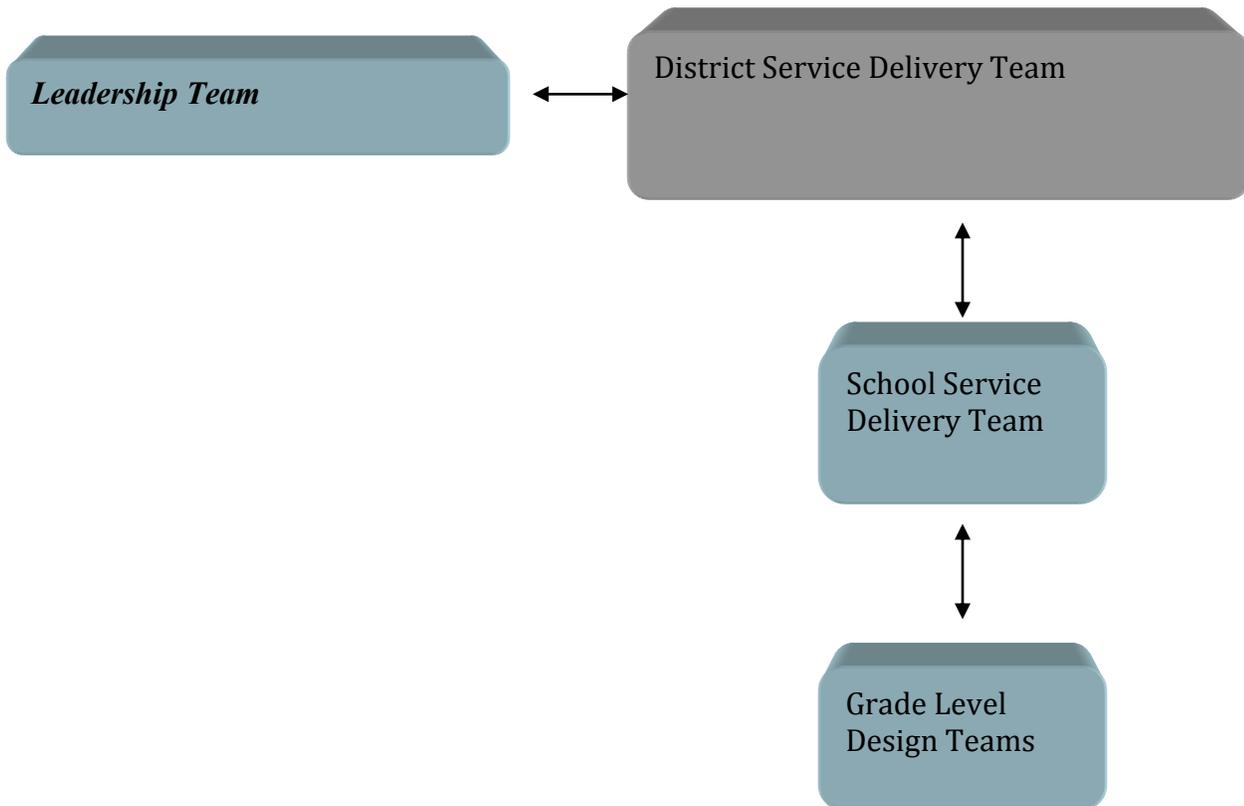
<http://www.asha.org/docs/html/SP2007-00283.html>

Implementation of current best practices that are evidence-based will enable the SLPs to effectively and efficiently identify and serve the students in the OASD who are in need of speech and language services.

School districts across the country have used Service Delivery Teams as a mechanism to move from a reactionary system to a proactive system and clarifying the roles of special and general education teachers and instructional assistants. Steps for such a transformation should include, but not limited to:

- the development of a district-wide unified vision (see Section II Infrastructure)
- the realignment of District Office under Teaching and Learning for all Students in order to provide proactive supports to schools to better serve a range of students
- The development of three types of teams (See Appendix C for more details):
 1. District-Wide Service Delivery Team is Responsible for:
 1. Developing a vision
 2. Setting a process to return students to their home schools
 3. Working with School Teams in unifying services, professional development, caseloads, etc.
 2. School-Based Service Delivery Teams are Responsible for:
 1. Delineating current structure for service delivery
 2. Defining how to move from reactive to proactive services
 3. Defining roles and responsibilities of special educators, general educators, and instructional assistants
 4. Developing hiring practices and evaluation practices of all teachers under a specific principles of service delivery
 5. Developing professional development needs specific to the school
 3. Grade-Based Teams Responsible for:
 1. Adhering to the RtI process
 2. Developing Co-Teaming opportunities
 3. Building pedagogical practices that adhere to principals of universal design – beginning with how a child learns
 4. Using flexible groupings based on “how” children learn
 5. Aligning all instruction with core content –
 6. Using assessment processes that allow students to show what they know the most often

Exhibit 13. Teams for Shared Decision-Making, Staff Design, and Student Support for ICS



To summarize, pull-out programs result in some students receiving support, while others do not. With pull-out programs, 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 these same students 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. Pull-out programs inadvertently blame and label students and marginalize and track students of color and low-income students. Pull-out programs prevent 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 identifying students for these programs are quite costly.

Recommendations for Service Delivery:

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1. *Therefore, OASD should place all students with disabilities in the schools they would attend if not disabled, specifically:*
 - a. *The 43 students who are currently tuitioned-out of the district should be returned at a cost savings of \$600,000 (dollars to be reallocated to better provide support to the range of learners in the schools and classrooms they would attend if not disabled).*
 - b. *Special education teachers should be realigned in a cross-categorical manner where schools are staffed Early Childhood 1:8, elementary 1:10, middle school 1:12 and high school 1:14 and transition 1:8.*
 - c. *Paraprofessionals should be realigned at the same ratio (early childhood 1:8, Elementary 1:10, Intermediate School, 1:12 and High School 1:14). In addition to student specific paraprofessionals.*
 - d. *Students eligible for speech and language only should be returned or placed onto the speech and language caseloads*
 - e. *As the District makes significant strides to better serve all learners in a collaborative manner between special and general education, and students are returned to their home district, dollars should be reallocated to increase special education staff to be more aligned with a model that serves students cross-categorically using a 1:10 elementary, 1:12 middle, and 1:14 high school.*
 - f. *Develop service delivery teams to move from a deficit-based model to a proactive model (See Appendix E for more details):*
 1. *District-Wide Service Delivery Team*
 2. *School-Based Service Delivery Teams*
 3. *Grade-Based Teams for All Learners*

Section IV: Teaching and Learning

Positives:

1. Some teachers have attended co-teaching professional development and are looking forward to opportunities to co-teach and continued professional development.
2. A desire for all students to be academically successful prevails.

Challenges:

1. Achievement

Exhibit 12 reflects the proficiency of students with and without disabilities from 3rd grade to 11th grade. Across all grades students with IEP's perform 12.8% to 42% or more below their same age peers without IEPs.

The largest gap between students economically disadvantaged and those who are not economically disadvantaged is at the high school level.

Exhibit 12. WKCE Reading Combined By Disability

			<i>Enrolled at Test Time</i>	<i>Number Included in Percents</i>	<i>No WSAS Total</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Advanced</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Oconomowoc Area School District	Grade 3	Students with Disabilities	48	45	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	48.9%	31.1%	20%
		Students w/o Disabilities	269	248	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%	28.2%	66.9%	4.8%
	Grade 4	Students with Disabilities	61	55	0.0%	0.0%	25.5%	47.3%	27.3%	25.5%
		Students w/o Disabilities	281	245	0.4%	1.6%	1.6%	33.5%	62.9%	2.0%
	Grade 5	Students with Disabilities	55	55	0.0%	14.5%	14.5%	60.0%	10.9%	29%
		Students w/o Disabilities	276	276	0.0%	0.0%	5.8%	40.9%	53.3%	5.8%
	Grade 6	Students with Disabilities	48	48	0.0%	6.3%	22.9%	41.7%	29.2%	29.2%
		Students w/o Disabilities	276	275	0.0%	0.4%	1.1%	32.7%	65.8%	1.5%
	Grade 7	Students with Disabilities	39	38	0.0%	0.0%	13.2%	55.3%	31.6%	13.2%
		Students w/o Disabilities	239	239	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	32.2%	67.4%	.4%
	Grade 8	Students with Disabilities	51	51	0.0%	19.6%	15.7%	45.1%	19.6%	35.3%
		Students w/o Disabilities	288	287	0.0%	0.3%	3.5%	32.8%	63.4%	3.8%
	Grade 10	Students with Disabilities	46	46	0.0%	21.7%	32.6%	30.4%	15.2%	54.3%
		Students w/o Disabilities	293	293	0.0%	2.4%	9.9%	35.5%	52.2%	12%

According to Exhibit 13, students with disabilities in the area of Math at the 3rd grade perform exceptionally well, but by high school students are showing a significant gap between students with and without disabilities.

Exhibit 13. WKCE Math Combined By Disability

			<i>Enrolled at Test Time</i>	<i>Number Included in Percents</i>	<i>No WSAS Total</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Advanced</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Oconomowoc Area School District	Grade 3	Students with Disabilities	48	45	0.0%	6.7%	0.0%	62.2%	31.1%	6.7%
		Students w/o Disabilities	269	248	0.0%	3.2%	2.4%	45.2%	49.2%	5.5%
	Grade 4	Students with Disabilities	61	55	0.0%	10.9%	10.9%	45.5%	32.7%	21.8%
		Students w/o Disabilities	281	245	0.4%	1.6%	2.9%	33.9%	61.2%	3.5%
	Grade 5	Students with Disabilities	55	55	0.0%	18.2%	10.9%	32.7%	38.2%	18.2%
		Students w/o Disabilities	276	276	0.0%	1.8%	3.6%	32.6%	62.0%	5.4%
	Grade 6	Students with Disabilities	48	48	0.0%	10.4%	12.5%	41.7%	35.4%	25.9%
		Students w/o Disabilities	276	275	0.0%	1.8%	1.1%	24.7%	72.4%	2.9%
	Grade 7	Students with Disabilities	39	38	0.0%	15.8%	13.2%	39.5%	31.6%	29%
		Students w/o Disabilities	239	239	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	33.1%	64.4%	2.5%
	Grade 8	Students with Disabilities	51	51	0.0%	19.6%	27.5%	35.3%	17.6%	47.1%
		Students w/o Disabilities	288	287	0.0%	1.0%	5.6%	55.4%	38.0%	6.6%
	Grade 10	Students with Disabilities	46	46	0.0%	41.3%	15.2%	41.3%	2.2%	57.5%
		Students w/o Disabilities	293	293	0.0%	2.4%	7.8%	61.4%	28.	10.2%

According to a research brief developed November 18, 2010, overall, 59% of OASD students with disabilities scored Advanced or Proficient on the WKCE Reading test compared to 70% at neighboring districts. OASD showed less reading proficiency at each grade level compared to its neighbors. The discrepancy was most apparent at grades 4 and 5. Also included in this brief is data supporting that the most predictable variables for struggling students in reading and math were learning disability, speech and language eligibility, and free and/or reduced lunch status.

3. Response to Intervention (RtI)

As students with disabilities are returning to the schools and classrooms they would attend if not disabled, Response to Intervention (RtI) will continue to become the most important tool to hold high standards for all learners and increase teacher capacity. Both NCLB and IDEA set requirements that all students will receive instruction in the core curricular areas

using universal design and differentiation to instruction and assessment. OASD has a Response to Intervention (RtI) team that has been working at the elementary and intermediate level and just begun including high school teachers in the discussion.

According to leadership, staff members have been working on understanding the basic parameters of RtI from two perspectives, getting it right the first time instructionally and providing resource-based intervention when students need additional support. Four year old kindergarten to 4th grade staff have worked for two or three years and have made great progress with data walls, progress monitoring, and providing interventions (push in and pull out). Title schools have used title funds to hire intervention specialists in grades 4K-4. Non-title schools have worked with classroom teachers and resource staff to provide in class “double dose” instruction.

The District formed a K5-12 RtI Think Tank during the 2010-11 school year. A team of staff members (regular education and special education) met to learn about RtI and share information. Leadership shared the need to move beyond their basic understanding and varied processes at all sites, to forming a cohesive process. Such efforts are significant and may account for the lower referral and identification rate at the elementary schools and less students meeting eligibility for OHI. In addition, leadership and teachers discussed the recent curriculum adoptions and how they will assist in meeting a broad range of needs while being culturally relevant.

Necessary Action:

The application of Response to Intervention (RtI) will be useful, but most likely will not solve the issue without major infrastructure changes (home schools and a general education base). There continues to be the perception that if a child is referred and found eligible –he should go away to receive services that can help him academically or behaviorally, especially if the child has a cognitive disability, emotional disability, or autism. As long as this perception is in place, the lack of ownership and understanding that all teachers must work together to support children will continue. OASD has a desire to come up with “tool kits” to meet the needs of each child versus trying to figure out where the child goes to get services. When this occurs, teacher capacity grows on multiple levels on a daily basis formally and most often informally through the expertise of others.

3. Pedagogy and Co-Teaching

Many general education teachers reported that they did not have any problems when they would send a student to the CMC or the special education classroom. Others were expressed frustration that students were practiced at going to the CMC, when the content specific teacher was ready and willing to assist the student in the general education

classroom. Over the last few years, students with disabilities are requesting to return to the CMC less often. Many general educators reported that they believe their classrooms are more appropriate learning environments for each and every student.

At the high school and intermediate level the International Baccalaureate (IB) programs has and is taking root, respectively. Teachers stated that the block schedules used at the high school may or may not benefit each and every learner. Students have the option of picking courses similar to a college course selection. Extra support is offered at the high school that students can choose to access or not. However, students with disabilities often tracked and clustered into more general classes, skewing the natural proportion of students in need. The inverse of such practices results in only 3 out of 140 students are accessing IB options. In addition, there are 155 students enrolled in Advance Placement (AP) courses, yet only 4 students with disabilities are enrolled in any AP course.

According to district leadership, high-quality research based materials that are inclusive of all needs (workshop models, experiential lessons, etc.) have been adopted in all major subject areas. Currently, the intermediate schools are implementing writers and readers workshop. Students are placed based on their assessment data. Although leadership clearly believes that if teachers begin with the core curriculum and develop their pedagogical practices based on how students learn, students are more successful.

The District is also working heavily on instructional technology initiatives for all students but particularly researching the impact on students with disabilities and those who struggle academically. For example, the District is researching different options to support assistive technology in a better, faster, cheaper model to support learning needs within the regular education environment.

Necessary Action:

Despite all the efforts in OASD, there is an inconsistent manner of addressing instructional practices for students with a broad range of disabilities. There continues to be an assumption that the curriculum and instruction did not succeed 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 not able to teach a range of students, that schools are incapable of changing to meet student needs and students are more alike than different. Instruction is based on the classroom majority rather than individual needs. Students who receive “specialized” instruction in resource rooms or the CMC, or in classrooms tracked for this purpose are typically the most behind relative to their peers.

However, “the how” becomes the key ingredient in the delivery of instruction, especially when educators are expected to teach a wide-range of learners. IB has been implemented

as an advanced curriculum versus a manner of providing high quality instruction for all learners. The four pillars of learning may be a way to connect the “how” of IB with the “what” for all learners. That is, the four pillars of learning that are derived from the International Commission for the Twenty-first Century in its report *Learning: The Treasure Within* seem to link very clearly with the philosophical premise of IB. Four Pillars of Education are Learning to Know, Learning to Do, Learning to Live Together, and Learning to Be³⁰. The Four Pillars, may provide a consistent framework to move forward in supporting “how” students learn through consistent instructional and assessment practices.

Learning to know

This type of learning is radically different from ‘acquiring itemized codified information or factual knowledge’, as often stressed in conventional curriculum and in ‘rote learning’. Rather it implies ‘the mastering of the instruments of knowledge themselves’.

‘Acquiring knowledge is a never-ending process and can be enriched by all forms of experience’. ‘Learning to know’ includes the development of the faculties of memory, imagination, reasoning, problem-solving, and the ability to think in a coherent and critical way. It is ‘a process of discovery’, which takes time and involves going more deeply into the information/knowledge delivered through subject teaching.

Learning to do

Learning to do implies *a shift from skill to competence*, or a mix of higher-order skills specific to each individual. ‘The ascendancy of knowledge and information as factors of production systems is making the idea of occupational skills obsolete and is bringing personal competency to the fore’. Thus ‘learning to do’ means, among other things, ability to communicate effectively with others; aptitude toward team work; social skills in building meaningful interpersonal relations; adaptability to change in the world of work and in social life; competency in transforming knowledge into innovations and job-creation; and a readiness to take risks and resolve or manage conflicts.

Learning to live together

In the context of increasing globalization, the Delors Commission places a special emphasis on this pillar of learning. It implies an education taking two complementary paths: on one level, discovery of others and on another, experience of shared purposes throughout life. Specifically it implies the development of such qualities as: knowledge and understanding of self and others; appreciation of the diversity of the human race and an awareness of the similarities between, and the interdependence of, all humans; empathy and cooperative social behavior in caring and sharing; respect of other people and their cultures and value systems; capability of

³⁰ Nan-Zhao, Zhou Four ‘Pillars of Learning’ for the Reorientation and Reorganization of Curriculum: Reflections and Discussions. www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/.../PillarsLearningZhou.pdf

encountering others and resolving conflicts through dialogue; and competency in working towards common objectives

Learning to be

This type of learning was first conceptualized in the Report to UNESCO in 1972, *Learning To Be* (Edgar Faure *et al*), out of the fear that ‘the world would be dehumanized as a result of technical change’. It was based on the principle that ‘the aim of development is the complete fulfillment of man, in all the richness of his personality, the complexity of his forms of expression and his various commitments – as individual, member of a family and of a community, citizen and producer, inventor of techniques and creative dreamer’. ‘Learning to be’ may therefore be interpreted in one way as learning to be *human*, through acquisition of knowledge, skills and values conducive to personality development in its intellectual, moral, cultural and physical dimensions. This implies a curriculum aiming at cultivating qualities of imagination and creativity; acquiring universally shared human values; developing aspects of a person’s potential: memory, reasoning, aesthetic sense, physical capacity and communication/social skills; developing critical thinking and exercising independent judgment; and developing personal commitment and responsibility.

These four pillars of learning are provided as a conceptual frame for cross -cutting themes and essential learning outcomes in repackaging curriculum modules/learning units or rebuilding curriculum to better meet the needs of a range of learners.³¹ In this manner, teachers are better able to develop lessons using universal design to teaching and learning. That is, all teachers should begin with how their students learn and develop their lessons in a manner that allows for the implementation of heterogeneous flexible learning groups versus a disability or leveled/track learning.

Across the board, from kindergarten through high school, both general and special educators discussed their need for planning time. All teachers discussed their willingness to co-teach with special educators but wanted to be able to have summer planning time to complete long-range planning and have the opportunity for short-term planning during the year. The high school found it difficult to align common prep time to “truly” co-teach. In addition, due to alignment of staff or schedule restrictions, special educators found it challenging to attend department meetings on a regular basis. However many general and special education teachers across the district expressed their willingness and interest in a more proactive manner of serving students to better collaborate and meet the needs of all learners.

Co-teaching configurations must be selected based on the individual needs of students as an instructional mechanism to increase both general and special education teachers capacity to better meet the needs of each and every learner based on how they learn. Often

³¹http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/COPs/Pages_documents/Competencies/Further_Reading/PillarsLearningZhou.pdf

an IEP at a glance may assist with sharing specific information regarding specific students and exactly what goals and objectives each child should be attending to in any particular class.

Exhibit 14. Peer Teaching Configurations³²

<i>Configuration</i>	<i>Description</i>
One Teacher/One Observer (consultation)	One teacher leads and one teacher observes individual students to better make instructional decisions. This configuration is not implemented for a quarter or a semester but at intervals to check student learning and understand student needs.
One Teacher/One Drift	One teacher leads the instruction, while the other teacher provides individual support to students. This is often used in large-group group settings where one teacher has the content expertise and one teacher has the ability to understand how specific students learn and require specific instructional supports. This type of configuration may also be used when one teacher is split across two classrooms and may not be in the room the entire time to share the actual instructional responsibility equally.
Station Teaching	Teachers develop the curriculum for the specific learners within the classroom and set up stations of instruction where students rotate from one to another. Teachers remain stationary and provide similar instruction with different groups of students. Often a third group may be formed using other support staff, e.g., OT, PT, speech and language, school counselor, reading teacher. Or, the third group may be formed to provide students with an opportunity for repeated practice or a cooperative assignment.
Parallel Teaching	Teachers divide the group into half and provide the same instruction to two smaller groups of learners. They may use different types of instructional techniques with similar content. When the content changes, the configuration is usually defined as station teaching.
Team Teaching/Collaborative Teaching	Teachers develop the curriculum with the understanding of the need for universal access (curriculum developed so that each and every student, even those with significant disabilities, may participate). That is, teachers jointly develop their instructional practices based on how each child learns. Responsibility is shared equally.

Both general and special educators referred to flexible grouping as homogeneously grouping students into ability levels versus starting with how a range of learners learns and then building the lesson using heterogeneous flexible learning groups to teach to the

³² Adapted from Friend & Burusck Friend, M., & Bursuck, W. D. (2002). Including students with special needs: A practical guide for classroom teachers (3rd ed.) Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon

same standard for all learners using different pedagogical approaches to teaching and assessment. See Appendix E.

4. Students with Severe Disabilities

Services for students with severe disabilities range from one school to another. In some schools at the elementary they are more self-contained and in other schools they have more opportunity to be based in general education. Although seemingly students with significant disabilities continue to be outsiders coming into the general education environment, but not a consistent member of an integrated community. At the high school level, students with severe disabilities are provided functional skills and community based instruction. Special education teachers reported the need to do vocational or jobsite development. OASD does have a school-to-work coordinator but only serves students without disabilities. There is a perception that transportation and limited resources impinges upon the offerings to advance the inclusion of all students with disabilities.

Teachers at the elementary level questioned the balance of functional skills to academic needs for students with more significant disabilities. Others discussed the confusion with retention of students with more significant needs at the kindergarten and elementary level, causing less time at the high school level for transitional supports.

Necessary Action:

The merging of resources across general education and special education is essential. That is, developing a proactive service delivery relative to school-to-work practices that could be accessed by any student who would need or desire such experience would increase resources for all students. Students with the most challenges in the area of retention, generalization, and recoupment must be able to learn and practice in the environments their family and friends access consistently to develop functional skills in the activities necessary to increase independence. Students with more significant needs from 18 to 21 should receive the majority, if not all of their instruction in the community environments and activities as their nondisabled peers (vocational, recreational, domestic, and general community [bussing, shopping, restaurant usage, etc]).

2. Professional Development

OASD leadership continues to work with all teachers to break down the need for students to leave the room to be serviced in a CMC or pull-out model. In addition, the District is working to build all staff capacity to meet the needs within the regular education classroom. According to staff, progress is varied among the sites in the areas of attitude toward and capacity in meeting all needs within the classroom and an area of continuous improvement.

Necessary Action:

A comprehensive professional development process must be put into place, for both general and special education teachers, which is aligned to the District vision and non-negotiables regarding “how” students with disabilities will be served. Such professional development should include, but not limited to:

1. Universal Design and Differentiation of Core Curriculum for all Learners EC-12
2. Proactive behavioral supports
3. Co-Teaching
4. Co-Planning
5. Functional Skill Development
6. Understanding specific disabilities
 1. Autism and communicative intent
 2. Mental Health Needs
 3. Emotional Disabilities
 4. Hearing Impaired and Learning Sign Language

Recommendations for Teaching and Learning:

1. *Embrace the importance that staff must assist in the development of each other’s capacity to work with a range of students – that is, share expertise and knowledge.*
2. *Assurance that all supports are seamlessly tied to and grounded in core teaching and learning in support of the range of learners within every classroom and grade.*
3. *All staff must believe they have a role and that their perceptions of student learning matter. All staff must work to understand how perceptions of low expectations may marginalize the performance of students with disabilities, students of color, English language learners, and students of low socio economic status.*
4. *Commitment that is built on culturally relevant differentiated curriculum and instruction through universal access of content-driven curriculum*
5. *Given natural proportion of students with disabilities in every school and classroom they would attend if not disabled. Special educators must be aligned with general education teachers by grade levels or academies at a (1:10, 1:12, 1:14, elementary, middle, and high, respectively)*
6. *Universal access to curriculum through instruction and differentiation for all students is essential. That is, the instructional model needs to clearly articulate the importance of understanding “how” a child learns and developing lessons that allow for the first intervention to be the right intervention for as many students as possible through integrated heterogeneous learning groups.*
7. *Individualized proactive behavioral supports must be put into place that attends to teaching appropriate behavior.*
8. *Avoid the use of retention of any child with disabilities in the early years as a means to “catch-up.” As, it limits the opportunity for necessary transitional time between 18-21.*

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9. *For students requiring functional skills (see Appendix E for more detail), balance instruction during natural transitions and in dyads versus large groups of students or enclaves.*
10. *Teaming arrangements should be based on the individual needs of the students who make up each special educators caseload and the general educators capacity to teach a broad range of learners - as an instructional mechanism to meet the goals of each student's IEP*
11. *A comprehensive professional development process must be put into place, for both general and special education teachers, which is aligned to the District vision and non-negotiables regarding "how" students with disabilities will be served by grade level (elementary, intermediate, and high) co-developed with teachers and school principals.*

Section V: Summary and Recommendations

All students should have the opportunity to attend their neighborhood school (or school of choice in school choice programs), and be placed in heterogeneous classrooms at their grade level along side their peers. This placement is the least restrictive, least intrusive and least disruptive in their daily lives, encourages independence in learning and not being over helped (i.e. least enabling), and ultimately is least expensive. The curriculum and instruction they receive in these environments should address their learning needs and at the same time, open the window to a rich, creative, non-restrictive learning experience. Within an integrated service delivery model, though 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 non-negotiables is ultimately the least expensive option as well. Finally, with integrated services, 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 student's positive sense of self as a learner (least enabling). Again, educators engaged in their teaching in this way save district resources that can be reallocated to the benefit of all in the school community.

Resources:

This is a building level step-by-step process in support of integrated comprehensive services and can assist in the development of a transformational plan.

Frattura, E. & Capper, C. (2007). *Leading for Social Justice: Transforming Schools for All Learners*. CA: Corwin Press.

These are a series of books that are specific to different grade levels and content areas – straight to the point – great ideas.

Gregory, G. & Chapman, C. (2007). *Differentiated Instructional Strategies: One Size Doesn't Fit All*. CA: Corwin Press

This is a whole school process that is similar to ours, different language – it is very clear and easy to follow.

Sailor, W. (Ed.) (2002). *Whole school success and inclusive education: Building partnerships for learning, achievement, and accountability*. NY: National Professional Resources.

Section VI: Appendices

Appendix A

Appendix B

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.

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

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

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-

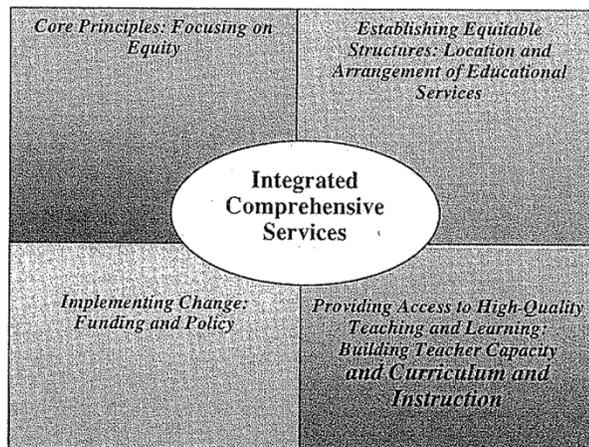


FIGURE 1. Four cornerstones of ICS.

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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 himself 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

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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-

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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

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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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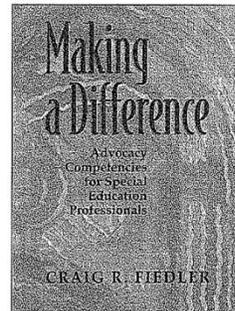
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Craig R. Fiedler

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Appendix C

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Collaboration



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-

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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-

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

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:

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- 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.

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

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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

- and general educators need to develop the curriculum and assessment for each section of the day.
- 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).
 - 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.
 - 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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TEACHING Exceptional Children, Vol. 39, No. 4, pp. 16–21.

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Appendix D

Students with Severe Disabilities and Best Practice

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

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 ICS 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 learners. 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 learner 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?*

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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
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
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29.			

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: 1. <i>What are the big ideas</i> 2. <i>What specific understandings about them are desired</i> 3. <i>What misunderstandings are predictable?</i>	Step 4: Essential Standards: 1. <i>What proactive questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?</i>
Step 5: Students will know: 2. <i>What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result if this unit?</i> 3. <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: 4. <i>What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result if this unit?</i> 5. <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: 1. <i>Through what authentic performance tasks will students demonstrate the desired understandings?</i> 2. <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 learners 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)?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 learners?</i> <i>O= Be Organized to maximize initial and sustained engagement as well as effective learning?</i>	

Adapted from Understanding by Design

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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).	

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