Instructional Leadership & Excellence in Special Education

October 3, 2018

Agenda

• Introductions & Learning Objectives
• The Need for Instructional Leadership in Special Education
• Assessing Instructional Leadership in the Special Education System
• Developing Instructional Leadership in Special Education
  o Solutions for Special Education Leaders
  o Solutions for Special Education Teachers & Related Service Providers
• Q&A
Introductions

Our Panel

Arun Ramanathan, Ed.D., CEO, Pivot Learning
Connie Jensen, MA, Pivot Coach
Former Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services, Long Beach Unified School District
Parisima Shahidi, Ed.D., Pivot Coach
Former Director of Special Education, Long Beach Unified School District
Terry Petersen, Ed.D., Pivot Coach
Former Director of Educational Services, Saddleback Valley Unified School District
Dean Ballard, MA, Director of Mathematics, CORE
Former K-12 Math Teacher and Consultant
Learning Objectives

• Understand why instructional leadership is the key to improving outcomes for students with disabilities

• Learn Pivot’s approach to assessing your system and developing an effective action plan for improving special education outcomes

• Find out from our experts in the field how to build the capacity of special educators to be instructional leaders
The Need for Instructional Leadership in Special Education

Wide Achievement Gaps Still Persist for Students with Disabilities in California

Met or Exceeded Standards (Smarter Balanced, 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ELA</th>
<th>Math</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students with disabilities</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students without disabilities</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages of students meeting or exceeding standards in ELA and Math.
Special Education Landscape

• **163 California districts** were identified as meeting criteria for assistance based on performance of students with disabilities

• **The Endrew Supreme Court Decision** (March 2017)
  - Held that schools must offer students an IEP which is “reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child’s circumstances"
  - This interpretation of the IDEA requirement for a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) overturned a lower court’s ruling that students were only entitled to “merely more than *de minimis*,” or minor, benefit

*Source: California Department of Education, LCFF Assistance Status, December 2017*
How Do You Begin the Process of Improvement?

- **The Five Dimensions:**
  - **Leadership** to ensure a clear vision for improvement
  - **Assessment & Evaluation** to drive informed decision making
  - **Curriculum & Instruction** to guide strong professional learning
  - **Culture, Capacity, Sustainability** for growth and longevity
  - **Systems Alignment** to coordinate coherent practices and structures which improve teaching and learning

Understand the Landscape to Support Implementation

- **The Landscape and Root Cause Analysis:**
  - Identifies and defines the strengths, challenges, needs, and opportunities
  - Determines the causal relationships
  - Highlights priority solutions with potential for the greatest impact
How Does the Data Guide Us?

• Provides evidence-based insights to develop a **Theory of Action**:
  - If we support an increase in the effectiveness of instruction to meet the needs of all special education students, then we will see an increase in student learning and achievement

• Facilitates creation of the **Action Plan** to provide a clear path for implementation using the **Theory of Action** as the driver

The Action Plan Ensures & Monitors Continuous Improvement

• **The Action Plan**:
  - Provides a roadmap for implementation
  - Schedules progress monitoring
  - Studies results
  - Includes specific data points to consistently collect, analyze, and measure effectiveness
  - Aligns with the cycle of continuous improvement:
    - Is the plan effective? Should the work continue?
    - Is the data indicating limited or no progress?
    - What do we need to revisit, alter, or adjust?
Case Study: A California District Supports Maximizing All Students’ Potential

- **Identified Priority Needs**
  - Lack of effective differentiated first instruction
  - Increased special education referrals
  - High number of non public school placements
Case Study: A California District Supports Maximizing All Students’ Potential

• Key Elements to Consider
  o Segregation of special education students has led to segregation of special education teachers
  o Teacher education programs concentrate on accommodations and modifications as an isolated add on
  o Not all special education leaders are instructional leaders
  o Principals are not sure of their roles in evaluating special education teachers
  o General education teachers serving special education students lack knowledge
  o All students are at risk and deserve a tiered system of interventions that meets their needs

• Our Solutions
  o Address special education and general education systems simultaneously
  o Increase the network of relationships between special education and other departments
  o Support the district in clarifying their priority for differentiated effective first instruction for all teachers
  o Develop special education leaders to become instructional coaches
Case Study: A California District Supports Maximizing All Students’ Potential

• **Instructional Leaders:**
  - Organize instructional rounds around a focus question in relation to pre-determined instructional practices
  - Collect general data—not to include information identifying any specific classroom/teacher
  - Focus on patterns and trends as the plan is reviewed for effectiveness in collaboration with the team
  - Provide feedback and coaching to address areas of need
  - Inform decision making with the cycle of continuous improvement

Developing Instructional Leadership in Special Education: Solutions for Special Ed Leaders, Case Study 2
Case Study: A California District Focuses on Deeper Learning for All Students

• Identified Priority Needs
  o Meeting the imperative needs of changing demographics to ensure equity for all students
  o Addressing the achievement gap: High API/Low AYP for SPED/EL subgroups; over-representation of EL and students of color in special ed
  o Confronting siloed special education and general education

• Key Elements to Consider
  o Facilitating participatory leadership through engagement of stakeholders
  o Creating and implementing an action plan
  o Receiving coaching and professional development
  o Collecting and evaluating data consistently to measure and determine effectiveness
  o Gaining ongoing implementation support
Case Study: A California District Focuses on Deeper Learning for All Students

• The Solutions
  o Shift in mindset to prepare for organizational change from the central office to the classroom
  o Build relationships
  o Focus on precision of pedagogy
  o Cultivate deep collaborative work
  o Develop a leadership framework that celebrates continuous improvement

• Instructional Leaders:
  o Access multiple data points in order to inform the decision making process
  o Apply the cycle of continuous improvement to inform decision making
Developing Instructional Leadership in Special Education: Solutions for Special Ed Teachers & Providers

Capacity Building for Instructional Leadership: School & Classroom Level Focus

- Foundational knowledge (Reading/ Math Academies)
- Research based instructional tools (curriculum & assessments)
- Job-embedded support
Stories from the Field

- Overwhelmed
- Underprepared
- Overlooked

Key Elements to Consider

- ELA
  - Advanced phonemic awareness
  - Systematic, explicit phonics instruction
  - Practice in connected text
- Math
  - Conceptual understanding, number sense, fluency
  - Pedagogy and content based on research
- Computer adaptive programs
  - Caution and excitement (promise and pain)
Learning Objectives

• Understand why **instructional leadership** is the key to **improving outcomes** for students with disabilities

• Learn Pivot’s approach to **assessing your system** and developing an effective **action plan** for **improving special education outcomes**

• Find out from our **experts** in the field how to build the **capacity** of **special educators** to be **instructional leaders**

Q&A
Thank You!

- **Contact Us:**
  - 510.250.2543
  - www.pivotlearning.org
  - learnmore@pivotlearning.org
  - arun@pivotlearning.org
  - 500 12th Street, Suite 350
    Oakland, California 94607