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Core Beliefs and Values

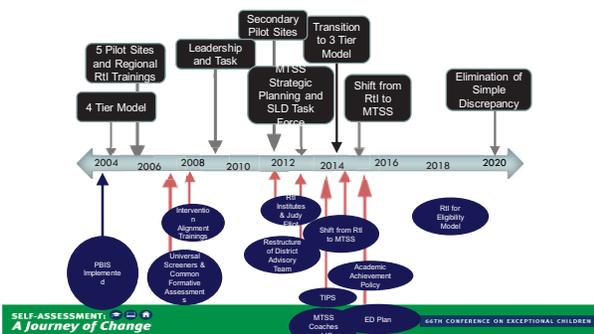
- We believe every student matters and makes meaningful contributions to their community.
- We believe every child can learn, but not all at the same pace.
- We believe every child should be educated in the LRE.
- We believe EC is a service rather than a place (Kovaleski, 2013)
- Their should be a continuum of support from GE to EC



Continuum of Support "What does your school look like?"



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Polling questions (for dot voting)

- Is your LEA/ charter school in an MTSS cohort?
- Are you or another member of your district/ charter school MTSS implementation team?
- Are you or a member of your school's MTSS implementation team?
- How confident are you in your ability to use multiple data sources to address the following criteria:
 - Rule out of lack of appropriate instruction
 - Rule out of additional exclusionary factors including loss of instructional time
 - Inadequate achievement
 - Insufficient progress
 - Adverse effect
 - Educational need for special education
- Understanding the role of Exceptional Children Teachers in the world of SLD and MTSS ?

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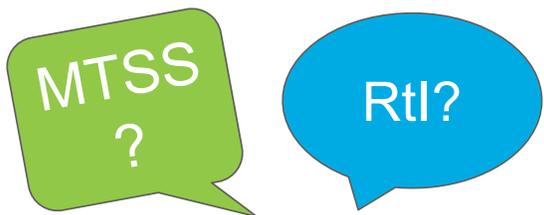
BUILDING COMMON LANGUAGE

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Core Beliefs

- All students are general education students first
- Every student has the right to strong core instruction
- A student who has fallen behind can catch up
- No teacher (or school psychologist) should have to address these challenges alone
- Special education can't be the only way a struggling student gets help

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NC MTSS

- ...is a multi-tiered **framework** that promotes **school improvement** through engaging, research-based **academic** and **behavioral** practices. NC MTSS employs a **systems approach** using **data-driven problem solving** to maximize growth for **all**.



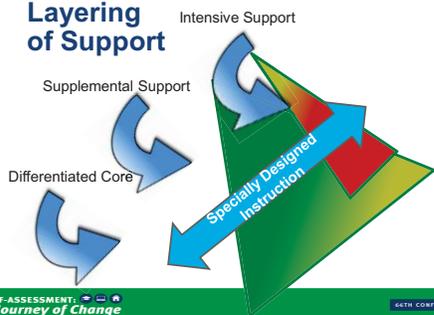
Rtl: Integrated within an MTSS

- "Rtl refers to the practice of providing high-quality, multi-tiered instruction and intervention matched to students' need, monitoring student progress frequently, and evaluating data on student progress to determine the need for special education support."

Batsche et al., 2005; Fuchs and Fuchs, 2006



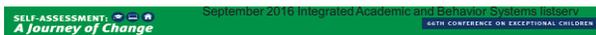
Layering of Support



Clearing Misconceptions

MYTH: MTSS is about installing interventions.

FACT: MTSS seeks to answer the question, "Does our system make sense for our students?" In order to answer this question we must have data which includes both student and implementation data.



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Responsiveness to Intervention (RtI): Integrated within an MTSS

- "RtI refers to the practice of providing high-quality, multi-tiered instruction and intervention matched to student need, **monitoring student progress** frequently, and **evaluating data** on student progress to **determine the need for special education support.**"

Batsche et al., 2005; Fuchs and Fuchs, 2006

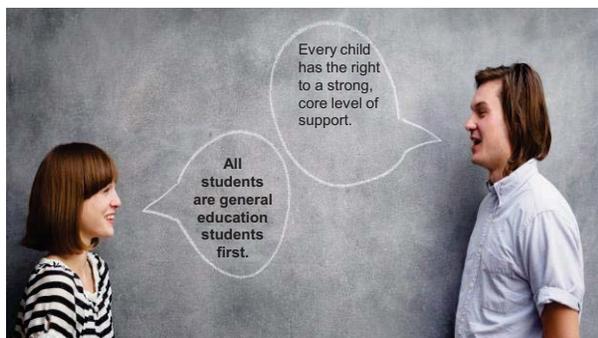
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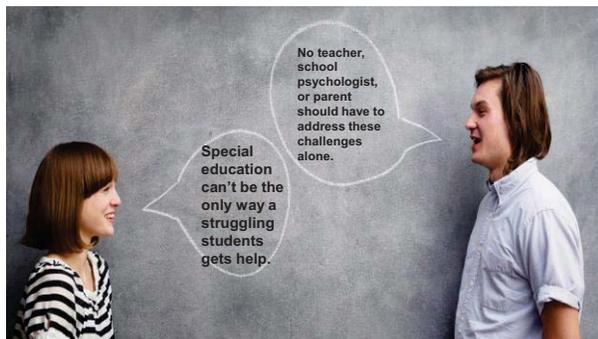
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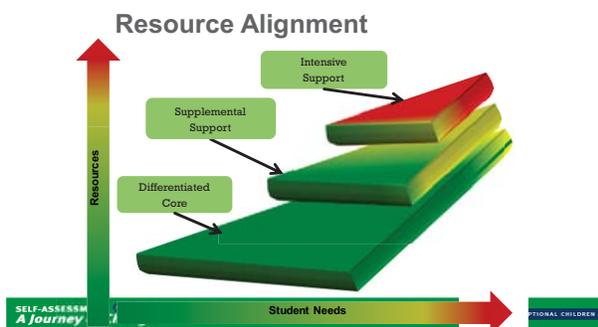
"A key to more effective responses to learning difficulties in general education and lowered LD prevalence will be policies that do not simply change the criteria for identifying LD, but that truly improve the capacity of teachers and schools to implement sound early interventions with the necessary fidelity."

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John, G.R. et al. (2011) Removing Special Education from a Child's Future
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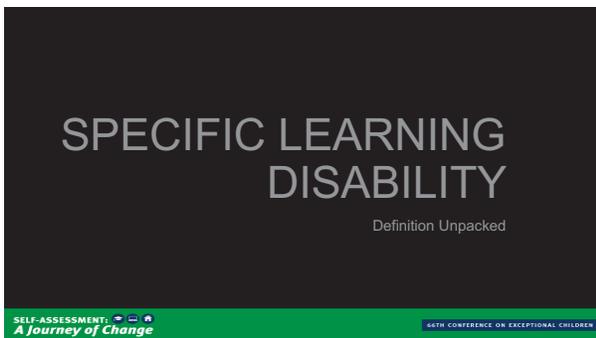




- Within the NC policy that will be effective July 1, 2020, which of the following are *required* as essential components for a comprehensive evaluation?
- Multiple tiers of instruction matched to student need
 - A system of high quality core instruction and scientifically research-based intervention
 - A comprehensive balanced assessment system
 - A systematic problem solving process and data based decision making
 - All of the above

Consider and Discuss

- Why are these important?
- Do you think you can make accurate decisions about eligibility without these components?



A learning disability is not technically a “*disability*” unless it is allowed to become a disability! The greatest good is found by preventing need, not by postponing help.

“Learning Disability: A Construct”,
Emerson Dickman, July 2014



Who IS LD?

- The student who does not respond to quality instruction: *hard to teach, not unable to learn*
- Low achievement and inadequate instructional response
- Often preventable with early intervention
- Heritable, but neural systems are malleable

Fletcher, 2015

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Then

"A learning disability refers to a retardation, disorder, or delayed development in one or more of the processes of speech, language, reading, spelling, writing, or arithmetic resulting from a possible cerebral dysfunction and/or emotional or behavioral disturbance and not from mental retardation, sensory deprivation, or cultural or instructional factors." (Kirk, 1963)

Now

A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in impaired ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, MBD, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. It does not include learning problems that are the primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of ID, SED, or of environmental, culture, or economic disadvantage. (NC Policy 2010)

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Specific Learning Disability

...a **disability** in one or more of the **basic processes** involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the impaired ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The disability **substantially limits academic achievement so that the child does not learn at an adequate rate when provided sustained, high quality instruction and scientific research-based intervention.**

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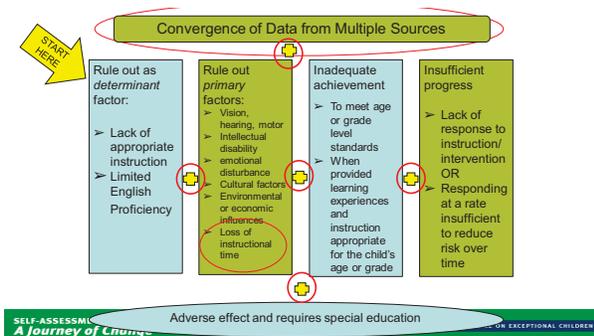
Specific Learning Disability

- Alternate terms **may** include, but are **not limited to, dyslexia and dyscalculia.**
- Disabilities not included. Specific learning disability does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of **intellectual disability**, of serious emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY

Addendum to
NC Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities
Effective July 1, 2020

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ESTABLISHING APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTION

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Criterion 1: Assurance of appropriate instruction

A child must not be determined to have a specific learning disability if the determinant factor for that determination is any of the following:

- Limited English Proficiency*
- Lack of appropriate instruction and scientific research-based intervention in reading, including the essential components of reading instruction, and/or
- Lack of appropriate instruction and scientific research-based intervention in math.

"Continued poor achievement when effective instruction has been provided is a powerful marker for the presence of SLD."

Kovaleski, VanDerHeyden and Shapiro

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EXCLUSIONARY FACTORS

Loss of Instructional Time

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LOSS OF INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

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What is chronic absence?

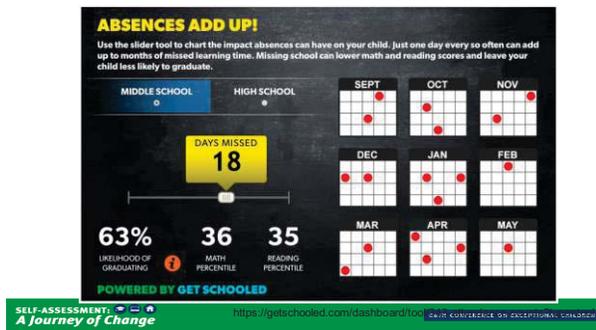
- As defined by the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP), chronic absence is defined as **missing 10% or more of the school year**, or 18 out of 180 days.
 - *Unexcused and excused absences*
 - *Consider this in terms of school days. A student absent 18 school days is missing nearly a month of school.*
- When a student in grades K-3 misses this much school, it is **chronic early absence**
- National data indicates that approximately 1 in 10 children are chronically absent, but this can vary from district to district
- *A study by NCCP revealed that some districts studied had 25% of students chronically absent*

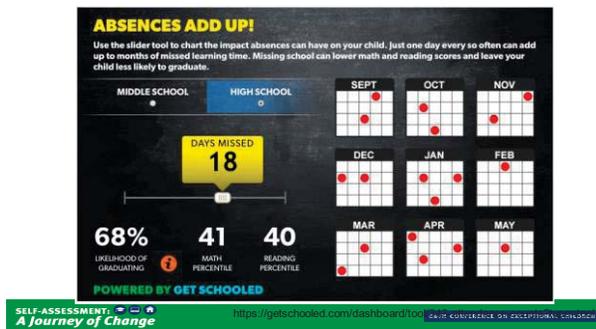
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Effects of Chronic Absence

- Regardless of gender, SES, or ethnicity, students are negatively affected when they are chronically absent
- Chronic absence in kindergarten = lower achievement in math, reading and general knowledge in 1st grade
 - *This relationship is stronger for Latino children*
- Long-term consequences are most significant for students from low SES households
 - *Chronic absence in kindergarten for low SES students is associated with lower achievement at the end of 5th grade (Chang & Romero, 2008)*
- In a study by Balfanz & Byrnes (2013), students who stopped being chronically absent saw academic improvements in all subject areas and were less likely to drop out of school.

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What can we do to reduce the number of chronically absent students?

- Recognize external factors affecting attendance and implement programs targeting these components
 - Including food programs, afterschool care, and increased recess time
- Create an attendance team to track chronically absent students and entire school's attendance data.
- Provide school-wide incentive programs for improved attendance, not just perfect attendance
 - Rewards include extra recess time, recognition at school, and homework passes
- Develop incentive programs for families of children with improved attendance
 - Rewards include gift cards, food baskets, and transportation passes
- Establish mentor programs to support chronically absent students and their families
 - Balfanz & Byrnes (2013) found the NYC Success Mentor Corps program increased attendance rates across all schools, with an average gain of 9 days of school for each year-level student.

Agree-Disagree-Why

“As advocates for students with disabilities, we must be as concerned about the quality of Tier 1 instruction and outcomes as it relates to the quality of special education instruction.”

Dr. George Batsche, CASE Hybrid Conference, 2016

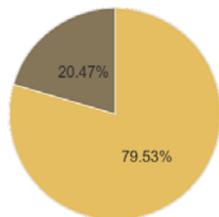


2016 Teacher Survey Data

- Survey was sent to all MTSS district coordinators in North Carolina, and they were asked to distribute it to all K-12 teachers
- 286 responses
- Respondents were routed based on their responses to questions about intervention delivery, intervention fidelity, and school policies

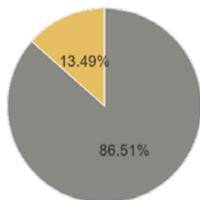


Do you think there is a group of students that could be referred to as "slow learners?" (n=171)



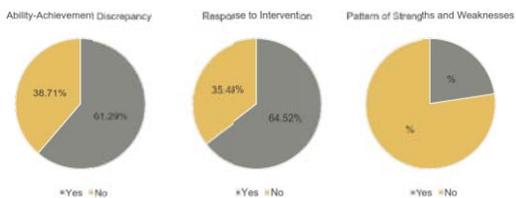


Does your school incorporate RtI/MTSS data when making Specific Learning Disability (SLD) eligibility decisions? (n=126)



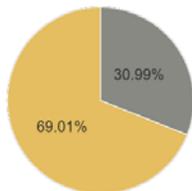
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How does your school determine if a student has a Specific Learning Disability (SLD)? (n=124)



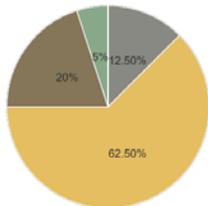
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Are you aware of the new SLD policy passed in February 2016 by the NC State Board of Education? (n=171)



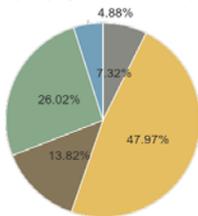
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How do you think the RtI/MTSS framework used for SLD eligibility will affect the use of IQ tests? (n=40)



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How do you think the implementation of MTSS (using RtI data) will impact the number of students qualifying for SLD? (n=123)



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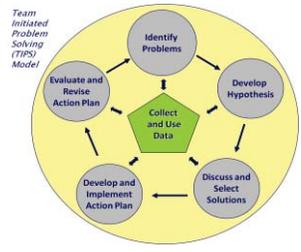
Consider and Discuss

- What existing data do you currently use to establish appropriate instruction and intervention?

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Suggested data that districts may use to assess the provision of appropriate instruction and intervention include:

CORE INSTRUCTION
Class and school-wide data (comparable to culturally and linguistically similar peers), including universal screening data (for all students), indicates that core instruction is sufficient for the majority of students to achieve age and grade level standards.
Attendance records indicate student was present on a regular basis to receive instruction; this review should include a review of disciplinary removals.
Checklists/systematic observational data collected measuring integrity of instructional delivery completed by observers or teachers as self-check measures verifies appropriate instruction practices are in place and delivered as intended by qualified personnel.
Evidence that the teachers were appropriately trained in using evidence-based practices within the core curriculum (i.e. differentiation, explicit instruction) and adequately use the prescribed instructional materials and procedures associated with the core curriculum.
INTERVENTIONS
Supplemental and intensive interventions are supported by scientific research and fall within the range of acceptable practice that research suggests is sufficiently rigorous to accelerate achievement.
Selection of supplemental and intensive interventions are determined through a systematic problem-solving approach and are matched to student need.
Progress monitoring data from supplemental and intensive instruction indicates most students receiving the intervention are responsive at rates sufficient to reduce risk after an appropriate period of time.
The interventions are delivered with a high degree of fidelity, with sufficient intensity, and



Some General Remedial Principles

- Remedial interventions must increase intensity and differentiation, so the first step is to increase time on task and reduce the size of the instructional group
- Whenever possible, interventions should supplement, not supplant
- No intervention is effective if it does not involve the academic skill itself (must read, do math, and write)

Fletcher, 2015

Some General Remedial Principles (cont.)

- The longer the intervention is delayed, the slower the response (on average) and the greater the need for intensity
- Intervention always begins in the general education classroom
- Effective interventions include a self-regulation component
- Progress must be assessed at all levels

Fletcher, 2015

Ineffective Interventions

- Don't focus on academic skills
- Defines academic proficiency narrowly
- Doesn't increase instructional time, intensity or differentiation
- Doesn't continually monitor progress and adjust instruction or change program
- Teaches for the sake of learning rules, not to master principles

- Doesn't engage the child in reading instructional level material or practice in math and writing
- Waits for the child to fail, leaves the child behind

Fletcher, 2015

All Professionals must...

- Focus on assessment of academic skills and move students to intervention as soon as possible – look at progress and academic strengths and weaknesses
- Address comorbid disorders and other factors
- Become experts on research-based interventions
- Evaluate progress
- Don't get hung up on progress, focus on results

Fletcher, 2015

If IQ tests are not used as part of the procedures for eligibility determination, won't "slow learners" qualify for special education?

Consider and Discuss

Who is the "slow learner"?

Then

- “Slow learners” are not identified as eligible for special education services.

Now

- Recognize that students with flat cognitive profiles and/or low overall achievement *may* be students with learning disabilities and may require long terms intensive interventions available through special ed.

Then

- A discrepancy is established comparing a student’s intellectual development to achievement.
- IQ is considered a marker of LD.

Now

- Students in the slow learner range may not be excluded from having an SLD if they display significantly inadequate achievement and they meet all of the other criteria.
- IQ is NOT considered a marker for LD.

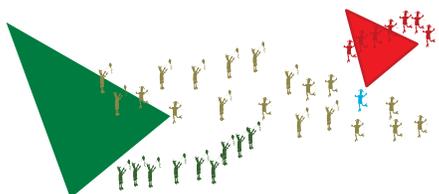
Then

- Special education was the only way a student could get help.

Now

- A multi-tiered system of support ensures all students receive a sound, basic education AND any additional supports needed for success.

Traditional Model



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Consider and Discuss

- What is the difference between a student who is significantly “behind” and one with an SLD?

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Consider and Discuss

- “For many, identifying these students as SLD changes how the construct of SLD is understood, creating the need for a paradigm shift in thinking.”

Kovaleski, VanDerHeyden and Shapiro, 2013

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Connecting MTSS with Special Education Teams

- Connecting MTSS with special education enables teams to blend the resources and expertise of both general and special education personnel to provide a unified system of supports that meets the needs of every student.
- Applying MTSS logic to the educational disability identification process and IEP development reinforces the requirements for the use of ongoing progress monitoring, instructional responsiveness, and data-based decision-making towards the specific goal of improving outcomes for

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The Role of the Exceptional Children's Teacher

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School Instructional Time: The Irreplaceable Resource

“In the average school system, there are 330 minutes in the instructional day, 1,650 minutes in the instructional week, and 56,700 minutes in the instructional year. Except in unusual circumstances, these are the only minutes we have to provide effective services for students. The number of years we have to apply these minutes is fixed. Therefore, each minute counts and schools cannot afford to support inefficient models of service delivery.” (p. 177)

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Secondary Students: Unique Challenges...

Struggling learners in middle and high school may:

- Have significant deficits in basic academic skills
- Lack higher-level problem-solving strategies and concepts
- Present with issues of school motivation
- Show social/emotional concerns that interfere with academics
- Have difficulty with attendance
- Are often in a process of disengaging from learning even as adults in school expect that those students will move toward being 'self-managing' learners...



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School Dropout as a Process, Not an Event

“It is increasingly accepted that dropout is best conceptualized as a long-term process, not an instantaneous event; however, most interventions are administered at a middle or high school level after problems are severe.”

Source: Jensen, S., Reardon, A.L., & Hess, R. (2008). Best practices in increasing the likelihood of school completion. In A. Thomas & J.

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Student Motivation & The Need for

“A common response to students who struggle in sixth grade is to wait and hope they grow out of it or adapt, to attribute early struggles to the natural commotion of early adolescence and to temporary difficulties in adapting to new organizational structures of schooling, more challenging curricula and assessment, and less personalized attention. Our evidence clearly indicates that, at least in high-poverty urban schools, sixth graders who are missing 20% or more of the days, exhibiting poor behavior, or failing math or English do not recover. On the contrary, they drop out. This says that early intervention is not only productive but absolutely essential.”

Source: Baltanz, R., Herzog, L., MacIver, D.J. (2007). Preventing student disengagement and keeping students on the graduation

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Mining Archival Data: What Are the 'Early Warning Flags' of Student Drop-Out?

A sample of 13,000 students in Philadelphia were tracked for 8 years. These early warning indicators were found to predict student drop-out in the sixth-grade year:

- Failure in English
- Failure in math
- Missing at least 20% of school days
- Receiving an 'unsatisfactory' behavior rating from at least one teacher

Source: Ballanz, R., Herzog, L., Macher, D. J. (2007). Preventing student disengagement and keeping students on the graduation track: Early identification and effective interventions. Educational Psychology, 27, 22-38.

7

What is the Predictive Power of These Early Warning Flags?

Number of 'Early Warning Flags' in Student Record	Probability That Student Would Graduate
None	56%
1	36%
2	21%
3	13%
4	7%

MTSS "Service Delivery" Mantra

1. Student services are arranged in a multi-tier model
2. Data are collected to assess student baseline levels and to make decisions about student progress
3. Interventions are 'evidence-based'
4. The 'procedural integrity' of interventions is measured
5. MTSS is implemented and developed at the school- and district-level to be scalable and sustainable over time

Brief History of Special Education

- Special education has a history based in legislation from the past 60 years. These legislative actions and court decisions have shaped the field of special education and the roles of teachers (Martin, Martin, & Terman, 1996).
- Over time, the elements of access to education and support have grown. Beginning in 1975 with the implementation of the PL-94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, students with disabilities were allowed only minimal access to the education system.
- However, special education practices have evolved and the government has focused on the quality of education with the subsequent reauthorizations of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act in 1997 and 2004 (IDEA) and No Child Left Behind in 2001 (NCLB, 2008; Scheuremann et al., 2009).
- These changes have led to the current educational climate in which children who were once overlooked now have greater access to the educational process (Clark & Tilly, 2010; Sullivan & Long, 2010).

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The Effect of MTSS on Special Education

- Questions have been raised regarding how special education fits into the model (Simonsen, & et al., 2010).
- In the past, special education teachers have worked with students with disabilities separate from general education (Brown-Chidsey et al., 2009).
- The special education field is being reshaped as result of the current challenges and demands. Without adapting to new roles, special education could lose its identity as a field (Brownell et al., 2010).
- As many states begin to implement a multi-tier service delivery model, the RTI model has the potential of becoming a lasting approach to service delivery in schools (Berkeley et al., 2011). For this reason, research on how special educators are responding to implementation is needed. Specifically, research needs to be conducted on how special educators' roles and responsibilities have changed as a result of the implementation of RTI.

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Past/Present Roles of Exceptional Children Educators

- Special education teachers have traditionally engaged in several different job responsibilities throughout their day. Classically, the special education teacher role has largely 10 been focused on providing specialized instruction to students with disabilities (Council for Exceptional Children, 2009).
- In addition to instruction, special education teachers also spend time assessing students and supporting their behavior. In addition, special education teachers, have several roles and responsibilities that extend beyond working directly with children. Special educators interact with students' families and work collaboratively with other professionals (Council for Exceptional Children, 2009).
- Specific responsibilities include instruction, management of behavior, coordinating support services, working with paraprofessionals, maintaining positive parent relationships, and advocating for children with disabilities. Special educators also work with other professionals on interdisciplinary teams in order to address students' unique needs (Council for Exceptional Children, 2009). However, there is variability among special education professionals regarding the distribution of their time across their various roles

and responsibilities.
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Past/Present Roles of Exceptional Children Educators

- Wasburn-Moses (2005) found in a quantitative study of special education teachers from 378 randomly selected public high schools in Michigan that special education teachers spend their time engaged in four general activities: teaching, working with students, collaborating, and completing paperwork.
- Within this framework, teaching involves academic instruction, whereas working with students could include non-academic interactions or behavior management. The survey included items about "demographic information, roles and responsibilities, program evaluation, and teaching preparation" (Wasburn-Moses,

Past/Present Roles of Exceptional Children Educators

- The task that most frequently emerged as a daily role for special education teachers was managing student behavior (89.5% of participants engaged in daily).
- Other tasks that emerged as daily roles (in descending order of frequency) were as follows:
 - completing paperwork (80.1%),
 - working with general education teachers (71.7%),
 - making accommodations and modifications (67%),
 - consulting students on their caseload (62.8%),
 - teaching mathematics (56.0%), and working with administrators (53.9%).
- These daily categories can be connected back to the four general activities discussed previous: teaching, working with students, collaborating, and completing paperwork.

Exceptional Children Time Usage

- Similarly, a second study emphasized that special educators do not spend a majority of their time engaged in one single activity (Vannest & Hagan-Burke, 2010).
- In this study, the researchers trained a sample of 36 special education teachers to use the Teacher Time Use Instrument, with which teachers documented their work throughout the day using codes for 12 common activities.
- The results showed that none of the 12 activities took up a majority of any teacher's day (See Table 1). However, academic instruction, instructional support, and paperwork accounted for about half of the teachers' day (Vannest & Hagan-Burke, 2010).

Table 1: Special Education Teacher Time Usage

Activity	Percentage of Time Engaged in the Activity	Activity	Percentage of Time Engaged in the Activity
Academic Instruction	16%	Personal Time	9%
Instructional Support	15%	IEP meetings	2%
Paperwork	12%	Activities of Planning	5%
Discipline	7%	Assessment	4%
Supervision	5%	Non-academic Instruction	4%
Consulting and Collaborating	8%	Other responsibilities	8%

Data from Yamest, K. J., & Hagan-Burke, D. (2010). *Teacher time use in special education. Remedial and Special Education, 31*, 126-142.

The SHIFT from Past to Present:
EC Teacher in an MTSS World

Table 2: Four Key Roles of Special Education Teachers

Role	Description
Collaborator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interacting and supporting other educators Planning with general education teachers Consulting with general education teachers Teaching with general education teachers Providing professional development for general educators
Interventionist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using evidence-based practices to support students' academic achievement Knowledge about interventions Match interventions to need Assist students in goal setting Involved in progress monitoring Implements case-management Implements targeted, small group Implements intensive instruction Implements behavioral support Implements social skills instruction
Diagnostician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies student response to instructional intervention Implementing basic skills assessment Implementing functional skills assessment Implementing special education eligibility assessments Interpreting assessment results Explaining and discussing results in an RTI meeting Explaining and discussing results in an IEP meeting Learning how to implement assessment
Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrative tasks Learning how to implement assessment Completing paperwork Answering/sending emails Attending meetings

Mitchell, B. (2011). *Examining the role of the special educator in a response to intervention model. University of Kansas. ProQuest Dissertation and Theses. With permission from the author.*

The SHIFT from Past to Present:
EC Teacher in an MTSS World



Exceptional Children Educator as Leader



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Shared Leadership

- A Multi-Tiered System of Supports restructures the educational system by creating a culture in which there is a shared responsibility and collaboration between general education and special education for the purpose of ensuring that the educational needs of every student are met.
- General and special educators work closely together within collaborative learning groups to create instructional plans that are rigorous and purposeful. These educators collect and analyze data to plan, organize, and deliver supports that reflect the Colorado Academic Standards and students' needs

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Exceptional Children Educator as Data Based Decision Maker



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Data-Based Problem Solving and Decision Making

- The special education eligibility and IEP development process becomes informed, valid, and instructionally driven when a team-based problem-solving approach is implemented.
- Decisions about the supports and/or services a student needs are based on multiple sources of student-centered data and the student's response to evidence-based instruction and intervention.
- This process of problem solving and using data should also be used to make ongoing instructional decisions for students who are continuing to receive special education services, by helping to guide measurable goal- setting and monitoring of progress at home and school.
- The goal of problem solving is to intentionally design, develop, and deliver instruction and supports matched to student needs, which may or may not include accessing special education resources.

Layering of Supports

- Every student has access to universal instruction and supports for both academics and behavior. The federal law IDEA (2004) mandates that students with disabilities be educated in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), specifically that "to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities . . . are educated with children who are not disabled."
- A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) presumes the participation of every student, including those with disabilities, in the core curriculum, which includes small and large group instruction.
- Effective interventions and supports at the universal tier can reduce the need for supports at subsequent tiers; however, students (including those who are eligible for special education services) may require supports at multiple levels.

Layering of Supports, Continued

- Not all students who receive intensive supports are identified as students with disabilities, and not all students identified with a disability need intensive supports in all areas.
- The initiation of formal evaluation procedures for a student suspected of having a disability can and should occur at any time that the parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or educator(s) express their suspicion of a disability.
- Receiving intensive, individualized interventions and supports does not automatically mean that a student will be evaluated for special education eligibility.

Exceptional Children Educator as an Interventionist



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Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring

- Schools must have a comprehensive assessment system in place utilizing multiple assessment tools and strategies to produce meaningful student data that guides instructional decision making.
- Every student's progress, including those identified with an educational disability, is monitored to ensure that needed supports are provided.
- The team makes adjustments and improvements to instruction/intervention when progress monitoring results indicate that the student, or group of students, is progressing beyond expectations, not progressing, or decreasing in rate of progress.
- Adjustments and improvements in instruction, in addition to progress towards goals and objectives, are documented within the student's learning plan. For students with disabilities, that is the student's IEP (per IDEA 2004 guidelines).

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Evidence Based Intervention, Instruction, and Assessment Practices

- General educators share the responsibility for every student in their classrooms. It is imperative that general and special educators, including related service providers, work collaboratively to align their efforts to accelerate the performance of every student to achieve and/or exceed proficiency.
- Instruction is differentiated so every student can access the core curriculum. Sound assessment practices, including universal screenings and progress monitoring should be used throughout the year to make appropriate, informed instructional decisions for every student, including those with disabilities.

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Exceptional Children Educator as a Collaborator



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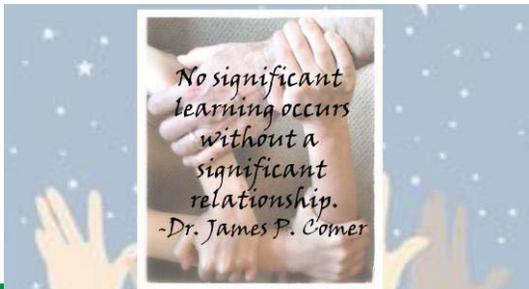
Family and School Partnering

- To develop true collaboration, parents and families must be fundamentally involved in the entire educational experience.
- Schools should acknowledge that families are active partners with educators to support children's learning.
- Additionally, partnering with community supports contributes to students' success and should be strategically tied to specific school and family needs.

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How has one School District Defined the Role of the Exceptional Children Educator?

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Mission

RCS Exceptional Children's Program empowers students to reach their maximum academic and social-emotional potential through promotion of self-advocacy and collaboration with parents, staff, and community in order to build positive relationships and life success.

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Our Vision
BE EXCEPTIONAL!
Exceptional Children
Exceptional Staff
Exceptional Schools
For Each and Every Child!

"In the RCS EC Department, each and every student receives an exceptional education in an inspiring environment with caring educators."

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BE EXCEPTIONAL!
 "In the RCS EC Department, **each and every student** receives an **exceptional education** in an inspiring environment with **caring educators.**"

Operational Excellence

Instructional Excellence

Graduation and Post-Secondary Outcomes

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Our Focus

Operational Excellence
High Quality Operational Support and System of Monitoring and Accountability

Instructional Excellence
High Quality Instruction and Services for Each and Every Student!

Graduation and Post-Secondary Focus
Improve Outcomes for Each and Every Student

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GOAL 1: OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE
 High Quality Operational Support and System of Monitoring and Accountability

Maintain efficient and effective special education operational support to enhance general and special education services.

- Action Steps for Goal 1:
 - Create Shared Vision and Instructional Improvement Plan
 - Problem Solving Training and Data Literacy for EC Staff
 - Obtain baseline data for compliance.
 - Monitor research based practices through EC department walkthroughs that focuses on communication, research based practices, progress monitoring, and overall fidelity of implementation of specialized instruction:
 - 2016-2017: Obtain Baseline
 - 2017-2018: 80%
 - 2018-2019: 90%
 - 2019-2020: 95%
 - Develop Professional Development Aligned with Instructional Improvement Plan Goals

Aligned with Vision 2020
 I.C. (Research Based Programs)
 I.I. (Graduation)
 I.I.B. (MTSS)
 I.I.C. Remove Barriers

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GOAL 2 : INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE
High Quality Instruction and Services for Each and Every Student!

Strengthen instructional support to students through creating a systems of monitoring educational excellence and individualized education plans for the purpose of improving student outcomes.

- Action Steps for Goal 2:
 - Provide professional development on progress monitoring.
 - Identify tools and resources to complete progress monitoring training.
 - Provide coaching supports for progress monitoring and implementation of progress monitoring efforts.
 - EC case managers will complete consistent progress monitoring (baseline and 6 data points per grading period for elementary; baseline and 4 data points per grading period for middle/high)
 - 2016-2017: 65% completion as evidenced in audits
 - 2017-2018: 80% completion as evidenced in audits
 - 2018-2019: 90% completion as evidenced in audits
 - 2019-2020: 100% completion as evidenced in audits

Aligned with Vision 2020
 I.C (Research Based Programs)
 I.J (Graduation)
 II.B (MTSS)
 II.C Remove Barriers

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GOAL 3 : Graduation and Post-Secondary Focus
Improve Outcomes for Each and Every Student!

Create a collaborative and integrated system of support in the Least Restrictive Environment to attain high levels of academic, behavioral, and social attainment.

- Action Steps for Goal 3:
 - Create an EC Problem Solving Committee with general and special education representatives to support improved graduation outcomes for students with disabilities.
 - Integrate an support MTSS implementation. In addition, incorporate MTSS in the SLD Definition and Implementation of Eligibility Decisions by 2020.
 - Support behavioral and social outcomes through implementation of IEP goals.
 - Engage families and community partnerships through hosting of community events.
 - Develop a progress monitoring tool to monitor EC HS transition activities
 - 2016-2017: Collect Baseline Data using transition progress monitoring tool.
 - 2017-2018: Increase documentation of transition activities to 75% through use of transition progress monitoring tool.
 - 2018-2019: Increase documentation of transition activities to 90% through use of transition progress monitoring tool.
 - 2019-2020: Increase documentation of transition activities to 100% through use of transition progress monitoring tool.

Aligned with Vision 2020
 I.C (Research Based Programs)
 I.J (Graduation)
 II.B (MTSS)
 II.C Remove Barriers
 II.C Community Partnerships

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RCS Exceptional Children's Department
 Professional Development Plan

Vision: Be Exemplary!
 Exemplary Instruction, Exemplary Support, Exemplary Outcomes

"Who dares to teach must never cease to learn."
 John Cotton Dana

Strategic Goal #1 Instructional Excellence	Strategic Goal #2 Graduation and Post-Secondary Focus	Strategic Goal #3 Operational Excellence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building Foundations Classroom Management Instructional Strategies Assessment Practices Instructional Technology Instructional Materials Instructional Resources Instructional Support Instructional Leadership Instructional Innovation Instructional Research Instructional Evaluation Instructional Improvement Instructional Innovation Instructional Research Instructional Evaluation Instructional Improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Learning Professional Learning Instructional Leadership Instructional Innovation Instructional Research Instructional Evaluation Instructional Improvement Instructional Innovation Instructional Research Instructional Evaluation Instructional Improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class Management Classroom Management Classroom Organization Classroom Procedures Classroom Environment Classroom Culture Classroom Climate Classroom Community Classroom Connections

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The Future of Our Exceptional Efforts

"By working together and focusing our efforts, we will continue to use performance data to refine our strategies and implement our strategic initiatives to provide each and every student with the highest quality educational experience, and we will support all employees as they help students with disabilities equip themselves with the skills, knowledge, and resources they will need to be independent, successful, and productive during their preschool through school-age years and into adulthood. **The RCS EC Department is EXCEPTIONAL!**"

Stephanie Lowe Austin, Director of Exceptional Children

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WHAT QUESTIONS ARE STILL CIRCLING?

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