

# BLUEPRINT FOR IMPROVED RESULTS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

New York State Education Department  
Office of Special Education  
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# BLUEPRINT FOR IMPROVED RESULTS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Set expectations for State and school district administrators, policy makers and practitioners to:


- improve instruction;
- prepare students with disabilities for success beginning in the preschool years;
- ensure appropriate and early identification of students with disabilities;
- ensure students with disabilities are in high quality inclusion programs; and
- lay the foundation for post-secondary readiness and success.

## Key Principles

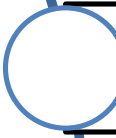
# BLUEPRINT FOR IMPROVED RESULTS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES




*Students engage in self-advocacy and are involved in determining their own educational goals and plan.*




*Parents, and other family members, are engaged as meaningful partners in the special education process and the education of their child.*



*Teachers design, provide, and assess the effectiveness of specially designed instruction to provide students with disabilities with access to participate and progress in the general education curriculum.*



*Teachers provide research-based instructional teaching and learning strategies and supports for students with disabilities.*



*Schools provide multi-tiered systems of behavioral and academic support.*



*Schools provide high quality inclusive programs and activities.*



*Schools provide appropriate instruction for students with disabilities in career development and opportunities to participate in work-based learning.*

# Underlying Essential Understandings

- ❖ Communities, boards of education, district and school leaders must provide systemic supports and professional development for teachers to meet the needs of students with disabilities, including appropriate identification and ensuring classrooms have necessary supports, rigorous and relevant learning environments and classroom and school-wide approaches are created to maintain a positive climate.
- ❖ School principals and special education administrators are fundamental in their roles as instructional leaders for students with disabilities.
- ❖ All teachers are teachers of students with disabilities and every teacher needs to be skilled in how to support and provide differentiated and specially-designed instruction to students with disabilities.
- ❖ Students with disabilities must be held to high expectations and given the appropriate supports and services to meet those high expectations.
- ❖ Students and parents of students with disabilities need information and support to be meaningfully involved in the special education process.
- ❖ Students with disabilities should participate, to the maximum extent possible, in making recommendations for supports and services needed for their academic success and to meet their post-secondary transition goals.

*Students engage in self-advocacy and are involved in determining their own educational goals and plan.*



***This is  
evident  
when:***

- *Students participate in individualized education program (IEP) meetings.*
- *Students create and monitor their progress towards academic and social goals.*
- *Students engage in career planning and selection of courses of study to prepare them for post-secondary living, working and learning.*

# What the research tells us....

- Self-determination rights in federal laws
- Self-advocates with disabilities have been demanding self-determination as adult citizens
- Research has demonstrated a positive relationship between self-determination and improved post school outcomes
- Yet.... a significant lag remains in the degree to which self-determination content is reflected in the goals and objectives of students' IEPs and, consequently, in classroom instruction.

# Ask yourself....



- How do practices in your schools demonstrate that self-determination is a high priority in planning instruction?
- To what extent do you include self-advocacy goals in students' education programs?
- What are best practices to developing such goals and promoting self-determination in students?

# Actions you can take...



## Teach the component measurable skills.

### Self Determination Skills

Choice making
Decision making
Problem-solving

### Self Regulation Skills

Self-observation
Self-evaluation
Self-reinforcement

➤ **PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRACTICE.**

➤ Expect all students to attend CSE meetings and prepare them to participate



*Parents, and other family members, are engaged as meaningful partners in the special education process and the education of their child.*



**This is  
evident  
when:**

- *Parents report that they understand the special education process and their due process rights and actively participate in the development of their child's IEP.*
- *Parents understand what their child is expected to know and be able to do to progress toward the State learning standards.*
- *Parents and educators engage in frequent, respectful and open discussion of the educational needs of the student.*
- *Families are invited into and feel welcome in all school environments.*
- *Parents have the information they need about effective strategies to support their child's learning and support transition from school to post-school activities.*

# Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

- Almost 30 years of research and experience has demonstrated that the education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by... **strengthening the role and responsibility of parents and ensuring that families** ... have meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children at school and at home.

# What the research tells us....

When schools and families work together, student learning and outcomes improve.

- children's attitudes, social skills and behavior toward school improve
- the likelihood that they will take more challenging classes and pass them increases.

True across families of all economic, ethnic/racial, and educational backgrounds—and for students of all ages.

# Ask yourself....



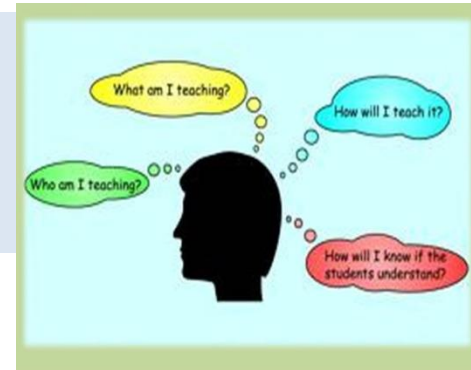
- How does your school help parents understand the special education process?
- How are IEP meetings conducted?
  - Are parents attending and meaningfully participating in IEP meetings?
  - Are they given information on learning standards students are working toward?
- How does the school help the parent to support the child's learning at home?

# What actions can you take .....



- Do not assume parents understand the IEP process. It is complicated. If they do not understand it, they cannot meaningfully participate in it.
  - Empower parents with information. It is their right.
- If you are chairing a CPSE or CSE meeting, learn and use meeting facilitation skills.
  - Process is important!!!!
- Keep meetings child-focused and always consider (which means discuss and document) the concerns of parents.
- Request assistance from the State and federal Parent Centers.

*Teachers design, provide, and assess the effectiveness of specially designed instruction to provide students with disabilities with access to participate and progress in the general education curriculum.*



**This is  
evident  
when:**

- All teachers are responsive to the pedagogical needs of students with disabilities.
- All students receive instruction in curriculum aligned with the State's Learning Standards.
- IEPs are developed in consideration of grade level standards.
- IEPs are implemented and reviewed by educators, families and students to ensure that students are meeting their annual goals.
- Special and general education teachers of students with disabilities engage in intentional collaborative lesson planning to meet the needs of each individual student with a disability.
- Individual student data are used to inform and design instruction for students with disabilities to progress toward grade level standards.
- Students with disabilities receive instructional materials in alternative formats at the same time as other students in the class receive their instructional materials.

# Specially Designed Instruction

**Classroom  
Actions &  
Student  
Growth**



**Intentional &  
Purposeful  
Planning  
Aligned to  
Address  
Student  
Needs**

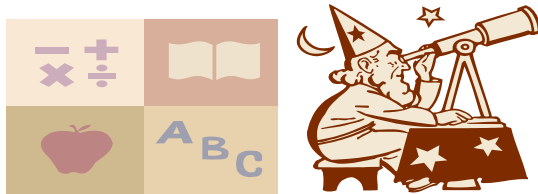
# What the research tells us....

- Effective teachers engage in extensive planning processes
  - Instructional design and delivery
  - Standards-based units and lessons
  - Using high-impact teaching strategies
  - Designing instruction to meet needs of all students
  - Assessing student learning



# Access/participation/progress in the general education curriculum.

**Content**



**Materials**



**Environment**



**How its taught**



**How learning is measured**



# Ask yourself....



- How do you ensure all aspects of access are considered and addressed for each student?
- Do students with all different disabilities have access to assistive technology?
- Do students receive accessible instructional materials at the same time as all other students?

# Actions you can take....



- ✓ All teachers, including special education teachers, are receiving professional development on teaching the standards
- ✓ IEPs are standards-based
- ✓ Principals ensure and support teachers to engage in intentional pre-lesson planning to support needs of students with disabilities
- ✓ Students have assistive technology devices and materials in accessible formats
- ✓ Teachers regularly collect and analyze data for student progress monitoring

*Teachers provide research-based instructional teaching and learning strategies and supports for students with disabilities.*



*This is  
evident  
when:*

- *All teachers develop lessons that allow multiple entry points and multiple modes of engagement for students with diverse needs.*
- *All teachers of students are knowledgeable and skilled in providing explicit instruction in academics and social-emotional learning.*
- *Students with disabilities are taught strategies for self-regulated learning across the content areas.*
- *All teachers continually assess students' understanding of lessons to improve and target instruction to student needs.*
- *Students' individualized needs for assistive technology devices and services are considered and accommodated.*

# Specially Designed Instruction

**Classroom  
Actions &  
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# What the research tells us....

Research on effective teaching practices has identified the components of explicit instruction as essential for positive student outcomes

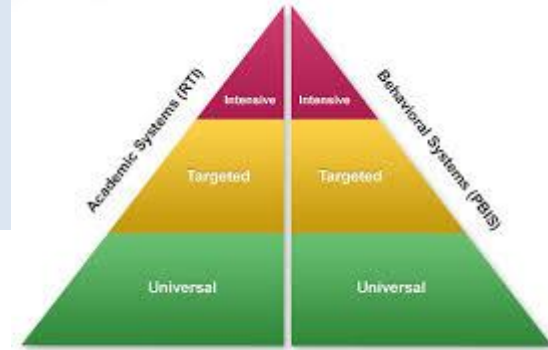
- clear delivery with models and demonstrations,
- guided practice supported by the teacher with corrective feedback delivered in a timely manner
- gradual withdrawal of teacher supports during practice to move students toward independent performance.

# What you can do....



- Set expectations for use of research-based practices
- Provide professional development, learning communities, book studies, coaching
- Have tools to regularly assess use of explicit and research-based specially designed teaching and learning strategies.

*Schools provide multi-tiered systems of behavioral and academic support.*



*This is  
evident  
when:*

- *Educators collect and analyze student outcome data to plan, organize, deliver and evaluate the effectiveness of school-wide programs and instruction for all students.*
- *Educators disaggregate and analyze outcomes for students with disabilities to improve school-wide programs and interventions.*
- *Educators collect and analyze data to identify individual students in need of additional support.*
- *Evidence-based interventions are provided in a timely manner to students needing more support.*
- *Progress monitoring data are collected and inform decisions about the effectiveness and/or need for modification to those interventions.*



# What the research tells us....

- Multi tiered systems of support (Rtl; PBIS\*) describes how educators can work together to ensure equitable access and opportunity for all students to achieve the State's Standards
- Use of regular screening, progress monitoring data and tiered systems of support address learning and behavior problems early

\* *Rtl – Response to Intervention*

*PBIS – Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports*

# What you can do....



- Provide leadership to support use of tiered systems of support
- Use screening devices and collect data to regularly make educational decisions
- Form teams to ensure fidelity of implementation
- Keep parents informed!

# *Schools provide high quality inclusive programs and activities.*

*This is evident when:*

- *Educators use the full continuum of services to ensure that students with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment.*
- *The needs of the students are the primary consideration in the configuration of special education programs and services to be provided to students with disabilities.*
- *District/school leaders allocate human and financial resources to support scheduling and planning time to ensure all students receive rigorous and appropriate instruction throughout the continuum of special education programs and services.*
- *Students with disabilities in inclusive settings are provided the accommodations and explicit and specially-designed instruction needed to progress in the curriculum.*

# What the research tells us....

Research has consistently demonstrated that the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms results in favorable outcomes.

Positive outcomes have been shown for both students with high incidence disabilities (e.g., learning disabilities) and those with low incidence disabilities (e.g., intellectual disabilities, multiple disabilities).\*

\* Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education

**Inclusion is not simply about physical proximity. It is about intentionally planning for the success of all students.**

**thinkinclusive.us**

# What inclusion is and is not ...

Authentic inclusion requires as much focus on communication, interaction, and relationship building as it does on curriculum modifications and accommodations.

Students with disabilities who are unwelcome, not encouraged to participate, and share only physical space with their peers are not having an “inclusive” experience.

# What you can do....



*Ensure that each student with a disability has access to the full continuum of special education programs and services, as required by federal and State law and regulation.*

*Ensure Committees on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) and Committees on Special Education (CSE), including parents understand their responsibilities for least restrictive environment determinations.*

*Ensure that each annual review includes consideration of special education services and supplementary supports and services that would support the student to receive education services in the student's regular school and in age appropriate general education classrooms.*

*Each school district reviews, discusses, develops and implements a plan to address its data, by district and schools and disaggregated by disability category, race/ethnicity, gender and age.*

***Assess and address the extent to which each school provides a high-quality inclusive setting.***

**TAKE ACTION**

***High quality inclusive setting means:***



***Instruction and configuration of classrooms and activities include both students with and without disabilities;***

***Students with disabilities are held to high expectations for achievement;***

***Special education and general education teachers intentionally plan teaching lessons to promote the participation and progress of students with disabilities in learning and social activities;***

***Individualized accommodations, supports and specially-designed instruction are provided to students with disabilities to participate and progress in regular education classes and activities; and***

***Evidence-based services and supports are used to foster the cognitive, communication, physical, behavioral and social-emotional development of students with disabilities.***



*Schools provide appropriate instruction for students with disabilities in career development and opportunities to participate in work-based learning.*

*This is  
evident  
when:*

- *Students are provided age-appropriate transition assessments, guidance, courses of study and work-based learning opportunities to meaningfully engage in early and ongoing career planning and exploration.*
- *Students with disabilities and their families are provided early and clear information on graduation requirements.*
- *Students with disabilities receive instruction toward the Career Development and Occupational Studies Learning Standards beginning in the early grades.*
- *Students are provided instruction to develop lifelong learning skills such as self-advocacy, social-emotional skills, higher order thinking, employability skills and consumer and life skills.*
- *Students and their families actively participate in the transition planning process.*
- *Schools facilitate timely student and family connections to post-secondary supports and services through ACCES-VR and other State agency programs and services.*

# What the research tells us....

- Teaching self-determination skills, fostering social networks, improving students' access to adult services, and increasing students' earning potential are all activities that can be undertaken now to help ensure a better future quality of life for students with disabilities.

# Actions you can take....

TAKE ACTION

Utilize  
systematic and  
age-  
appropriate  
transition  
assessment

Involve  
students in  
transition IEP  
development  
and goal  
setting (career  
planning and  
exploration)

Teach soft  
skills

Provide  
opportunities  
for application  
of learned  
skills outside  
the classroom  
(work-based  
learning)

Provide  
students  
relevant  
programs of  
study (CTE)

Support  
students and  
families to link  
to adult  
service  
delivery  
systems

# Resources – Self Determination

- W. Wood, et. al *Promoting Student Self-Determination Skills in IEP Planning* Teaching Exceptional Children, Vol. 36, No. 3, pp. 8-16 . Copyright 2004 CEC.  
<https://transitionresponse.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/2011-11-14-Promoting-Student-Self-Determination.pdf>
- AIR Self-Determination Assessments  
<http://www.ou.edu/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow/self-determination-assessment-tools/air-self-determination-assessment.html>

# Resources – Parent Support

- NYS Special Education Parent Centers  
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/techassist/parentcenters.htm>
- Federal Parent Training and Information Centers  
<http://www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center/>
- Early Childhood Direction Centers  
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/techassist/ecdc/home.html>
- IEP Facilitation <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/dueprocess/iep-facilitation/IEPFacilitation.html>
- Mediation  
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/techassist/mediation.htm>
- Publications for parents  
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/parentpubs.htm>

# Resources: Planning and Instruction

- DC Teaching Fellows *Teaching for Student Achievement 2002 Guidebook & Toolkit*  
<http://www.nycteachingfellows.org/mypersonalinfo/downloads/June%202002%20Guidebook.pdf>
- *The Role of the Committee on Special Education in Relation to the Common Core Learning Standards* – New York State Education Department (NYSED) 2015  
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/commoncore/roleofCSE-614.htm>
- Guidance Document - Lesson Plan Template - Accessing the Common Core for Students with Disabilities. NYSED 2015 <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/commoncore/guidance-commoncore-template.htm>
- Quality Indicator Review and Resource Guides. NYSED  
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/techassist/QIcover.htm>
- RSE-TASC Instructional Walk-Thru Tool  
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/spp/Walkthroughtool-LAPSelfReview.pdf>
- Standards-based IEP Development  
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/commoncore/roleofCSE-614.htm>
- Accessible Instructional Materials <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/aim/home.html>

# Resources – Tiered Systems of Support

- NYS Response to Intervention Technical Assistance Center  
<http://www.nysrti.org/>
- Regional RtI Professional Development Teams
- NYS PBIS Technical Assistance Center <http://nyspbis.org/>
- RSE-TASC Behavior Specialists  
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/techassist/rsetasc/home.html>
- PYRAMID Model  
[http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/do/pyramid\\_model.htm](http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/do/pyramid_model.htm)
- Recognition and Response <http://randr.fpg.unc.edu/>; webinar -  
<http://www.nysrti.org/page/past-webinars/>

# Resources - Inclusion

- Least Restrictive Environment – School District Responsibilities. NYSED 2015  
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/2015-memos/least-restrictive-environment-district-responsibilities.html>
- Continuum of Services for School Age Students with Disabilities  
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/schoolagecontinuum.html>
- Universal Prekindergarten Program: An Ideal Setting for the Integration of Preschool Students with Disabilities  
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/preschool/upk.htm>
- LRE Communities of Practice <http://www.tacomunities.org/community/view/id/1027>
- Guide to Quality IEP Development  
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/iepguidance.htm>
- U.S. Department of Education policy statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs  
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/earlylearning/joint-statement-full-text.pdf>



# Resources – Transition Planning

- Transition Specialists and Community Employment Specialists Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Centers  
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/techassist/rsetasc/locations.htm>;  
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/techassist/rsetasc/tslist.htm>
- NYSED's Transition Services Professional Development Center – Cornell University
- Transition.org <http://www.transitionsource.org/login/index.cfm>
- ACCES-VR Transition and Youth Services  
<http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/transition-and-youth-services>
- Independent Living Centers <http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/independent-living-centers>