

Instructional Leadership for Students with Disabilities Anchor Presentation Part 4

Overview for Facilitators

The CEEDAR Center is pleased to provide the anchor presentation on School Leadership for Students with Disabilities. The materials are designed for us in a preservice course or in inservice professional development. Consistent with the Common Core Standards, this resource is designed to increase school leaders' abilities to improve student readiness for college and careers.

Speaker Notes

The speaker notes are what the facilitator can say, verbatim, to explain each slide and the activities. The notes are provided as a guide, and speakers should feel free to modify these as needed. Directions and notes for the facilitator, not to be said aloud, are in italics.

Handout 1: Save the Last Word (Jigsaw ctivity for use with Deshler & Cornett reading)

Handout 2: Sources of Evidence-Based Practices

Objectives

1. Identify the importance of high expectations for students with disabilities
2. Explain key dimensions of instructional leadership and relevance to students with disabilities
3. Describe the relevance of collective and distributed forms of leadership for students with disabilities

Outline of Session with Activities and Approximate Time

The session is designed for approximately 3 hours

Topic	Slides	Activity	Time in minutes
Introduction	1-3	Discuss objectives	5
Defining instructional leadership & what it means for students with disabilities	4-6		15
Academic Press & Achievement	8-11		15

Expectations			
Positive Disciplinary Climate	12-16	Example of PBIS in Gwinnett County http://www.pbis.org/swpbs_videos/default.aspx	30
High quality instruction and progress monitoring	17-22		15
Break			
Activity	23	Handout 1 for Activity: Save the Last Word for Me (using Deshler & Cornett, 2012 chapter)	30
Supporting Teacher Effectiveness	24-28	Handout 2	10
Video Instructional Leadership	29	Activity (15 minutes to view video) 15 minutes large group discussion	30
Distributed Leadership	30		5

Suggested Follow-Up Professional Learning Opportunities

In professional learning communities, study a select of the following:

Books & Monographs:

1. Billingsley, B., McLeskey, J., & Crockett, J. B. (2014). *Principal leadership: Moving toward inclusive and high-achieving schools for students with disabilities* (Document No. IC-8). Retrieved from University of Florida, Collaboration for Effective Educator, Development, Accountability, and Reform Center website: <http://cedar.education.ufl.edu/tools/innovation-configurations/>
2. Crockett, J., Billingsley, B., & Boscardin, M.L. (Eds.). (2012). *Handbook of Leadership & Administration for Special Education*, Routledge, Taylor-Francis: New York, N.Y.
3. Theoharis, G., & Brooks, J.S. (2012). (Eds.). *What Every Principal Needs to know to Create Equitable and Excellent Schools*. *Teachers College Press*, New York, N.Y.

Articles & Book Chapter:

- Batsche, G. (in press). Multi-tiered system of supports for inclusive schools. In J. McLeskey, N. L. Waldron, F. Spooner, & B. Algozzine (Eds.), *Handbook of research and practice for inclusive schools*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bays, D. A., & Crockett, J. B. (2007). Investigating instructional leadership for special education. *Exceptionality, 15*(3), 143-161. doi:10.1080/09362830701503495
- Billingsley, B. (2007). Recognizing and supporting the critical roles of teachers in special education leadership. *Exceptionality, 15*(3), 163-176. [In special issue, titled, *The Changing Landscape in Special Education Administration*].
- Cook, B. G., & Smith, G. J. (2012). Leadership and instruction: Evidence-based practices in special education. In J. B. Crockett, B. S. Billingsley, & M. L. Boscardin (Eds.), *Handbook of leadership and administration for special education* (pp. 281-296). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
- Deshler, D. D., & Cornett, J. (2012). Leading to improve teacher effectiveness: Implications for practice, reform, research, and policy. In J. B. Crockett, B. S. Billingsley, & M. L. Boscardin (Eds.), *Handbook of leadership and administration for special education* (pp. 239-259). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
- Dyson, A., Farrell, P., Polat, F., Hutcheson, G., & Gallannaugh, F. (2004). *Inclusion and pupil achievement* (Research Report No. 578). Retrieved from National Archives website:
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RR578.pdf>
- Holdheide, L. R., Goe, L., Croft, A., & Reschly, D. J. (2010). *Challenges in evaluating special education teachers and English language learner specialists*. Washington, DC: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality.
- Johnson, S. M., Kraft, M. A., & Papay, J. P. (2012). How context matters in high-need schools: The effects of teachers' working conditions on their professional satisfaction and their students' achievement. *Teachers College Record, 114*(10), 1-39.
- Lake, B. J., & Stewart, A. (2012). Building trust and responding to conflict in special education. In J. B. Crockett, B. S. Billingsley, & M. L. Boscardin (Eds.), *Handbook of leadership and administration for special education* (pp. 223-236). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
- Vannest, K. J., & Hagan-Burke, S. (2010). Teacher time use in special education. *Remedial and Special Education, 31*(2), 126-142. doi:10.1177/0741932508327459

Speaker Notes

Slide 1—School Leadership for Student with Disabilities

In this fourth anchor presentation, we consider instructional leadership with an emphasis on supporting the learning of students with disabilities. In this CEM presentation, the focus is on the role of the principal and yet we acknowledge that leadership functions are often shared by others who work in the school. For example, teacher leaders, related-services personnel and parents may be responsible for some leadership functions.

Slide 2—Provides Instructional Leadership

In Part 4 of the CEM is an introduction to instructional leadership to benefit students with disabilities.

Slide 3—Objectives

These three objectives are addressed in this anchor presentation.

- ◆ Identify the importance of high expectations for students with disabilities
- ◆ Explain key dimensions of instructional leadership and relevance to students with disabilities
- ◆ Describe the relevance of collective and distributed forms of leadership for students with disabilities

The material in this anchor presentation has been adapted from Billingsley, B., McLeskey, J., & Crockett, J. B. (2014). *Principal leadership: Moving toward inclusive and high-achieving schools for students with disabilities* (Document No. IC-8). Retrieved from University of Florida, Collaboration for Effective Educator, Development, Accountability, and Reform Center website: <http://cedar.education.ufl.edu/tools/innovation-configurations/>

In this session we will focus on the areas of instructional leadership that matter to all students, but the examples provided will deal primarily with instructional leadership for students with disabilities.

Slide 4—What is instructional leadership?

Instructional leadership is a term that is no doubt familiar to you as it has been part of educational leadership discourse for many year. How would you define instructional leadership and what activities would you include? Take ten minutes to discuss the following with another student:

Define instructional leadership

Identify activities you associate with instructional leadership.

At the end of the discussion, please have several share key points they discussed in their group.

Slide 5—Dimensions of Instructional Leadership

Although researchers demonstrate that instructional leadership makes a difference in student achievement (Robinson et al., 2008), the specific processes of instructional leadership are not always clearly defined. Here are two conceptualizations of instructional leadership and yet there are additional functions within each. These conceptual frames are provided to show just two examples of how instructional leadership is conceptualized.

Slide 6—Importance of Instructional Leadership (Elmore, 2004)

Elmore defines principals' core work as instructional improvement *Read quote.*

Literature reviews on the effects of instructional leadership show that it has an impact on students achieving, with moderate effect sizes (e.g., Robinson et al., 2008).

Slide 7—Instructional Leadership & Students with Disabilities

While we address key aspects of instructional leadership for all learners, the focus is on instructional leadership for instructing students with disabilities. These leadership dimensions were selected primarily from the general education leadership literature based on their impact on improving student performance. These key areas are not always distinct rather are expected to occur together in support of student learning.

Each of these four areas, setting high expectations, promoting a positive disciplinary climate, facilitating high quality instruction and progress monitoring and supporting teaching effectiveness are relevant for all students. Students with disabilities, by definition, have challenges that interfere with their achievement, so these students need to be in schools where all feel a collective responsibility for their learning.

Slide 8—1. Academic Press/High Expectations

Academic press is a normative emphasis on student success throughout the school. In other words, academic press refers to the extent to which all in the school “experience an emphasis on academic success and conformity to specific standards of achievement” (Lee, Smith, Perry & Smylie, 1999, p.). Research findings show significant, positive, and at least moderate relationships between academic press and student achievement, most often in the area of math but extending to other subjects such as writing, science, reading, and language.

School leaders are in the position to set expectations in the school and work with others in goal setting. In high performing schools school leaders tend set outcome goals and expectations that are higher than district minimums, and who promote the use of “multiple measures of student success” (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010, p. 283). Robinson and his colleagues (2008) state that “academic

goal focus is both a property of leadership” as principals set student achievement as the primary school goal and a “quality of the school organization” (p. 659). In summary, setting high achievement expectations is an important role of leadership and all in the school need to work collectively toward these goals.

Slide 9—Clear Mission

A focus on high achievement standards is included in the school mission or vision statement. In the Sunflower District, Ruleville Central Elementary has a mission to provide “*rigorous and relevant educational experiences daily that will enable students to develop positive social, emotional, and intellectual relationships and compete with students at premier institutions locally, nationally, and globally.*”

In this statement the mission statement outlines achievement high expectations, yet it is clear they do not want achievement to be at the expense of social and emotional development.

Slide 10—Academic Press in Practice

Specific practices that reinforce academic press include: Setting clear goals for student achievement and making sure achievement and instructional priorities are clear to all in the school. At Rulesville Elementary a priority is reading instruction and the entire staff focused on reading instruction based on student performance.

A focus on making sure there is dedicated instructional time for key goals is also essential. For example, at Rulesville Elementary, a schedule was developed for literacy instruction to occur daily from 7:45 AM-9:15 AM and two adults were assigned to every classroom. Protecting this instructional time and avoiding interruptions critical.

High expectations are also communicated to students through clear expectations for through challenging assignments and expectations for homework.

Slide 11—Academic Press and Students with Disabilities

High expectations for all students, including those with disabilities is also important to consider. Unfortunately, low expectations are often low for students with disabilities and as expectations have been raised over time, students with disabilities often meet these increased expectations. Low expectations are pernicious and can interfere with the progress of students with disabilities. Students with disabilities also need to have opportunities to learn what all students learn, and to the maximum extent possible, receive this education with other students. However, students with disabilities must have educational programs that address their unique needs, include specially designed instruction, and participate with students who do not have disabilities.

There is relatively little literature about academic press and students with disabilities. However, a strong achievement orientation was a distinctive factor in successful inclusive schools. Dyson and colleagues (2004) reported that a strong achievement orientation for all students was a factor in 12 high-performing inclusive schools in England. In case studies of 12 high-performing inclusive schools, researchers described how staff held high expectations for all students in these settings, including those with disabilities, and enacted these expectations by providing a range of strategies to improve achievement. These strategies were directed toward improving the overall quality of teaching and providing additional supports to address students' areas of need.

In summary, leaders need to ask themselves questions such as:

What messages am I sending about students with disabilities to teachers, parents and school staff?

How can I work toward a sense of collective responsibility for students with disabilities in the school?

Slide 12—2. Positive Disciplinary Climate

Creating a positive disciplinary climate is a key goal of school leadership. Such environments are linked to better student outcomes and the magnitude is similar to that of academic press. In these environments, students and teachers work together without disruptions, transitions between classes are smooth and behavior in non-academic situations, such as the bus are characterized as positive.

Moreover, Leithwood and colleagues reported that when schools are characterized by both academic press + a positive disciplinary climate, the combination explained more achievement variation between schools than either of these two variables working alone (Leithwood et al., 2010)

Slide 13—Positive Disciplinary Climate in Practice

In practice, we hope to see an orderly environment where students are engaged in learning and where there are few disruptions. School-wide frameworks to teach and improve positive student behavior show positive impacts not only on student behavior, but student achievement as well. In the next slides, an example of the use of these frameworks is provided.

Slide 14—School-Wide Positive Behavioral Support (pbis.org)

School-Wide Positive Behavioral Support is a systematic way to teaching desired behavior. This website (pbis.org) provides numerous resources that leaders interested in these systems can use in learning about and implementing SWPBS in their schools.

Usually three levels are included in SWPBS.

The first level includes determining what behavioral expectations will be taught throughout the school. These are usually a few key behaviors that are taught to all students. All staff in the school help to supervise and reinforce these key behaviors. The secondary level includes providing additional supports for those students who have not shown consistency in learning the taught behavioral expectations. The third level is designed for students who exhibit chronic and high-risk behaviors. Please note that there should not be many of these students at the third tier, as these students require more intensive, specialized and individualized supports.

The data on these frameworks is impressive. Such systems are linked to decreased behavior referrals, improved achievement and greater teacher satisfaction.

Slide 15—Example of PBIS in Gwinnett County

In this six minute video, a video of the PBIS approach is described. This video provides an overview of the program and the outcomes associated with this approach.

To find, go to pbis.org, then videos and scroll down to see video of Gwinnett County Schools

As you watch this video, look for examples of SWPBS.
Describe the three tiers and examples of each.
Identify results of this program?

Watch video.(6.5 minutes)

What did you observe in the video about SWPBS and look for examples for each of these three tiers?

Emphasize these ideas in summary if not brought out in the discussion.

- Fosters a positive school culture and academic success
- Focus is on preventing problematic behavior rather than reacting to it
- Tier 1: All students are formally taught expectations and these are reinforced by all in the school.
- Tier 2 involves additional supports for students who do not respond to the Tier one supports. They may use additional structures, such as schedules, provide additional supervision and additional contingencies.
- Tier three involves individualized support for students who exhibit high-risk or on-going problem behaviors. It is important to note that a small percentage of students will receive Tier 3 supports.

The PBIS.org website has many excellent resources (pbis.org)

Slide 16—Positive Disciplinary Climate and Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities, like other students benefit from PBIS systems. Students with disabilities may be served at any of these tiers, like others in the school. However, students with disabilities who have significant behavioral needs will be at Tier 3 and the interventions outlined in the IEP. Systemic changes in a school or district approach to discipline and behavioral intervention, including collaboration with families and community agencies, can significantly impact school climate and student achievement.

Slide 17—3. High Quality Instruction & Progressing Monitoring

Leaders have key roles to play in assuring that schools provides the best is what is known about high quality instruction for all students, including those with disabilities. Several key leadership activities can help promote high quality instruction, including:

Promoting the use of high-quality instructional practices in the school--those supported by research. The reading that you did by Deshler & Cornett (2012) outlines practices that research suggests makes a difference in student achievement.

Assuring that teachers have opportunities to learn about and use instructional practices that research shows are powerful in promoting learning. Both leaders and teachers need to be aware of those practices that make a difference and support the use of these instructional practices in schools. Professional learning opportunities that are tied to the use of research-based practices that have been tied to learning among students with disabilities is also important to their success.

Protecting instructional time, especially in core academic areas is essential to making sure that students have uninterrupted time for learning.

Finally, monitoring student learning and reviewing student data provides teachers with knowledge about how students and specific groups of students are responding to instruction.

Slide 18—Response to Intervention (RTI)

In the Deshler and Cornett reading you were provided some basic information about RTI. You might notice a similarity between RTI and SWPBS. Multi Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is an overarching term that includes both SWPBS and RTI. Deshler and Cornett (2012) identified three major assumptions underlying RTI models: “(1) all students can learn; (2) teacher instruction is most powerful in predicting student success; (3) schools need to provide all students with the supports needed to benefit from their education” (Deshler & Cornett, 2012, p. 240).

Slide 19—Response to Intervention (RTI)

Six elements typically included in RTI include:

“Universal screening—A brief screening measure administered to all students one to three times per year (i.e., fall, winter, and spring) to help identify struggling students.

High-quality instruction—Effective instruction (i.e., research-based instruction) provided to all students in the general education setting using a standards-based curriculum and [research-validated practices](#).

Data-based decision making—The process of analyzing formative assessment data and using it to make instructional decisions, such as identifying which students are struggling and how best to meet their academic needs.

Frequent progress monitoring—A type of [formative assessment](#) in which student learning is evaluated often and on a regular basis in order to provide useful feedback about performance to both learners and instructors.

Data-based decision making—The process of analyzing formative assessment data and using it to make instructional decisions, such as identifying which students are struggling and how best to meet their academic needs.

Fidelity measures—Procedures designed to assess whether teachers are accurately following the implementation guidelines of an instructional or behavioral program or practice.”

IRIS Center module http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/rti-math/cresource/what-is-rti-for-mathematics/rti_math_02/#content

Not all RTI systems look the same. Often there are three tiers, but at least 2 and rarely more than four. Typically we would see these six elements in most RTI systems.

Slide 20—Ruleville Elementary from [swift.org](#)

This example shows how Ruleville Elementary scheduled time for tiered instruction. These included creating protected time in the schedule for Tier 1 literacy instruction. This occurs daily from 7:45 and (:15 am and two adults are in every classroom during this period. Additional Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction is provided for students at the end of the day. Students in the lowest quartile receive this instruction in small groups and by highly qualified teachers.

As [swift.org](#) reports, this change has made a difference on benchmark assessments. “Data from spring benchmark assessments indicate that nearly 64% of all students showed growth in assessment scores and that over 55% of the students in the bottom 25% demonstrated growth. Mrs. Barber, the school principal, attributes this growth to the changes in the school’s literacy block. In addition to improved

assessment scores, this shift in literacy contributes to a new culture in which all staff are responsible for the instruction of all students. It has also decreased the school's tardy rate. With continued support from SWIFT, Mrs. Barber expects to see even more improvements in academic instruction and growth in achievement." (from swift.org).

Slide 21—Video: Response to Instruction Boulevard Elementary School

Here is another example of a school incorporating RTI.

From the link on the slide, scroll down to Boulevard Elementary School in Gloversville, New York (7.5 minutes)

Slide 22—Save the Last Word for Me

The purpose of this group activity is to deepen and extend thinking about how to promote effective instructional practices. We will discuss the reading assigned to you during our last session by Deshler and Cornett, using the process in handout 1, "Save the Last Word for Me." Since all of you have already reviewed this handout, please appoint a time-keeper for your group. Are there any questions about this activity?

Source for activity: Deshler, D. D., & Cornett, J. (2012). Leading to improve teacher effectiveness: implications for practice, reform, research, and policy. In J. B. Crockett, B. S. Billingsley, & M. L. Boscardin (Eds.), *Handbook of leadership and administration for special education* (pp. 239-259). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.

Slide 23—High Quality Instruction & Students with Disabilities

Tier three instruction may define special education in some districts as progressive more intensive supports are incorporated into multi-tiered systems. In the Deshler and Cornett reading, high quality instructional practices were defined across all instructional practices. In special education, there are evidence-based practices that have been shown through research to be effective in the instruction of students with disabilities. Sources of this evidence was summarized by Cook and Smith and is summarized on Handout 2. These are excellent resources to use in better understanding a range of effective instructional practices for students with disabilities.

Differentiated instruction is an approach that may be used in classrooms to support the learning of diverse populations of students. Tomlinson (2003) referred to differentiated instruction as academically response instruction that considers student characteristics, levels, interests, etc. Other systems, such as Universal Design for Learning provide supports for learners with varying needs.

There is a need for administrative support for differentiated instruction, as teachers are unlikely to provide this support on their own (Goddard, Neumerski, Goddard,

Salloum & Berebitsky, 2010). This support may take the form of professional learning to help teachers learn how to differentiate, the need for creating collaborative cultures that support differentiation across the school, and support for individual teachers' efforts at differentiation.

Slide 24—4. Supporting Teaching Effectiveness

A fourth way of providing instructional leadership is considering how principals support teacher effectiveness and teaching effectiveness.

Slide 25—Use of one's "knowledge, skills, and abilities...in an environment conducive to teaching and learning"

Principals are in the position to support teacher activities through the decisions they make, the schedules and structures they put in place, and the ways that they directly support teachers. This quote illustrates two key ideas in supporting teacher effectiveness. One is the importance of teachers' knowledge skills and abilities. We can think of this as a question of how to best facilitate teaching learning. The second is the school environment and how well it is designed to facilitate teaching and students' learning. For example, the extent to which principals facilitate the development of collective responsibility makes a difference in how all teachers in the school see their role with students with disabilities. When all teachers are invested in seeing students with disabilities succeed, special educators are not the sole advocates for these students. The next slides explore these two ideas in more details.

Slide 26—Promoting Teaching Effectiveness

Supporting new special education teachers requires systematic recruiting and hiring as shortages of these teachers tend to be higher than in some of the other teaching areas. Leaders should work with district leaders to clarify plans for selecting highly qualified and effective special education teachers. Determining criteria and involving both school and districts in hiring decisions can help assure that the teachers selected will share the same values as school personnel and have the collaborative and instructional skills to assure that the needs of students with disabilities are met.

Teacher induction is an important part of new special educators' development and sometimes mentors need to be selected from outside the school if other experienced special education teachers are not available. Moreover, helping new special educators participate in the whole school community and in professional learning communities is essential to creating a sense of collective responsibility among all who work with students with disabilities.

Slide 27—Promoting Teacher Effectiveness

In studies of special education teachers' working conditions, three needs are clear. First, it is important to have a supportive culture for all students, so that there is shared responsibility for all students. This includes structures (e.g., time and schedules) that allow special and general education teachers, as well as other specialists to communicate and collaborate together.

A second need is effective job design. Special education teachers need to have time to support students' instruction and there needs to be clarity across all in the school about their roles and activities. Schedules that support their instruction also requires that these needs be considered when the entire school schedule is developed.

A third area is instructional supports, such as the resources and technology that are needed for teaching. Special education teachers also need to be able to teach without interruptions and steps should be taken to keep clerical tasks to a minimum, so they have time for instruction. Unfortunately, one observational study of special educators' time suggests that their work is highly fragmented and a large proportion devoted to non-instructional tasks. Careful planning with the principal and teachers needs to happen before school begins to provide these teachers with the working conditions necessary to make a difference with their students.

Slide 28—From a special educator

Principal support in special education is critical to teachers. A supportive principal is the number one reason for staying in a school and leaving a school.

Slide 29—Video: Instructional Leadership at Henderson School

Review video as a class (15 minutes)

As you watch the video think about two things:

1. What stood out for you in this video?
2. What specific features of instructional leadership did you see?
3. Who performed the instructional leadership roles?

After video, review responses to the two questions.

Slide 30—Distributed Leadership

Although we have focused on the principal, these school leaders are not the only leaders in the school. Robinson and colleagues (2008) point out that “what matters is the frequency of various instructional leadership practices rather than the extent to which they are performed by a particular leadership role” (p. 668). Multiple individuals take responsibility for school leadership, including teachers, related services personnel and sometimes parents. Sometimes these roles are formally designated, for example, with mentors and coaches. Yet, teachers clearly take informal leadership roles as well. This is a clear finding in the development of inclusive schools. Identifying key leadership functions and clarifying who will

provide them is needed to create schools that address the needs of all students, including those with disabilities.

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