GIVING THEM A STRONG START:
STRATEGIES AND RESOURCES FOR
SUPPORTING
EARLY CAREER SPECIAL EDUCATORS

KERRY HAAG, MEG KAMMAN, DONNA WILDER
MODERATOR: ROB O’NEILL

OSEP Project Directors’ Conference
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Arlington, VA
Purpose of CFDA 84.325

The purposes of OSEP’s Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities program are to:

(1) help address State-identified needs for personnel preparation in special education, related services, early intervention, and regular education to work with children, including infants and toddlers, with disabilities; and

(2) ensure that those personnel have the necessary skills and knowledge, derived from practices that have been determined through scientifically based research and experience, to be successful in serving those children.
Strategic Investments in PDP

Across the Career of Educators

- Interest in Field
- Personnel Preparation
- Hiring
- Mentoring / Induction
- Ongoing Professional Learning
Shortages

• Nearly every state reports shortages of special education teachers and early intervention providers
  – 48 states and the District of Columbia report shortages of special education teachers
  – 42 states report shortages of early intervention providers
Why Should We Be Concerned?

• Certain students are more likely to be affected than others
  • *Remote rural and urban areas have the worst shortages*
  • *Students served in special schools are more likely to have less prepared teachers*
New Teacher Pipeline is Shrinking


- 2008-09: 719,081
- 2009-10: 725,518
- 2010-11: 684,801
- 2011-12: 623,190
- 2012-13: 499,800
- 2013-14: 465,536

[Graph showing enrollment in teacher preparation programs from 2008-09 to 2013-14 with a downward trend.]
Why Should We Be Concerned?

• These shortages will likely result in shortcuts to the classroom, which could have deleterious effects.
Being Prepared Matters

- Special education teachers with a certificate from a preparation program or 30 hours of credit completion are more effective in reading and math.
- Fully prepared special education teachers demonstrate more effective practice than those teachers with little preparation.
Experience Matters

- Experience has been linked to the effectiveness of special education teachers and early childhood teachers.
- Having experienced and effective peers as colleagues influences retention in an environment and teacher effectiveness.
Ultimately we need a Talent Management Framework

What should we do?

- Recruitment
- Retention
- Preparation
Kerry Haag
Assistant Director of Special Education, & Title Services
Learning Services Division
Kansas State Department of Education
Kansas loses more than 10% of special education teachers annually

Source: https://www.ksde.org/Agency/Division-of-Learning-Services/Early-Childhood-Special-Education-and-Title-Services/Special-Education/Special-Education-Fiscal-Resources/Categorical-Aid
Aim: To Retain Highly Qualified Special Education Teachers in Kansas Schools

- Mentee

I have really enjoyed having a seasoned special educator **guide and advise me** in what has been the most challenging year, my second year, of teaching.

- Mentee

**Personal correspondence [with my mentor], both over email and by phone, has been the only thing that has helped me manage this year.**
The Kansas Recruitment and Retention project provides support to Kansas districts, schools and educators through the Kansas Education Employment Board (KEEB) and to early career special education staff through the Kansas e-Mentoring for Student Success (eMSS) effort.
## Snapshot of Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short-Term</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Long-Term</th>
<th>Sustainability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased knowledge of effective instructional practices and effective classroom management practice</td>
<td>Increased implementation of effective instructional practices and effective classroom management practices</td>
<td>Increased <strong>student engagement</strong></td>
<td>Increased special education teacher retention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased teacher competence</td>
<td>Increased <strong>job-related self-efficacy</strong></td>
<td>Improved cooperation within educational systems</td>
<td>Intra and inter-school collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fidelity to mentoring professional development plan</td>
<td>Cadre of <strong>highly skilled KS mentors</strong></td>
<td>Data-based mentoring to continually improve instructional practices that impact student outcomes</td>
<td>Sustainable system of mentoring available statewide to meet the needs of early career teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased knowledge of effective mentoring techniques</td>
<td>More effective mentoring through content enhancement, including <strong>family engagement</strong></td>
<td>Increased <strong>family engagement</strong></td>
<td>Increased special education teacher retention</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mentoring Components
Additional Supports

**TASN Face-to-Face PD**

**Resources**

**Video Observation Tools**
Expectations for Mentees

• Communicate with your mentor 2 times per week.
• Participate in a goal setting process with your mentor.
• Complete 1 Exploration per year (allowed up to 3).
• Participate in 3 video observation cycles during the school year (including pre-conference, video, post-conference with your mentor).
Explorations Completed in 2017-18

- Developing IEPs: 41.3%
- Accommodations & Modifications in Curriculum: 25.4%
- Working with Paraprofessionals: 20.6%
- Co-Teaching in Inclusive Classrooms: 14.3%
- Expanded Core Curriculum: 11.1%
# Mentee Satisfaction

Percentage of mentees that agreed or strongly agreed with each statement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My mentor was a great source of moral support</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor had a positive affect on my instructional practice</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mentor was a great content resource</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring helped me grow professionally/develop my skills in my current role</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eMSS provided me with mentoring support that would otherwise be unavailable to me</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Having a mentor was wonderful. This year started out stressful and I couldn't keep up with all of my responsibilities. My mentor, gave me her phone number, listened to me, offered suggestions, and then followed up with me! She made the whole situation more manageable.*

- Mentee
### Mentee Reflection

Instruction, Administrative Support, and Job Satisfaction

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<th>Statement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am given the support I need to teach students with disabilities.</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My students are engaged in the lessons that I teach.</td>
<td>93.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to meet the learning needs of all my students.</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I regularly communicate with parents regarding the academic progress of their child.</td>
<td>96.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I regularly communicate with parents regarding the behavioral progress of their child.</td>
<td>94.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am generally satisfied with being a teacher at this school.</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MENTOR RATINGS OF MENTEES
(Percentage Proficient or Somewhat Proficient)

- Plans instruction based on learning and developmental levels of all students: 98%
- Establishes a classroom environment conducive to learning: 98%
- Uses methods and techniques that are effective in meeting student needs: 100%

I love working for eMSS! I believe that I have grown professionally by helping others to succeed.

-Mentor
Local Level Impact
(Retention 2 Years After Mentoring)
Statewide Implementation

In the past six years, 491 early career special educators in 87 Kansas school districts have successfully completed at least one year of e-mentoring.
Kansas Lessons Learned

• Aligned and coherent systems
• Clearly convey expectations
• Be responsive yet steadfast
Briefs Available

Briefs available for download at:

TASN Provider Evaluation Briefs
Kerry Haag
Kansas State Department of Education
khaag@ksde.org
www.ksdetasn.org
Handout Located at: TASN Provider Evaluation Briefs
Building Capacity of Novice Educators Using Performance Data and Authentic Coaching

Donna B. Wilder
Supervisor of Professional Learning
Outcomes

• Gain clarity to better understand the functions and intentions of those who mentor novice educators.

• Understand the role of data to support educator growth during authentic coaching conversations.
Role versus Function

Every person has multiple roles to play in life. Every role requires a different set of functions and responsibilities.

“*My role is mentor, but I support the new teacher by functioning as a coach, collaborator, and consultant.*”
Coaching
- Presumes the teacher has resources to reflect on practice and plan for instruction.
- Is teacher-focused
- Is driven by the thinking of the teacher.
- Supports self-directed assessment, thinking and learning.

Collaborating
- Creates shared focus and thinking.
- Is driven by the thinking and contributions of both parties.
- Promotes valued collaboration.
- Can lead to dependency by the teacher.

Consulting
- Is focused on thinking and knowledge of the mentor who gives advice, options, etc.
- Is driven by the ideas offered to the teacher by the mentor.
- Leads to dependency by the teacher: “Just tell me what to do.”
## Five Types of Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judgments</th>
<th>Personal Observations</th>
<th>Inferences</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Mediative Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>I like your classroom.</td>
<td>You’re a model teacher.</td>
<td>You called on 8 girls and 3 boys during the lesson.</td>
<td>What are you noticing about your data?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>I didn’t like the strategy used.</td>
<td>Your classroom runs beautifully.</td>
<td>Here is a script of all 20 questions you asked.</td>
<td>How do these compare to your expectations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your attitude was poor.</td>
<td>I liked the group activities.</td>
<td>You’re going to struggle fitting in.</td>
<td>Your paragraph is a 3 of 4 on the rubric.</td>
<td>How might you refine your paragraph?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Growth Producing Feedback

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As you listen to each of these scenarios, be thinking about how the feedback and its use is an essential skill for mentors.

Growth Producing Feedback (Cont’d)

Judgments

Personal Observations

Inferences

Data

Mediative Questions

Evaluative from the observer’s perspective.

Coaching to support self-directed thinking

There is only one you in all time.

Martha Graham

When we give our advice, we open the door to be blamed for failure. Blame evokes defensiveness, defensiveness reduces awareness.

No two human minds or bodies are the same. How can I tell you how to use yours best? Only you can discover how with your awareness.

John Whitmore (2010)
National Technical Assistance

- CEEDAR
- NCIPP
Systems Approach

- State Department
- Districts
- Universities
West Virginia Example
West Virginia Goal

To reduce unwanted teacher turnover by creating an induction program aimed at ensuring a committed high quality special education teacher force by:

• building instructional quality
• increasing student achievement
• retaining effective teachers
West Virginia Plan

Strategy to Achieve Goals, Ameliorate Roadblocks

- Professional Development
- National Board Certification
- E-Mentoring

Effective Special Education Teacher
National Board Certification

Goal:

• Encourage Experts in Special Education

• Build Strong Cadre of Mentors

Take One!

• Standards-based approach for improving teaching practice and links student learning to effective instruction

Paid for by State
E-Mentoring Plans- WV Connect

• Establish Statewide cadre of low-incidence mentors
• Online Platform decision/collaborate with IHEs
• Pilot mentor assignment for most rural areas, open invitation
Professional Development

• Monthly professional development sessions
• Mentor and beginning teacher attend
• Follow up activities, materials, suggestions
Georgia Example
High-Leverage Practices

- The Georgia Department of Education
- The University System of Georgia
- The Georgia Professional Standards Commission
- CEEDAR Center
- School Districts
Empower educators to maximize P-20 student success using High-Leverage Practices within a *Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS)*

MTSS  EBPs  HLPs
High-Leverage Practices (HLPs)

• “A set of practices that are fundamental to support...student learning, and that can be taught, learned, and implemented by those entering the profession.” (Windschitl, Thompson, Braaten, & Stroupe, 2012, p. 880)

• HLPs are HOW teachers deliver instruction. All teachers should have deep knowledge in a core set of effective instructional practices. (McLeskey & Brownell, 2015)
What about Evidence-Based Practices?

- Are content specific
- Developmentally appropriate
- Learner dependent
- Are taught using HLPs
Key Stakeholders

Universities- University System
• Embed HLP in coursework and field experiences in teacher and leader preparation

School Districts
• Provide opportunities for practice in general education, special education and leadership supports

DOE
• Provide infrastructure for supports, P-20 collaboratives, RESAs, State TA support

PSC
• Considerations for Policy
Resource Roundup

NCIPP.org
• Mentor handbook
• District Induction Manual
• Briefs

CEEDAR.org
• HLP
• EBP
• Course Enhancement Modules
• Practice Based Opportunities
If we truly care about students with disabilities we will:

1. Commit to increasing the number of fully prepared staff
2. Put in place programs and policies that recruit and retain more well prepared and fully certified staff
3. Leverage federal, state, and district programs to create a more comprehensive talent management approach
Questions