TEACHER EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

Presenters:
Julie Blair
Beth Hoffman
Jay Johnson
Kim Rice

exceptionalchildren.org

#CECLIVE
INTRODUCTIONS

Julie Blair, Assistant Director of Academic Programs/Assistant Professor
College of Education, Grand Canyon University

Beth Hoffman, Special Education Instructional Coordinator/Assistant Professor
College of Education, Rio Salado College

Jay Johnson, Director of Itinerant Services
Arizona School for the Deaf and the Blind

Kimberly Rice, Recruitment and Retention Specialist
Exceptional Student Services, Arizona Department of Education
OUTCOMES

Participants will learn about...

- The evolution of a pilot project to retain teachers.
- The timeline of the project from exploration to implementation.
- The power of relationships and partnerships for sustained capacity.
THINK BACK...
The Teacher Empowerment Project was created to familiarize and connect special education teachers and special education directors with the resources and supports available to *sustain* and *retain* novice special education teachers.
SYNERGY
Trust & Relationships

Teacher Empowerment Project
ADE Teach Camp
Special Education Directors
AZCEEDAR/ACEPP
TEP Partnerships
OUR Story
July
Teach Camp Induction for New Special Education Teachers

August
Outreach to Special Education Directors begins
September

- Idea of the Teacher Empowerment Project came to fruition and the conversation began with ACEPP around teacher shortages and the high leverage practices

October

- Surveyed teachers from the three Districts (initially a part of Teach Camp)
Teacher Survey

Instructional Help

- Low
- Medium
- High

Teacher to Leader Talk

- Low
- Medium
- High
Teacher Survey

Access to Resources for Best Practices in Special Education (*High Leverage Practices - Explicit Instruction*)
November
- Conversation around narrowing the focus of project to high leverage practices with Special Education Teacher
- Synthesizing data from our partner districts
- Teacher Empowerment Project begins
- First webinar with special education teachers

December
- Explicit Instruction Webinar for Special Education Teachers, their mentors, and their special education directors
January
- Second Explicit Instruction webinar
- Turning point for TEP direction

February
- AZCEC/CASE Conference lunch: networking and preparation for the fall CEEDAR Convening with Special Education Directors

March
- TEP Meeting with Special Education Directors

May
- CEEDAR Shortages TAG Meeting
- TEP Meeting with Directors (Next steps)

June
- Gathered feedback from larger CEEDAR group (SSC)
- Reviewed survey results from SSC
- AZCEEDAR strategic planning meeting to sustain TEP
August
- Left future meetings open in response to COVID needs CEEDAR Shortages TAG Meeting

September
- AZ Shortages TAG Planning Meeting
- Schools trying to figure out their response to COVID-19

October- November
- TEP meeting with SPED Directors
- Connected directors to local and state resources
- CEEDAR conversation around shortages
- AZ CEEDAR SSC Meeting
- OSEP Summit: Attracting Effective Personnel.

November
- AZ Shortages TAG planning meeting

December
- TEP meeting with SPED Directors: Began to develop survey and sent to SPED directors for feedback
January
- TEP team meeting to solidify survey

March
- Will disperse survey to teachers in all four participating districts

April
- Will continue to disperse survey to teachers in all four participating districts
- Analyze survey results

TBD
- TEP team meets with AZCASE to develop professional learning opportunities in the area based on the data
Where We Are Headed

➔ Continue to support teacher and director empowerment
➔ Broaden district participation to include charter schools and AZ rural schools
➔ Partner with AZ CASE to support directors and AZCEC to support teachers with professional learning.
➔ Seek out additional partnerships to sustain the work
● Novice teachers in an alternative path program may need DIFFERENT support than the novice teacher coming from a traditional program.

● Pre-service teachers need more practice learning opportunities for writing IEPs to address the specific needs of different disability categories.

● Special education directors need a space to share the challenges with the hiring process and mentorships.
● Applicants are unfamiliar with district jargon and acronyms when applying for positions.

● Special education directors need and want to be more involved in the district and school level hiring process and fit applicants to site level positions.

● Connecting sped directors to local hiring resources- Pima County One Stop and Maricopa ARIZONA@Work

AH-HA Moments, continued
Empowered directors to become more involved in supporting teachers in their day-to-day activities.

Webinars and support need to be scheduled on “teacher-time” for more involvement.

Self Care and Connection with Others a common theme of need.

Forced us to think outside the box (technology, equity, platforms, training, connections with others).
Celebrations

★ We did this all during a pandemic!
★ Moving education forward
★ Relationship Connections
The Teacher Empowerment Project was created to familiarize and connect teachers and special education directors with the resources and supports available to sustain and retain novice teachers.
QUESTIONS
Julie Blair, Assistant Director of Academic Programs/Assistant Professor
College of Education, Grand Canyon University
julie.blair@gcu.edu

Beth Hoffman, Special Education Instructional Coordinator/Assistant Professor
College of Education, Rio Salado College
elizabeth.hoffman@riosalado.edu

Jay Johnson, Director of Itinerant Services
Arizona School for the Deaf and the Blind
jay.johnson@asdb.az.gov

Kimberly Rice, Recruitment and Retention Specialist
Exceptional Student Services, Arizona Department of Education
Kim.Rice@azed.gov