

RE-INVENTING SPECIAL EDUCATION: LEADERSHIP PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT TEN YEARS

Missouri Council of Administrators of Special Education

Dr. Terry Allee—Executive Director MO-CASE

Dr. Thurma DeLoach—MO-CASE Project Facilitator

MASA

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Fundamental Question:

- Does special education need to be re-invented in order to stay relevant and responsive in our current educational environment?
- ***“Take two”***: How are your schools today different than they were in 1975—before PL 94-142?



Major changes in the nature of school

- All students with disabilities have full access to schools—fundamental civil rights
- Inclusive mindset among most educators
- NCLB created accountability for all students—including SWD
- Common Core Standards & College/Career Ready Expectations apply to all
- Performance-based Assessments (Smarter Balance) include all students
- Educator evaluation/retention tied to student growth
- Increasingly diverse student needs—mobility, poverty, non-traditional families, LEP
- Increasing incidence of students with autism and significant medical impairments
- Fewer students with mild learning impairments identified for special education
- Technological innovations have changed the nature of teaching & learning

Why is MO CASE asking this question?

- Special education **operates much as it did 30 years ago**, despite fundamental changes in today's schools
- General and special education still **function as parallel systems** in many schools, districts, states, and nationally
- Educator **time spent on compliance** driven, legalistic sped process instead of planning/implementing specially designed instruction
- Missouri data confirms that most **students with IEPs spend most of the school day in the regular education classroom**—not in special education settings
- Missouri data confirms that **70% of students with IEPs are not proficient in reading or math** when they graduate--not good enough
- Classroom & special education **teachers report being inadequately prepared to meet the diversity** of educational needs in today's classrooms



MO CASE Goal: Provide leadership to create a new vision for Missouri

- For a *single unified educational system*
- In which *professional educators work collaboratively*
- To *implement policies and research-based practices*
- That *ensure all students achieve* the academic, social-emotional, life skills and knowledge
- Necessary to *transition into post-secondary schools and/or careers* as productive citizens and contributors to our global society



How will we do this?

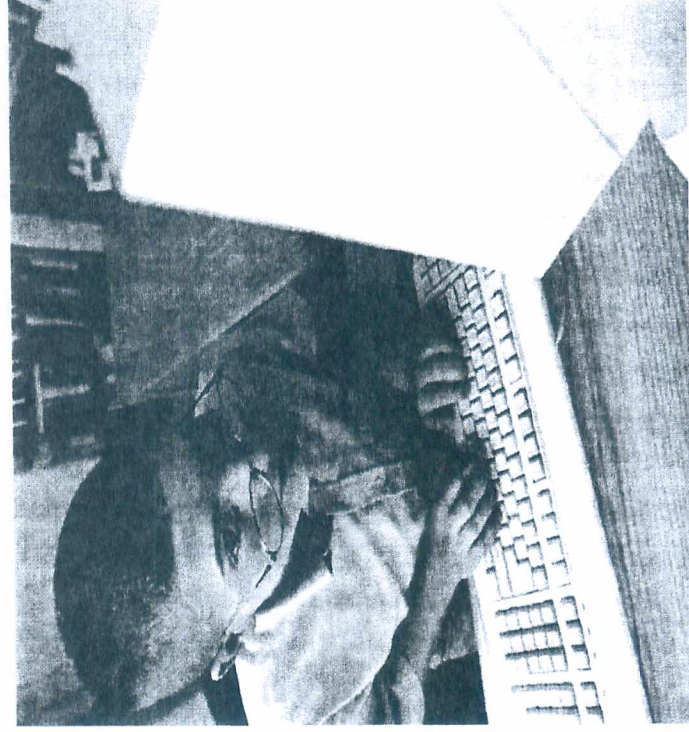
- Step one—start with the people doing the work now
 - Interview educational leaders and key stakeholders across Missouri about their **best case scenarios** for the re-invention of special education
 - General education administrators—superintendents, district administrators, principals
 - Special education administrators & leaders—district, state, national
 - General and special education teachers
 - Parents of students with disabilities
 - Recent graduates or non-completers who participated in special education services

• Step Two: Talk with ***other states currently engaged*** in the re-invention of special education

- Colorado
- Florida
- Kansas
- Iowa
- Ohio
- Illinois
- Michigan



- Step Three: Identify **key practices** being implemented in MO districts that are demonstrating success in **moving the numbers** for students within key subgroups—students with disabilities, low SES, LEP, racial minorities

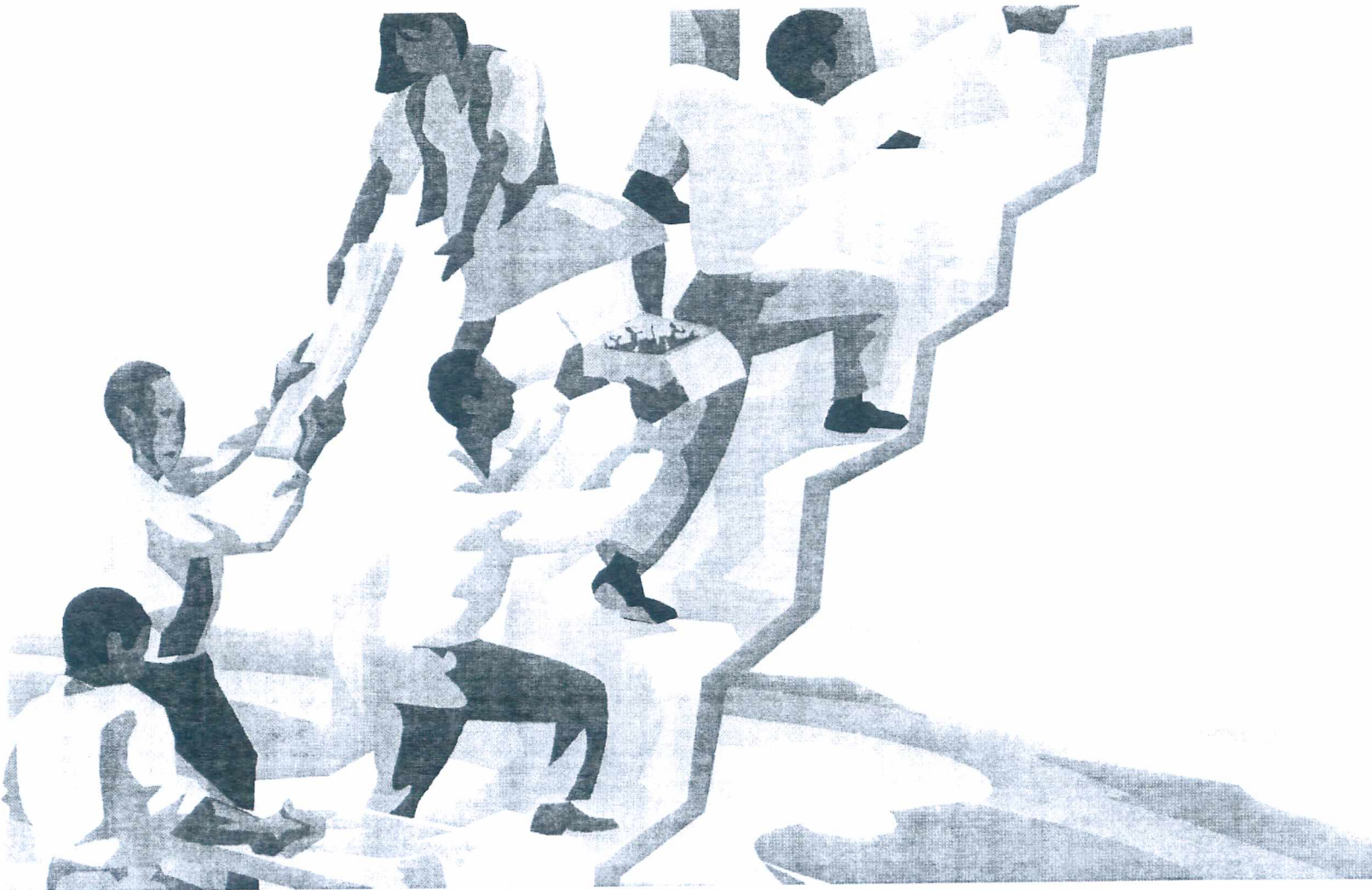


Step Four: Partner with other professional educational organizations in creating the *vision*

- MASA, MAESP, MCSA, MASSP
- DESE
- CEEDAR and IHE
- MO-CASE LASE groups
- Parent Advisory Councils
- MO CEC
- MSBA
- MSTA/MNEA

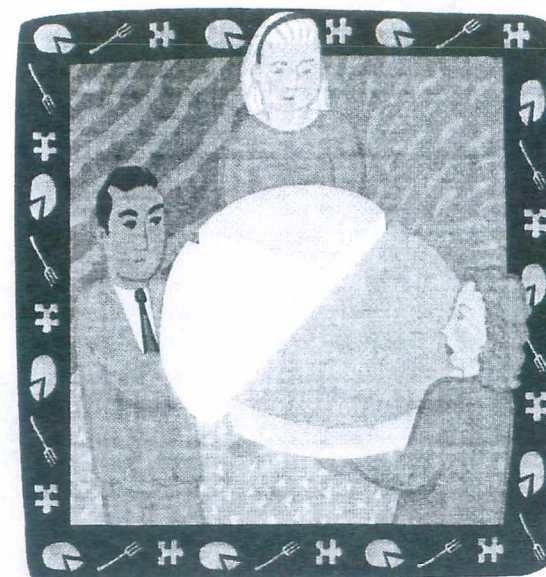


Step Five: Develop an *Action Plan* for creating the vision

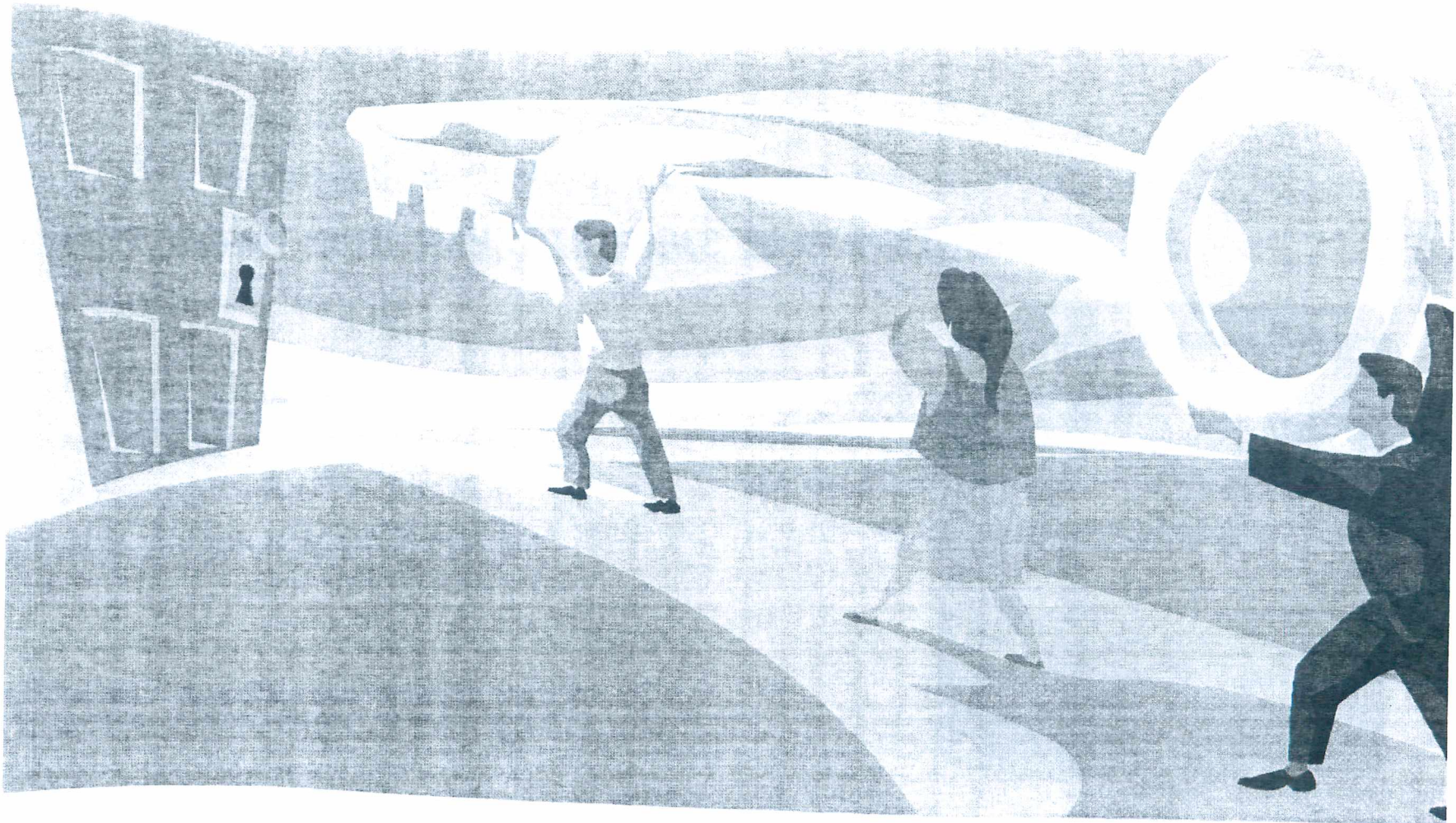


Our work so far

- Building Partnerships
 - DESE
 - MASA
 - MAESP
 - CEEDAR & IHE
- Interviews with Stakeholders and Leaders
 - Over 40 individual or small group
 - State leaders
 - District leaders
 - Principals
 - National leaders in special education policy/research
 - Looking for *recurring Big Ideas*



Collecting your reactions to our emerging *Big Ideas* collected in interviews





Emerging Big Ideas.....

- 100% of interviewees to date agree there is a need to reinvent special education because:
 - Today's **schools are vastly different** than they were in 1975
 - Administrative, training and funding structures perpetuate an **inefficient dual system** and reduces effectiveness for all learners
 - Spec Ed **focus is on compliance and accommodation at the expense of specialized, intense instruction**; DESE data shows we are great at compliance and ineffective in "*moving the numbers*"
 - **Pre-service programs are not preparing teachers or administrators** for the diversity of challenges in today's schools
 - **Social-emotional-behavioral outcomes** for all students must be part of re-invention vision



“BEST CASE SCENARIOS”

Imagine: ten years into the future.....



Big ideas: How our schools will function

- A **single, unified educational system** in which all educators work together to ensure all students get what they need
- Classroom teachers will have the **“heart”, mindset, skills, and confidence to teach *all students***—including those at the margins (“teaching to the top & bottom catches all learners”)
- Principals will have the **flexibility to utilize their building staff and funding resources** to ensure all students are making measurable progress on common core and social-emotional-behavioral outcomes—**“*all hands on deck*”** thinking



More on how schools will function

- Most students taught in the general education classroom supported by teacher teams/co-teachers capable of differentiating & intensifying instruction
- “Universal Designs for Learning” as the template for all classrooms
- Students assigned to multi-aged instructional groups based on readiness and interests—proficiency-based within a sequence of learning—not same age/grade



- **Flexible school schedules** based on student needs

- Starting/ending times
- Longer/shorter school years
- Graduation based on mastery/readiness
- Evening & weekend schedules
- Flexible staffing schedules

- **Real time continuum of expertise available in all schools**

- Core Curriculum—ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies –Tier 1
- Social-emotional-behavior—Tiers 1, 2, 3
- Dx & Prescriptive Reading/Writing/Math—Tier 2 & 3
- UDL/assistive technology—Tiers 1, 2, & 3

- **Re-designed classroom space**

- Small instructional group areas
- Break & movement areas
- Facilitated Practice areas
- Technological access for everyone

Big Ideas: Systems that will be universally implemented across Missouri

- **Instructional practices guided by “what works” research** (e.g. Hattie’s work) supported by **embedded instructional coaches** in essential areas—literacy, math, behavior, data
- **Collaborative teams responsible for groups of students** use benchmarking, problem solving, assessment & progress monitoring data to match students with research-based instruction appropriate to their needs
- **Dedicated & protected time for collaboration and PD**
- **Multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) implemented in all schools** as universal framework for providing research-based tiered interventions for any student who is off track; reading intervention provided until competency achieved



More universal systems

- Individual Growth Plans for any student who is performing below the 35%tile (not like IEPs)-- eventually a growth plan for every student
- Technology as the **great equalizer** for students with reading, writing, and attention difficulties
 - Responsive instructional software with data systems & individualized adjustments built in
 - Textbooks available on line across devices with reading and transcription functions available for all
 - Neuro-behavioral tools (e.g. wrist bands that monitor affective changes) which enable students to self-monitor anxiety, mood changes, attention changes, identify triggers, and intervene early
 - Technology readily available for any student who wants to use it-not limited to students with IEPs



And more systems....

- **School-based mental health supports** available for all students demonstrating SEB needs through collaborative partnerships with community mental health professionals
- “***Catch‘em Early***”: Universal PK & Early childhood programs work with other professionals to provide early intervening services as soon as we know a child is off track with a goal of closing the gap by grade 2
- **Growth accountability models**



Big Ideas: Role of the special educator

- **Specializations** along the continuum
 - **Collaborating, coaching, co-teaching**, supporting all learners
 - **Intensifying instruction** in reading, math, writing, & social-emotional behaviors for students at the highest tiers of intervention (students who need this intensity—not only students with IEPs)
 - Designing and **implementing highly specialized instruction** for students with disabilities of substantial, adverse impact
- **Support/work with students at all tiers of support**—with and without IEPs based on need & expertise
- **Facilitate IEP team focus on student capabilities, needs, goals, transition** —not compliance requirements
- **Special services administrators as instructional resources/collaborators** with other district leaders—not the compliance police

Big ideas: Pre-service preparation

- **Unified, single pre-service programs** replace current dual system (gen ed or spec ed) with areas of specialization available beyond the core preparation for all teachers & administrators
 - **Badges or certificates of expertise/specialization** beyond BA/MA degrees (e.g. district, state PD pathways)
- **Required curriculum & educator competencies-- much deeper preparation**
 - Classroom-based experience at the start of pre-service (e.g. medical training model)
 - Case-studies over lecture-style instruction
 - Research-based instructional strategies (Hattie) & DI
 - *“Heart and Mindset”* which understands and accepts student diversity—*“I am the teacher for all of my students”*
 - Literacy
 - Data analysis and decisions
 - MTSS—academic (literacy & math) & SEB (PBIS)
 - UDL
 - Special education law—IDEA, Section 504
 - Team collaboration & problem solving skills
 - Co-teaching models



Big Ideas: Competencies within Sped

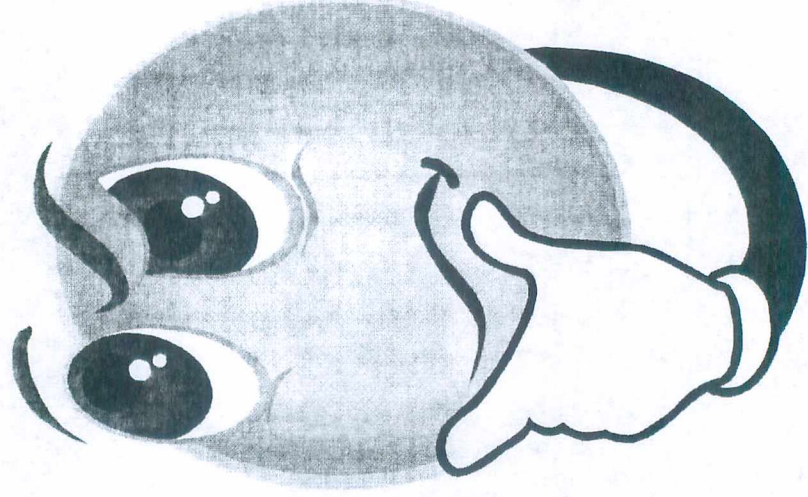
- **Intensification of instruction** for most resistant learners
- Curriculum access via **UDL** strategies
- **Behavior** interventions—FBA & BIPs & SEB instructional strategies
- **Specialization pathways in functional impairments** (replace categorical specialization)
- **Coaching, collaboration, and co-teaching** skills
- **Transition & career** preparation
- **Functional knowledge** in core content—but not in order to become the content teacher

Big Ideas: Special Education Eligibility

- Based on evidence the **disability has significant, adverse impact** on learning and development
 - RTI data showing **low rate of response to intensified interventions will replace discrepancy models** for learning and behavioral disabilities
 - Comprehensive evaluation still necessary for suspected disabilities due to autism, vision, hearing, brain injury, severe cognitive, language, medical impairments
- Appropriately **funded data systems & research-based MTSS implemented with fidelity are necessary conditions** in all schools if this is to become the basis for special education eligibility
- Strong implementation of **DI, MTSS, UDL & collaborative teams of experts** in the schools **reduce the need for students with mild to moderate disabilities to receive special education services & protections**

Your thoughts about these emerging

Big Ideas



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Re-inventing Special Education: Leadership Priorities for the next 10 Years

Our current educational context of common core standards, college/career ready expectations, and educator evaluation systems tied to student performance is changing how general and special educators work together in Missouri schools. Leadership in creating a unified educational system based on proactive policies and research-based practices which improve educational outcomes for all children is urgently needed. The Missouri Council of Administrators of Special Education (MO-CASE) has identified the re-invention of special education as a leadership priority for the next 10 years. MO-CASE is working with educators from multiple roles and responsibilities to create a new vision for the practice of special education in Missouri schools. Presenters will share the vision that is emerging based on conversations with state/district leaders, principals, teachers & parents and the high-impact, research-based systems/strategies necessary for our “best-case” scenario to become real.

Re-inventing Special Education
MASA Spring Conference
March 20, 2014

Participant Feedback

Name (optional):

District:

Position:

Directions: If you agree/support the concept, mark the item with a **+**. If you disagree/would not support the concept, mark the item with a **0**

There is a need to re-invent special education because:

1. Today's schools are vastly different than they were in 1975
2. Administrative, training and funding structures perpetuate an inefficient dual system and reduces effectiveness for all learners
3. Special education focus is on compliance and accommodations at the expense of specialized, intense instruction
4. Pre-service programs are not preparing teachers and administrators for the diversity of challenges in today's public schools
5. Social-emotional-behavioral outcomes for all students must be part of re-invention

Big Ideas: How our schools will function

1. A single, unified educational system in which all educators work together to ensure all students get what they need
2. Classroom teachers will have the "heart", mindset, skills, and confidence to teach all students—including those at the margins
3. Principals will have the flexibility to utilize their building staff and funding resources to ensure all students in the school are making measurable progress on common core and social-emotional-behavioral outcomes—"all hands on deck" thinking
4. Most students taught in the general education classroom supported by teacher teams/co-teachers capable of differentiating & intensifying instruction
5. Students assigned to multi-aged instructional groups based on readiness & interests—proficiency based within a sequence of learning—not age/grade
6. Flexible school schedules based on student needs
 - a. Starting/ending times

- b. Longer/shorter school years
 - c. Graduation based on mastery/readiness
 - d. Evening & weekend schedules
 - e. Flexible staffing schedules
7. Real-time continuum of expertise available in all schools
 - a. Core curriculum—ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies—Tier 1
 - b. Social Emotional Behavior—Tiers 1,2,3
 - c. Diagnostic & Prescriptive reading/math/writing --Tiers 2,3
 - d. UDL/assistive technology—Tiers 1,2,3
 8. Re-designed classroom space
 - a. Small instructional group areas
 - b. Break & movement areas
 - c. Facilitated practice areas
 - d. Technological access for everyone

Big Ideas: Systems universally implemented across Missouri

1. Instructional practices supported by “what works” research (e.g. Hattie) supported by embedded instructional coaches in essential areas—literacy, math, behavior, data
2. Collaborative teams responsible for groups of students use benchmarking, problem solving, assessment & progress monitoring data to match students with research-based instruction appropriate to their needs
3. Dedicated and protected time for collaboration and PD
4. Multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) implemented in all schools as a universal framework for providing research-based academic and social-emotional-behavioral tiered interventions for any student who is off track
5. Reading intervention provided until student is a competent reader—e.g. high school
6. Individual Growth Plans developed for any student who is performing below the 35%tile and eventually a growth plan for every student
7. Technology as the *great equalizer* for students with reading, writing, and attention difficulties; data systems & individualized adjustments built into responsive instructional software
8. School based mental health supports available for all students demonstrating SEB needs through collaborative partnerships with community mental health professionals
9. “*Catch ‘em early*”—Universal pre-school and early childhood programs work with other professionals to provide early intervening services as soon as we know a child is off track—close the gap by grade 2

10. Growth accountability models

Big Ideas: Role of the Special Educator

1. Specializations along the continuum
 - a. Collaborating, coaching, co-teaching supporting all learners
 - b. Intensifying instruction in reading, math, writing, SEB for students at the highest tiers of intensity
 - c. Designing and implementing highly specialized instruction for students with disabilities of substantial, adverse impact
2. Support/work with students at all tiers of supports—with/without IEPs based on need & expertise
3. Facilitate IEP team focus on student capability, needs, goals, transition—not compliance requirements
4. Special services administrators used as instructional resources/collaborators with other district leaders—not compliance police

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1. Unified, single, pre-service programs replace current dual system (gen ed or spec ed) with areas of specialization available beyond the core preparation for all teachers & administrators—e.g. badges or certificates of expertise
2. Required competencies with much deeper preparation
 - a. Classroom experience at the start of pre-service
 - b. Case studies over lecture style instruction
 - c. Research-based instructional strategies
 - d. Heart and Mindset understands/accepts diversity
 - e. Literacy
 - f. Data analysis and decisions
 - g. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)—academic and SEB
 - h. Universal Designs for Learning (UDL)
 - i. Special education law—IDEA & 504
 - j. Team Collaboration & Problem solving
 - k. Co-teaching models

Big Ideas: Competencies within Spec Ed

1. Intensification of instruction for most resistant learners
2. Curriculum access via UDL strategies
3. Behavior intervention—FBA & BIPs 7 SEB instructional strategies
4. Specializations in functional impairments (replace categorical specializations)

5. Coaching, collaboration, co-teaching skills
6. Transition & career preparation
7. Functional knowledge in core content—but not to become the content teachers

Big Idea about Special Education Eligibility

1. Based on evidence the disability has significant, adverse impact on learning and development
 - a. RTI data showing low rate of response to intensified interventions in reading, writing, math, social-emotional behavior will replace discrepancy models for learning and behavioral disabilities;
 - b. Comprehensive evaluation for suspected disabilities of autism, vision, hearing, brain injury, significant cognitive, language, or medical impairments
2. Appropriately funded data systems & research-based MTSS implemented with fidelity are necessary conditions in all schools if this is to become the basis for special education eligibility
3. Strong implementation of DI, MTSS, UDL, & collaborative teams of experts in schools will reduce the need for students with mild/moderate disabilities to receive special education services and protections

Big Idea: Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.