

Getting to Effectiveness in Special Education

Profiles in Women's Leadership

October 1, 2021

Session Description

This session will introduce the [domains of effectiveness](#) in special education and showcase local exemplars of effective practices, driven by local female leaders. The session will highlight how investments in leadership, a culture of high expectations, family/community engagement, etc. are critical to creating effective learning environments for students with disabilities. The session will provide opportunities to learn from and ask questions of a diverse panel of experienced women leaders in New Jersey special education. The intended audience is all school and district leaders, including those who directly support special education.



VIP Panelists

- Lystrea Crooks: Director of Special Education, Irvington Public Schools
- Peggy McDonald: Coordinator of Special Projects, Foundation for Educational Administration (FEA)
- Debby Sarmir: Assistant Superintendent, Northern Valley Regional High School District
- Candice Wells: Supervisor of Special Education, Newark Public Schools; NJ Leadership Academy Facilitator, NJPSA/FEA

Facilitator

- Kendra Carter: Associate Manager, Public Consulting Group



Call to Action!

- There is an urgent need to raise expectations and improve educational outcomes in special education, which has been a pressing issue since before the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020
- Despite the federal Office of Special Education's shift to a Results Driven Accountability (RDA) model in 2014, there remains a need for vast improvement in academic and functional outcomes for students with disabilities
 - Only eight states have achieved a "Meets Requirements" rating for all six years under RDA
 - Largest states (California, New York, and Texas), accounting for approx. 25% of the nation's students with disabilities, have NOT received a "Meets Requirements" determination in any year of RDA
- Number of students found eligible to receive special education services continues to grow
 - Increase of 11% between the 2000–2001 and 2017–2018 school years, totaling 7M+ students nationwide
- *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District*, the Supreme Court affirmed that schools must be "appropriately ambitious," in meeting the needs of every child with a disability through their Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- **The only way to effectively ensure that a growing number of students with disabilities meet appropriately ambitious learning standards is for school districts to develop clear roadmaps for what it means to operate effective, high-quality special education programs and then to enact these roadmaps with intentionality and commitment**



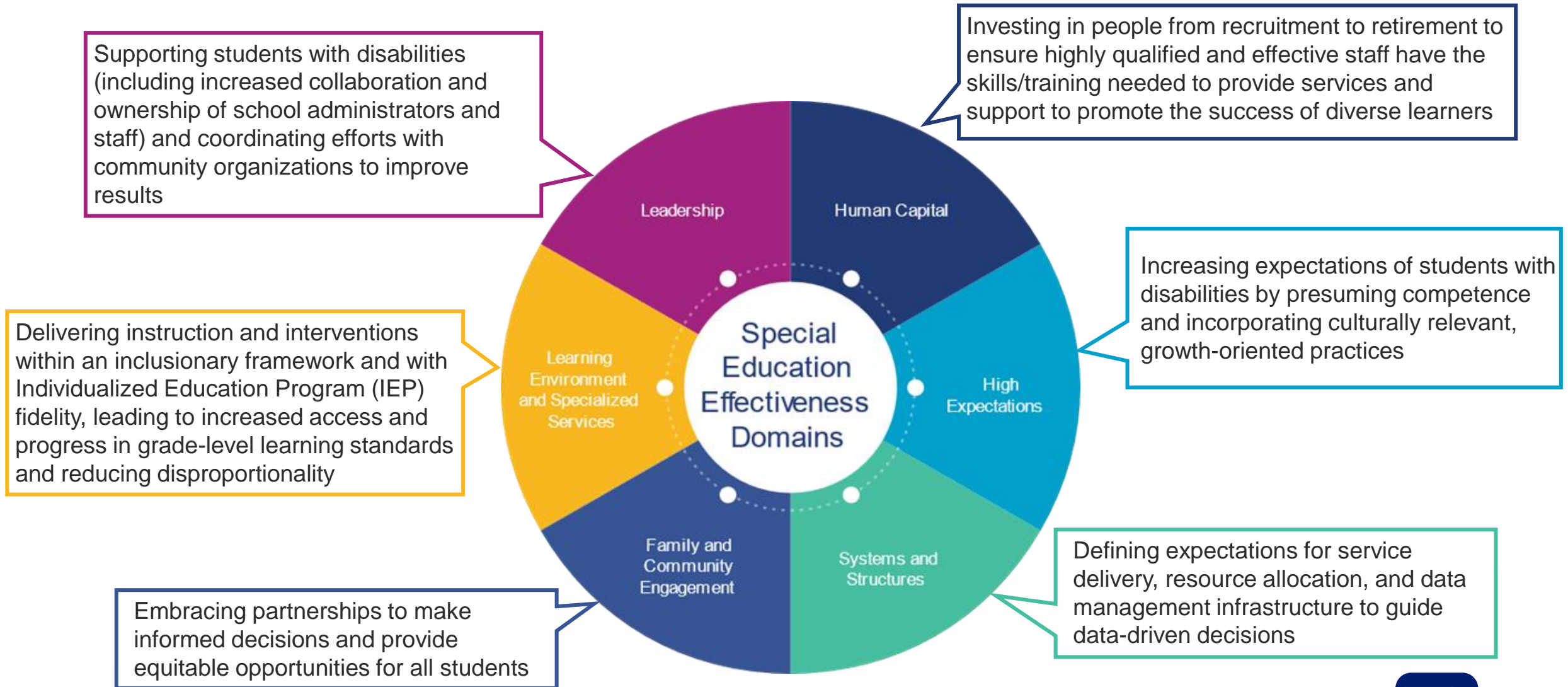
PCG's Special Education Effectiveness Framework

What is the Special Education Effectiveness Framework?

- The Special Education Effectiveness Framework was designed to assist school districts in catalyzing roadmap conversations, assessing and ultimately improving the quality of special education programs
- Designed to provide school district leaders with a set of practices to strengthen special education services and supports in six key domains, and to highlight the multidisciplinary, integrated nature of systemic improvement
- An intentional focus on improving outcomes for students with disabilities leads to improved outcomes for ALL students



Special Education Domains of Effectiveness



Deeper Dive: Potential Points of Discussion

Special Education Domains of Effectiveness: Leadership

Supporting students with disabilities (including increased collaboration and ownership of school administrators and staff) and coordinating efforts with community organizations to improve results

- How did your leadership team foster a sense of shared accountability amongst staff, students, families and community?
- Tell us about the team building process your team followed to ensure effective communication and collaboration
- How did your leadership team maintain a student-centered focus and encourage that amongst the entire team?



Special Education Domains of Effectiveness: Learning Environment and Specialized Services

Delivering instruction and interventions within an inclusionary framework adopting a coherent Multi Tiered System of Support, leading to increased access and progress in grade-level learning standards

- How did Office of Special Education, Office of the Assistant Superintendent, and Office of the Superintendent come together to problem-solve the needs around supporting struggling learners and students being referred?
- How has the District's Multi-Tiered System of Supports impacted struggling learners?
- What are some of the best practices the District has incorporated in the IEP development process?
- Tell us about the District's approach for incorporating student-centered planning and family input



Special Education Domains of Effectiveness: Systems and Structure

Defining expectations for service delivery, resource allocation, and data management infrastructure to guide data-driven decisions

- How has the District embedded special education initiatives into its vision and strategic plan?
- Tell us about the District's process for revamping policies and procedures, and how you train and communicate changes
- What process does Newark follow to ensure continuous review of practices to ensure improvement?
- Tell us about your process for benchmarking, setting goals and progress monitoring



Special Education Domains of Effectiveness: Family and Community Engagement

Embracing partnerships to make informed decisions and provide equitable opportunities for all students

- What practices has the District incorporated to ensure staff communicate and work effectively with families?
- How is family input solicited and incorporated?
- What practices has the District implemented to account for the cultural diversity of families?
- Tell us about the supports and resources Irvington offers its families
- Tell us about the partnerships the District has forged in the community and the impact these partnerships have on your programming



Questions for our panelists?



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