Practical Strategies for Reducing Disproportionality in Special Education

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SELDA
Learning Targets

• I can identify some practical strategies to implement that will help reduce disproportionality in my district

• I can identify types of noncompliance that is frequently cited by GaDOE

• I can identify different types of data that should be examined when analyzing disproportionality
Reducing Disproportionality

Teacher training

- Culturally appropriate assessment and instruction
- Home and school collaboration
- Problem-solving process
- High quality instruction

Cultural sensitivity

Effective services and supports (i.e., interventions, mental health services, social services, etc)
General Supervision

• Reviewing policies, procedures, and practices (PPPs) to make sure they are compliant, effective, and implemented with fidelity
• Providing high quality professional learning and technical assistance
• Supervision and Monitoring of Processes and Procedures
• Data-based Decision Making
PPPs: Compliance, Effectiveness, and Fidelity

Compliance

We must move from policies to best practices for implementing:

- State Board Rules
- Georgia’s Special Education Rules
- IDEA
Written Procedures

Policies provide guidance to help people make decisions. Procedures are the "how to(s)" that describe the actions or tasks that need to be done to implement the policy.

- SST/RTI/MTSS
- Special Education Rules
- Discipline
- Retention
Policy vs Procedures

POLICY

• Each school shall have a minimum of one SST and shall establish support team procedures.

PROCEDURE

• Prior to the beginning of the school year, the administrative team will assign an SST chairperson and develop/revise procedures for SST implementation. All faculty and staff will be trained on procedures prior to the beginning of school by district and school staff.
Policy vs Procedures

POLICY
• Before a referral is made for other supplemental or support services an evaluation and/or assessment shall be conducted.

PROCEDURE
• Include in the SST referral packet the results of recent standardized testing and/or benchmark assessments
Policy vs Procedures vs Practices

POLICY

• Each LEA must conduct a full and individual initial evaluation before the initial provision of special education and related services to a child with a disability and it must be completed within 60 calendar days of receiving parental consent for evaluation.

PROCEDURE

• Upon completion of referral packet, the packet is sent to the Office of Special Education to be reviewed for compliance/completeness. If complete, the packet is assigned to school psychologist. The parent is contacted to obtain consent for evaluation. After completion of evaluation, evaluation is submitted to Office of Special Education.

PRACTICES

• Special education coordinator reviews packets for completeness/compliance. Special education director assigns evaluation to school psychologist. School psychologist obtains parental consent and gives copy of signed consent form to Office of Special Education. Special Education Director/appointee adds case information to timeline log. 30 days after consent is signed, Office of Special education sends a 30-day notice to school psychologist, principal, and teachers. School psychologist submits completed evaluation to Office of Special Education. Special Education Director/appointee updates timelines log.
Research and Examination of Special Education Eligibility Process

Identify key decision points in special education eligibility process to examine disproportionality

• Referral to SST

• Referral for initial assessment

• Referral for special education evaluation and eligibility

• Special education eligibility placement decisions
Examination of Practices

SST and Child Find Rule

• Child Find Activities
• SST meeting participants
  • Parent/guardian invitation
• Steps of SST are clear in documentation
• Documentation of scientific, research, or evidence based interventions
• Progress monitoring data
Examination of Practices

Initial Evaluations and Reevaluations

• Reevaluation or redetermination conducted every 3 years

• Comprehensive, individual assessment, and assessed in all areas related to suspected disability

• Technically sound instruments and variety of tools and strategies used for evaluation, including information provided by parents

• Initial evaluation completed within 60 day timeline of parental consent
Examination of Practices

Eligibility Determination

• A group of qualified professionals and the parents of the child (Eligibility Team) determines whether the child is a child with a disability and the educational needs of the child

• Comprehensive, individual assessment, and assessed in all areas related to suspected disability

• Draw upon information from a variety of sources, including aptitude and achievement tests, parent input, and teacher recommendations, as well as information about the child’s physical condition, social or cultural background and adaptive behavior;

• Initial evaluation completed within 60 day timeline of parental consent
Quick Audit of Practices within the Four-Tier Georgia Pyramid of Interventions

Pyramid Activity

List Most Intensive Supports

List SST Individualized Supports

List Targeted/Strategic Supports

List Core Practices/Support for All
Eligibility Determinations

• Relevant Case History

• Interventions must be identified

• Date range for intervention, baseline dates, and progress monitoring dates

• **CONDUCT** comprehensive evaluations and evaluate in all suspected areas of need, not just suspected disability
  
  • **MAKE** appropriate and thorough decisions regarding the need to conduct reevaluations and presume that a reevaluation is needed rather than presuming that it is not.

• Eligibilities are considered based upon weaknesses identified in comprehensive evaluation

• Exclusionary factors must be addressed and have written rationales for Yes responses

• Final Eligibility choices must include rationale
Data: From Compliance to Improvement

- LRE
- Screenings
- Evaluation to Eligibility Ratios
- Alternate Assessment
- Eligibility Categories
- Timelines
- Disciplinary Removals
- Standardized Testing Data
- Reevaluations and Redeterminations
- Attendance
- Graduation Rate
- Drop Out Rate
- MDRs
- SST
- Progress Monitoring
- Post Secondary Outcomes
Activity

Adapted Annotated Checklist for Addressing Racial Disproportionality in Special Education (2008) by Losen and Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction