Road Map for Increasing Student Achievement

John O’Connor
Director, Student Support Programming
Henry County Schools

john.oconnor@henry.k12.ga.us
404.973.9214
My position in Henry

- Debra Delaine, Director for Special Education – Tier 4
- O’Connor, Director for Student Support Programming – Top of Tier 1 (Tier 1 interventions through Tier 3)
  - Mostly, I will discuss Tier 4, but also include some “general education” stuff
Does this story sound familiar?

- Tremendous progress in SWD achievement – especially in the 5-6 years following the implementation of NCLB
- During the same time period, we were drastically increasing the percentage of SWDs who were educated in general education classes
- Lots to be proud of…
Does this story sound familiar?

- Since that time, there has been a plateauing of achievement and graduation rates in many districts for SWDs.
Pop Quiz
(Partner Discussion)

The Superintendent has called you to his/her office.

“We have to radically improve the achievement/learning of students with disabilities (and their graduation rate) in our school/our district. What should we do?”

What would you say?
(5 minutes)
Debrief
At the end of the day, that is the most important question...
At the risk of sounding incredibly arrogant...
I Know the Answer
Provide GREAT INSTRUCTION
The good news...

We, as educators, control 100% of that.
Goal for Today

- Dig into how we might make significant strides in our school district to increase student achievement and graduation rates.
Please...

- Share your expertise
- Feel free to be selective
GREAT Instruction

What classes are we talking about for students with disabilities?
Did you know...

- In Georgia, roughly 66% of students with disabilities spend at least 80% of their school day in general education classes?
Therefore, if we are going to increase the achievement of students with disabilities, we have to impact **ALL** classrooms.

(General ed classes with one teacher, co-teaching classes, and pull-out special education classes)
What is GREAT instruction?

- Work in pairs
- 5 minutes – Write your answers on a blank sheet of paper
- You only get 6 bullets
Debrief
GREAT Instruction includes:

- Standards Driven Instruction
- Rigorous
- Formative assessments that guide instruction (i.e., benchmarking, progress monitoring, etc.)
- Differentiation through Flexible Grouping
- Scientific or evidenced-based instructional practices

What piece is missing?
The missing piece

Magic
How do you like this acronym?

GREAT instruction is:

G - Guided by the performance standards
R - Rigorous with research-based practice (two parts)
E - Engaging and exciting
A - Assessed continuously to guide instruction
T - Tailored (differentiated) through flexible grouping
All of these components are intertwined
If you asked every teacher what constitutes GREAT instruction, how many answers would you get?
If the answer is.....

- You would have as many answers as there are teachers

- Does that seem like an efficient way to move instruction in the same direction?
Or…

- Could there be some consistency in the answer, but it would be surface-level
  - Standard posted on the board
  - Three-part lesson
  - With some buzz words that have lost some meaning
  - Follow the CCGPS
You have a Visual Organizer

- Fill out the acronym for GREAT Instruction
  - Guided by the performance standards
  - Rigorous with research-based practices
  - Engaging and exciting
  - Assessed continuously to guide further instruction
  - Tailored through flexible groups
Increasing the Achievement of Students with Disabilities

Provide GREAT Instruction
in every school, in every class, every day

Don’t forget:

Research-based Instructional Practices
Note

- GREAT Instruction also applies to non-academic instruction
  - Behavior
  - Communication
  - Self-Advocacy
But wait, we also need to focus on attendance
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absences Range</th>
<th>Graduation Rate 4 Years Later</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 absences</td>
<td>76.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 absences</td>
<td>74.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 absences</td>
<td>64.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-14 absences</td>
<td>50.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 or more</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Similar findings for 8th Grade Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 absences</td>
<td>78.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 absences</td>
<td>74.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 absences</td>
<td>64.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-14 absences</td>
<td>52.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 or more</td>
<td>30.89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Still early….what we have done re: attendance

- Shared data last summer with every Principal
  - All students registered for the upcoming school year
    - Even if they didn’t attend the school last year
  - List of students with most to least absences (includes all absences – excused, unexcused and OSS)
  - List of students with most to least ISS and OSS suspension days
Some school initiatives

- Class competitions – Attendance thermometers in hallways
  - Each grade and faculty attendance
- Having an individual conference with every student who had patterns of attendance issues
  - “I didn’t know anyone cared about me here.”
- One Principal….I looked at the attendance data for students who did not meet expectations on the CRCT…
New CCRPI definition of attendance

Percentage of students with less than 6 absences

(Includes all absences – excused, unexcused and OSS)
Be careful about using Average Daily Attendance Rate

- If my school has a 95% Average Daily Attendance Rate, that is an “A.” Right?
- Not so fast…
  - One average, every student in the school is missing 1 out of every 20 days…once a month.
  - 9 absences throughout the school year.
New format for data
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>M/F</th>
<th>Ethn</th>
<th>Absences</th>
<th>Days of ISS</th>
<th>Days of OSS</th>
<th>Total Days Suspended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On your visual organizer

Please create a new box.
Provide GREAT Instruction

in every school, in every class, every day

Don’t forget:

Research-based Instructional Practices
In that box, write...

- Implement school and student specific attendance initiatives and interventions
Research-based Practices

- Two parts
  - First part: Effective research-based Tier 1 instruction in all classes
  - Second part for SWDs: Specially-designed instruction
In fact, since 1975 (Education for All Handicapped Children Act) Special Education has been defined as

Specially Designed Instruction
Table Discussion
(3 Minutes)

What is specially designed instruction?
Debrief
Did your answer sound something like...

- Designed to meet the unique needs of the student with a disability
- Enables the child to meet the grade-level standards
- Includes adapting content, methodology, or delivery of instruction
- Based on the child’s IEP
- Research-based
Those things are legally true, but....

They don’t tell us much
We have to get more specific!

If we want our teachers to implement specialized instruction consistently for all of our students…

We have to clearly define it
We have enough experience.

There is enough research.
Can we make a list of instructional practices that are needed by a large majority of students with (mild) disabilities?
Table Activity  
(5 minutes)  
Make a list of the specific instructional practices that are needed by the greatest number of SWDs.  

If these things were implemented with great fidelity for all students with disabilities, in all classes, then you would see great gains.
Debrief
My short list that apply to all subjects

- Implement effective instruction and interventions to promote responsible behavior
- Drastically increase the number of practice turns and feedback
- Provide explicit instruction
- Provide effective vocabulary instruction
- Provide fill-the-gap instruction (interventions)
- Explicitly teach metacognitive strategies
  - Comprehending informational text
  - Approaching math word problems
  - Writing informational text
  - Executive Functioning/Organization
I am not saying...

- That this list is an absolute
- Your list may be different
- But, we need to be able to set a foundation for “specialized instruction”
- Sits on top of effective Tier 1 instruction
Think of your typical 8th grade Science textbook

- 8th Grade Science Text
- SWDs in the co-teaching class who:
  - Tourette Syndrome, SLD, Good narrative reader
  - SLD, ADD/OHI, Good language and good narrative reader
  - ADD, TBI, Trouble with organization,
  - EBD, often off task, weak reader
- What will be the barriers for the SWDs (and other struggling students)
Barriers?

- **Vocabulary**
  - Students have limited background information

- **Structure of informational text can be barriers for some students more adept at narrative text**

- **Students may have difficulty differentiating most important messages from less meaningful information**
What specially designed instruction do we need in science for the students?

- **Effective Vocabulary Instruction**
- **Explicit instruction in metacognition**
  - Use one strategy over and over to process the text
  - Eventual release so that the student can use the metacognitive strategy independently
  - **SQ3R** — Some old approaches are good approaches
    - Survey
    - Question
    - Read
    - Recite
    - Review
The goal of metacognitive strategy instruction is to...

- Eventually teach the child to complete the strategy independently
  - Identify when it is needed
  - Use it with fidelity for the intended purpose
With the increased focus on informational text in the Common Core...

- Has there been a major push in teaching all students metacognitive strategies for understanding the text?
- Has there been a major push in teaching students with disabilities metacognitive strategies for understanding the text?
- Would teaching metacognitive strategies be effective for all students?

Need a balance between close reading, text dependent questions and building background knowledge/vocabulary
Let’s talk about mathematics and specially-designed instruction.
National Math Advisory Panel
Partner Discussion
(4 minutes)

☐ Please read the section on struggling students - SWDs and other low achieving students

☐ Discuss with a peer:
  ■ What are your reactions?
  ■ What are the themes?
  ■ Any surprises?
Did it surprise you that they grouped students with disabilities with “low achieving” math students?

Why do you think they did that?
National Math Advisory Panel

- Explicit instruction
  - Explaining and demonstrating
  - Students ask questions and receive feedback
  - Student think aloud
  - Careful sequencing of problems through instructional materials to highlight critical features
  - Direct Instruction
Explicit instruction with students who have mathematical difficulties has shown consistently positive effects on performance with word problems and computation. Results are consistent for students with learning disabilities, as well as other students who perform in the lowest third of a typical class. By the term **explicit instruction**, the Panel means that teachers provide clear models for solving a problem type using an array of examples, that students receive extensive practice in use of newly learned strategies and skills, that students are provided with opportunities to think aloud (i.e., talk through the decisions they make and the steps they take), and that students are provided with extensive feedback.
### Specially Designed Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Classes</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Co-Teaching Classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Behavioral instruction/interv.</td>
<td>- Explicit Instruction</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Practice Turns &amp; Feedback</td>
<td>- Thinking Aloud</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Explicit Instruction</td>
<td>- Concrete-Representational-Abstract</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Vocabulary Instruction</td>
<td>- Metacognitive Strategies</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Metacognitive Strategies</td>
<td>- Focus on Motivation</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most Important!

Your list may be different from my list
Let’s discuss co-teaching

- One Teach/One Assist
- One Teach/One Observe
- Team Teaching
- Alternate Teaching
- Station Teaching
- Parallel Teaching

Friend, M. et. al.
When we write co-teaching in a student’s IEP...

We are obligating to provide specially-designed instruction in that class.
Let’s look at co-teaching

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OeKnM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OeKnM)
- Watch the students
  - What benefit are they getting from having 2 teachers in the room?
When we write co-teaching in a student's IEP, we are obligated to provide specially designed instruction in that class.
How do we make it happen?
How do we make this happen consistently across the district?

- Build a context for change
  - Get in front of Principals as much as you can
  - Meet their priorities by focusing on the CCRPI indicators
  - Identify needs clearly (through data)
  - Have solutions
## Achievement Gap

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elementary School Content Area Assessments</th>
<th>Gap Size</th>
<th>Gap Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRCT: English Language Arts</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRCT: Reading</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRCT: Mathematics</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRCT: Science</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRCT: Social Studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total

Percent of Higher of Gap Size/Gap Change

Weighted Performance

Achievement Gap Points Earned
In Henry County....

- We are not going to call this “Specially Designed Instruction”
- We are going to call it High Leverage Practices
  - Good for all students, but required for the lowest performing 25%
- Partnership between Special Education Director, Director for Teaching and Learning and myself (Director for MTSS/RTI)
Have a clear and simple message

See Project ICE Road Map
Invest deeply into teacher practices

- Get all helpers on the same page
  - Content Coordinators
  - Instructional Coaches
  - Student Support Facilitators
  - Special Education Coordinators

- Provide job-embedded, ongoing professional development, coaching, support, etc.
How do we make it happen?

- Build the context for change through strong partnerships
- Have a clear message and strong road map
- Invest immensely in changing teacher and leader practices