We’re All in This Together

• ACSA Every Child Counts Symposium
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It’s NOT rocket science...

• AND that’s the point!
Session Outcomes

**Honor**
Honor the role that every educator has for every student in today’s inclusive classrooms

**Challenge**
Challenge participants to build professional teams that pull together in the same direction

**Explore**
Explore five approaches that can help teams to build better IEPs, foster effective implementation, and improve learning outcomes for all students

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MINDSET SHIFTS NEEDED!

“All means all” and “each and every,” too!

- ALL means all--teachers and students. Each and every. We are not working for just 11+% of California students. For equity and fairness, we need a major MINDSET SHIFT.

- EDUCATION is the purpose of our efforts--real learning and honest reporting. Yet, often, procedures, disputes, rights, and even the push for inclusion, etc...get in the way. Time to elevate educators, not lawyers and bureaucrats. This too requires a MINDSET SHIFT!

- TRUST is the coin of the realm. Without it (among teachers, parents, students, taxpayers etc...) we ain’t got nothing! We must ask—do we promote trust in all that we do? It’s so basic! Yet, this, too, requires a MINDSET SHIFT!
YES, it’s *NOT* rocket science...but

• In many ways, we’ve lost our way

• We need major mindset shifts

• ....and a return to common sense
THE IDEA IS OVER 40 YEARS OLD. IT SUCCEEDED IN PROVIDING ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR ALL STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.

WE CAN CELEBRATE GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, EVEN AS WE ALSO FACE MANY CHALLENGES.

A MAJOR CHALLENGE DEALS WITH THE DIFFERENT ROLES OF GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATORS.
Let’s get this right from the get go!

Too often, we’re doing it backward. No one likes to be told what to do.

Kids say, “You’re not the boss of me.”

ASK NOT why general educators refuse to implement IEPs and how to get them to change their ways.

ASK HOW to engage all educators to develop those IEPs from the get go!
And, since Endrew F. v. Douglas County, (2017)…..

• Schools need to provide a “cogent and responsive” rationale for their decisions!

A court reviewing an IEP “may fairly expect those [school]authorities to be able to offer a cogent and responsive explanation for their decisions that shows the IEP is reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress in light of his circumstances.”

That is, a FAPE.
So...let’s start with the WHY

There’s a big difference between where we were in 1975, and where we are today

In today’s inclusive settings, we should focus on improved student outcomes—by putting the WHAT before the WHO

Engage all educators for the education of all students and build trust-based teams

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First the **WHAT**, then the **WHO**…

**The WHAT**
- The standard
- The lesson’s purpose
- The game’s rules
- The homework assignment
- The social skills
You get the idea!

**The WHO**
- The student with an IEP or 504 plan
- The advanced student
- The slow learner
- The student who is WBFWR (way behind for whatever reason, thanks to Jim Walsh!)
You get the idea!
A word about Who....

• Does a student with a disability need an IEP or 504 plan?
  “It depends”
  – Not every student will be eligible

• Do we provide differentiated support to students without an IEP or 504 Plan?
Clarify Who the Experts are...

- General Educators...about WHAT and WHO
- Special Educators...about the WHO
- Parents...about the WHO
- Evaluators...about the WHO
It’s my party!
Trust is the Coin of the Realm

- between teacher & student & student & teacher
- between teacher & parent & parent & teacher
- between teacher & teacher & teacher
- between teacher & administrator & administrator & teacher & parent & student

plain language; no acronyms, don’t overpromise and underdeliver; focus on student learning

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Next, Clarify the Purpose of IEPs

What is FAPE? It requires that the “the IEP is reasonably calculated to enable a student to make progress in light of his circumstances.” *Endrew F.*

Does FAPE require us to work towards closing the gap?

It depends on which gap!

- The gap between a student’s potential and current performance—probably yes.
- The gap between a student’s performance and his/her peers, no.

Establish a base of understanding

Adaptation or alteration

Accommodation

Modification
Purpose of IEPs, continued

Adaptation or Alteration

The umbrella term for a change, described in a student’s IEP or 504 plan which may include a(n): accommodation, modification, aids, benefits, and services. The term “adaptation” or “alteration” does not involve the effect of the change on the validity of standards, course requirements, tests, etc.
Accommodation vs. Modification

• An **accommodation** is a change (alteration) in course/test presentation, location, timing, student response, or other attribute which is necessary to provide access for a student with a disability to participate and demonstrate his/her “academic achievement and functional performance” and does not fundamentally alter or lower the standard or expectations.

• A **modification** is a change (alteration) in course/test presentation, location, timing, student response, or other attribute which is necessary to provide access for a student with a disability to participate and demonstrate his/her academic and functional performance and which does fundamentally alter and/or lower the standard or expectations.
In short,

• An **accommodation** does not fundamentally alter the standard; a **modification** does.

• An **accommodation** preserves validity of course, test, etc; a **modification** does not.

• In popular parlance, an accommodation **levels the playing field**; a modification **changes the game**.
First the WHAT...Then the WHO....

Become comfortable with “It depends”.........

- An IEP can include an accommodation and a modification; A 504 plan can only include an accommodation

- Whether a student needs an accommodation or modification DEPENDS on the WHAT first; then, the student’s (the WHO) needs in order to access the material, lesson, test, etc. and to demonstrate what he knows and can do?

- Note—it does not depend on what the student needs in order to succeed or pass the course.
Mindset and Attitude Shift

It’s not about general educators refusing to implement accommodations and modification; it’s about building them together.

Teams must provide a cogent and responsive rationale for their decisions that show that “the IEP is reasonably calculated to enable a student to make progress in light of his circumstances.” Endrew F. Tuscaloosa County Board of Education

Remember! IEPs are not written in stone...update as needed during the year.
On to the **HOW**......to improve learning and build TRUST in the system!

**General Educator’s Role**
Describe the WHAT: course, standard, requirements, etc.
Understand and describe a fundamental alteration with examples.
Get to know the student (the WHO)
Regarding standards, learn to be comfortable with the term, “It depends”....it depends on the WHAT, not the WHO.

**Special Educator’s Role**
Describe the student (the WHO) and what services, aids, benefits, and accommodations/modifications s/he needs in order to access the curriculum and demonstrate what s/he knows and can do.
Work collaboratively with the general educator to carry out class standards and goals.

**Parent’s Role**
Provide information about the student.
Give the final word through consent and due process.
And we hope, work collaboratively with all of the student’s teachers.
The HOW, continued...

Team’s Role

• For the majority of students with disabilities, to maintain general education standards and to meet individual student needs with clarity and honesty.

Team’s Job

• To speak and write in plain language that parents can understand
• To provide opportunity and access to help the student make progress—NOT to guarantee success or to “close the gap” between the student and his/her peers
• NOT to fix the disability
What to do on Monday!
Five Approaches to Help and Inspire Teams to Improve Learning for All Students and Build Better IEPs for Students who Need Them

1. ALL means ALL.
2. Mindset shift
3. Outcomes.
4. It takes all players.
5. Trust.

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We end with the **WHY**, the **WHAT**, & the **WHO**

- ALL students and ALL teachers
- Protect and promote high standards for ALL students
- Provide access when and as needed
- Elevate true learning for ALL without promising success for any student
- And, with all of the above, trust will thrive!
- You can smile because you’re doing vital work!

- **Remember.... While it’s NOT rocket science, it’s so much more for our students and our nation!**
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