

National **Charter School** **Resource** Center

Welcome to the Webinar!

Meeting the Challenge to Serve All Students: Charter Schools and Special Education

We will be starting soon.



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The National Charter School Resource Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement and administered by Learning Point Associates, an affiliate of American Institutes for Research, under contract number ED-04-CO-0109/0004.

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Meeting the Challenge to Serve All Students: Charter Schools and Special Education

March 16, 2011



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About the Resource Center

The **U.S. Department of Education** is committed to promoting effective practices, providing technical assistance, and disseminating the resources critical to ensuring the success of charter schools across the country. To that end, the Education Department, under a contract with Learning Point Associates, an affiliate of American Institutes for Research, has developed the **National Charter School Resource Center**.

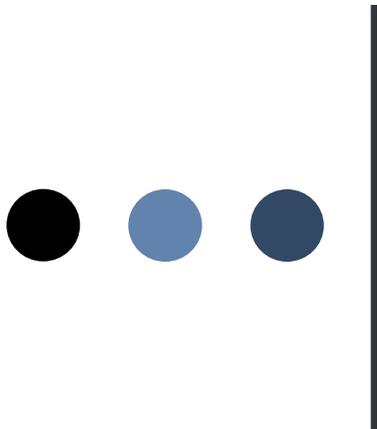
Presenters

Lauren Morando Rhim, Ph.D.

President, LMR Consulting

Allison Gandhi, Ph.D.

Senior Research Analyst,
American Institutes for Research

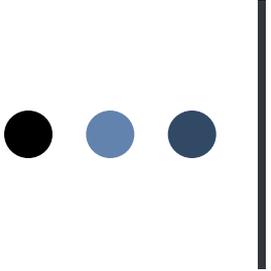


Special Education in the Charter School Sector

Lauren Morando Rhim, Ph.D.

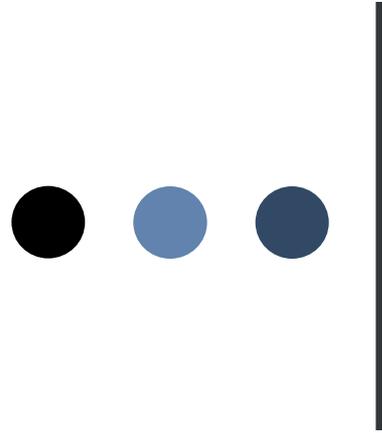
*LMR Consulting for the National Charter School
Resource Center*

March 16, 2011 Webinar

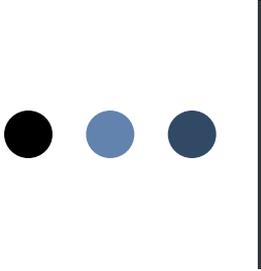


Webinar Overview

- Guiding principles
- Research
- Promising practices
- Guiding questions
- References and resources

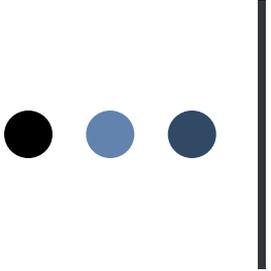
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Guiding Principles



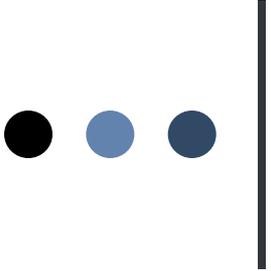
Guiding Principle I: Follow the law...

With the exception of state and district rules explicitly waived by state charter school laws, charter schools are public schools and required to abide by the same rules and regulations as traditional public schools (e.g., ADA, IDEA, NLCB, and Section 504)



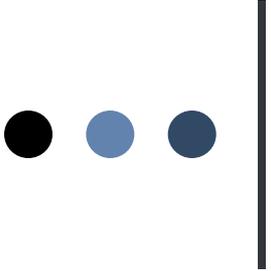
Guiding Principle II: Make smart decisions...

- Decisions related to educating students with disabilities must ensure that students are provided a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE)
 - Definitions of these principles are complex and have been the focus of extensive litigation, including multiple influential Supreme Court cases.
 - Free and appropriate public education aims to ensure that children with disabilities will receive, without cost, the services and programs selected by the individualized education program team to meet students' individual needs.
 - “Appropriate” is interpreted to include a very broad continuum of services and supports required to allow a child with a disability to access the general education curriculum.



Guiding Principle III: Develop a plan...

- The Individual Education Program (IEP) details:
 - a student's present performance levels,
 - annual and short terms objectives,
 - special education, and
 - related services to be provided.
- IEPs are developed by a team comprised of teachers, specialists, parents, and the student when appropriate.

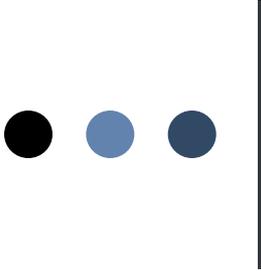


Guiding Principle IV: Implement the plan...

- Decisions related to educating students with disabilities must reflect IEPs.
- Schools are responsible for ensuring that students with disabilities receive the supports and services outlined in their IEP.

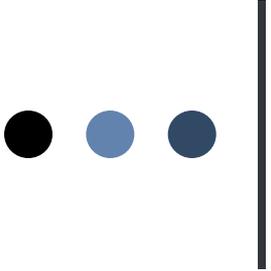


Research



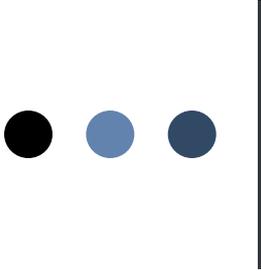
Research: Special Education in the Charter Sector

- Enrollment of students with disabilities in the charter sector
- Opportunities associated with creating a new school
- Challenges associated with providing special education and related services
 - Challenges occur at both the policy-level and at the implementation-level
 - Charter operators struggle to navigate policy issues while negotiating day to day implementation issues.



Enrollment

- Charter schools are serving students with disabilities
- As a proportion of the total school population, enrollment ranges from 0-100%

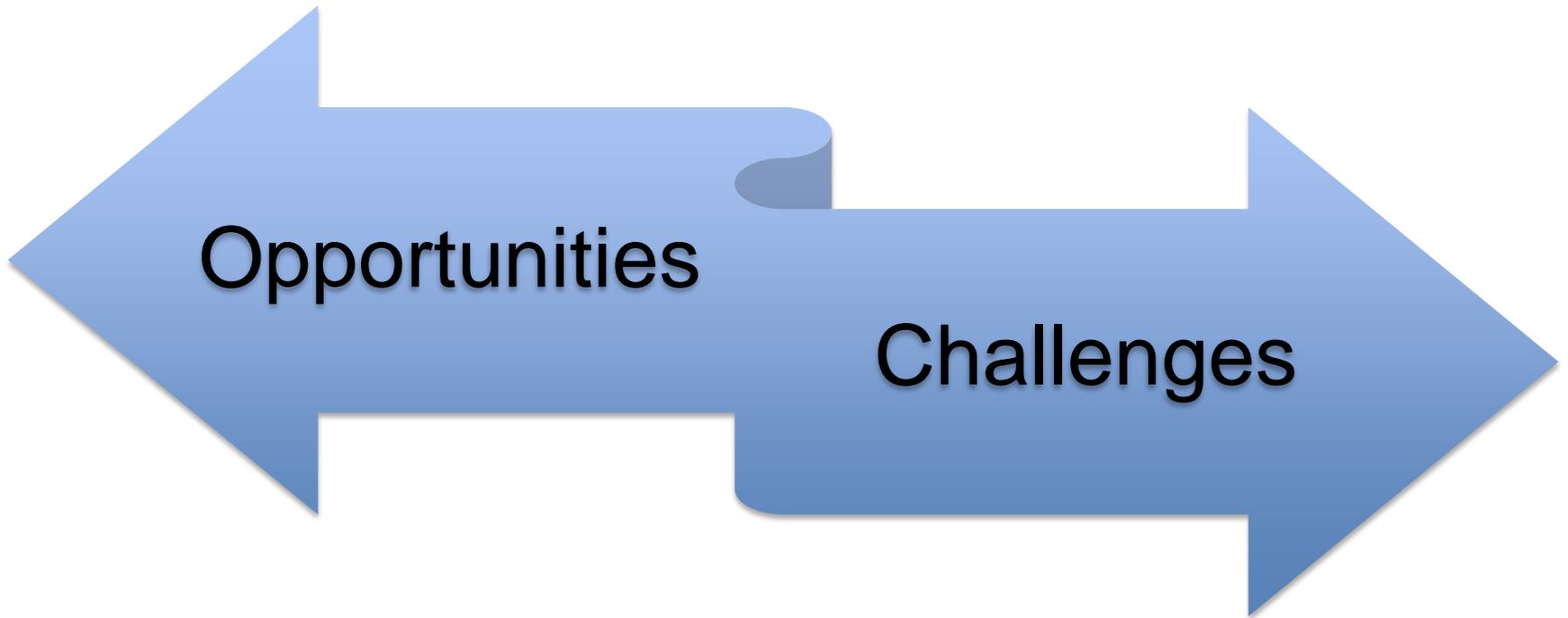


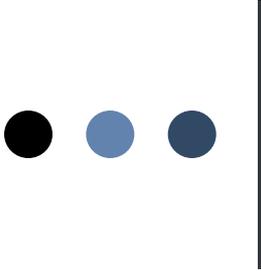
Enrollment cont.

- No recent, national, definitive analysis of enrollment of students with disabilities in charter sector
- Survey data from 2003-2004 found that students with disabilities represented 10% (Rhim et al, 2007) of the charter school population, less than the average for all public schools (i.e., 11.5%- US Department of Education)
- Multiple factors influence enrollment in charter schools (e.g., parental choice, state/district special education policy, funding, and lack of technical knowledge on the part of charter schools)

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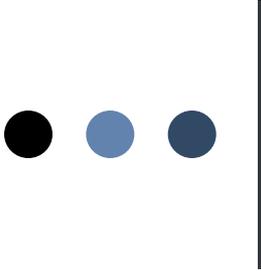
Inherent Tensions





Special Education Opportunities

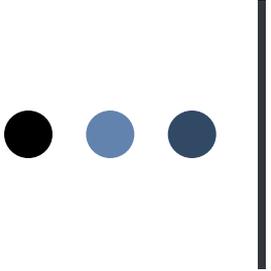
- Create-mission driven schools that include students with disabilities by design rather than as an add-on
- Develop innovative service provision models in a time-compressed manner absent having to overcome existing policies and practices
- Cultivate special education infrastructures and conduct research to track effectiveness and financial sustainability
- Provide online and hybrid/blended learning environments that support highly individualized learning



Policy Challenges

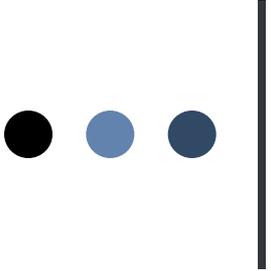
Policy tensions associated with implementing special education in the charter school sector

- *Legal Identity (i.e., LEA or Part of an LEA)*
- *Autonomy and Regulation*
- *Parental Choice and Team Decision-Making*
- *Federal, state, and local funding systems*



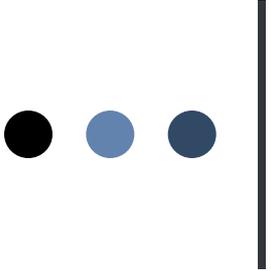
Legal Status of School

- Charter schools that are their own district (i.e., local education agencies) are ***wholly responsible*** for fulfilling obligations assigned to districts under IDEA
- Charter schools that are part of a district ***share responsibility*** for fulfilling obligations outlined under IDEA



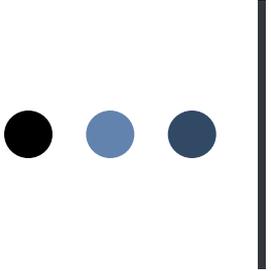
LEA Charter Schools

- Develop policies and procedures to provide required special education and related services to students with disabilities
- Develop internal special education infrastructure *or* identify potential external partners that can provide capacity



Non-LEA Charter Schools

- Share responsibility for delivering special education and related services to students with disabilities with authorizer/district
- Key issue is articulating roles and responsibilities



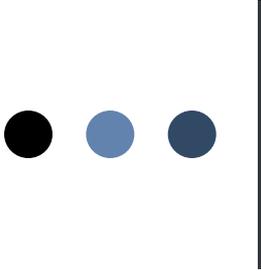
Pros and Cons of LEA Status

Own LEA...

- Pro
 - Autonomy
 - Opportunity to innovate
- Con
 - Lack of scale
 - Limited depth/breadth of expertise
 - Limited access to external supports

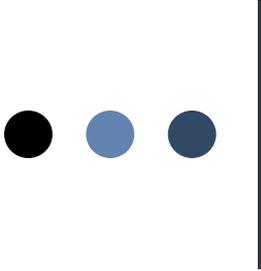
Part of an LEA...

- Pro
 - Access to depth/breadth of expertise
 - Economies of scale
- Con
 - Lack of autonomy
 - Ambiguous roles/responsibilities
 - Existing practice



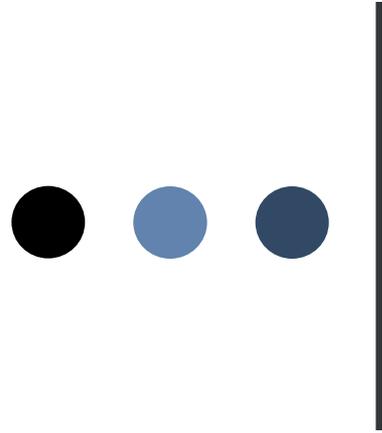
Implementation Challenges

- Knowledge gap
- Navigating relationship with authorizer
- Charter school characteristics
(i.e., small, mission driven, new, limited resources)
- Authorizer characteristics
(i.e., inexperience, multiple roles, limited resources)
- *Evolving infrastructure*

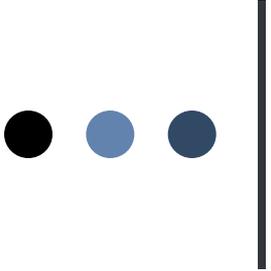


Special Education Infrastructure

A “special education infrastructure” is a local education agency, an intermediate administrative unit, a cooperative, a community based non-profit, a comprehensive education service provider, or other ***external entity*** that provides a charter school with fiscal, human, legal, and organizational ***capacity*** that is otherwise virtually impossible to amass in a single school

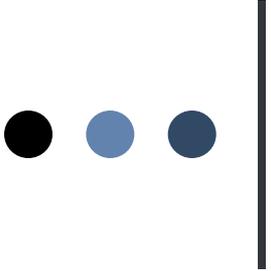
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Promising Practices



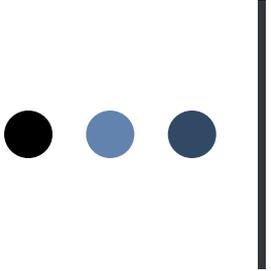
School Mission and Vision

- Leadership committed to philosophy of inclusion
- Explicit and authentic commitment to the tenets of IDEA as opposed to compliance



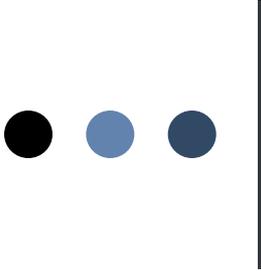
Strong Support for Teachers

- Data-driven instructional decisions
 - *Strong **R**esponse **t**o **I**ntervention model in place*
 - *Identify where students are to individualize*
 - *Inform/improve instructional practice*
- Targeted and relevant professional development



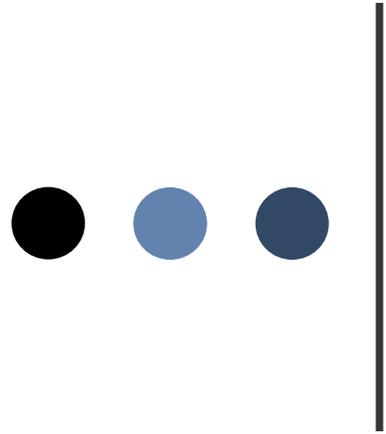
Customized Student Services

- Effective, not segmented, instructional practices
 - Differentiated/individualized instruction for all students “normalizes” special education
- Best instructional practices for children without disabilities benefit children with disabilities
- A safe and supportive environment

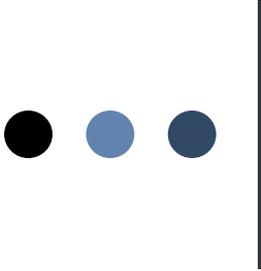


Case Study: Chime Elementary and Middle School

- Based on a pilot program developed by California State University, Northridge which built on a commitment to full-inclusion using co-teaching, the CHIME schools embrace full-inclusion of students with disabilities.
- Seamless inclusion is supported by a co-teaching model, intense classroom support, regular planning for instructional personnel, and a constructivist instructional delivery model supported by teacher training provided by Mel Levine's *Schools Attuned* program.
- All children enrolled at the two CHIME schools have individualized learning plans.
- Elementary school enrolls 249 students and the middle school 229 students.
- 13% of the students at both schools have a diagnosed disability that qualifies them for special education including children with multiple disabilities and severe disabilities
- Elementary school has met adequate yearly progress targets for the past three years
- Middle school has met AYP two of the last three years.

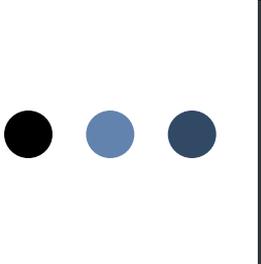


Guiding Questions



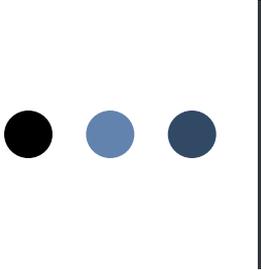
Issues to Consider: Overview

- Human resources (*special education teachers and specialists*)
- Curriculum and assessment (*accommodations and modifications*)
- Professional development (*inclusive practices*)
- Administration (*special education paperwork and reporting*)
- Special education funding (*accurate reporting, sources, timing*)
- Facilities (*accessible, universal design goals*)
- Transportation (*required if part of IEP*)



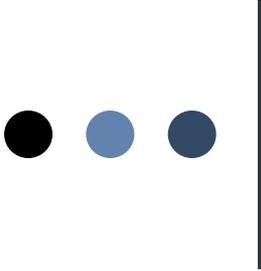
Issues to Consider: The Details...

- What is the projected cost of special education program (e.g., percent of operating budget)?
- How will federal, state, and local special education dollars be disseminated (\$ or services)?
- Who will provide ongoing legal guidance related to special education and related services?
- Who is responsible for ensuring that the school facility meets the requirements of other related laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504?
- Who will manage IEP transition procedures?



Issues to Consider: The Details...

- Who will evaluate and identify children referred to special education?
- Who will develop, review and revise IEPs?
- Does enrollment in a charter school represent a change of placement for students with an IEP?
- Who will integrate special education services and related services into the general education program?
- Who will deliver special education and related services?

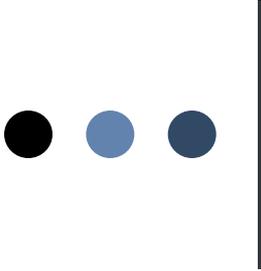


Issues to Consider: The Details

- How will student discipline be handled?
- Who will handle programming disputes involving parents of students with disabilities?
- Who will ensure confidentiality of special education records?
- Who will secure and manage potential external contracts with special education vendors?
- Who will provide technical assistance and training?

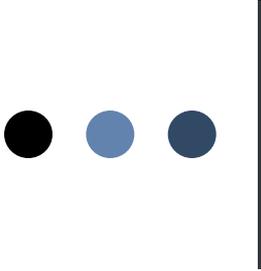


References and Resources



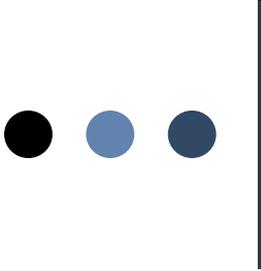
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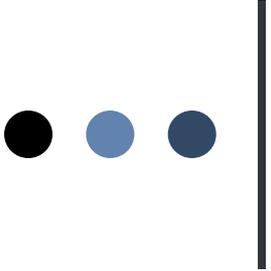
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- U.S. Department of Education. (2005). *The 27th Annual report to Congress on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*. Available at <http://www.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/osep/2005/parts-b-c/index.html>.



Resources

- National Association of Charter School Authorizers:
<http://www.qualitycharters.org/>
- National Association of State Directors of Special Education
 - Primers on Special Education in Charter Schools:
http://www.uscharterschools.org/cs/spedp/print/uscs_docs/spedp/home.htm
- National Charter School Resource Center:
<http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/>
- National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHY):
<http://www.nichcy.org/InformationResources/Pages/default.aspx>



Questions

Lauren Morando Rhim

LMR Consulting

Lauren_Rhim@LMRConsulting.us

Presenter

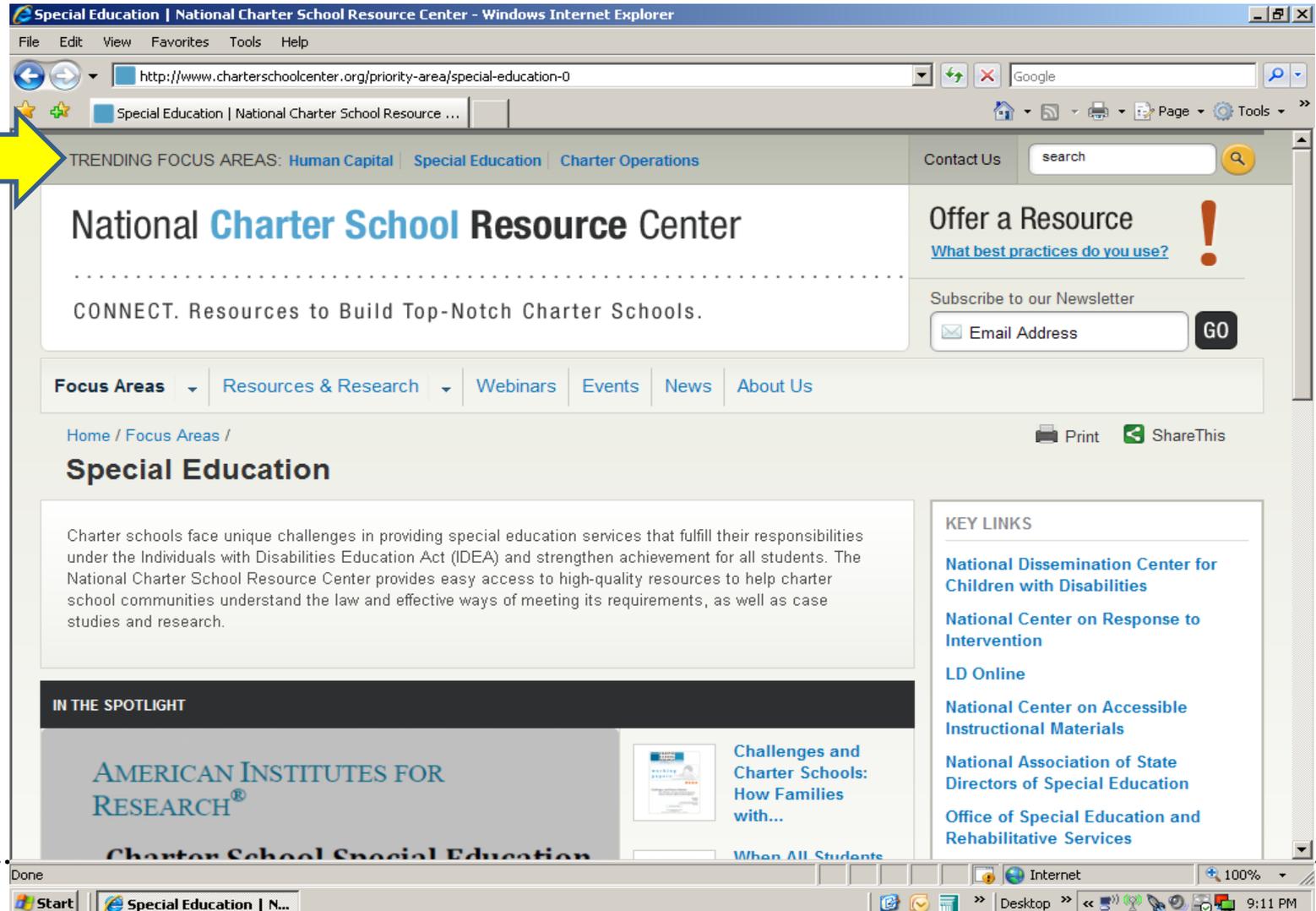
Allison Gandhi, Ph.D.

Senior Research Analyst,
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Resources on Charter Schools and Special Education

- National Charter School Resource Center (NCSRC) website
 - Trending Focus Area: Special Education (<http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/priority-area/special-education-0>)
 - Key links
 - Articles and reports
 - NCSRC–commissioned report: *Charter School Special Education Cooperatives*

Resources on Charter Schools and Special Education



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http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/priority-area/special-education-0

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Special Education

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Charter schools face unique challenges in providing special education services that fulfill their responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and strengthen achievement for all students. The National Charter School Resource Center provides easy access to high-quality resources to help charter school communities understand the law and effective ways of meeting its requirements, as well as case studies and research.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

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Challenges and Charter Schools: How Families with...
When All Students

KEY LINKS

- [National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities](#)
- [National Center on Response to Intervention](#)
- [LD Online](#)
- [National Center on Accessible Instructional Materials](#)
- [National Association of State Directors of Special Education](#)
- [Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services](#)

Done

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Questions?



Raise your hand or enter your question in the chat box
on the left side of your screen.

Thank you for participating.

- We look forward to your participation in future webinars hosted by the National Charter School Resource Center.
- This webinar will be archived at the following website:
<http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/webinars>
- Please share your feedback with us through the evaluation.

National **Charter School** **Resource** Center

National Charter School Resource Center

1000 Thomas Jefferson Street N.W.

Washington, DC 20007-3835

Phone: 202-403-6222

Website: www.charterschoolcenter.org/

E-mail: charterschoolcenter@learningpt.org



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