



**SPECIAL EDUCATION START-UP & IMPLEMENTATION
TOOLS FOR
CHARTER SCHOOL LEADERS &
SPECIAL EDUCATION MANAGERS**

Beth Giovannetti - Educational Support Systems, Inc.

**“Building the Capacity of Charter Schools:
Effectively Serving Students with Disabilities”**

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INTRODUCTION

- Guidance and tools exist to support the charter school application process and full operation, but not to guide charter schools in building a program from the ground up.
- The vast majority of the 5,000 plus charter schools are individual, stand alone LEAs , solely responsible for the start-up and implementation of special education programs on day one of operation.
- Without support of a district central office or the resources of a CMO/EMO, charter schools are alone in their responsibility to create high quality legally compliant programs to serve students with disabilities.



METHODOLOGY

- Surveyed charter school leaders and special education managers at 2011 National Charter Schools Conference re: critical areas of need
- Conducted an extensive review of existing federally-funded resources for concrete, user-friendly tools to support identified needs



CREATING A FORMAT

- Based upon data gathered from charter schools, created an outline of 15 topic areas which charter schools must address to build sped programs
- Data re: resources related to the 15 issues were gathered in three broad areas...
 1. Need to Know: Information required to understand the issue
 2. Research: Available studies on the issue
 3. Tools: Strategies, guides & other tools available related to the issue
- Included existing tools under each topic area; created new tools where none existed in order to provide a comprehensive how-to guide in building sped programs from the ground up.



ONE: INTRODUCTION TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

- Need to Know:
 - OSEP website
 - IDEA, 504 and related laws
 - NASDSE Primers
 - NICHCY Top 10 Basics of Special Education
 - CO League of Charter Schools Compliance Plan
- Research:
 - Project Intersect Publications
 - Special Education Challenges and Opportunities in the Charter School Sector
- Tools:
 - TA Customizer – state specific primers
 - A Cost Estimation Tool for Charter Schools



TWO: NONDISCRIMINATORY ENROLLMENT

- Need to Know:
 - Charter Schools Program Nonregulatory Guidance
 - Enrollment and Lottery Guidelines – DC Public Charter School Board
- Research:
 - Charter Schools and Students with Disabilities: A National Study: Final Report – Westat
 - Project Search: Final Report – NASDSE
- Tools:
 - Measuring Up to the Model: A Tool for Comparing State Charter School Laws – National Alliance for Public Charter Schools



THREE: SPECIAL EDUCATION BASICS

- Need to Know:

IDEA 2004 – Disability Categories & Definitions

- Tools:

Disability & Special Education Acronyms - NICHCY

10 Steps in SPED Enrollment - NICHCY



FOUR: IMPROVING SCHOOL CULTURE

- Need to Know:
 - Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS)
 - Behavior, Assessment, Plans, and Positive Supports – NICHCY
 - Positive Behavior Supports – National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)
 - Functional Behavioral Assessment – American Institutes for Research (AIR)
- Research:
 - Social Skills and Academic Achievement* - NICHCY
 - “Syntheses of School-wide PBIS from Mental Health Institute”
- Tools:
 - Bill of Rights for Behaviorally Challenging Kids* – Dr. Ross Greene
 - School-Wide Positive Behavior Support: Implementers’ Blueprint and Self-Assessment* – OSEP
 - An array of additional tools from NICHCY, What Works Clearing House and others



FIVE: SETTING UP A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SEA/LEA

- Need to Know:

Importance of understanding this relationship and the responsibility connected to each role

- Research:

Project SEARCH - NASDSE

- Tools:

Primer for Charter School Operators – NASDSE



SIX:

DISCIPLINE, SUSPENSION & EXPULSION

- Need to Know:

Guidance on Discipline Procedures – OSEP

Placement and School Discipline - NICHCY

Discipline, in Detail - NICHCY

- Research:

Three sources of interesting research including school discipline and its connection to juvenile justice, suspension and expulsion fact sheet and a piece that outlines the characteristics of bullying and its victims.

- Tools:

Letter about harassment and bullying from the Office of Civil Rights including background, summary and facts that every operator should know and a school climate toolkit to support school wide discipline action planning



SEVEN & EIGHT: HIRING A SPECIAL ED COORDINATOR/MANAGER & TEACHERS & SETTING UP ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS

- Need to Know & Research:

Chapter on hiring special education staff offers information on the connection between hiring high quality staff and the performance of SWDs as well as a policy analysis on the retention and attrition of special education directors and strategies to increase longevity of staff.

- Tools:

Offers concrete, hands on tools to support hiring and employment including proposed hiring process as well as job descriptions and performance measures for the special education coordinator and teacher

Chapter includes a variety of sample tools and templates to support special education staff in creating student files which are compliant with special education regulations and include all necessary components, quality practice and documentation.



NINE: EMPLOYING/CONTRACTING WITH RELATED SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Need to Know:

This section guides users in what to consider when choosing and contracting with a partner in the delivery of special education services in charter schools including evaluators and related service providers.

- Tools:

Chapter offers concrete, hands on templates and tools to support this process including:

- Things to consider when hiring an outside service provider

- Job Descriptions and Performance Measures for Related Service providers

- Clinician IEP Contact Sheet

- Progress Note Format for Related Service Providers



TEN: DEVELOPING A PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- Need to Know & Research:

Reminder that the “No Child Left Behind Act of 2001” (NCLB) brought about a renewed mandate for schools, districts and states to prove all students are learning through quantitative data.

This chapter also includes research conducted by NASDSE which offers a detailed background on the assessment requirements of IDEA and NCLB and includes information on including SWDs in assessment.

- Tools:

Offers concrete, hands on tools developed and used by educators to assist in gathering and using data to make decisions that will drive student performance including:

- Student Profile Template

- Special Education Tracker

- Self Reporting Report Card

- Parent Satisfaction Survey



ELEVEN:

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

- Need to Know & Research:

Offers a reminder that creating an RTI framework to support the needs of all struggling students is a requirement for every charter school.

This chapter also includes a paper that provides a basic overview of RTI including a definition of levels of intervention and how to identify and monitor students at risk conducted by the National Center on RTI and AIR.

- Tools:

This chapter offers a wide variety of concrete, hands on tools to support educators in creating and implementing an RTI framework, building a cache of interventions and tools to measure and respond to student progress.



TWELVE:

BUILDING A CONTINUUM OF SPECIALIZED INSTRUCTION OPTIONS IN SUPPORT OF CORE SUBJECT AREAS

- Need to Know & Research:

This chapter includes a discussion of the responsibility of charter schools to create a continuum of instruction options to meet the needs of SWDs.

This chapter also includes research on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) conducted by the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) which offers an explanation of UDL.

- Tools:

Offers concrete, hands on tools recommended by CAST and charter schools across the country. This list of tools is organized by subject area and need including tools to support the general curriculum, reading, writing, math, life, social and vocational needs.



THIRTEEN: TRAINING GENERAL EDUCATORS

- Need to Know:

This chapter discusses the importance of the role of the general educator in the creation of strong programs for SWDs focusing on the philosophy that all teachers embrace all students and underscoring the responsibility of the general educator in driving learning for all students.

- Tools:

This chapter offers helpful tools which summarize the role of the general educator as part of the IEP team and learning process and offers a tool to support collaboration between special and general education staff in the identification and service to SWDs.



FOURTEEN: PARTNERING WITH PARENTS

- Need to Know & Research:

This chapter highlights the importance of parents as critical partners in a child's education.

This chapter also includes research conducted by the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE) which conducted a review of the research and found that parent involvement is positively correlated with higher grades, test scores, better social skills, attendance and graduation rates.

- Tools:

Includes a tool created in a Q & A format which explains difficult topics in plain, user friendly language for parents to understand the content and guidelines of NCLB and IDEA and their role in their child's education.

NCLB and IDEA: What Parents of Students with Disabilities Need to Know -
National Center on Educational Outcomes



FIFTEEN:

LOOKING FORWARD: INTEGRATING COMMON CORE STANDARDS & RELATED ASSESSMENTS

- This final chapter discusses newly adopted Common Core State Standards, the development of new assessment systems to align with these standards and the federally funded projects awarded to states in the development of these plans.
- Also highlighted are awards to other groups of states to design new assessments for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and an assessment system to support English learners.



Q & A
&
DISCUSSION

Beth Giovannetti
Educational Support Systems, Inc.

bgiovannetti@spedsupport.com

(202) 669-6425

