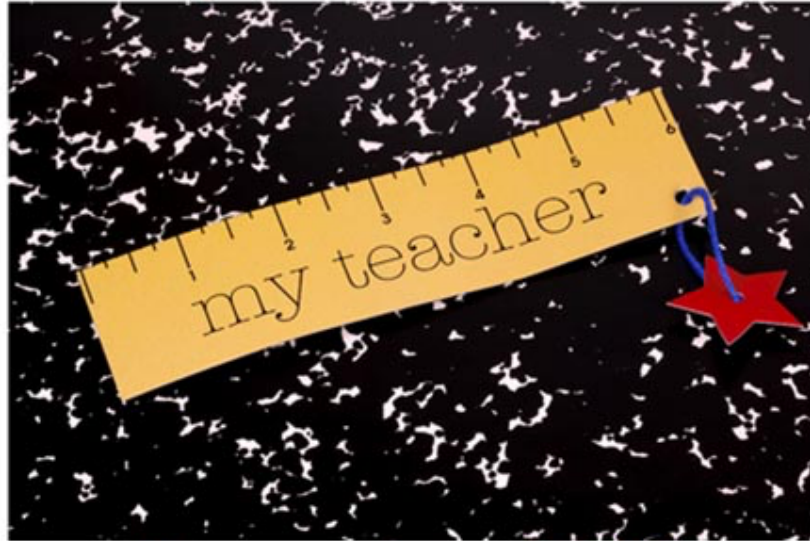


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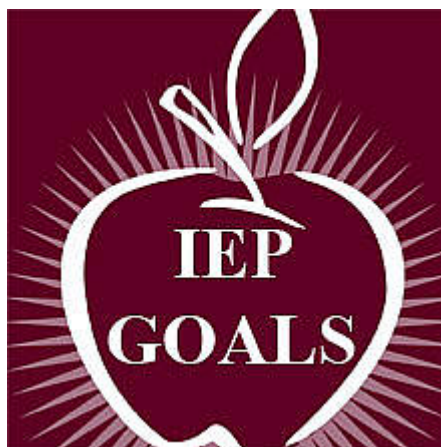


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Impact of Least Restrictive Environment Interpretation for Students with Severe Disabilities

By Amanda Berndt

Florida International University

Abstract

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, defines how students with disabilities shall have access to the general education curriculum and non-disabled peers in the school setting. A student with severe disabilities may be forced into a placement that is very restrictive, despite the possibility that accommodations and modifications may enable the student to remain in a less restrictive placement, when adequate resources and programming are not readily available. The increase in inclusion of students with disabilities into the general education setting, the decrease in number of students with mild disabilities in restrictive placements and the percentage of students with severe disabilities in restrictive placements remaining static, it is possible a reinterpretation of Least Restrictive Environment is warranted.

Impact of Least Restrictive Environment Interpretation for Students with Severe Disabilities

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, students with disabilities must be educated with their non-disabled peers as much as possible, and services that remove them from their peers must occur only when, “the nature of severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aides and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily,” (McLeskey, Landers, Hoppey and Williamson, 2011, p. 60). This act defines how students with disabilities shall have access to the general education curriculum and non-disabled peers in the school setting. Much research has focused on inclusive education practices, with supplementary supports and services integrated into the general education classroom. Research by McLeskey and colleagues (2011) analyzed the placement trends for students with Learning Disabilities (LD), which illustrated a decrease in restrictive placements for students with LD. From 1990 to 2008, the percentage of students educated outside of the general education setting, in self-contained or separate school settings, dropped from 22% to only 10% of students with the LD classification (McLeskey, 2011). There may be many reasons for this decline, including more accurate identification of disabilities, advancements in assistive technology, inclusion initiatives or universal design for learning (UDL). Kurth, Morningstar and Kozleski (2014) cite data that indicate the rate of students with severe disabilities that are segregated from their non-disabled peers has not changed over time. This paper investigates possible causes and solutions for discrepancies with a focus on reinterpretation of Least Restrictive Environment.

Review of Literature

Segregated Settings

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004, defines three categories of placement as follows: Category A, students remain in general education for 80% or more of their day, Category B, students remain in general education for less than 40% of their day and Category C, whereas students are educated in separate schools, homebound/hospital placements or residential facilities (Kurth, et al., 2014). Students that fall into Category C, are subject to the most restrictive placements. Kurth and colleagues analyzed Annual Performance Reports and isolated baseline percentages of students in Category C placements and the change in percentages from 2004-2012. The authors hypothesized that students, with the most severe impairments may truly benefit from a functional curriculum, however current research indicates that students with low-incidence can greatly benefit from an inclusive placement (2014). They found a disproportionate placement of students with low-incidence disabilities in these highly restrictive placements.

Placement Considerations

Students with disabilities must be educated in the Least Restrictive Environment, however there is a continuum of services available. Special education supports and services may be implemented and incorporated into the general education setting through inclusion (where students remain in the general education setting for most or all of their day) and resource (where students are pulled out of the general education setting for supports and services but remain in general education for part of their day). The more restrictive placement options include self-contained (where students spend the majority of their day in the special education setting), separate school (with no non-disabled peers) and institutional placements, such as treatment centers or hospitals (Obiakor, 2011). There are no clearly defined parameters for determining which placement is most appropriate for students with disabilities and must be made on a case-by-case basis, reviewed annually.

Historically, students with disabilities were not educated with their non-disabled peers, and were placed in programs that did not align with state learning outcomes for students. These outdated programs, with little accountability, had allowed students to complete a course of study devoid of literacy and math skills. Obiakor (2011) advocates for an “Accessible, equitable and inclusive,” education for all students (p. 11). The passing of IDEA and its reauthorization has increased access to the general education curriculum and non-disabled peers for most students with disabilities. Common Core State Standards require all students address the same grade level expectations while No Child Left Behind mandates accountability testing, which may impact these outdated programs.

Supporting Inclusion

“Placement in a general education classroom alone will not guarantee improved outcomes for students with severe disabilities – effective supports for learning and participation must also be in place,” (Kurth, Lyon and Shogren, 2015, p. 262). Students with severe disabilities benefit from inclusion in the general education setting, when they are provided adequate accommodations, adaptations, supports and services. This structure provides social interactions with non-disabled peers, helps build meaningful connections with curriculum content, enhances skill acquisition and expands communication opportunities.

Kurth and colleagues observed practices supporting 18 students with severe disabilities through survey, site visit and interview, identifying promising practices for building inclusion programs (2015). Teaching arrangements included co-teaching, volunteer supports and paraprofessional educators interacting with the class and individual students. Supports included, but were not limited to communication supports, physical and sensory supports and behavior supports. A Universal Design for Learning approach included various methods of presenting material, interacting with content and expression of skills.

These practices produced a variety of engagement levels including “actively, passively, not engaged or not possible to be engaged,” (Kurth, 2015, p. 266). Activities included large group, small group and individual teaching opportunities. Kurth and colleagues conclude that inclusion works when whole class supports are in place, with a flexible, collaborative teaching approach and individual student supports.

Stakeholder Reflection on Inclusion Outcomes

Downing and Peckham-Hardin (2007) focused research efforts on the effects of inclusion through stakeholder reflection. Fifty eight parents, teachers and paraprofessionals were interviewed in an open-ended semi-structured format and the data was analyzed using a constant comparison approach. After coding the responses, the researchers found most interviewees felt students were successful in the inclusion setting, however two issues emerged as significant. The first issue addressed behavioral challenges, particularly with aggressive and disruptive behaviors (Downing and Peckham-Hardin, 2007). The students spent substantial time out of the classroom for cooling off or taking breaks to avoid negative behaviors. The second issue focused on skills and content, teachers and paraprofessionals both cited worries about measuring what the students were truly learning and how best to meet the needs of the students with severe disabilities. In follow up questioning, participants expressed “Mastery of this material was not necessarily the highest priority,” (Downing and Peckham-Hardin, 2007, p. 22), however exposure to general education curriculum was important to parents. Most participants described peers as appropriate role models, conversational partners and natural supports, all of which positively impact their students with severe disabilities.

Most participants identified the use of assistive technology and modifications to provide a relevant and meaningful experience in the classroom (Downing and Peckham-Hardin, 2007). Assistive technology, ranging from no- and low-tech (slant boards, adapted chairs and pointers) to high-tech (laptops, switches and tablets) can increase student engagement and remove participation barriers when implemented effectively. These supports enable students to interact with peers, practice skills and access breaks when needed.

One of the most important pieces for inclusion, according to the stakeholders, is, “Having well trained, highly skilled and knowledgeable staff,” to support students in the classroom (Downing and Peckham-Hardin, 2007, p.24). Collaboration with paraprofessionals and itinerant therapists supports teachers and the consistency necessary for students with severe disabilities. This collaborative approach ensures that the supports and services the students require are implemented consistently and reviewed for efficacy.

Outcomes for inclusion, according to the participants, include leading a “normal life” however they have concerns for the future. “Having a normal life included typical post school outcomes such as employment, college and living independently,” (Downing and Peckham-Hardin, 2007, p. 26). Parents also expressed their desire for their children to have families and friends, finding their place in society. Middle school teacher participants expressed some concern over independence and employment after formal schooling. In both cases, the participants felt the inclusion experience positively impacted future success.

Interpreting “Least Restrictive Environment”

In June of 2015, Cari Carson published an article in the Michigan Law Review discussing different interpretations of Least Restrictive Environment and evaluating the litigious implications of *School Committee of Burlington v. Department of Education*. This court case set the precedence that school districts may be required to pay for a private special education placement if appropriate supports, services and placement are not available (Carson, 2015). Carson differentiates between these interpretations naming them “Least Restrictive Environment Available” and “Least Restrictive Environment Needed,” (2015, p. 1400). The Least Restrictive Environment Available approach leaves room for error and may inadvertently place students in overly restrictive placements (Carson, 2015). A student with severe disabilities may be forced into a placement that is very restrictive, despite the possibility that accommodations and modifications may enable the student to remain in a less restrictive placement. A Least Restrictive Environment Needed interpretation provides increased opportunities for inclusion based on the student’s needs. Least Restrictive Environment may be interpreted either way under the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA. As a part of IDEA, parents have the right to question the educational classification of their child’s disability, supports and services available to their child and the placement determined for their child, which is contested through a Due Process hearing. Courts typically align with the Least Restrictive Environment Available interpretation, based primarily on the availability of resources rather than the needs of the individual student.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The increase in inclusion, the decrease in number of students with mild disabilities in restrictive placements and the percentage of students with severe disabilities in restrictive placements remaining static, it is possible a reinterpretation of Least Restrictive Environment is warranted. Following the Least Restrictive Environment Needed model, Carson recommends, “(1) identifying a student’s education needs, (2) assessing the availability of needed support services in the public school setting, and (3) requiring the creation and implementation of needed programs in less restrictive settings where reasonable,” (2015, p. 1417). This process would put structures in place, which support a greater number of students and ensure a Free and Appropriate Public Education. In some situations, a temporary placement in a restrictive environment may be used to provide services while resources and programming are created. The student would return to the least restrictive placement once services become available (Carson, 2015). In this way, students would retain special education supports and services during the transition. Additional research should be conducted to determine if changes stimulated by the Least Restrictive Environment Needed interpretation impact the percentage of students with severe disabilities in restrictive placements. Data should be analyzed to determine how much an inclusive education affects students’ post school outcomes.

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Building Successful Partnerships Between Families and Schools: A Review of the Literature

By

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Abstract

Parental involvement has been considered an essential component of effective schools since the initiation of Head Start in the 1960's (Epstein & Hollifield, 1996). Today's educators are encouraged, and sometimes required, to collaborate with each other, business and community leaders, parents, and human service agencies (Russell & Flynn, 2000). It is easy to forget, however, that collaboration is not an easy task, nor does simply calling a meeting create a partnership. When partnerships are developed and implemented correctly, they can strengthen families, schools, and communities (Furman & Jackson, 2002). This paper focuses on partnering with families and examines school-family partnerships by: (a) discussing the types of family involvement identified in the literature, (b) exploring the rationale for school-family partnerships, (c) delineating benefits of school-family partnerships, and (d) identifying important elements of school-family partnerships.

Building Successful Partnerships Between Schools and Families: A Review of the Literature

Community partnerships are crucial for ensuring quality outcomes for all children, especially students with disabilities. Today's educators are encouraged, and sometimes required, to collaborate with one another, as well as with business and community leaders, parents, and human service agencies (Russell & Flynn, 2000). It is easy to forget, however, that collaboration is not an easy task, nor does simply calling a meeting create a partnership.

Collaboration with families takes place today because the problems faced by many young people are so complex that solutions can no longer be implemented in one setting (Russell & Flynn, 2000). Parental involvement has been considered an essential component of effective schools since the initiation of Head Start in the 1960's (Epstein & Hollifield, 1996). Educators over the decades have been working to increase family, school, and community connections that will improve student attitudes, behavior, and learning. These concerted efforts have brought about a common language that refers to (a) families, instead of only parents; (b) partnerships, focusing on shared responsibilities; and (c) types of involvement, recognizing the many different ways in which families and schools can collaborate to assist students. Research has noted that we have moved from simple parent involvement to more detailed school-family partnerships (Epstein, 2010; Nitecki, 2015).

By involving parents, there is a positive effect on students, schools, and families (Epstein, 2010). Schools and families will see improvement in school programs and school climate. Additionally, Epstein (2010) highlights the following: (a) an increase in parent skills and leaderships, (b) families will be provided with appropriate services and supports, (c) parents will be connected to other families, and (d) teachers will receive help with their work.

A search of literature from 1991 to the present via EBSCOHost and the search terms “partnerships”, “schools”, “comprehensive school reform”, “families”, “parents”, “special education”, and “school-family partnerships” was conducted. This paper focuses on partnering with families and examines school-family partnerships by: (a) discussing the types of family involvement identified in the literature, (b) exploring the rationale for school-family partnerships, (b) delineating benefits of school-family partnerships, and (c) identifying important elements of school-family partnerships.

Types of Family Involvement Identified by Epstein

Family involvement in schools will vary for different parents and a variety of schools; some family involvement will include partnerships between families and school personnel, while other involvement will not. Six types of family involvement have been identified in the research: (a) parenting, (b) communicating, (c) volunteering, (d) learning at home, (e) decision making, and (f) collaborating with the community (Epstein, 2010; Epstein et al., 2002).

The first form of family involvement, parenting, involves helping parents care for their children and may include activities such as trainings on parenting skills, GED courses, and afterschool programs to watch children while parents are at work (Epstein, 2010; Epstein et al, 2002).

The second type of family involvement is communicating and includes intentional, effective communication systems between families and schools; these communications might include parent-teacher conferences, translators for non-English speaking families, phone calls, newsletters, and clear information about school policies and procedures (Epstein, 2010; Epstein et al, 2002).

Volunteering is the third type of family involvement; volunteering is the recruiting and organizing of parent support for the school and includes volunteer activities in and for the school and phone trees for parents to share information about school events and happenings (Epstein, 2010; Epstein et al, 2002).

The fourth type of family involvement is learning at home and occurs when schools provide parents with tools for increasing their children’s learning outside of the school setting. Learning at home may be accomplished through providing parents with information about the skills taught at each grade level, information for parents regarding how to help their children with homework, and interactive homework assignments for parents and children to complete together (Epstein, 2010; Epstein et al, 2002).

Decision making is the fifth type of family involvement; examples of decision making include active collaborative leadership groups like Parent Teacher Associations, including families in school and district committees, and providing families with information about candidates in school board elections (Epstein, 2010; Epstein et al, 2002).

The final type of familial involvement is collaborating with the community to help families gain access to non-educational services they might need. Community collaboration may happen when schools provide families with information about community resources, community services are made available in the school setting, and schools and families work together to volunteer in the community (Epstein, 2010; Epstein et al, 2002). Some parent involvement activities include components of two or more of these types. It is important to note that family involvement does not necessarily lead to school-family partnerships (Epstein, 2010; Epstein et al., 2002).

Rationale for Building School-Family Partnerships

The opportunity for parent participation in the Special Education and Individualized Education Plan process is mandated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004). According to this policy, schools must make significant efforts to involve parents, including (a) scheduling the meeting at a mutually convenient time and place, (b) supplying parents with sufficient notice for them to attend the meeting, (c) arranging for an interpreter for parents when needed, (d) providing parents with copies of the IEP, and (e) documenting a variety of attempts to involve parents who have chosen not to attend the meeting.

Involving parents in the education process is also required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015. According to this federal policy, schools that receive Title 1 funding, must budget at least one percent of those funds for (a) training school faculty for school-family partnerships, (b) outreach to families, (c) distributing information to families regarding the benefits of partnerships, (d) collaborating with community agencies, and (e) other partnership efforts. Additionally, the ESSA provides money to states, through Title 1 funds, for the creation of Statewide Family Engagement Center for the purpose of policy development and implementation, as well as helping families better partner with schools.

In addition to the legal requirements, the literature also suggests that parents want to be involved with schools for a variety of reasons. According to Epstein (2010), parents (a) want their children to succeed, (b) care about their children, and (c) want to be provided with information from the school. Parents often choose to be involved in the education of their children in order to help their children be more successful with academic skills (Grolnick, 2015; Hayes, 2011; Wang & Mason, 2008) and to help them prepare for college and future education (Park & Holloway, 2013). Warner (2010) found that middle class parents think that school involvement is important in order to help their children improve in academic skills, as well as to protect their children's emotional development. Additionally, parents may want to be involved in their children's schools as a means of building relationships with other parents in the community (Wang & Mason, 2008). A final factor that motivates many parents to participate in schools is being asked to do so by their children (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005; Fishman & Nickerson, 2015) or by teachers (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005). In other words, when parents feel that their partnership is desired, they are more likely to become involved in the school.

While federal laws mandate collaboration with families during the special education process and parents desire involvement, the primary reasons for these partnerships come from their many benefits.

Benefits

A child's education, both academic and nonacademic, is significantly improved through effective collaboration between families and schools. Increased family involvement in schools can lead to more positive outcomes for students with disabilities, and parental involvement in schools has both short-term and long-term benefits for children, families, and schools. It is also worth noting that El Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drzal (2010) found elementary school students whose parents are more involved with the school scored slightly lower than their peers on the reading subtest of the Woodcock Johnson. However, the mounting research identifying benefits far outweigh this isolated study.

When schools and families frequently interact and communicate, students are more likely to receive common messages emphasizing the importance of school, hard work, creative thinking, helping each other, and graduation (Epstein, 1995). When successful collaboration is achieved, parental-student discussions regarding long-term educational goals and plans increase (Epstein, 2008). When parents feel as though they are part of the school community, their expectations of their child also increase (Davies, 1996). Finally, by involving the family in planning and collaboration, the families' access to vital information relating to successful treatment outcomes and individual support systems increases (Arllen, Cheney, & Warger, 1997).

Increased Student Achievement

General academic achievement may also improve as a result of increased collaboration among schools and families (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Spoth, Randall, & Shin, 2008; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). Collaboration or parental involvement is identified by several researchers as working with their children on academics (Alcena 2014; Bui & Rush, 2016; Gonida & Cortina, 2014). This cannot be achieved by parents alone; the schools must communicate with families in order for this occur. Several authors note that children of parents who have high educational backgrounds and come from a higher socioeconomic status (SES) attain the same education and SES (Bui & Rush, 2016; Davis-Kean, 2005; Fan, 2001). However, parents who do not have high education levels and/or come from low SES can produce children with high achievement by involvement in their child's schooling (Bui & Rush, 2016; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

Increased Student Attendance

School-family collaboration may increase student attendance (Sheldon & Epstein, 2004; Sheldon, 2007). Sheldon and Epstein (2004) explored whether family and community involvement activities could reduce absentee rates. They classified chronic absenteeism as missing 20 or more school days per year and examined longitudinal data to determine the effects of family and community involvement. Data was collected from thirty-nine schools from 1999-2001. Their results showed that chronic absenteeism was more problematic in large urban schools, high-poverty schools, and secondary schools. Even after accounting for prior rates of absenteeism, only two school-family collaboration practices were found to be effective in lowering chronic absentee rates: communicating with families about attendance and celebrating good attendance with students and their families. In order to be effective, communication with parents regarding attendance rates must be frequent and positive.

Non-Academic/Social Benefits

Family involvement with schools may decrease problem behaviors for children (El Nokali, et al., 2010; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). El Nokali and colleagues (2010) found that teachers who reported children exhibiting behavior problems at a rate of 0.36 standard deviations lower than that of their peers had parents whose school involvement was considered at least one standard deviation above the norm. Wang & Sheikh-Khalil (2014) found a student's emotional health increased with parents who are involved. This involvement is seen through communication from parent to student about the importance of education, termed academic socialization.

Furthermore, school-family collaborations provide a caring component that strengthens social networks available to students (Epstein et al., 2002; Sanders, 2007; Toffler & Toffler, 1995). Anderson-Butcher, Stetler, Midle (2006) found that partnerships are important to alleviating the nonacademic barriers to learning including: (a) poor peer relations, (b) family conflict and instability, and (c) negative community norms and disorganizations.

School-Wide Improvements

Successful partnerships result in benefits to all students in the school, even the students whose parents are not actively involved (Epstein, 2008). Increased parental and community participation in supporting the school can increase grades and completion of courses, while decreasing behavioral problems. In addition, they can: (a) improve school programs and school climate; (b) connect families with others in the school and in the community; (c) help teachers with their work; and (d) help all students succeed in school and later adult life (Epstein et al., 2002).

Elements of Successful Partnerships

The research is clear that school-family partnerships are an important component of effective school programs. For partnerships to successfully focus on true collaboration, certain elements are critical. The literature identifies several elements (see Table 2) that make for successful school-family partnerships.

Table 2

Elements of Successful School-Family Partnerships

Elements of Successful Partnerships	Literature Support
Positive School Climate	Haines, Gross, Blue-Banning, Francis, & Turnbull, 2015; Nitecki, 2015;
Strength-Based System	Bryan & Henry, 2008; Bryan & Henry, 2012; Rothengast, 2016
Democratic Community	Arllen et al., 1997; Auerbach, 2010; Bryan, 2009; Bryan & Henry, 2012; Haines et al., 2015; Christenson, 2004; Davies, 1996; Skrtic, Sailor, & Gee, 1996
Reciprocity	Arllen et al., 1997; Davies, 1996; Haines et al., 2015; Rothengast, 2016
Shared Vision and Goals	Bryan & Henry, 2012; Haines et al., 2015; Hands, 2005; Klopovic et al., 2003; Leone, Quinn, & Osher, 2003; Sommerville & McDonald, 2002; Woodruff et al., 1999
Flexibility	Hands, 2005; Epstein, 2008; Epstein & Jansorn, 2004; Epstein & Salinas, 2004; Jehl, 2007; Mawhinney, 2002; Oulette et al., 2004; Sanders, 2007; Sommerville & McDonald, 2002; Woodruff et al., 1999
Teamwork	Epstein & Jansorn, 2004; Fredericks, 1994; Hands, 2005; Leone et al., 2003; Woodruff et al., 1999
Family-Like Schools	Arllen et al., 1997; Bryan & Henry, 2008; Epstein, 1995; Epstein, 2008; Epstein & Jansorn, 2004; Ziegler, 2001

Positive School Climate

One element in creating successful school-family partnerships is to provide a positive school climate for everyone who walks through the doors. A positive school climate encompasses several elements. When schools create positive school climates by partaking in the areas below, families feel welcome, thus wanting to work with the school to ensure their children are successful.

Nitecki (2015) found that creating a welcoming environment did in fact create successful school-family partnerships. It was noted in Nitecki's (2015) work that families felt welcomed because they were part of a friendly, welcoming initial phone conversation where teachers arranged a tour of the school. Families continued to feel welcome when they met with the teachers and the teachers spent quality time with them, getting to know them and their child's strengths and weaknesses. Making the atmosphere in the school welcoming is also important.

Examples of a welcoming atmosphere may include couches, flowers, student artwork on the walls, and a kitchen; items to make the school feel more like a place you want to be. Strong teacher commitment can be seen by teachers educating families about what their children are doing in school, listening to families' concerns, and showing the value of education to families (Nitecki, 2015).

An essential part of a welcoming school climate is successful and positive communication. Haines et al. (2015) state the importance of having open communication, strong leaders, and strong teacher commitment when creating successful school-family partnerships. Nitecki (2015) also found open communication an important element of successful partnerships. Inviting families to conferences and Back-to-School nights through newsletters as well as informal meetings at the car pick-up/drop-off areas are ways to build communication (Nitecki, 2015).

Strengths-Based System

Utilizing a strengths-based system in the school has been identified as an important aspect of successful school-family partnerships (Bryan & Henry 2012; Rothengast, 2016). According to Rothengast (2016) the purpose of creating a strengths-based system is so families feel valued and like they are part of their child's success. Strengths-based systems can occur when schools and families focus and build on the strengths of all stakeholders; the schools, families, and the students (Bryan & Henry, 2008; Bryan & Henry, 2012). As a result of creating strength-based systems, students' social competencies and chance for success will increase with concomitant decreases in behavior problems (Bryan & Henry, 2012). Furthermore, Bryan and Henry (2008) note that utilizing a strengths-based system will help to empower both children and their families.

Democratic Community

An effective partnership should also be democratic in nature (Auerbach, 2010; Bryan & Henry, 2012; Haines et al., 2015; Skrtic et al., 1996) actively including elements of the democratic process (Bryan & Henry, 2012; Davies, 1996). Each party in the collaborative relationship should be equally involved in making decisions and all parties should share the responsibility for determining the goals of the partnership and the outcomes, both positive and negative, of the collaboration (Bryan & Henry, 2012; Christenson, 2004). Any services offered should be comprehensive and cohesive (Arllen et al., 1997). All members should recognize different interests, respect all other participants without regard to race or creed, and find positive ways to mediate and resolve conflicts (Davies, 1996). Successful partnerships must cater to diverse populations through diverse opportunities. Attention must be given to each school and community so that a plan can be developed to meet these unique needs (Davies, 1996), and all stakeholders in the partnership should be aware of cultural and linguistic issues and respond accordingly (Arllen et al., 1997). According to Bryan (2009), collaborative energy is released when partners engage in a democratic relationship.

These partnerships can be achieved through democratic collaboration where school, student, family and community partners share decision-making when creating and implementing goals and outcomes (Bryan & Henry, 2012). A vital piece of democratic collaboration is consensus among partners in order to overcome the typical silencing of student and family voices within the school setting. Partnerships utilizing democratic collaboration empower students and families to feel be seen as equal partners in the educational process. However, involving students and families, particularly those families from low-income or culturally diverse backgrounds, must be intentional. School leaders must recognize the home as a valuable learning environment (Christenson, 2004), and families are the experts in that learning environment (Bryan & Henry, 2012). School leaders must reach out to these families as having equivalent importance in the leadership process of the school (Bryan & Henry, 2012; Christenson, 2004).

Christenson (2004) emphasizes the need for school leaders to consider how families may already be supporting their children's education at home and use that to build on partnerships by emphasizing these home activities as examples of families' expertise and equality in the educational process. Many families will need direct and personal invitations to partner with schools. According to Christenson (2004), the purpose of a school-family partnership is not to fix the family, but to support them in their efforts to provide a holistic education for their children that fits their familial values and norms. True family

support occurs when school leaders meet families where they are and seek to understand their motives and needs.

Reciprocity

Partnerships should be based on reciprocity (Davies, 1996; Haines et al., 2015). Schools and families have needs and obligations to children, and they should meet their obligations individually while relying on each other corporately to meet their needs. The driving force behind all service provision should be the strengths and needs of the child and family (Arllen et al., 1997). Rothengast (2016) found an increase in family involvement when her school utilized a strength-based approach emphasizing reciprocity. The model Rothengast utilized involved valuing families and making families equal partners in their child's education.

Shared Vision and Goals

Partnerships need to have shared vision and goals (Bryan & Henry, 2012; Haines et al., 2015; Hands, 2005; Klopovic et al., 2003; Leone et al., 2003; Sommerville & McDonald, 2002). The goals, vision, and activities of the partnership need to demonstrate a strong sense of positiveness (Klopovic et al., 2003; Sommerville & McDonald, 2002; Woodruff et al., 1999). The literature also identifies the need for team members to share ownership of the goals and the problems associated with the partnership (Hands, 2005; Leone et al., 2003).

Flexibility

Partnerships must also be able to endure change and be flexible (Hands, 2005; Mawhinney, 2002; Oulette et al., 2004; Sommerville & McDonald, 2002). The literature identifies the importance of linking action plans to a student's goals which will assist in the students' success (Epstein & Jansorn, 2004; Jehl, 2007; Sanders, 2007; Woodruff et al., 1999). Creating individualized action plans based on the student can be achieved by allowing students to engage in activities that are culturally responsive, student centered, and tailored to their needs. The activities must also assist in building academic and social supports (Woodruff et al., 1999). Furthermore, partnerships must be culturally sensitive (Epstein, 2008; Epstein & Jansorn, 2004; Epstein & Salinas, 2004; Oulette et al., 2004; Woodruff et al., 1999). Valuing and addressing diversity can be accomplished by designing and implementing services with people of diverse backgrounds (Woodruff et al., 1999).

Teamwork

An additional element assisting in the effective development and implementation of effective partnerships is teamwork (Epstein & Jansorn, 2004; Hands, 2005; Leone et al., 2003). Teamwork can be seen in supplemental characteristics such as integrating different ideas (Leone et al., 2003; Woodruff et al., 1999), providing ongoing evaluation and improvement suggestions (Epstein & Jansorn, 2004; Woodruff et al., 1999) and in the synchronization of activities (Leone et al., 2003).

Family-Like Schools

Creating community-friendly school partnerships require teachers and administrators to create more family-like schools (Bryan & Henry, 2008; Epstein, 1995; Ziegler, 2001). Schools can make their campuses more welcoming to families in several ways. By recognizing each child's individuality and making each child feel special and included, a welcoming environment for all families is created (Bryan & Henry, 2008; Epstein, 1995). Educators must respond to the growing diversity of U.S. families by developing knowledge and strategies to work effectively with all families, including those with limited English proficiency and those unfamiliar with the U.S. school system. In addition, this approach encourages family advocacy (Arllen et al., 1997).

Parents, in turn, need to realize that each child is also a student (Epstein, 1995). To demonstrate this, parents can reinforce the importance of school, homework, and activities that build skills and success, and

work within the community to create school-like opportunities, events, and programs that reinforce, recognize, and reward students for progress, creativity, contributions, and excellence (Bryan & Henry, 2008; Epstein, 1995). Communities then create family-like settings, services, and events designed to support families, children, and neighborhoods which can, in turn, help all parents become involved in different ways (Epstein, 2008). According to Epstein and Jansorn (2004), all schools need a purposeful, planned partnership program that creates a welcoming environment which will draw in families and contribute to students' readiness for school, academic success, and positive attitudes and behaviors.

Conclusion

Partnerships between schools and families are crucial for effective outcomes for all children. When partnerships are developed and implemented correctly, they can strengthen families, schools, and by extension, communities (Furman & Jackson, 2002). In order to ensure success for all students, it is clear that schools must involve the families of all students in the education process. The purpose of this article was to provide the reader with the benefits of creating effective school-family partnerships as well as to provide the important elements that assemble these partnerships. When school-family partnerships are established, student academic achievement and attendance increase, as well as various school wide improvements and social benefits to students are achieved. To create effective school-family partnerships, several elements should occur. These include: a) positive school climate, b) strength-based system, c) democratic community, d) reciprocity, e) shared vision and goals, f) flexibility, g) teamwork, and h) family-like schools. While building successful school-family partnerships is not a simple task, the benefits of working in partnership with families will have a significant impact on the success of students and schools.

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Review of Ethical Leadership and Decision-Making in Education: Applying Theoretical Perspectives to Complex Dilemmas-4th Edition

Deborah C. McLaughlin

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Ethical Leadership and Decision-Making in Education: Applying Theoretical Perspectives to Complex Dilemmas-4th Edition, 265 pages, Publisher Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, New York. Authors: Joan Poliner Shapiro and Jacqueline A. Stefkovich
ISBN-13: 978-1138776272, \$39.95 at amazon.com

This book is intended to be used as a textbook for prospective or present educational leaders to develop a baseline of their own ethical responses to difficult decisions and actions, in fact, to create their own code of ethics. This book's format is well suited to an online course; discussion (board) questions are suggested after every case study. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) use scenarios culled from their years of teaching ethics in that part of the requirements for students in their graduate level classes was to submit an ethically challenging case study and discussion questions for it. The fourth edition includes subjects that have recently become necessary to address on the educational scene such as technology issues (social media, sexting, cyberbullying) and including Exceptional Student Education and early childhood issues.

Purpose and Thesis of the Book

The purpose of this book is to be used as a textbook for prospective or educational leaders taking a course in developmental ethics in educational leadership. It is unique in its perspective in its lenses of contemplation: the viewpoints of care, critique, justice and profession. The authors believe that topics that educators encounter are often viewed through the first three viewpoints but rarely the latter and they wish to introduce it as a paradigm.

The thesis of the book is to expose future educational leaders to possible difficult scenarios with no clear or suggested resolutions, to better address these issues for the ever-evolving main concern and beneficiary: the student. The thesis also is put forward by the cover art; there are intersecting circles around a central circle called "The Best Interests of the Student." On this main theme the book and chapters evolve. The major theme put forward by this book in line with the thesis of "The Best Interests of the Student" is that the existing three paradigms of Justice, Critique and Care are insufficient lenses through which to view ethical dilemmas, and another, unique to education, must be added. This viewpoint that the authors have put forward since the First Edition of this book in 2001 is described as "a consideration of those moral aspects unique to the profession and the questions that arise as educational leaders become more aware of their own personal and ethical frameworks described in this chapter....", or, the Ethic of the Profession.

Summary: The book is set up with the initial teaching of the three usual paradigms with special exposition of a fourth, of which the authors originate, the Ethic of the Profession, in Part I. Part II, the bulk of the book, contains chapters of case studies with the same general topic, with discussion questions from each paradigm. Part III consists of profiles of the authors, their educational journeys, and advice to

those employing this book in their ethics classes. The major topics in need of contemplation and reflection in ethical decision consideration that are addressed are reflected in the chapter titles and advance the theme of making decisions in the best interests of the student. These topics are (a) individual rights versus community standards, (b) traditional curriculum versus the hidden curriculum, (c) personal codes versus professional codes, (d) the American melting pot versus the Chinese hot pot, (e) religion versus culture, (f) equality versus equity, (g) accountability versus responsibility, (h) privacy versus safety, (i) technology versus respect.

Another **major topic** is that using the case study approach to teaching ethics is preferable to other methods in which the learning is not applied to real life situations.

Weak and Strong Points of the Book

The book shows strengths in the use of case studies that cause the participants to dialogue and develop their own Professional Code of Ethics by coming to consensus on the questions posed (or to differ in opinion with a defense). In the authors' biographical information, each has extensively taught educational ethics, primarily with a feminist stance, and each has published books and articles on the subject both in conjunction with the current co-author and with others. The authors' experience and knowledge of the change and growth of topics in ethics in educational leadership are considerable. One of the strengths of the book that comes from the many years that the authors have taught ethics is the inclusion of one of the class requirements: in each class graduate or doctoral students were required to contribute a unique, difficult and debatable case study. These forty-five complex case studies create the heart of the book. This edition was updated with more contemporary case studies in areas like cyberbullying and teachers with concealed weapons.

There are some points in which this book does not excel; many of the references are 20 years old and older. It does seem that the authors developed an excellent textbook with many applications, having added the paradigm of profession in 2001 in addition to those of justice, critique and care. However it seems that the original works on which the book was based in have not been updated or rethought, many of the references are twenty years old or older and the case studies are the same as in the First Edition (2001). Granted, the researchers on which the original book was based are indeed still undisputed experts, i.e. Kohlberg (stages of development of moral intelligence) and Gilligan (adding the care element to the scope of moral intelligence), but other research such as the abundance of brain research could have been incorporated. Also many of the case studies are outdated, such as one in which a school habitually put minorities in lower achieving tracks because of research done in 1969 proposing that minorities and blacks have lower IQ's. Another example is that of an unmarried teacher contemplating a pregnancy without being married; this would not cause the smallest of ripples nowadays.

Quotes from the Book

Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) state the purpose for their book in this manner:

Thus, it is evident by the plethora of publications that there has been a resurgence of interest in and recognition of the importance of ethics for educational leaders....Such developments have exposed gaps in the knowledge base that cry out for a response. (xiv)

Also, they remark concerning the construction of one's own ethical repository, "We believe there is merit in providing a process by which professors and practitioners alike can come to grips with their own ethical codes and then apply these codes to practical situations"(xv).

Compare and Contrast to another Book

In comparing this work with another on educational leadership, the authors of *Ethical Leadership* do not cite any case studies outside of education, whereas another author of a book for school leadership, Fullan (2001) gives examples of what has been done by leadership in education and the business world. In contrast to *Ethical Leadership*, Fullan's *Leading in a Culture of Change*, written in the same year as Shapiro and Stefkovitch's first edition of *Ethical Leadership*, but the tone is more modern. One reason is that Fullan's book sets up a challenging situation and reports on what was done to rectify it without much application value. Fullan's book is more theoretical even with its examples; Shapiro and Stefkovitch use of case studies, even though dated, cause the reader to take and defend a position, rather than just reading and shelving a book like Fullan's.

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(Pre)Literacy Skills and Deaf Children

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Literacy requires extensive experience in language interaction. Shared reading activities between an adult and a small child that promote such interaction have consistently been shown to be primary among the factors that positively correlate to the child's success in reading. But for many deaf children shared reading activities are rare because those experiences can be disappointing and stressful. Hearing adults who might want to read with deaf children can be dismayed that the books don't capture the children's attention. They can get frightened that their children will never be good readers. Deaf children may be bored with a story presented in spoken words and static illustrations, plus they sense the stress in the adults and may feel they are a disappointment to them. As a result, adults and children don't seek out those experiences. Similar types of things may happen in the mainstreamed classroom: the deaf child might wind up doing something else during book-sharing time and the teacher might be at a loss for how to help that child get interested enough to participate.

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SPECIAL EDUCATION LEGAL ALERT

Perry A. Zirkel

© September 2016

This periodic legal alert provides, as a two-column table, highlights (on the left) and practical implications (on the right) of major new legal developments in the K–12 context, with particular attention to special education.

1. The New ADA Regulations Expand Sec. 504 Eligibility.	
Effective August 11, 2016, the new federal regulations for Title II of the ADA, which applies to public schools and other governmental entities, extend beyond the wording of the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 as follows:	The ADA eligibility standards apply to Section 504, which is the more common designation within the public schools, but the courts have been slower and stricter about interpreting these standards.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for physical or mental impairments, adding to the express examples <i>dyslexia</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thus expanding this designation and maybe dyscalculia, dysgraphia, dysthymia, and dystonia in terms of parental requests for 504 plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for the major life activities (MLA), adding the following express examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>writing, speaking, and interacting with others</i> - <i>reaching, bending, and lifting</i> - <i>immune system, circulatory system, endocrine system and a few other bodily systems' functions</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The added examples not only trigger additional impairments but also seem to suggest a narrower scope for other, unlisted MLAs. - thus expanding requests for not only dysgraphia and Tourette syndrome but also Asperger disorder - thus expanding requests for various health conditions, some being of very low incidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for the final essential element of “substantially limits,” designating the following impairment as “easily” qualifying: <i>diabetes, bipolar disorder, and OCD</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diabetes is no longer controversial or disputed, but bipolar disorder and OCD will be the source of more requests that are not so automatic.

2. A New Ninth Circuit Decisions Raises IDEA Eligibility Issues for RTI and Other Proactive Practices in General Education.

On September 16, 2016, this federal appeals court ruled, in *L.J. v. Pittsburg Unified School District*, that the student, who met the criteria for at least one IDEA classification (e.g., OHI based on ADHD), also met the disputed, other essential element for eligibility, the need for special education.

The Ninth Circuit covers eight states in the Far West from Arizona through Alaska, including California. Courts in other jurisdictions may, but not must, follow its logic depending on their interpretation of the scope and cogency of this ruling.

- The court based this need on the combination of the following items the student, who had behavioral problems, received in general education and that improved his behavior and academic performance:
 - mental health counseling
 - a one-on-one aide
 - extensive behavior specialist interventions
 - various classroom accommodations

- It is unclear to what extent the court relied on the full combination of all of these items and whether the underlying criteria were individualization, availability (to other students in general education), and/or extent (e.g., less extensive behavioral interventions or a part-time rather than full-time aide). Nevertheless, proactively instituting such practices in general education appears to run the risk, albeit limited and arguably worth the price, of judicial reversal of non-eligibility of a student who does well with these mitigating measures.

- The court applied the “snapshot” approach, which limits the information to what the IEP team knew or had reason to know at the time of its meeting, to IDEA evaluations.

- This decision is the first major one in which the courts extended this approach, which most jurisdictions used for FAPE cases, to eligibility cases.

3. The New Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Which Replaces the NCLB, Drops the “Highly Qualified” Teacher Requirement.

Congress enacted a conforming amendment to the IDEA to eliminate the requirement for highly qualified special education teachers.

States may continue the requirement via certification or other personnel policies; check your state.

Special Education Legal Alert

Perry A. Zirkel

© October 2016

This periodic legal alert provides, as a two-column table, highlights (on the left) and practical implications (on the right) of major new legal developments. Here are my top three special education law items for this month:

1. A new Second Circuit decision holds that eligibility under the IDEA does not necessarily mean eligibility under Section 504 and its sister statute, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).	
On Sept. 16, 2016 in <i>B.C. v. Mount Vernon School District</i> , the Second Circuit affirmed a pre-trial lower court ruling that rejected the plaintiff-parents disparate impact claim under Section 504 and the ADA because receipt of special education services under an IEP does not necessarily mean that the child's impairment is a substantial limitation.	The Second Circuit, which encompasses New York, Connecticut, and Vermont and is one of the most active jurisdictions for IDEA litigation, joined the Tenth and Fifth Circuit, which arrived at a similar conclusion about eligibility under the IDEA as compared with Section 504. It only addresses a very limited exception, instead simply requiring proof for each student.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The disparate impact claim, which the court did not reach, was that students with disabilities had to take non-credit remedial courses during school hours than their nondisabled students did, thus negatively affecting their promotion from grade to grade. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The disparate theory under Section 504 and the ADA is an unsettled and, for school districts, unsettling source of potential claims.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although reasoning that the IDEA and Section 504/ADA "serve different ambitions in different ways," the court acknowledged that many students with IEPs qualify under Section 504 and the ADA, ruling that the issue of substantial limitation requires an individual determination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This appellate decision is another example of the courts not necessarily agreeing with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR). Yet, school districts face OCR's opposing, automatic interpretation in its complaint investigation and compliance processes.

2. The Supreme Court agrees to decide two special education cases, with one being centrally significant.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On June 28, 2016, the Supreme Court agreed to review the Sixth Circuit decision in <i>Fry v. Napoleon Community Schools</i>, and on September 29, the Supremes agreed to review the Tenth Circuit decision in <i>Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District Re-1</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These are the first Supreme Court forays into special education since the Court's tuition reimbursement decision in <i>Forest Grove School District v. T.F.</i> (2009). This gap was the longest one in the previous Court decisions in the context of special education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The <i>Fry</i> case is an adjudicative issue of interest primarily for attorneys rather than educators—in which student cases under Section 504 or the ADA the plaintiff-parents must exhaust the available mechanism of an impartial hearing under the IDEA before proceeding in court. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The two competing approaches are the relief-centered and injury-centered approach. The relief-centered approach will not require exhaustion when plaintiff-parents seek money damages, even if the “injury” is educational in nature. Thus, school representatives tend to oppose the relief-centered approach because it removes one of the hurdles for to district liability.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The <i>Endrew F.</i> case is of much more central interest to educators because it revisits one of the key issues in the landmark Supreme Court decision in <i>Board of Education v. Rowley</i> (1982)—whether the IEP must be reasonably calculated to yield meaningful or only some benefit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The <i>Rowley</i> substantive standard for FAPE is relatively low compared to “best” or “maximum,” but the level of benefit can make either a semantic or a significant difference in the outcome of the many FAPE cases that are either directly substantive or indirectly so via the two-step approach for procedural violations.

3. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which replaces the NCLB Act, introduced some major changes in relation to students with disabilities.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESSA eliminates the highly qualified requirement for teachers, including special education teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Congress amended the IDEA to do the same, with the effective date September 2017 except to the extent that states arrange an earlier effective date.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminating the additional 2%, ESSA limits the cap to 1% for Alternate Assessments Aligned with Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AA-AAAS) but changes the cap to a state, not local district basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEP teams under the IDEA still retain the authority under the IDEA to grant AA-AAAS without limit, but the consequences in terms of ESSA accountability remains cap based. The ESSA regulations are still pending but presumably will make the implementation of the cap clearer for school districts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ESSA allows students in the AA-AAS category to count in the graduation cohort if they receive a state-designated alternate diploma that is (a) standards-based and (b) aligned to the requirements for a regular high school diploma. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Again, the pending ESSA regulations are expected to fill in the details for applying this revision to the graduation measure as part of the accountability structure.

Latest Employment Opportunities Posted on NASET

Special Education Teacher

Littlestown, Pennsylvania

Job Category: Full Time

Description:

The Hoffman Academy is a special education, private, academic school for students identified with social and emotional disorders. The school is aligned with, and located on the grounds of, Hoffman Homes for Youth- a psychiatric residential treatment facility outside Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The Hoffman Academy educates approximately 100 students. The mission is to offer a learning environment combined with a therapeutic component. Teachers, therapists and direct-care staff work together to assist the children-in-care with achieving their treatment goals.

The Hoffman Academy is accepting applicants for Special Education Teacher positions. The Special Education Teacher is a full-time position with benefits.

The Hoffman Academy is looking for teachers to work in a creative and versatile environment geared toward educating and treating at-risk youth. The goal is to allow teachers the flexibility to deliver curriculum in the most effective manner. Teachers, at the Hoffman Academy, must be able to work as part of a treatment team (i.e. the student, therapist, direct-care staff, parents, etc.) and assist the student in defining and achieving successful outcomes. Teachers are encouraged to use the support of the therapists and direct-care staff. The principles of Sanctuary® and Trauma Informed Care are expected to be applied within the daily routines, interactions and interventions of the school day. Overall, teachers for the Hoffman Academy must exhibit an enthusiasm for educating distressed young people while coaching them toward a safe and productive lifestyle.

Salary: Starting at \$45,000

Duties of the position include, but are not limited to:

- Develop and implement IEPs and NOREPs as well as facilitate meetings with regard to these plans and the student's overall treatment program
- Plan and teach appropriate and engaging lessons according to the students' ability and need
- Collect and analyze student data
- Participate as an active member of each student's treatment team; Assist the team in developing and implementing successful approaches for the student.
- Maintain records and make reports as required by State Law, the State Board of Education, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and the School.

Requirements:

Applicants must have Pennsylvania Certification in Special Education (7-12; N-12; and PK-8). Proper clearances, as defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, are required.

Equal Opportunity Employer

Benefits:

- Comprehensive Major Medical Plan with Prescription Plan
- Dental
- Vision
- 403(b)
- Paid Time Off

Contact:

Interested applicants may forward a resume to Walter Smith, Director of Education, via Email: wsmith@hoffmanhomes.com, Fax: 717-359-2600, or Mail: 815 Orphanage Rd., Littlestown, PA 17340. <http://www.hoffmanhomes.com/menu/About/careers>

Early Childhood Special Education Teacher

Queens Village, New York

Job Category: Full Time

Description:

Full Time, 12 Month Teaching Position in a Unique Day Treatment/Therapeutic Preschool Program.

- Work Collaboratively as Part of a Multidisciplinary Team to Implement Academic, Behavioral and Therapeutic Services for Special Education Students with Emotional Needs.
- Provide Direct Instructional Services to Special Needs Students Both Individually and in Small Groups within a Center Based Classroom Setting
- Implementation of Specialized Early Childhood Curriculum, Behavior Management Plans and Special Education Best Practices and Methodologies.

Requirements:

New York State Teacher Certification in Students with Disabilities (Birth-2), or Pending.

Experience in Special Education Preferred

Benefits:

Full Comprehensive Benefits Package; Competitive Salary; All NYC Public School Holidays

Contact: Amy Levine, Principal
allifeline@aol.com

Please Visit our Website at www.lifelinecenter.org to Learn More About this Specialized Program

Special Education Teacher

Alameda County, California

Job Category: Special Education Teacher

Description:

Seneca Family of Agencies provides an unconditional continuum of care for the most vulnerable children and families in California. We provide a range of school-based, community-centered and residential services to support the diverse needs of our clients.

At our school programs, Seneca seamlessly interweaves special education services with rich therapeutic and behavioral supports. Our students are referred to us after years of school failure; it is our goal to provide an enriching and successful environment where students' strengths are celebrated and their needs addressed with a variety of targeted interventions.

Within the program, our Special Education Teachers are responsible for providing multi-grade, standards-based instruction and academic interventions that afford students the opportunity to thrive academically. The teacher works on a dynamic team to provide a clear, consistent structure for the classroom, ensuring that the academic, social, and emotional needs of each student are met within the guidelines of the Individualized Educational Program (IEP) and the Treatment Plan.

Now hiring in:

- San Leandro
- Fremont

Responsibilities:

- Work effectively as a member of a multi-disciplinary team to implement academic, behavioral, and therapeutic services for special education students with emotional disturbances
- Utilize backwards design principles to deliver differentiated curriculum, rooted in the state content standards
- Use student-centered instructional methods as defined by the school's Learning Principles
- Employ authentic and norm-referenced assessment strategies to monitor progress and guide instructional planning and decision making
- Provide an individualized academic intervention program to target at-risk learners.

- Perform all duties related to the development of an IEP: assessment, goal setting, implementation and progress reporting
- Engage caregivers in the educational process, providing frequent opportunities to discuss student growth and needs
- Participate in professional learning communities to enhance practice and create coherence
- Facilitate and/or participate in required meetings (classroom, site wide and supervision)
- Co-lead the classroom team to maintain a structured therapeutic learning environment based on Seneca's philosophy
- Intervene with the clients' behavioral program as needed. This includes physical management of the clients (implementation of Seneca Center's Ahimsa Model Training) as necessary to ensure safety
- Maintain a high standard of professional behavior at all times
- Perform all other duties as necessary for the good of the agency as instructed by supervisor

Hours:

- Monday - Friday
- School hours Year Round

Qualifications:

- Qualified teachers will hold a valid Special Education Credential - Mild/Moderate.
- Current California Education Specialist Credential may qualify
- Experience teaching Special Education preferred
- Valid California Driver's License and ability to be insured by Seneca's insurance carrier
- Clearance of TB test, fingerprints, and any other state or federal requirements

Compensation:

- Comprehensive employee benefit package, including medical, dental, vision and chiropractic coverage, as well as partially paid premiums for dependents
- Employer-paid Employee Assistance Program
- \$2,700 classroom petty cash budget
- Specialized training & support
- Yearly professional development budget
- Two to three full-time Classroom Counselors to provide behavioral and academic support
- 7 weeks of school breaks
- 1 week of PTO, and 4 weeks of teacher days off
- We provide a 403b retirement plan

Please apply directly through our website at: http://senecafoa.org/online-application?position=special_education_teacher

Employment opportunities are, and shall be open to all qualified applicants solely on the basis of their experience, aptitudes and abilities. It is the policy of Seneca Family of Agencies to grant equal employment opportunity to all applicants and employees without regard to race, color, national origin, marital status, disability, Vietnam Era Veteran status, age, religion, political affiliation, gender or sexual orientation. Seneca is committed to providing a fair, equitable, and inclusive work environment. We welcome candidates that will promote and value diversity and exercise teamwork and collaboration.

Special Education Specialist

Dover, NH

Job Category: Full Time

Description:

This position is contingent upon a contract award (expected September, 2016). The preference for this position is to be based in Dover, NH; however, individuals with extensive professional, industry-based alternate assessment experience who are able to travel onsite for program orientation and training may be considered.

The Special Education Specialist (SPED) provides technical assistance across one or more contracts in administering assessment programs for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Develops special education content materials for professional development, item development and the administration of alternate assessments. Additional responsibilities include the following:

- Under the supervision of program leadership and/or the Senior Special Education Specialist:
- Collaborate with and provide technical assistance to Measured Progress Program Manager(s), subcontractors, and/or the state education agencies regarding the program's design, planning and implementation.
- Conduct in-state professional development workshops with educational professionals on the implementation and scoring of alternate assessments.
- Develop and write administration manuals, resource guides, scoring guides, and presentation materials as needed.
- Collaborate with Measured Progress Curriculum and Assessment staff to develop and refine alternate assessment items as needed as well as the overall assessment design.
- Act as the main liaison with Measured Progress staff and the state agencies on all development issues for the contract, conducting in-state development meetings as required.
- Collaborate with the Measured Progress Program Managers and/or subcontractors with communicating the program's design, objectives, deliverables, budget, and deadlines to internal personnel to ensure the contract is carried out on time and according to specifications.
- Assist with the creation of contract specific test designs and specifications for current contracts and/or proposals.

Requirements:

Master's Degree in Education and a minimum of four (4) years teaching experience in special education (preferably with students with significant cognitive disabilities); or two (2) years special education teaching experience (preferably with students with significant cognitive disabilities), plus two (2) years directly applicable professional level alternate assessment experience.

Contact:

<http://www.measuredprogress.org/about-us/careers/employment-opportunities/>

Early Childhood Special Educator

Lakenheath, UK

Job Category: Early Intervention

Description:

Position works with children of American military families stationed overseas at RAF Lakenheath, UK. Provides early intervention services to developmentally delayed infants and toddlers, in a home-based program.

Requirements:

Position requires a Master's degree in Special Education, a minimum of two years' experience within the last five years working with developmentally delayed children in the 0, 1 & 2-year age population in a home-based early intervention capacity, and a current state teaching license/certification to teach in this capacity.

Benefits:

Paid relocation, medical, dental, generous paid time off, competitive salary and housing allowance.

Contact:

Lynn Romer at LynnR@magnummedicaloverseas.com or 800-852-5678 x.156 or fax resume to 513-984-4909

Special Education Specialist

Multiple Locations

Description:

The primary responsibility of the Special Education Specialist is to provide instruction and other related services to Special Education students. The Special Education Specialist will also facilitate diagnostic assessment including administration, scoring and interpretation. Will review and revise IEP's as needed.

Will support instruction in reading, math, and written language for students, tutor individual and small groups of students, administer and score academic testing, write individualized education plans and support other academic programs as needed. The Special Education Specialist will work under the leadership of the Program Specialist and the Director of Special Education. This position will be available to provide direct instruction to students 6 hours a day.

Essential Functions include, but are not limited to the following:*

- Provide instruction to students with special needs and identified learning disabilities in a special education program.
- Tutor individual and small groups of students, reinforcing language and reading concepts.
- Administer and score individual and group tests.
- Schedule IEP meetings, coordinating schedules with parents, general education teacher(s), administrator, and all appropriate special education staff.
- Conduct IEP meetings.
- Communicate and coordinate special needs evaluation and testing with speech teacher, psychologist, and other service providers.
- Communicate with parents regarding individual student progress and conduct.
- Maintain progress records and record progress toward IEP goals.
- Record progress within the independent study program.
- Perform other duties in support of the Special Education Specialist program.
- Support other academic programs offered within the independent study program.

Various openings in Burbank region, San Gabriel region, Victor Valley region, Inland Empire region, San Bernardino region, and San Juan region.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Required:

- Special Education Specialist Certificate or ability to obtain Mild/Moderate Certificate.
- Ability to teach students of grades K-12.
- Ability to work with children of all ages.
- Ability to understand, adopt, and support the independent study program, concepts and their philosophies.
- Ability to organize and present ideas effectively in oral and written form.
- Ability to make skillful decisions.
- Ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines.
- Ability to operate a PC computer, word processor, copier, FAX, and other office machines.

Education and Experience:

- BA/BS Degree
- Valid California Teaching Credential in Special Education (Mild/Moderate)

Contact:

Nehia Hearn
Human Resources Assistant
Direct: 626) 204-2552 Fax: 626) 685-9316
nhearn@ofy.org

Special Education Specialist

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Contact:

Nehia Hearn
Human Resources Assistant
Direct: 626) 204-2552 Fax: 626) 685-9316
nhearn@ofy.org

Special Education Teacher

Fitchburg, MA

Job Category: Special Education Teacher

The Durham Center for Education, a division of The Institute of Professional Practice is seeking a Special Education Teacher to join our team of enthusiastic and dedicated professionals. Reporting to the school's Director, you will join a team of educators, dedicated to "getting to the heart of every child." The Durham Center is a small state of the art school for ASD students located in Central Massachusetts with easy access to Boston and surrounding cities.

Our students come to us with a variety of complex profiles, each unique, but each wanting to learn. We enjoy nurturing time spent in the classroom, gymnasium, and in the community. Our teaching is based on the principles of Applied Behavior Analytics, and teaching communication, social, functional and job readiness skills. Durham Center students and educators participate in community activities, work experience, and learning excursions.

To be successful in this role, you will be able to:

- Develop and maintain measurable IEP plans for each student
- Oversee and consult with specialists to ensure services are delivered in accordance with the IEP
- Develop clear and concise written protocols for each IEP
- Implement Massachusetts Department of Education MCAS requirements
- Communicate effectively and professionally with colleagues, parents, school districts
- Supervise and train paraprofessionals working in the classroom

We look for the following experience:

- Master's degree in education
- 3 or more years working with students with disabilities
- Massachusetts certification in special education preferred
- **Some of what we provide when you join our team:**
- Outstanding medical, dental, and vision benefit package
- Company paid short and long-term disability plans
- 403(b) Retirement Plan with immediate company match
- Generous paid time off program including PTO and 11.5 paid holidays
- Company paid continuing education programs
- 36 hour work-week

If you want to have a meaningful and lasting impact on a young person's life, in a professional work environment that provides the tools for success, please send your resume and cover letter to: Rhonda Page, Director, Durham Center for Education at: careers@ippi.org

Special Education Coordinator

Boston, MA

Job Category: Full Time

Uncommon Schools

Uncommon Schools (Uncommon) is a nonprofit organization that starts and manages outstanding urban charter public schools that close the achievement gap and prepare students in high poverty, high need

areas to graduate from college. Uncommon currently manages 44 schools serving nearly 12,000 students in six cities: Boston, New York City, Newark, Camden, Rochester, and Troy.

Who are we? We are a community of educators, families, and students united by the fierce belief that every student can graduate from college. We signed on to this mission because we believe educational inequity is an American crisis. We are an intensely committed group of people who bring tenacity, dedication, and celebration to our work each day. We love fun, and we love focus. With the right balance, we're able to ensure that our students are prepared to get to and through college.

Position Overview

The Special Education Coordinator is passionate about supporting the students who are at-risk for academic underperformance due to emotional and/or physical challenges so that they can succeed in the school's rigorous academic program. The Special Education Coordinator holds primary responsibility for providing academic, emotional, and physical services for students who require additional support to thrive within the school's core academic program.

Essential Duties & Responsibilities

- Ensure that all students receive the educational services that they need to succeed
- Identify incoming students' special education needs as indicated by family questionnaire responses
- Review the results of intake assessments of new students to identify special education needs
- Schedule and providing pull-out services as needed
- Schedule, coordinate, and chair team and pre-referral meetings
- Conduct academic testing as part of the evaluation process
- Coordinate and conducting classroom observations and testing (i.e. psychological) as needed
- Ensure that all regular education teachers know and understand all classroom accommodations required by IEPs
- Deliver one-on-one, small group, and whole class instruction as appropriate
- Maintain student records regarding special education issues and preparing reports for regulatory agencies
- Ensure compliance with all City, State, and Federal special education law and regulations
- Contribute to the design of curriculum materials
- Design and administer rigorous, standards-based assessments and using assessment data to refine curriculum and instruction
- Help to create a culture of order, structure, humanity, and academic rigor in the classroom and school as a whole
- Collaborate with other teachers, other school staff, and administrators to ensure that all our students climb the mountain to high school and college

To Apply

If you are passionate about improving educational opportunities for historically underserved children and communities, please visit our website at www.uncommonschools.org and apply online via the [Special Education Team](#) posting.

The foregoing information is requested for mandatory government reporting purposes only. As an equal opportunity employer, we hire without consideration to race, religion, creed, color, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status, disability, or any other category protected by applicable law.

Qualifications

- Drive to improve the minds and lives of students in and out of the classroom.

- Proven track-record of high achievement in the classroom.
- Mastery of and enthusiasm for academic subjects.
- Evidence of self-motivation and willingness to be a team player.
- Bachelor's degree is required; Master's degree is preferred.
- Minimum of two years teaching experience in an urban public school or charter school setting preferred.
- Special Education teaching certification required

Belief in and alignment with Uncommon's core beliefs and educational philosophy is non-negotiable.

Compensation

We offer a generous compensation package. All staff members are equipped with the tools needed to succeed, including a dedicated work space, laptop computer, email, high-speed internet access, and all necessary supplies.

Contact

Madyson Lubba; mlubba@uncommonschoools.org

Special Education Teacher

Washington, DC

Job Category: Teaching

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW:

KIPP DC is a non-profit network of high-performing, college-preparatory public charter schools in Washington, D.C. Our sixteen schools and The Learning Center recruit and educate over 5,700 students on six campuses in the city's most educationally underserved communities across wards 5-8. At KIPP DC, we empower students to access opportunities that lead to a choice-filled life. Highly skilled teachers and leaders, more time in school, a rigorous college preparatory-curriculum, and a strong culture of achievement and support help our students climb the mountain to and through college.

At KIPP DC, we believe the quality of instruction defines the rate and quality of student achievement. Therefore, teaching and learning is at the core of everything we do, and we view our Lead Teachers as a critical component of our mission and success with regards to ensuring all students learn and achieve within classrooms that are intentional, rigorous, and joyful.

POSITION OVERVIEW:

We are looking for highly dedicated educators who will bring an unwavering commitment to helping children succeed. KIPP DC's teachers are responsible for delivering effective, high-quality, rigorous

instruction in their content areas, producing unmatched academic results and student growth. KIPP DC gives its students an intensive foundation in the core academic subjects with an emphasis on developing the knowledge and skills necessary for success in school and in life. The KIPP DC community holds itself to high standards, cognizant that success can be achieved by all, regardless of challenging circumstances, through team work, tenacity and focused dedication.

KIPP DC Special Education Teachers work closely both as a team and with General Education Teachers in order to plan targeted, high-leverage intervention for their students. Our Special Education Teachers seek first to diagnose student challenges and then to design individual programs and differentiated strategies in order to meet specific needs. The team serves students with IEPs and diagnosed disabilities, as well as with students who are identified as at-risk.

We are looking for hardworking, team oriented, and experienced teachers for 5-8th grade. While students receive instruction from 8:00am-4:30pm, KIPP DC teachers are on duty in school Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm, with most arriving before and staying after these hours. Many KIPP DC teachers take on additional roles within the school, including working as Saturday School Coordinators and Grade Level Chairs. Though they face demanding schedules, all KIPP DC teachers are strongly supported by experienced and dedicated leadership and staff. KIPP DC students have an extended school day, Saturday School, and a mandatory summer session.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Believe deeply in the mission and values of KIPP DC and subscribe to KIPP's Differentiators
- Display an incredible work ethic and a passion for being part of a team-oriented, mission-driven school culture
- Ability to work in a dynamic, fast-paced environment and adept at developing relationships
- Commit/contribute to constant professional growth and development
- Create and teach challenging and engaging lessons linked to state standards
- Implement the school-wide student management policies within classrooms and everywhere on campus
- Perform morning, lunch, and afternoon duties as assigned
- Pass a criminal background check, as required by law
- Additional responsibilities may arise during the school year. This could include but not limited to: attending staff and student field trips, open houses, parent-teacher conferences, home visits, and other events involving parents and students as needed. They will be communicated to all employees with as much notice and flexibility as possible.

BENEFITS:

KIPP DC offers an extremely competitive compensation and benefits package:

- Salaries for staff are competitive with added compensation for KIPP DC's extended day and year, along with additional bonuses.
- KIPP DC offers its employees competitive rates for medical, dental, life, and long-term disability insurance.
- KIPP DC also offers its employees a 403(b) retirement account with employer contributions and matches vesting after 3 years.
- Teachers are also supported with on the job professional development, a laptop computer for work, and access to a discounted cell phone plan for staff/student/parent calls.

CONTACT:

Katie McMahon

Associate Director of Recruitment

katie.mcmahon@kipfdc.org

<http://www.kipfdc.org/careers/apply-now/>

Special Education Teacher

Washington, DC

Job Category: Special Education Teacher

Description:

Under general supervision of the House Manager, the incumbent is responsible for teaching and supervising a class of special needs students utilizing various techniques to promote learning. Duties include planning, organizing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating class activities, developing Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and working with assigned staff, therapists and students to achieve the IEP goals and objectives. The incumbent is responsible for supervising assigned students and classroom staff insuring that students and staff are compliant with all school policies and procedures. This position requires close supervision of students which includes the ability to keep up with running children and or to lift or assist with lifting students is essential to perform this task. An important aspect of the job is gaining knowledge of and implementing the assigned student's Individual Education Plan goals and objectives as well as ensuring accurate data collection and documentation of same.

Requirements:

The ideal candidate has a Bachelor's degree in Special Education, and holds or is eligible for District of Columbia teaching certification with appropriate endorsement. Prior teaching/instructional experience with individuals with special needs is preferred.

Contact:

St. Coletta of Greater Washington
Human Resources Department
1901 Independence Avenue SE
Washington DC 20003
202-350-8680

Applications accepted **online ONLY** at www.stcoletta.org

Assistant/Associate Prof. Special Ed/Psychology

Mount Berry, GA

Job Category: Tenure-Track Assistant or Associate Professor

Description:

The successful applicant will assist in the development of coursework in Applied Behavior Analysis for Board Certified Assistant Behavioral Analyst (BCaBA) and Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) preparation. Berry College currently has a 4-course sequence approved by the Behavioral Analyst Certification Board preparing students for BCaBA certification. Responsibilities may include 1.) Teaching courses such as Applied Practice in ABA, Single Subject Design in ABA, Advanced Strategies for Behavior Change in ABA, The Exceptional Child, and Ethics; 2) Assist in the development of a graduate course sequence and clinical experiences that would prepare students for BCBA and BCaBA certification; 3) Work with local schools to develop sites for practicum placements for students taking ABA coursework; and 4) Work with formal training collaborations with clinical facilities in the region that take a lead role nationally in the development of innovative use of ABA to treat severe behavioral disorders, language acquisition, educational deficits and feeding disorders. The faculty member is expected to engage in close collaboration with faculty in these facilities for providing classroom instruction and supervision of students in clinical practica. Service, including committee work at the college, school, and department level and student advising are expected. In addition, the successful candidate should demonstrate potential for research. It is expected that the successful candidate maintain an active research agenda.

Requirements:

Candidates must hold a Ph.D. in Special Education, Psychology, Applied Behavior Analysis, or Education and be a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA or BCBA-D) by start date. Competitive applicants will have had previous experience in supervising clinical training in ABA.

Applicant should send letter of interest, curriculum vitae, evidence of teaching effectiveness, a statement of teaching philosophy, transcripts and three letters of recommendation to Dr. Karen Kurz, Assistant Dean Graduate Studies in Education, Berry College, P. O. Box 495019, Mount Berry, GA 30149-5019 (e-mail: kkurz@berry.edu). Review of applicants will continue until a suitable candidate is identified. A national background check may be required of applicants.

Contact:

Dr Karen Kurz
Berry College
P. O. Box 495019
Mount Berry, GA 30149-5019
email: kkurz@berry.edu

Special Education Teacher

Barstow, California

Job Category: Full Time

Job Description / Essential Elements:

Special Education Teacher is sought by Barstow Unified School District in Barstow CA. At present there is a single job opening for a full time position for 7 hours a day 185 days per year. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

Minimum Qualifications:

Eligible or holds appropriate California Teaching Credential for Special Education.

Major Duties & Responsibilities:

Provides individual and small group assistance related to the pupil's specific learning disabilities, educational problems, and total educational adjustment. Other Duties: Evaluates pupils' academic and social growth, keeping appropriate records and communication progress with parents. Participates with the I.E.P. team to develop the individualized education program for each student placed in the class.

Requirements for Applying:

California Education Specialist Instruction Credential: Mild/Moderate (M/M) and/or Moderate/Severe (M/S) Minimum of three (3) years successful classroom contract teaching experience in a special education setting EL Authorization VPSS NCLB Certification in Subject (Verification Process for Secondary Teachers in Special Settings) Autism

Authorization **SIGNING BONUS AVAILABLE** (must possess Level I or Level II credential)

- Attach copies of credentials
- attach copies of testing (CBEST, CSET...)
- please attach no more than three (3) signed letters of reference dated within the last three (3) years

Application Deadline: Until Filled

Upon hire ~ submit to a fingerprint background check, submit official transcripts and original official test scores, submit valid TB and physical

***SIGNING BONUS AVAILABLE TO FULLY CREDENTIALLED SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS**

To apply: <https://www.edjoin.org/Home/JobPosting/848934>

Special Education Teachers

Manassas, Virginia

Job Category: Teacher

BASIC FUNCTION/NATURE OF WORK

The special education teacher's function is to develop and implement effective instructional practices based on the needs identified in students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). The teacher will develop, implement and monitor the students' Individualized Education Programs in collaboration with parents and other IEP Team members. The teacher will promote a collaborative relationship with school staff and parents that will foster inclusionary practices.

BASIC QUALIFICATIONS

Master's degree preferred. Bachelor's degree required. PWCS is interested in candidates with ESL and bilingual credentials and foreign language fluency.

STATE REQUIREMENTS/QUALIFICATIONS

Hold a Virginia teaching certificate with endorsements in the area of disability served. In lieu of complete endorsement, a conditional license may be granted if the teacher is working toward complete endorsement at a rate of a minimum of six (6) semester hours per year.
EEOC/M/F/D/V

BENEFITS

- Extensive professional learning opportunities.
- Multiple medical, dental, vision plans to choose from.
- Virginia Retirement System incl. life insurance
- Supplemental retirement, life insurance, disability plans available.
- Tuition reimbursement.
- Personal and sick leave.
- 195 day contract.

CONTACT

Coordinator, Recruitment & Retention

recruit@pwcs.edu

703.791.8950

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- National Institute of Health
- National Organization on Disability
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- U.S. Office of Special Education

The **National Association of Special Education Teachers** (NASET) thanks all of the above for the information provided for this edition of the Special Educator e-Journal

NASET Application for iPad and iPhone



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