

# **NASET Special Educator e-Journal**



## **OCTOBER 2016**

## Table of Contents

- [Update from the U.S. Department of Education](#)
- [Buzz from the Hub](#)
- [Book Review: Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race By Amanda Berndt](#)
- [Literature Review: Inclusion and Least Restrictive Environment By Lauren Vivar](#)
- [Book Review: Learn Like a Pirate By Paola Esquijarosa](#)
- [Learning Approaches as a Predictor of Academic Performance for Students Who are Deaf By Daniel Fobi, MPhil Alexander, M. Oppong, Ph.D. and Joyce Adu, MPhil Student](#)
- [Latest Employment Opportunities Posted on NASET](#)
- [Acknowledgements](#)

## Update from the U.S. Department of Education

### U.S. Department of Education Announces \$2.5 Million in Grants to Operate Centers for Parents of Children with Disabilities

The [U.S. Department of Education](#) announced the award of \$2.5 million in grants to operate 23 Community Parent Resource Centers in 17 states and a Parent Training and Information Center to serve American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the Republic of Palau. The centers provide parents with the training and information they need to work with professionals in meeting the early intervention and special needs of children with disabilities.

With the new grants, the Department now funds 87 information centers for parents of children and youth with disabilities. Every state has at least one Parent Training and Information Center that assists parents as they work to ensure their children receive a free, appropriate public education as guaranteed by federal law. In addition, the centers provide services to underserved parents of children with disabilities in targeted communities throughout the country.

“Parent centers empower families who have children with disabilities by helping them understand their rights and the services to which their children are entitled under the law,” U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King Jr. said. “These community parent resource centers are powerful levers for ensuring equity in diverse communities across the country.”

The training center and many resource centers work closely with state and local school systems to engage parents in working collaboratively to improve outcomes for their children. Community Parent Resource Centers receive grants to assist underserved families of children with disabilities in metropolitan areas like Miami, New York City, Philadelphia, and San Francisco, while others work in rural areas in Alaska, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina, for example. For a list of Department-funded parent training and information centers, visit [www.parentcenterhub.org](http://www.parentcenterhub.org).

The following is a list of grantees and the contacts for Community Parent Resource Centers, which will receive \$100,000 annually for five years. The Parent Training and Information Center serving the Pacific is getting \$200,000 annually for four years.

Wasilla, AK – LINKS Mat-Su, Eric Wade, [eric@linksprc.org](mailto:eric@linksprc.org)  
 Springdale, AR – Arkansas Support Network, Inc., Candia Nicholas, [cnicholas@supports.org](mailto:cnicholas@supports.org)  
 Berkeley, CA – Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, Susan Henderson, [shenderson@dredf.org](mailto:shenderson@dredf.org)  
 Napa, CA – Napa Valley Child Advocacy Network, Inc.—Parents CAN, Marlena Garcia, [marlenag@parentscan.org](mailto:marlenag@parentscan.org)  
 San Francisco, CA – Support for Families of Children with Disabilities, Joe Goyos, [jgoyos@supportforfamilies.org](mailto:jgoyos@supportforfamilies.org)  
 Denver, CO – THRIVE Resource Center, Yvette Burkhalter, [Yvette@thrivectr.org](mailto:Yvette@thrivectr.org)  
 Hartford, CT – African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities, Ann Smith, [asmith@afcamp.org](mailto:asmith@afcamp.org)  
 Miami, FL – Parent to Parent, Isabel Garcia, [igarcia@ptopmiami.org](mailto:igarcia@ptopmiami.org)  
 Gulf Breeze, FL – Project Empower of Northwest Florida, Gary Walby, [gwalby@comsysinn.com](mailto:gwalby@comsysinn.com)  
 Hewitt, NJ – Association for Special Children & Families, Angela Abdul and Julie Rikon, [ascfamily@hotmail.com](mailto:ascfamily@hotmail.com)  
 Albuquerque, NM – EPICS, in Alvino Sandoval, [asandoval@epicsnm.org](mailto:asandoval@epicsnm.org)  
 Buffalo, NY – Parent Network of Western New York, Kim Walek, [kmw@parentnetworkwny.org](mailto:kmw@parentnetworkwny.org)  
 Queens, NY – United We Stand of New York, Lourdes Rivera-Putz, [lriveraputz@uwsofny.org](mailto:lriveraputz@uwsofny.org)  
 Asheville, NC – FIRST, Gaile Osborne, [gaile@firstparentcenter.org](mailto:gaile@firstparentcenter.org)  
 Morganton, NC – Family Support Network HOPE, Vickie Dieter, [vbd Dieter@fsnhope.org](mailto:vbd Dieter@fsnhope.org)  
 Panama, OK – Pervasive Parenting, Kodey Toney, [kodeytoney@hotmail.com](mailto:kodeytoney@hotmail.com)  
 Philadelphia, PA – HUNE, Luz Hernandez, [lhernandez@huneinc.org](mailto:lhernandez@huneinc.org)  
 Erie, PA – Mission Empower, Jill Hrinda-Patten, [advocate@missionempower.org](mailto:advocate@missionempower.org)  
 Charleston, SC – Family Resource Center for Disabilities and Special Needs, Bev McCarty,

[bevmccarty@fredsn.org](mailto:bevmccarty@fredsn.org)

El Paso, TX – Children's Disabilities Information Coalition, Patricia Santibáñez,

[patricia.santibanez@cdicelpaso.org](mailto:patricia.santibanez@cdicelpaso.org)

Fairfax, VA – Formed Families Forward, Kelly Henderson, [formedfamiliesforward@verizon.net](mailto:formedfamiliesforward@verizon.net)

Tacoma, WA – Open Doors for Multicultural Families, Ginger Kwan, [gingerk@multiculturalfamilies.org](mailto:gingerk@multiculturalfamilies.org)

Milwaukee, WI – Alianza Latina Aplicando Soluciones, Elsa Diaz-Bautista, [elsa@alianzalatinawi.org](mailto:elsa@alianzalatinawi.org)

Honolulu, HI – Learning Disabilities Association of Hawaii, Michael Moore, [MMoore@LDAHawaii.org](mailto:MMoore@LDAHawaii.org)

## FACT SHEET: Supplement-not-Supplant under Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act

The U.S. Department of Education (the Department) released proposed regulations to implement the requirement in Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as recently revised by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that federal funds must supplement, and may not supplant, state and local funds. The proposal will help ensure that federal funds are additive and do not take the place of state and local funds in low-income schools, in keeping with the longstanding commitment under Title I that the nation's highest need students receive the *additional* financial resources necessary to help them succeed. The proposed regulation would mean up to **\$2 billion** in additional state and local funding for high poverty schools.

"For too long, the students who need the most have gotten the least," said U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King Jr. "The inequities in state and local funding that we see between schools within districts are inconsistent not only with the words 'supplement-not-supplant' but with the civil rights history of that provision and with the changes Congress made to the law last year. No single measure will erase generations of resource inequities, and there is much more work to do across states and districts to address additional resource inequities, but this is a concrete step forward to help level the playing field and ensure compliance with the law."

Wade Henderson, president and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights said, "Plainly put, our system of funding education is unfair and unwise and this draft rule is an important step toward improving an intolerable status quo. Our states and districts routinely spend less money to educate children facing greater challenges. This rule doesn't solve this massive problem—no single rule could—but it's a step in the right direction and brings us closer to a more just education system."

## Civil Rights History of the "Supplement-not-Supplant" Provision

ESEA was first passed in 1965 to address enormous inequities in educational opportunities provided to low-income students and children of color. It became law around the same time as the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act, and was intended to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, disparities in educational quality. The original purpose of the law was, at its core, to support educational opportunity for economically disadvantaged students in the spirit of providing all children across the country a high quality education. To that end, the law provided funds to schools with high concentrations of poverty—through Title I—to ensure those schools receive additional resources relative to their peers to support their high-need students.

Four years after ESEA became law, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Legal Defense and Education Fund did a [study](#) on how states were spending federal education resources provided under Title I. The report revealed egregious misuses of funds, including an example from Mississippi where a superintendent admitted in federal court that the *highest* state and local per-pupil expenditure for schools serving black students in his district was half of the *lowest* per-pupil expenditure for schools serving white students. Although Title I funds were intended to provide high-need students with additional resources relative to their peers, the gap in state and local funds was making that impossible.

In 1970, in the wake of these findings, Congress added a provision to ESEA designed to ensure that districts did not use Title I funds simply to shirk their responsibilities to provide equitable state and local funding to all schools. In revising ESEA last year, Congress specified a new requirement under supplement, not supplant that indicates that schools receiving Title I federal funds must receive all of the

State and local funds the school would have otherwise received if it were not receiving the federal resources.

More than forty years after ESEA was enacted, our nation has still not achieved the law's original promise of providing *all* students with equitable access to educational resources. The vast majority of districts—more than ninety percent—already ensure that their Title I schools receive at least as much state and local funding per student as their non-Title I schools—which does not necessarily ensure adequate funding for a high-quality education for students who often need more, but is consistent with the statute. However, 3.3 million children remain in Title I schools that receive less. Currently, schools receiving Title I funds educate more than two-thirds of our low-income children and children of color, and yet approximately 5,750 Title I schools nationwide received substantially less state and local funding than their non-Title I peers *within the same district*. **on average, these Title I schools are shortchanged by about \$440,000 per year, and the federal funds spent in these schools are often, in effect, being used to make up some or all of that shortfall, instead of providing the additional resources needed in high poverty schools.** In total, these schools are underfunded compared to their non-Title I peers by \$2 billion in state and local funding. In part because of those disparities, but also because of further resource inequities including disparities in funding between districts and between states, our low-income students do not have the same access to rigorous and varied coursework, excellent educators, and college-level experiences that we know are necessary for them to get a fair shot and succeed in higher education or a career.

### Resource Inequities in Schools Serving Students of Color and Low-Income Students

This proposed rule is designed to mitigate clear discrepancies in educational resources and opportunities, while ensuring compliance with the statute:

- Low-poverty and low-minority schools are twice as likely to offer a full range of math and science courses as high-poverty and high-minority schools;
- On average, low-poverty schools offer three times as many AP classes as high-poverty schools;
- Low-minority schools are twice as likely to offer dual enrollment or dual credit opportunities, compared with high-minority schools;
- Educators in high-poverty and high-minority schools are more than twice as likely to be in their first or second year of teaching, compared to their peers in low-poverty and low-minority schools.

### Proposal Details

No single federal rule can make up for decades of resource inequities, and going forward we must continue to fight for full equity in funding between schools, districts and states, but today's proposal would mean up to \$2 billion in additional funding annually for our nation's poorest children, though the precise amount will depend on how districts comply with the requirements. That's a significant step forward in the ongoing fight for resource equity in our nation's schools, and to ensure federal dollars are spent as they are intended under the law: to ensure that our highest need students receive the *additional* resources they need to be successful.

Recognizing that this is not a simple undertaking, the draft regulations reflect the robust and thoughtful input provided during the negotiated rulemaking process, and feedback the Department received from stakeholders across the education system over the past few months. Compared to the proposal put forward during negotiated rulemaking, the new proposed regulations would allow districts and states significantly greater flexibility in complying with the supplement, not supplant provisions. As a number of negotiators suggested, it also builds upon the [non-regulatory guidance](#) the Department issued in 2015.

Specifically, the proposal clarifies for school districts options for how to demonstrate compliance with the supplement, not supplant, provision in Title I. Notably, the ESSA for the first time contains a statutory directive around how districts must demonstrate compliance with supplement, not supplant. The law states that districts must use a methodology to allocate state and local funds to each Title I school that ensures each such school receives all the state and local funds it would otherwise receive if it were not a Title I school. The proposal affirms that funds-based requirement and allows each district the flexibility to demonstrate compliance in a number of ways:

- A weighted student funding formula that provides additional resources for students with characteristics associated with educational disadvantage, such as students in poverty, English learners, and students with disabilities, and ensures that each Title I schools receives all of the actual funds to which it is entitled under that system;
- A formula that allocates resources including staff positions and non-personnel resources directly to schools, and that ensures each Title I school gets all of the funding it is entitled to, as measured by the sum of (1) the number of personnel in the school multiplied by the district's average salaries for each staff category, and (2) the number of students in the school multiplied by the district's average per-pupil expenditures for non-personnel resources;
- An alternative, funds-based test developed by the state and approved by a panel of expert peer reviewers that is as rigorous as the above two options; or
- A methodology selected by the district that ensures the per-pupil funding in each Title I school is at least as much as the average per-pupil funding in non-Title I schools within the district.

Regardless of how they choose to demonstrate compliance, the Department encourages districts to meet the requirement by:

- Increasing overall funding for education, with a focus on putting new resources in Title I schools, rather than shifting resources from other schools;
- Avoiding forced staff transfers and instead investing in providing the resources that students need to learn and that will attract staff to choose to work in Title I schools. Such resources might include high quality early learning opportunities, wraparound supports such as healthcare and counseling, improved working conditions, or financial incentives for effective educators who choose to work in high-need schools.

### Flexibilities for Districts

Understanding that school budgeting is complicated and often requires varied approaches from district-to-district and year-to-year, the proposed rule provides several flexibilities that take into account feedback given during negotiations, including:

- Exceptions for those cases in which discrepancies in state and local funding within districts are the result of investments in students with disabilities, English Learners or special schools.
- Flexibility for minor fluctuations from year to year within a district's budget.
- Flexibility for very small schools, where 100 or fewer students are enrolled.
- Opportunity to comply on a districtwide *or* grade span basis, as the cost of running a high school is often quite different than the cost of running an elementary school.
- Opportunity to exclude state or local funds expended for programs that meet the intent and purposes of Title I, Part A (e.g. a state-funded preschool program that provides additional services only for students most at risk of not meeting challenging State academic standards).
- Flexibility to exclude state and local funds spent on districtwide activities (e.g. districtwide administrative costs or districtwide summer school), provided that each Title I school receives an equal or greater share of those activities as it would otherwise receive if it were not a Title I school.

Finally, we recognize that this is challenging work that will take time to implement. The proposal provides additional time for districts that cannot demonstrate compliance by the statutory deadline in ESSA: December 2017. Those districts must submit to their state a plan in December 2017 for how they will fully comply beginning in the 2019-2020 school year. The Department encourages districts to take advantage of this time in order to implement strategies that increase funding for Title I schools in which federal funds may not currently be supplemental, consistent with the statutory requirement.

### Building on Progress

Today's proposal builds on the Administration's efforts to promote equal educational opportunity across the country. High school graduation rates are now at an all-time high, with students who are historically further behind—low-income students, students of color, students with disabilities--making faster progress. Since 2009, the Administration has invested more than \$7 billion in turning around low-

performing schools and provided \$4.2 million to the Excellent Educators for All initiative to help states develop and implement plans to ensure that low-income students and students of color are not taught at higher rates than their peers by unqualified, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers. The Administration's investments in Promise Neighborhoods—a cradle-to-career program that places schools at the center of a community's revitalization efforts and aligns comprehensive supports such as high-quality early learning, after school activities, mental health services, job training, and crime prevention to the needs of students and families—enshrined in the ESSA, has improved opportunities in very high-need communities across the country. The Administration has also worked to invest over \$1 billion additional dollars in expanding access to high-quality preschool, one of the best investments we can make to close the achievement gap. We have also worked to improve college readiness by redesigning America's high schools, expanding access to community college through America's College Promise, and starting a pilot program allowing 10,000 high-school students to access Federal Pell Grants to pay for college-level courses.

The promise of ESSA is to provide all children with access to a high-quality, well-rounded education and prepare them to succeed in college or a career. We have come a long way as a country since the original passage of ESEA in 1965, but we must do better, and this proposal is an important step forward in providing our highest need children with the additional resources they need to succeed.

The full text of the proposed regulation is available [here](#), and is on track to be published in the Federal Register on Tuesday, September 6. The Department welcomes comments on these proposed regulations during the 60 day public comment period.

## **Obama Administration Encourages Schools and Districts to Enroll Students in Health Care Coverage through School Registration**

As students begin the new school year, the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services are calling on states and districts to help enroll students in health care coverage during school registration processes and ensure students have access to the health coverage they need.

U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King Jr., U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Burwell and District of Columbia Public Schools Chancellor Kaya Henderson joined the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), AASA, The School Superintendents Association and other officials at Cardozo Education Campus for a roundtable discussion highlighting best practices for getting more students enrolled in health care. CDF and AASA have developed the [Insure All Children toolkit](#), informed by extensive work with districts in California, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas, on how schools and districts can enroll students in health care coverage through routine school registration processes.

"As a nation, there is more we can do to help children access the care they need to stay healthy and to be ready to learn," said King. "Enrolling or linking students to coverage through school registration processes is just one of many ways that education and health stakeholders and agencies can partner to ensure all students are healthy and ready to learn."

"Children do better in the classroom when they are healthy and ready for learning," said Burwell. "As we gear up for Open Enrollment's start on Nov. 1, we want to make sure more kids have access to quality care that will keep them healthy, active, and prepared to learn through the year."

[Research shows](#) that children who have access to health coverage are more likely to graduate from high school and college than uninsured children. In addition, when eligible parents get enrolled in Medicaid, their eligible children are more likely to get enrolled and receive necessary and preventive care.

"We urgently need to change the odds to help our most vulnerable children succeed in our global economy," said Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund. "Giving every child a healthy start should be the goal of every school district, school and parent. We know healthy children do better in school. This is something schools can do to help close achievement gaps right now."

“As a key ambassador in every community, support from the superintendent is critical to fully implement and sustain policies and practices within a school district,” said Daniel A. Domenech, executive director, AASA. “With more than half of America’s public school students living in low-income households, it is more important than ever for school districts around the country to join us in this initiative which touches the lives of our children and their families. And it is imperative that health and other community agencies and advocates partner with and support schools in this enrollment effort. Health insurance improves health access and outcomes, which in turn, improves educational outcomes.”

In the nation’s capital, the site of today’s roundtable, the District of Columbia Public Schools has implemented a strategy as part of school registration that directs families and students toward health care enrollment and services. Through efforts like this and other practices, D.C. now has a 97 percent coverage rate for children. The district has also built a model partnership between education and health agencies that allows for data sharing, fostering better tracking of students who do not receive coverage and directing services to students and schools in highest need.

While the nation has made significant progress expanding health insurance for more children, nearly 4.5 million children under age 18—about one in 17—remain uninsured. School-aged children (ages 6-17) are more likely than younger children to be uninsured, and account for nearly three out of four uninsured children in the nation. [About 2.8 million uninsured children are eligible for Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program](#) (CHIP), but are not yet enrolled. The children who remain uninsured are often the hardest to reach because of various enrollment and retention barriers, including immigration status and homelessness. Schools and districts have an opportunity to help close these gaps.

Today’s announcement builds on efforts that began in January 2016 where, the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services launched their first toolkit entitled “[Healthy Students, Promising Futures](#).” The toolkit highlighted state and local practices that can improve and expand school-based health services. Outlining concrete resources to support communities and schools in providing or connecting students to adequate health care will yield countless tangible benefits for society.

### **Obama Administration Investments in Early Learning Have Led to Thousands More Children Enrolled in High-Quality Preschool**

Hundreds of thousands more children across the country have access to high-quality early learning programs today, compared to the beginning of the Obama Administration.

In 2013, President Obama put forth his bold [Preschool for All](#) proposal to establish a federal-state partnership that would provide high-quality preschool for all 4-year-olds from low- and moderate-income families. After the President’s call, many states took action and today, all but four states offer preschool to young children. Overall, in the 2015-16 budget year, states increased their investments in preschool programs by nearly \$767 million or 12 percent over the 2014-15 fiscal year. And, from 2009 to 2015, states enrolled 48,000 more 4-year-olds enrollment in state preschool.

The Obama Administration has increased investments by over \$6 billion in early childhood programs from FY 2009 to FY 2016, including high-quality preschool, Head Start, child care subsidies, evidence-based home visiting, and programs for infants and toddlers with disabilities.

"A high-quality early education provides the foundation that every child needs to start kindergarten prepared for success," said U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King Jr. "Because of historic investments from the Obama Administration, states and cities, more children—particularly those who have been historically underserved—now have access to high-quality early learning. But we can't stop there. We must continue our collective work to ensure that all children—regardless of socioeconomic status, race, background, language spoken at home, disability or zip code—have access to the opportunities that prepare them to thrive in school and beyond."

King talked about this progress during his visit to [Pike View Early Childhood Center](#) in the North Little Rock School District in Arkansas, which is one of 18 states that received [Preschool Development Grants](#). Jointly administered by the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, the grant

program has led to 28,000 more children being served in new high-quality preschool classrooms or classrooms improved by supporting a well-qualified and compensated teacher, becoming full-day, reducing class size or child-teacher ratios, providing evidence-based professional development, and providing comprehensive services in 230 high-need communities in the 2015-16 school year, the first year of funding. This fall, funding from the grant's second year will enable an estimated additional 35,000 four-year-olds from low-income families to get the strong start they need for success in school and in life. Over the four years of the grants, approximately 150,000 additional children from low- to moderate-income families will attend high-quality preschool programs.

A new preschool program is included in the nation's new education law, the [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#), which also for the first time includes provisions to promote coordination in early learning among local communities; align preschool with early elementary school; and build the capacity of teachers, leaders, and others serving young children to provide the highest-quality early learning opportunities.

In addition, through the [Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge](#) (RTT-ELC) grant program—jointly run by the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services—the administration invested more than \$1 billion to support 20 states in designing and implementing a cohesive system of quality early learning programs and services for young children from birth through age five. A [report](#) released last month shows that nearly 70,000 more early learning programs in the Early Learning Challenge states now participate in quality rating systems to enhance their programs, with more than 21,000 now rated highest in quality—more than double the number five years ago. States with RTT-ELC grants reported that nearly 267,000 children, particularly those with high-needs and from low-income families, are enrolled in state-funded preschool that meets high standards in the state quality rating and improvement system than there were in 2011. These grantees are working to align, coordinate and improve the quality of existing early learning programs across multiple funding streams that support children from birth through age 5.

While states and the federal government have invested in early education, more needs to be done to ensure every parent and family can access and enroll their child in a quality preschool program. Today, according to the [National Institute for Early Education Research](#), only 41 percent of all 4-year-olds and 16 percent of 3-year-olds in the United States are enrolled in publicly funded preschool through state programs, Head Start, or special education. Even fewer children are enrolled in the highest-quality programs.

Expanding access to high-quality early education is among the smartest investments that we can make as a country. President Obama's 2017 budget proposal includes expanding high-quality preschool through programs through the following proposals:

- \$75 billion over 10 years for the [Preschool for All](#) proposal to provide universal high-quality preschool programs for all 4-year-olds from low- and moderate-income families.
- \$350 million for [Preschool Development Grants](#), an increase of \$100 million over the FY 2016 funding level, to help states lay the foundation for universal public preschool.
- An additional \$82 billion over 10 years for the Child Care and Development Fund to provide high-quality child care for all low- and middle-income families with young children.
- \$434 million in additional funding for the Head Start program to increase the duration of Head Start services and maintain program quality and enrollment.

For more information visit the [Early Learning page](#).

The Secretary's visit is part of the Education Department's seventh and final [back-to-school bus tour](#) this week to celebrate progress in communities and states across the country.

## Advancing Opportunity and Success in U.S. Education

*"In America, opportunity can never be rationed. It cannot be a perk set aside for some and denied to others. Opportunity must be available to all. Opportunity and education are not only the foundation of*

*our economy, they are also the foundation of our democracy and the American way of life."* – U.S. Education Secretary John B. King Jr.

President Barack Obama entered office in 2009 with a comprehensive vision for improving our education system to advance our children's opportunity and success. That vision included efforts to address the dropout crisis, improve student achievement, and increase graduation rates; expand equity in education through stronger schools; give more of our youngest learners access to high-quality early childhood education; ensure all students achieve high standards that prepare them for college and career; grow innovation and investment in what works, while safeguarding the right of all students to a world-class education; and have the opportunity to complete an affordable high-quality college education.

Thanks to the hard work of educators, state and local leaders, communities, parents, families, and students, the nation has made significant educational progress over the last eight years. High school graduation rates are at an all-time high, and the dropout rate has decreased—with all groups making progress, and students of color closing gaps. The nation has a new education law, the [Every Student Succeeds Act](#), passed with bipartisan support and signed by President Obama in December 2015 that offers the chance to reclaim the promise of an excellent, well-rounded education for every student. More states have implemented their own unique plans for education reform and school turnarounds. More independent students, older students, and parents are also enrolling in college for the first time. Meanwhile, more students are graduating college than ever before; there have already been well over 27 million college degrees and credentials awarded since the President took office. More students are making their student debt successfully, as defaults, delinquencies, and forbearances are on the decline. More students and families have access to the information they need to make the best choice about college—from easier and now earlier financial aid to the next generation of college transparency with tools like [College Scorecard](#). And we've expanded access to pre-K, free community college, and computer science classes.

To build on our prosperity and competitiveness as a nation, the Administration has worked diligently to partner with states and communities to make a positive difference for students and to continue the work to deliver on the promise of a world-class education for every child.

To celebrate those successes, U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King Jr. is launching a five-day bus trip across six states, starting in Washington, D.C., and ending in New Orleans, Louisiana. He will start with a rally on the plaza outside the U.S. Department of Education in Washington, D.C., with stops in Charlottesville, Virginia; Bristol, Knoxville, Chattanooga and Memphis, Tennessee; Harvest, Alabama; Little Rock, Arkansas; Indianola, Mississippi; and Monroe, Baton Rouge and New Orleans, Louisiana. A trailer for the bus tour is [here](#).

During this year's "Opportunity Across America" Tour, King and other senior Department officials will hold events touting the Administration's key initiatives over eight years, highlighting the progress made to expand opportunity across the nation and the groundwork laid for continued momentum. Along the route, talented art teachers, students, and local artists in each community will draw and write on the bus, creating a collaborative mural focusing on the definition of "opportunity."

## Buzz From the Hub

**All information and more details of the information below can be found at:**

<http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/buzz-august2016/>

## New Resources in the Hub on ESSA

Here are several recent additions to the [Hub library](#), all of which pertain to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and how it addresses specific populations of students.

### **ESSA Provisions for Juvenile Justice-Involved Youth with Disabilities.**

This presentation by Kate Burdick of the Juvenile Law Center & Legal Center for Youth Justice and Education provides an overview of important provisions in the ESSA regarding youth involved in the juvenile justice system. 24 minutes.

### **ESSA Provisions Regarding Homeless Children and Youth: Implications for Students with Disabilities.**

This presentation provides information on important provisions of the ESSA for homeless children and youth that impact students with disabilities. Presented by Patricia Julianelle, Director of State Projects and Legal Affairs for the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY). 26 minutes.

### **ESSA and Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities.**

This presentation provides an overview of ESSA provisions regarding Alternate Assessments on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Presented by Ricki Sabia, Senior Education Policy Advisor for the National Down Syndrome Congress. 14 minutes.

## Spotlight on...Help for the Hot Spots

As the school year gets underway, we all hope for the best, while recognizing that there are particular “hot spots” where trouble may brew—behavior, discipline, bullying, to name a few familiar challenges. Here are tools to help parents build effective working relations with school professionals, help them ward off hot-spots-in-the-making, or deal with them once they arise.

### **Open Line and More: A Guide for Effective Communication.**

This handy guide is filled with useful communication tips for families working with schools or other agencies. From Parents Reaching Out (PRO) in New Mexico.

### **Planning for a Meeting about Your Child’s Behavior Needs.** | Also in *Spanish!*

When a child’s behavior causes concern at school, parents may find themselves among competing approaches to handling behavior. Planning ahead for an individualized meeting about their child’s behavior needs will help parents explain their own ideas about the best way to help their child in addition to listening to the ideas of others. English version from PACER Center in Minnesota. Spanish version from Parents Resource Network in Texas.

### **IDEA Dispute Resolution Parent Guides | In English and Spanish!**

IDEA gives parents and schools multiple ways to resolve conflicts. CADRE offers a parent guide series describing each of IDEA’s mechanisms: state complaints, mediation, due process complaints and hearings, resolution sessions, and IEP facilitation. Each is available in English and in Spanish.

## Resources You Can Share with Families

Building parent power takes hard, dedicated work. Here are several resources you can share with the families you serve.

### **Back to School Tips for Parents of Children with Special Needs.**

Here are Reading Rockets' top 8 back-to-school tips for parents emphasize communication, organization, and staying up-to-date on special education news.

### **Accessible Educational Materials: Key Questions for Parents and Families.**

Are you working with families with a student who needs extra help using textbooks, online learning programs, or other educational materials or technologies? Share this Q&A with families and parents to help them get started learning about AEM and accessible technologies to ensure every learner has access to learning.

### **10 Tips for a Successful School Year.**

Here are 10 tips to help parents get off to a good start at the beginning of the new school year. From Wrightslaw.

## Resources Just for Parent Centers

The work that Parent Centers do covers so many topics, it's mind-boggling. How do you keep up with such a broad range of priorities? Here are several resources you can use on topics of continuing importance.

### **Essential Elements of Digital Storytelling for Nonprofits.**

Everyone loves a compelling story, and Parent Centers have a lot of stories to share. The link below will take you to an article called *Experts Break Down the Science of Nonprofit Storytelling*. At the end of this interesting article is an even MORE interesting storybook you can download for free. Sweet!

### **Parent Leadership Initiatives Set Off a Ripple Effect.**

This new report from the Annenberg Institute for School Reform suggests how parent leadership initiatives can set off a positive "ripple effect." Across the 7 programs explored, parents said they have gained the confidence and skills to speak out with authority about their experience and propose innovative solutions to bolster access and opportunity for their children's future.

### **Preschool Inclusion: What's the Evidence, What Gets in the Way, and What do High-Quality Programs Look Like? | Webinar**

This 2016 webinar provides an overview of the 40 years of research supporting early childhood inclusion; a review of myths surrounding the children, adults and systems that support inclusion; and a review of common features across the inclusion models that have produced the most powerful outcomes. 58 minutes. Watch the streaming presentation (linked above) or download the [PowerPoint presentation file](#).

## Book Review

# Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race (Author: Debby Irving)

Amanda Berndt

“When it comes to culture, the only thing we all have in common is that we have one, and it shapes us” (15). Author Debby Irving documents her personal transformation as she defines her ideas of race and culture to “make the world a more humane place to live, work and thrive,” (xiv). She provides personal experiences, resources, guiding questions and activity prompts to help others uncover their understanding of race and find ways to help people connect respectfully. The author believes that by confronting anxiety, asking difficult questions, re-evaluating childhood experiences, defining personal cultural norms and listening carefully to others, we can develop a new understanding and appreciation for diversity.

Some of the lessons are the result of what is left unsaid. Her childhood memories provide clues as to how she developed her understanding of race as a child. From disapproving facial expressions, the clicking of her mother’s tongue, the expectation that she should help those in need, and the presumption that everyone shares the same goals, the author acknowledges that much was taught without directly saying anything at all. She becomes aware that many of her values and perspectives were based upon a sheltered and worry free childhood. “Providing a worry-free childhood is a privilege of the dominant class – a white privilege,” (19). Her parents, in an attempt to protect her, had withheld experiences that would have deepened her understanding that not everyone has equal access to resources.

Inattentive blindness, where we do not see what we do not want to see (69), is a startling lesson she confronts by “making an effort to slow down, look around, and notice how other people might be experiencing the world,” (70). As simple as this sounds, taking the time to consider another’s perspective is an activity that must be practiced. By accepting that others have an experience that is different from our own and resisting the urge to qualify that experience as inconsequential or inferior is a huge step towards greater understanding.

Irving provides a simple formula, “Skin color symbolism + favoritism + power = systemic racism” (54). Skin color may be observable, however, culture is the expression of language, behaviors, customs and understandings by a group. Systemic racism uses skin color as a defining factor. Favoritism refers to identifying one group as superior; reinforcing the idea that one group is the “norm,” and all others are somehow different. When reflecting on her description of people, white was the norm, further reinforcing them as superior in her experience. This was not a conscious linguistic decision, but the result of her upbringing. The author writes of her struggles when she inadvertently dismissed the worries of others, as the result of her narrow life experiences. The power to make policy and allocate resources is instrumental in perpetuating systemic racism. Historically, those in power have actively restricted racial groups through financial and educational means.

This book has significant implications for educators. White culture values independence, confidence, academic awards and often discourages asking for help. While teaching second grade, the author misinterpreted a girl offering to help her classmate, focusing instead on her leaving her seat and developing a behavior chart with rewards and consequences to correct the behavior. She had failed to see this behavior as a strength, “Nor could I conceive of interdependence as a survival strategy in an under-resourced population,” (202). The cultural expectation to help, which is not aligned with the white cultural expectation to work independently and competitively, caused friction between the teacher and student. “I thought I was being helpful,” (48). Inadvertent harm, by imposing cultural expectations without regard to differences in cultural norms may be a factor in disproportionate office referrals and may negatively affect student and parent engagement in schools. Educators are keenly aware of the

achievement gap and spend time and resources trying to “bridge the gap.” The author questions the roots of this disparagement and argues systemic racism is at its core. The long history of segregated neighborhoods, unfair banking policies, access to adequate health care and even law enforcement bias (i.e. racial profiling and limited access to adequate legal representation) continue to impact students and their families.

Teachers and administrators, particularly white teachers and administrators, may benefit from the prompts and activities suggested by the author to help become more self aware of cultural bias they bring to the classroom. Michael Fullan, in his book *Leading in a Culture of Change*, describes the messy process of how to make meaningful change in schools. The components necessary for change include relationship building, defining moral purpose, and knowledge sharing. This book is a first step for many educators as they begin their journey of change. Creating a culture that not only tolerates diversity, but uses cultural differences to enhance the community and foster deep connections between students, teachers and families, may help decrease the achievement gap and the disproportionate identification of non-white students for special education services.

# Literature Review: Inclusion and Least Restrictive Environment

By  
Lauren Vivar

Florida International University

“Special education is supposed to provide an avenue through which children with disabilities are guaranteed to receive specially designed instruction to assist them in maximizing their highest potential.” (Obiakor, 2011, p. 11) There has been a long-lasting debate as to the most effective and appropriate way to provide this instruction to students with special needs. For many educators and policymakers, inclusion is the answer. Even then, however, there are differing views on what exactly constitutes inclusion and how it should be carried out.

The idea behind inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms revolves around the idea that all students should have access to the same curriculum. This means every student, regardless of their ability level, should be a part of the same classroom where they are being exposed to the same lessons. With that idea, it is understood that all students have different needs and their learning is best done with different strategies and supports. Some may argue that these supports can be provided in a general education classroom setting by the classroom teacher or a special education teacher while others believe that some children’s needs may be best met in a special classroom with less students. Ryndak et al. (2014) argue that special education should be seen as a service and not a specific location. While there is a push towards this inclusion, there is evidence that shows that a very small population of special education students are included in a general education classroom for most of the day. The majority of these students tend to be those with more high-incidence disabilities while those with the more severe disabilities are still being segregated into different classrooms.

While the debate on what is best continues, it is important to keep in mind that the end goal is the same for everyone. Meeting the students needs in the most appropriate way possible is the most important aspect of the push behind inclusion. Some even argue that if instructional strategies such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL) are implemented, even the general education students could benefit from the inclusion of special education peers in their classrooms. (Sailor & McCart, 2014) If the proper supports and policies are in place, inclusion can be successful in meeting the needs of all students.

## Special Education and Inclusion Policies

In early special education, students with disabilities were almost always placed in special education classrooms and often even segregated schools. Many had the view that students with disabilities were “uneducable”. Dudley-Marling and Burns (2014) use the words segregation and exclusion to describe the history of United States special education. These words began to fade when Public Law 94-142 was put into place. This law required that all students were given “a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment.” (Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014, p. 15) With this, there was a movement towards educating students with special needs in public schools and with their typically developing peers. Even today, however, this looks different in every state and in every school.

The question then becomes “What is the least restrictive environment for students with special needs?” The answer to that is one that many people disagree on. Ryndak et al. (2014) argues that the term least restrictive environment is vague and leads to a wide range of interpretations depending on the state or even school district. The author states that some even perceive least restrictive environment as accepting of segregated learning environments. Some see the general education classroom is something a student with special needs must “earn” when they prove that they are able to perform the academics and exhibit the appropriate behaviors. Others feel that some students just would not benefit from being in a regular classroom setting and learning general education standards. Instead, students should focus less on academic skills like math and reading and more on life skills that they will need to function

independently. Since there is not a clear cut definition of what this should look like, there continues to be a variety of opinions on how inclusion should look and be carried out within the school setting.

### **Perspectives on Inclusion**

Dudley-Marling and Burns (2014) define two main perspectives that are taken when it comes to inclusion. The first perspective they discuss is the deficit stance. In this view, the desired outcome of inclusion is to give students with special needs the tools they need to function properly in a part of the “normal” environment. The deficit standpoint argues that students may be placed in the general education classroom if they can function relatively independently without changing the curriculum or expectations that are given to all students in the class. Otherwise, students with special needs are seen to be taking up more of the teacher’s time and therefore taking away from the learning of the other students.

This deficit perspective also looks at the difference between general education and special education teachers. From this view, regular classroom teachers may not have the knowledge and skills required to teach students with special needs. For this reason, it is seen as beneficial for these students to spend at least some of their day in a specialized classroom as they will have instruction from a teacher who has the training and flexibility to meet their individual learning needs. People with this viewpoint argue that the most important thing is the quality of what the students are learning, not where they are learning it.

The other viewpoint the authors discuss is the social-constructivist stance. In this viewpoint, students are seen first as students and they are not defined by their disabilities. People with this mindset hold “the belief that all children, regardless of their differences, are smart, competent, learners.” (Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014, p. 23) Social-constructivist educators feel as though the regular classroom should always been the default setting where children are learning. They believe that inclusion is not just about education but about social justice and the fact that the students have the right to be in the general education classroom setting, learning the same material as their same-age peers.

There is, of course, still the understand that students with special needs will need more assistance or different adaptations. In this viewpoint, however, instead of changing the child, the learning environment and classroom structure is what should be adjusted. This means having additional special education teachers in the classroom to support student needs or adapting lessons in ways that could benefit all students. Sailor and McCart (2014) urge that there should be a shift from looking so heavily at the placement of the students and instead focusing on changing the education environment as a whole.

These are only two of many different views on inclusion and how it should be carried out. While it is clear that there are many different standpoints, it is also clear that none of these options will be successful unless schools and teachers are on the same page and working together to meet the needs of these students.

### **Key Roles in Inclusion**

In order for any variation of inclusion to be successful, all stakeholders play an important role in the process. Obiakor (2011) outlines the roles that each person plays and how each one is important to ensuring student success. It is crucial for families to be involved in the education of their child. This means being knowledgeable about special education and the options available for inclusion. Parents must advocate for their children and ensure they are getting the best available resources to meet their needs. The author also urges the importance of student involvement in the process. It is important that the child is taught early on to advocate for themselves as well so that as they get older they already have experience and know what to do.

The school also plays a role in ensuring that inclusion is successful. Schools must be organized and have plans in place to ensure that the inclusion process is seamless and meets the students’ needs. This includes having the appropriate staff in place and making sure that they are properly trained. The author discusses the role that the community plays in the inclusion of students with disabilities as well. Inclusion does not only happen in the classroom setting but out in the community as well. Programs should be available where students with disabilities are able to participate and play with all other children.

## Teacher Attitudes and Beliefs

Another key stakeholder in the inclusion process is the teacher. Teachers are the ones responsible for providing the education to their students. They are involved in the process from beginning to end and their involvement is critical. One study looked at the effects of teacher attitudes on the success of inclusion and found that the more positive attitudes teachers have towards inclusion, the more satisfaction and less friction their students felt in the classroom. They stated that “the success or failure of implementing inclusive education policy and practice is dependent upon what the classroom teacher believes about such initiatives.” (Monsen, Ewing, & Kwoka, 2014, p. 114) The way a teacher feels about inclusion will impact how they run their classroom, how they teach, and ultimately how the students in their room feel about their classmates as well. Research found that teachers with positive attitudes had happier students and more positive learning environments as a whole. (Monsen, Ewing, & Kwoka, 2014)

One way that teacher attitudes are kept positive is through support and collaboration. Galvish and Shimoni (2011) found that many teachers feel as though they have a lack of knowledge about inclusion law and preparation for implementing it in the classroom. If teachers were able to work alongside their peers and learn from each other, they would be more likely to feel successful in their positions. The school’s readiness for inclusion also impacts the teachers’ attitudes. A school must be well equipped and well prepared in order to implement a successful inclusion program. If teachers feel as though they do not have the resources or the support they need to meet their students unique learning needs, they will not feel positive and in turn the program will not be successful.

If teachers do not have a positive attitude towards inclusion, the risk is teacher burnout and frustration. One common coping mechanism that often results is the general education teacher removing themselves from the situation and passing the responsibility on to special education teachers who may seem more knowledgeable. (Galvish & Shimoni, 2011) This is a disservice to both the teachers and the students involved.

## Successful Inclusion

Throughout the research, no matter the issues found or the perspectives taken, there is one common thread that can be found. “Collaborative effort is required for successful inclusion to occur.” (Monsen, Ewing, & Kwoka, 2014, p. 124) All of the stakeholders, teachers, families, schools, communities, and even students must work together in order to find the appropriate placement for the child’s success. Galvish and Shimoni (2014) urge that inclusion should be about all members taking actions and a sense of ownership to work together for the common goal of properly educating students. It is critical that all parties are involved and working together to ensure success.

It is easy to see how drastically teacher’s attitudes can impact the success of inclusion as well. Since this factor is already known, it is important that work is done to keep teachers’ positive. This included frequent collaboration with peers and support from administration. Additionally, pre-service teachers should be taught early on strategies for working with students with disabilities. This could help avoid the feelings of inadequacy and the unknown that Galvish and Shimoni (2014) discuss. If the proper steps are taken ahead of time, the negative views and lack of progress can be avoided.

Since there are so many benefits to inclusion, it is important to discover the best ways to implement inclusion in the classroom. Programs like the Schoolwide Integrated Framework for Transformation (SWIFT) Centers help schools and teachers begin to create that positive inclusion environment and relationship with parents. (Ryndak, et al., 2014) Implementing teaching styles like UDL that will reach all students no matter their needs can also help make the inclusion more successful. (Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014) Sailor and McCart (2014) state that there are many positive benefits to implementing educational supports in general education classrooms for all students.

While there is still much debate on what may constitute the least restrictive environment and how inclusion should be carried out, it is important to keep in mind that the end goal is to make all students successful. “Fairness does not consist of educating all children in the same place at the same time [and with the same curriculum] but is ensuring that the student has basic needs met and is traveling toward a well-thought-out career and satisfying life style.” (Dudley-Marling & Burns, 2014, p. 20)

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## About the Author

Lauren Vivar is an Exceptional Student Education teacher in Palm Beach County, Florida. She has a Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Education from the University of Florida (Go Gators!) as well as a Master's Degree in special education from Florida International University. She has a passion for education and believes all students should have the opportunity to reach their highest potential.

# Book Review: Learn Like A Pirate

By Paola Esquijarosa

Florida International University

“If you’re willing to live by the code, commit to the voyage, and pull your share of the load, then you’re free to set sail. Pirates don’t much care about public perception; they proudly fly their flags in defiance. And besides, everybody loves a pirate.” Paul Solarz restates this in the book *Learn Like a Pirate*. Paul Solarz is the author of this book but he also is also a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Westgate Elementary School in Arlington Heights, Illinois. His view of education in the United States is one that is outdated and inefficient. He has explored education systems in other countries, such as Finland, to know what can be changed about our own educational system. Through the book *Learn Like a Pirate*, Solarz opens the door to a new type of 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom that is not teacher led but instead student led. His purpose of writing this book is to show teachers the benefits of a student led classroom, what this type of classroom looks like, and being able to move towards a 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom. Overall, Solarz wants teachers to be able to empower their students to collaborate, lead, succeed, and become the leaders of their own education.

Throughout the book, there are several themes that are listed throughout, which include: peer collaboration, improvement focus vs. grade focus, responsibility, active learning, twenty-first century skills, and empowerment, which make up the acronym pirate. These six themes are what Solarz focuses on in order to have an effective student-led classroom. Collaboration is an important strategy to have as a student and as a teacher. Through collaboration, we are able to know other people’s views, learn to work together, and be able to practice that everyone has a role and is able to be a leader. “Students lead when they believe the teacher would appreciate their help, not when the teacher is completely in charge.” Solarz expressed. When a teacher expresses the need for help, this allows students to start leading and taking initiative. Now when establishing this student-led classroom, it is important that the teacher teaches the student how to foster this power because the downside of this aspect is the fact the classroom can get out of control and instead of being something beneficial, it can become something problematic.

In classrooms now, teachers are driven by assessments, especially standardized testing since this is what determines whether or not they can keep their jobs. In turn, students focus on their grades rather than the journey of learning. “Grades shouldn’t earn rewards or privileges, nor should they earn negative consequences.” Solarz expresses this thought about focusing on grades. Solarz suggests moving away from grades and move towards improvement focus, which can be monitored through portfolios instead of grades. Though in theory of not focusing on grades and moving towards portfolios sounds like a great idea, the reality of our education system is that we are still focused on high-stakes testing. The question is how can we incorporate this student-led classroom when our educational system is not there? Solarz does not completely address this issue, which is problematic.

For the student-led classroom to work successfully, there has to be responsibility. The responsibility lies on the students and the teacher has the responsibility to guide these students into the different responsibilities. Solarz explains that every student has a job in the classroom; most of the jobs are not assigned that way the responsibility doesn’t fall on only one person. Doing this allows all students to be able to be a leader in the classroom. This model also goes for projects or assignments in the classroom when it comes to group work. A weakness I see is that what if you had a situation where a group of students argue because they all want to lead in the assignment or they wanted a specific job. How does the teacher handle this situation? Though Solarz describes that these situations can happen and the importance of talking to the students about these issues, he isn’t very clear on other ways because the reality is what if those solutions don’t work, then what does the teacher do to handle these issues?

Active learning, twenty-first century skills, and empowerment all work together hand in hand to make a successful student-led classroom. When students are actively engaged in their learning, they are able to become inspired and empowered to learn and to lead their own learning. Twenty-first century skills, such as innovating, creating, collaborating, problem solving, and taking responsibility of your own learning will allow students to be able to be better prepared for the future of education and the future jobs. These three are very powerful tools for every student and for teachers to lead their students to this form of education.

Though teachers, who are not in this type of classroom, may feel stressed out and not know where to start, this is a good way to start implementing twenty-first century learning into the classroom without feeling completely overwhelmed.

In Fullan's *Leading in a Change of Culture*, he focuses on leadership in a different view. His view consists of having leaders that are able to follow the leadership framework, which consists of moral purpose, understanding change, relationship building, knowledge creation and sharing, and coherence making. Though both Fullan and Solarz talk about two different types of leadership, they could also be interrelated. If you were to have teachers who follow the Fullan's leadership framework and their goal is to change the traditional classroom into a student-led classroom, then both strategies would be incorporated in one. In order to have a student-led classroom, the teacher has to be able to lead this change in his/her classroom or at their school.

On the other side of it, in the book *Most Likely to Succeed* by Tony Wagner, it supports the theory Solarz implements but takes it to the next level. Wagner is in agreement with a student-led classroom but he takes it a step forward. In the school High Tech High, the students are in charge of their own learning. There are no tests and no homework, only a project that the students work on throughout the entire year. Parents and teachers not exposed to this type of environment raise a lot of questions regarding college, how effective is this, are the students learning, and many more. Through this model, students learn problem solving skills, collaboration, and other skills that in the long run are more effective for students to learn. Teachers should be the type of leader to guide their students into taking charge of their own learning because the reality is we are teaching students whose jobs are yet unknown because they do not exist.

In the book, *Finnish Lessons 2.0* by Pasi Sahlberg, it takes a look in the world's top education system and what they do that is effective. Finland views their education as a top priority. First off, teachers are seen as a top profession in society. Second, students are not given standardized testing at any point. The students are not divided by grade level, are given early interventions, and have a choice to continue their academic career or to attend vocational school. The question that many people have is why is it that the United States is focusing on standardized testing when everyone knows it isn't effective. Our educational system in the United States is outdated and needs to be reevaluated not by government officials but by people who know education. Our educational system needs to move towards what Solarz and Wagner describe, which is a student-led classroom that doesn't focus on grades but focuses on the learning and has the success of the students in mind.

In conclusion, Solarz has a very interesting view of the educational world and where our education in the United States might be headed. This book opens the eyes of future teachers and administrators to take a look at what education should be and how to get to student-led classrooms. Instead of keeping our students in a bubble, student-led classrooms expose students how to function in the real world. "I want students to set goals, work towards those goals, and experience setbacks along the way because that's what real life is like!" Solarz exclaimed. Get ready for change because our education is in the transitional stage.

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## **About the Author**

Paola Esquijarosa was born in Miami, Florida. She attended the University of Miami where she received her Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and Special Education with an endorsement in Reading and ESOL. She currently attends Florida International University where she is finishing her Master of Science in Special Education with an endorsement in Autism Spectrum Disorder. She is working at a private school in Coral Gables, Florida as a teacher for Junior Kindergarten. Paola always tries to better her teaching practices by keeping up with the latest in education, especially involving technology.

# Learning Approaches as a Predictor of Academic Performance for Students Who are Deaf

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## Abstract

This correlational study explored learning approaches as a predictor of academic performance of deaf students at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). Data were gathered from 31 out of 41 deaf students. The participants were purposively sampled from level 200, 300 and 400. Data were gathered through ASSIST (1998) questionnaire and students' academic records. Results of the study suggested that participants' approaches to learning (deep, strategic and surface) did not predict their academic performance. The study recommended that further investigation could be done to explore the factors that predict students' academic performance.

## Introduction

In order to better understand academic achievement of students who are deaf in their educational lives, researchers have over the past years tried to examine some predictors of the achievement of such student. In this study, the word "deaf" is used to refer to students whose level of hearing acuity ranges from severe to profound and depend on Sign Language interpreting service for academic information. This study explored how learning approaches of deaf students serve as the predictor of their academic achievement. Approaches and Study Skills Inventory for Students (ASSIST, 1998) and deaf students Grade Point Average (GPA) were utilized to obtain information concerning the learning approaches and academic achievement of the students. Biggs (2001) referred to learning approaches as how students go about learning, their learning motives and their strategies. Ladan, Balarabe, Sani, Musa, Salihu, and Salihu (2014) contended that educational researchers have argued that to systematically improve the academic achievement of deaf students, it is necessary to understand their learning approaches. Richardson (2009) and Richardson, MacLeod-Gallinger, McKee, and Long (2000) posited that while some studies believe the approaches deaf students' employ in their studies have a significant impact on their academic success, other studies believe learning approaches have no significant impact on academic success.

The seminal work of Marton and Saljo (1976) identified that student learning could be categorized into two general strategies: deep and surface approaches to learning. Biggs (1987) defined a third learning approach, labelled a strategic approach. The deep approach to learning requires that students get understanding for themselves what they learn and draw their own conclusions. Surface approach on the other hand requires that students memorises what they learn and reproduce them whenever required. Strategic approach learner in their quest for attaining high academic grade, chooses to either use the deep or surface learning approach in order to be successful. Gijbels, Dochy, Van den Bossche, and Segers (2005) generally believed that the use of a deep learning approach among deaf students is associated with higher quality learning outcomes and a surface approach with lower quality learning outcomes. Zeegers (2001) further reiterate that it is accepted that a deep approach will contribute positively to learning outcomes and therefore consider it important that deaf students be encouraged to adopt a deep approach to learn.

In Ghana, available literature on deaf students indicated that no empirical study had been conducted on the ways the students' learning predict their academic achievement. Even the few studies that were conducted on the students' learning approaches did not consider how the approaches predict the academic achievement of the students.

This study when successfully conducted would highlight how the learning approaches deaf students at the university employ predict their academic achievement. This would help to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the literature. The research question that this study sought to answer was that: What is the impact of approaches to learning of deaf students on their academic performance? The study hypothesized that there is no statistically significant relationship between learning approaches and academic performance of deaf students.

In Nigeria, Ladan, et al., (2014) explored the learning approaches as predictors of academic performance of undergraduate students in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The objectives of the study were to determine the predominant learning approach, identify factors that influence the choice of students learning approach and explore the relationship between approaches to studying and academic achievement of undergraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The study found that there was a significant relationship between learning approach and academic achievement.

Nordin, Wahab, and Dahlan (2013) conducted an empirical study on approaches to learning among trainee teachers in Malaysia. The objectives of the study were: 1) to identify the approaches to learning used by trainee teachers of UiTM, Shah Alam; 2) to identify the difference between approaches to learning and gender; 3) to identify the relationship between approaches to learning and academic achievement of trainee teachers of UiTM, Shah Alam. A total of 255 respondents participated in this study. Results showed that there was a positive but low relationship between deep and strategic approaches to learning on academic performance. Findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents were inclined towards using deep and strategic approaches to learning. However, there was also evidenced that these trainee teachers tend to use surface approaches.

Gürten, Turan, and Senemoğlu (2013) explored prospective teachers' learning approaches, learning preference and the relationship between learning preference, learning approaches with achievement and students' perception of achievement. Approaches and Study Skills Inventory for Students (ASSIST) was used to determine the approach and study skills of students. Findings of Gürten, et al. (2013) indicated that academic achievement was positively related to strategic approaches, and perception of achievement was positively related to strategic approaches but negatively related to a surface approach to learning. However, zero correlation was found between academic achievement and surface approach.

Shaari, Mahmud, Abdul Wahab, Abdul Rahim, Rajab, Mohamed Saat, et al. (2011) conducted the study on personality, intelligence and approaches to learning as predictors of academic performance. A sample of 158 undergraduate students from University College of London, participated in the study. The results indicated significant relationship between academic achievement and learning approaches.

Similarly, Cano (2007) explored the predictors to academic achievement among students and found that both intelligence and approaches to learning are significant factors in predicting students' academic achievement. His research revealed that high usage of deep approach to learning with general intelligence resulted in better academic performance. This is because students with successful academic achievement are more prone to use deep approach to learning than those who are less successful (Zeeger, 2001).

Mayya, Rao, and Ramnarayan (2004) developed the Approaches to Learning Inventory (ALI) and administered to explore the learning approaches, learning difficulty and academic performance of undergraduate students of physiotherapy, at the College of Allied Health Sciences, Manipal. University examination marks of these students were collected. Academic performance showed significant negative correlation with surface approach and various problems of learners like fear of failure and lack of confidence, non-academic distractors and poor English language ability. The study demonstrated significant positive association between surface approach and various problems of the learners.

Diseth (2002) explored the relationship between intelligence, approaches to learning and Academic Achievement. Three different tests of intelligence and the Approaches and Study Skills Inventory for Students were administered to 89 Norwegian undergraduate psychology students. The purpose was to

investigate the relationship between intelligence, approaches to learning and academic achievement. No relationship between general intelligence and approaches to learning was observed. A curvilinear relationship between surface approach and academic achievement was observed. Multiple regression analysis showed interaction effects between deep–strategic and surface–strategic approaches to learning as predictors of academic achievement.

The current study is set apart from the studies discussed in this research because the previous studies did not consider how deaf students’ learning approaches predict their academic performance. The previous studies considered only students without disabilities.

## Methodology

The study employed correlational research design to explore the relationship between learning approaches and the academic performance of deaf students at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). Thirty-one deaf students were purposively selected out of a population of 41 students. They comprised 21 males and 10 females aged between 21 and 39 years with an average age of 25 years. Twenty of the participants were from the Department of Special Education, 5 from Information and Communication Technology Department, and 6 from the department of Graphic Design. Fifteen of the participant were in level 200 and 13 in level 300 and 3 in level 400. Level 100 deaf students were not included in the study because they were in their first semester and had not written any university exams. Levels 200, 300 and 400 deaf students were chosen because they were accessible and could give relevant data for the study.

All the participants had their secondary school education at Secondary Technical School for the Deaf at Mampong-Akuapem. Two of the participants had post-Secondary education at Presbyterian College of Education at Akropong in the Eastern Region. The remaining 29 participants had only Secondary School education before entering into University of Education, Winneba. None of the deaf students had additional disability. The hearing level of the deaf students ranges from severe to profound hearing loss. Their communication mode at UEW is manual communication (Sign Language). They depended on interpreting service during lecture and examination periods.

Approaches and Study Skills Inventory for Students (ASSIST, 1998) was adapted for the study. ASSIST derives from Marton & Saljo’s (1976, 1997) ideas on approaches to learning, combined with (Entwistle & Ramsden’s 1983, Ramsden & Entwistle, 1981) descriptions on approaches to studying. The ASSIST has shown excellent reliability and stability (Richardson, 2009). It was developed specifically for use in educational settings and has been previously used in determining the approaches to studying among tertiary students with disability (Richardson, 2005).

ASSIST consists of four sections, but only the section measuring the three approaches to learning was used in the study. Majority of deaf students in Ghana have difficulties with English Language during their studies on university campuses (Fobi & Oppong, 2015). The ASSIST was used to determine the deaf students’ approaches to learning. This was because of its simple language and structure of questions. Also few expressions that could pose challenge for the students were reworded to meet the participants’ learning needs. Thirty-seven out of the fifty-two question items were revised. They were the items: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 46, 48, 50 and 52. Table 3.2 gives an illustrations of the question items that were reworded. Furthermore the easy self-assessed scoring system facilitated a reliable classification for educational purposes.

**Table 3.2 Illustrations of the Question Items that were Reworded**

Original Expressions in ASSIST	Reworded Expressions in ASSIST
1. I manage to find conditions for studying which allow me to get on with my work easily.	1. I manage to find conditions for learning which allow me to learn easily.

2. When working on an assignment, I'm keeping in mind how best to impress the marker.	2. When working on an assignment, I keep in mind how best to impress the marker.
3. Often I find myself wondering whether the work I am doing here is really worthwhile.	3. Often I find myself thinking whether the work I do in the university is really important.
4. I usually set out to understand for myself the meaning of what we have to learn.	4. I usually try to understand the meaning of what I have to learn.
6. I find I have to concentrate on just memorizing a good deal of what I have to learn.	6. I concentrate on just memorizing most of what I have to learn.
7. I go over the work I've done carefully to check the reasoning and that it makes sense.	7. I go over the work I've done carefully and see if the work is meaningful.
8. Often I feel I'm drowning in the sheer amount of material we're having to cope with.	8. Often I feel the amount of material I have to learn are too much for me
9. I look at the evidence carefully and try to reach my own conclusion about what I'm studying.	9. I look at evidence in books carefully and try to reach my own conclusions.
10. It's important for me to feel that I'm doing as well as I really can on the courses here.	10. It's important for me to feel that I'm doing the best I can on the courses.
11. I try to relate ideas I come across to those in other topics or other courses whenever possible.	11. I try to relate ideas I come across to those in other topics and courses whenever possible.
12. I tend to read very little beyond what is actually required to pass.	12. I read very little beyond what is actually required to pass exams.
15. I look carefully at tutors' comments on course work to see how to get higher marks next time.	15. I look carefully at lecturers' comments on course work to see how to get higher marks next time.
16. There's not much of the work here that I find interesting or relevant.	16. I find much of the work in the university not interesting.
17. When I read an article or book, I try to find out for myself exactly what the author means.	17. When I read a book, I try to find out for myself exactly what the writer means.
18. I'm pretty good at getting down to work whenever I need to.	18. I'm pretty good at working whenever I need to.
19. Much of what I'm studying makes little sense: it's like unrelated bits and pieces.	19. Much of what I learn is not important to my course.
22. I often worry about whether I'll ever be able to cope with the work properly.	22. I often worry about whether I'll ever cope with the work properly.
23. Often I find myself questioning things I hear in lectures or read in books.	23. Often I find myself questioning topics lecturers teach.
25. I concentrate on learning just those bits of information I have to know to pass.	25. I concentrate on learning information I have to know in order to pass my exams.
28. I keep in mind who is going to mark an assignment and what they're likely to be looking for.	28. I keep in mind who will mark my assignment and what their expectations are.
29. When I look back, I sometimes wonder why I ever decided to come here.	29. When I look back, I sometimes wonder why I ever decided to come to university.
30. When I am reading, I stop from time to time to reflect on what I am trying to learn from it.	30. When I am reading, I stop from time to time to think about what I am trying to learn from it.
31. I work steadily through the term or semester, rather than leave it all until the last minute.	31. I work little by little through the semester, rather than leave it all until the last minute.
32. I'm not really sure what's important in lectures so I try to get down all I can.	32. I'm not really sure what's important in lectures so I try to write all I can.

33. Ideas in course books or articles often set me off on long chains of thought of my own.	33. Ideas in course books make me form new ideas.
34. Before starting work on an assignment or exam question, I think first how best to tackle it.	34. Before I start to work on an assignment and exam question, I think first how best to answer it.
35. I often seem to panic if I get behind with my work.	35. I often seem to panic if I am late to submit my work.
37. I put a lot of effort into studying because I'm determined to do well.	37. I learn hard in order to pass my exams.
38. I gear my studying closely to just what seems to be required for assignments and exams.	38. I plan my learning closely to just what seems to be required for assignments and exams.
39. Some of the ideas I come across on the course I find really gripping.	39. Some of the ideas I come across on the course are really interesting.
41. I keep an eye open for what lecturers seem to think is important and concentrate on that.	41. I pay attention to what lecturers seem to think is important and concentrate on that.
42. I'm not really interested in this course, but I have to take it for other reasons.	42. I'm not really interested in some courses, but I have to take them for other reasons.
43. Before tackling a problem or assignment, I first try to work out what lies behind it.	43. Before working on an assignment, I first try to know why that assignment was given.
46. I like to play around with ideas of my own even if they don't get me very far.	46. I like to play around with pieces of idea of my own even if they don't get me very far.
48. Often I lie awake worrying about work I think I won't be able to do.	48. Often I awake up from sleep thinking about work I won't be able to do.
50. I don't find it at all difficult to motivate myself.	50. I don't have any difficulty in motivating myself to learn.
52. I sometimes get 'hooked' on academic topics and feel I would like to keep on studying them.	52. I sometimes get attached on academic topics and feel I would like to keep on studying them.

Question items on the ASSIST comprised of fifty-two (52) different question items rated (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree). The 52 question items are grouped under three main learning approaches (deep, strategic and surface learning). Deep approach to learning has four sub-scales. The subscales are seeking meaning, relating ideas, use of evidence and interest in ideas. Each sub-scale has four question items. They are: seeking meaning (4, 17, 30 and 43), relating ideas (11, 21, 33 and 46), use of evidence (9, 23, 36 and 49) and interest in ideas (13, 26, 39 and 52). Strategic approach to learning has five sub-scales. The sub-scales are organizing studying, time management, alertness to assessment demands, achieving and monitoring effectiveness. Each of the five sub-scales under the strategic approach to learning has four question items. They are: organizing studying (1, 14, 27 and 40), time management (5, 18, 31 and 44), alertness to assessment demands (2, 15, 28 and 41), achieving (10, 24, 37 and 50) and monitoring effectiveness (7, 20, 34 and 47). Also, surface approach to learning has four sub-scales. They are lack of purpose, unrelated memorizing, syllabus-boundness and fear of failure. Each of these sub-scales has four question items. They are: lack of purpose (3, 16, 29 and 42), unrelated memorizing (6, 19, 32 and 45), syllabus-boundness (12, 25, 38 and 51) and fear of failure (8, 22, 35 and 48). The ASSIST is a standardized instrument and as such had been validated. Cronbach alpha coefficients were extracted using SPSS 20 to test the internal reliability of the 52 scales. This procedure is applied to test the extent to which items within a scale are measuring the same dimension. In the case of the ASSIST questionnaire, for example, 52 items in the questionnaire measured students' approaches to learning. The Cronbach alpha coefficient indicates the extent to which they do so. The ASSIST contained 16 items that measure deep approach to learning, 20 items that measure strategic approach to learning and 16 items that measure surface approach to learning. The deep approach had a Cronbach Alpha of 0.84, strategic approach had Cronbach Alpha of 0.80 and surface approach had a Cronbach Alpha of 0.87.

A pilot study was conducted on 9 deaf students on a similar University in Ghana-University of Education Winneba- Kumasi Campus (UEW-K). The validated question items of the ASSIST were piloted on the deaf

students at UEW-K. The deaf at UEW-K had no contact with the deaf at UEW. The deaf at UEW-K answered all the question items on the ASSIST without leaving a single question item unanswered. This gave the researchers the indication that the question items in the adapted ASSIST was not ambiguous and as such can be used on the participants for this study. Respondents were subjected to the same conditions as planned for the main study. This was because the deaf at UEW-K could respond to all the question items without any difficulty

The study used GPA as the measure of academic achievement. GPA is a standardized measure of overall academic performance across all courses completed by the student (Zeegers, 2001). The academic records consisted of only First year examination records for each participant. First and Second semester examination results formed the First year results. Consents of participants were sought and they agreed to provide their results slips which contained their Grade Point Average (GPA).

Permissions were sought from the heads of department whose students participated in the study. Three Sign Language interpreters were trained on how to administer the ASSIST. The training was done in a day. The purpose of the study to was explained to them. ASSIST (1998) was administered by trained Sign Language interpreters in their respective departments (Special Education, Graphic Design and Information and Communication Technology) on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2014. Each of the Sign Language interpreters administered the questionnaires on deaf students in one department. This was because those Sign Language interpreters were assigned to those respective departments as interpreters. Also the deaf in those respective departments were familiar with the interpreters.

Multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the data. The reason for the regression method of analysis was that it lends itself more to the analysis of data from correlational designs that investigate the relationship between two or more naturally occurring, non-manipulated and measurable variables.

## Results

### Testing of the Study Hypothesis

**H<sub>01</sub>:** *There is no statistically significant relationship between learning approaches and academic performance of deaf students.*

To test this hypothesis, multiple regression analysis was run on the responses of the respondents learning approaches and GPA. The test was meant to identify the significant relationship that existed between the three learning approaches of students' with deafness and their academic performances. However before attempting to analyze the data, preliminary analysis was performed to confirm the suitability of the data set.

### Normality of the Distribution

Gravetter and Wallnau (2000) explained that normality of a distribution is used to describe a symmetrical, bell-shape curve, which has the greatest frequency of scores in the middle, with smaller frequencies toward the extremes. The normality of the distribution was expressed and assessed by obtaining the values of skewness and kurtosis. From the data set in Table 2, the distribution of the deep approach to learning score was approximately normal with a mean score of 63.65 and a standard deviation of 8.09. The value of skewness and kurtosis of the distribution are also 0.20 and -0.58 respectively. Strategic approach to learning almost assumed a normal distribution with a mean of 81.52 and standard deviation of 8.19. Skewness of the distribution was -0.32 and the kurtosis was -0.46. Surface approach to learning which assumed a normal distribution with a mean of 53.06 and a standard deviation of 7.73 had a skewness of distribution of 0.22 and a kurtosis of 0.03. The results in Table 1 show that the distribution of the scores is approximately symmetrical and matches the Gaussian distribution.

**Table 1: Approximate Normal Distribution of Learning Approach scores**

	Deep Approach	Strategic Approach	Surface Approach
Sample Size	31	31	31
Mean	63.65	81.52	53.06
Std. Deviation	8.09	8.19	7.73
Skewness	0.20	-0.32	0.22
Std. Error of Skewness	0.42	0.42	0.42
Kurtosis	-0.58	-0.46	0.03
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.82	0.82	0.82

### Learning Approaches as Predictor of Academic Achievement of Deaf Students.

Multiple regression analysis was run on the responses of the respondents learning approaches and GPA. GPA which represents the academic performance was set at the dependent variable and the three learning approaches (deep, strategic and surface) among deaf students were set as the independent variable.

**Table 2. Multiple Regression Analysis on Academic Performance.**

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	R square	t-value	Sig.-value
(Constant)	2.09			2.68	0.01
Deep Approach	0.37	0.45		1.55	0.13
Strategic Approach	-0.19	-0.19		-0.77	0.45
Surface Approach	-0.04	-0.04		-0.17	0.87
			0.11		

Dependent Variable: GPA

Table 2 shows unstandardized (b) and standardized (beta) regression coefficients, the multiple correlation coefficients R square and the value of t and its associated sig-value for each variable that entered into the equation. As shown in Table 2, deep approach, strategic approach and surface approach are collectively explained 11% ( = 0.11) of the variance in academic performance. This suggested that there are other factors which contribute or predict the academic performance of deaf students at UEW.

Based on multiple regression analysis, as shown in Table 2, the finding reveals that out of the three predominant approaches to learning, none of them was found to be significant predictor of the academic achievement of deaf students. The t-values and p-values of the three approaches are; Deep approach (t = 1.55, p = 0.13 > 0.05), Strategic approach (t = -0.77, p = 0.45 > 0.05) and Surface approach (t = -0.17, p = 0.87 > 0.05). The total amount of variance of the criterion variable that was predictable from the three predictors was 11.1%. These results suggest that in this study, deaf students' approaches to learning (deep, strategic and surface) could not predict the academic performance of such students in the university and hence the null hypothesis two was accepted.

## Discussion of Results

Results from the analysis suggest that in this study, deaf students' approaches to learning (deep, strategic and surface) could not predict the academic performance of such students in the university. This results imply that there could be other confounding variables which could possibly predict the academic performance of the students. This study finding is in agreement with the works of (Diseth, & Martinsen 2003; Noble, Brown, & Murphy, 2011). Their study concluded that the correlations between approaches to learning and academic achievement were weak although the results were consistent across cultural and educational levels.

However, other studies such as (Ladan et al., 2014; Nordin et al., 2013; Gürlen, Turan, & Senemoglu, 2013; Shaari et al., 2011; Cano, 2007; Cano, 2005) showed that there was a significant relationship between learning approach and academic achievement which is different from the findings of this study.

## Conclusion

Findings of this study revealed that approaches to learning among university deaf students could not predict their academic achievement and that there could be some confounding variables which the study suggest could predict the academic performance of the students. In future research, researchers could consider using a larger sample which are drawn from various higher institutions in Ghana so that the results can be generalized to all students in the country. There were many direct and indirect effects on the variables that were examined which the researchers did not take control of. For example, in this study, the researchers found deaf students learning approaches as a predictor of their academic achievement. Thus, the study suggest that future research be conducted to examine other variables such as teaching methodology, on-set of disability, cultural background of students and proficiency of sign language interpreters which could possibly predict the academic achievement of deaf students.

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## Latest Employment Opportunities Posted on NASET

### Assistant/Associate Prof. Special Ed/Psychology

Mount Berry, GA

Job Category: Tenure-Track Assistant or Associate Professor

Posted on Thursday, 29. of September 2016

#### 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 courses 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](mailto: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](mailto:kkurz@berry.edu)

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## Special Services Manager

Renton, WA

Job Category: Special Education

Posted on Wednesday, 28. of September 2016

**Description:**

Puget Sound ESD is seeking a Special Services Manager to support the provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities across the region. This is an exciting opportunity to support school district staff as they increase the post-secondary successes of students with disabilities through job exploration, work-based learning, post-secondary education exploration, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy.

## Qualifications

- BA/BS degree in Education, Special Education, or related field
- Professional experience working with high school special education students and post-secondary transition planning.
- Experience with special education law and requirements

## Preferred Qualifications

- Experience with students in educational or work training situations, across a variety of disabilities, including learning disabilities, health impairments, emotional behavioral disabilities, intellectual disabilities, and multiple disabilities,
- Experience providing professional development to adults.
- Experience with grant management and outcome reporting
- Experience with coordinating and/or providing post-secondary services (e.g. education, training, employment) for adults with disabilities
- Special Education Endorsement and/or ESA certificate a plus

## Benefits:

This special education leadership position has a potential end date of September 1, 2018, with possibility of extension contingent upon funding.

This position is based in Renton, Washington. Salary: \$69,333 - \$80,405/year. Salary offers consider candidate qualifications, experience, and internal equity. Excellent benefit package, including participation in Washington State Department of Retirement Systems, and the opportunity to work with a family-friendly, skilled and dedicated workforce committed to the communities we serve.

## Contact:

**Open until filled;** for best consideration, submit complete application by Tuesday, 10/18/16. For more information and to apply via our online application system, visit our website at [www.psesd.org/careers](http://www.psesd.org/careers).

\*\*\*\*\*

## Special Education Teacher

Barstow, California

Job Category: Full Time

Posted on Monday, 26. of September 2016

**Date Posted:** 9/6/2016

**Contact:** Cynthia Duran

**Telephone:** 760-255-6000

**Number Openings:** (At time of posting) 1

**Length of Work Year:** 7 hrs. per day ~ 185 days per year

**Employment Type:** Full Time

**Application Deadline:** Until Filled

**Visit website:** <http://www.barstow.k12.ca.us/District/3752-EdJoin-Job-Search.html>

\*\*\*\*\*

## 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>

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## NYS Special Ed Certified Teacher

New York, New York

Job Category: Full Time

Posted on Monday, 26. of September 2016

### Description:

**Catapult Learning** is seeking Special Education Teachers in New York for the 2016-17 school year

Locations are in New York - Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan, and Staten Island

We are an organization of dedicated people who know how exciting and rewarding it is to help children achieve. We are eager to have people join us whose training, skills and experience add to our ability to provide successful, research based instructional systems, great teaching, excellent support services, and strong partnerships with the schools we serve across the US. We emphasize flexible work schedules, small group teaching environments and high professional standards and will provide you the opportunity to grow with us and help students achieve beyond expectations.

Provides contracted instructional services with the necessary educational expertise in reading, mathematics, writing, and related areas; diagnoses learning skill deficits and delivers prescribed instructional delivery methods as determined by the Company; consults with school personnel to coordinate efforts in providing services to students; communicates and conferences with parents providing information on student progress.

### Essential duties and responsibilities include the following:

- Attends training sessions, passes content assessment, and delivers designated instructional models and strategies in readiness, reading, mathematics, and/or writing skills to eligible students through utilization of Company-designed materials and educational strategies.
- Develops and maintains individualized skill-appropriate lesson plans.
- Ensures supervision of students at all times, including escorting students safely to and from Company classroom or to mobile/trailer classroom.
- Establishes and maintains student forms and files as required by Company, local, state, and/or federal agencies.
- Attends and documents conferences/meetings/trainings with Company Supervisors, classroom teachers, principals, and parents as required by the Company, local, state, and/or federal agencies.
- Maintains inventory of educational materials and supplies.
- Other duties may be assigned.

### EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE:

Requires valid teaching certification, as required by contract. Teaching experience preferred.

### OTHER JOB REQUIREMENTS:

Must understand that all children can learn. Must demonstrate positive and enthusiastic attitude towards internal and external customers. Must be flexible. Working knowledge of Microsoft Office preferred. Must be available to work during the summer months.

## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT/WORKING CONDITIONS:

Light lifting, walking, climbing stairs. Most programs are in school settings. The Company provides all classroom and instructional materials as well prepared lesson plans and paid training. Continued instructional and leadership support for all employees is also provided.

### Contact:

**Apply Here:** <http://www.Click2Apply.net/7c8tqf25kt>

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## Teacher of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (HS)

Haddonfield, New Jersey

Job Category: Full Time

Posted on Monday, 19. of September 2016

### Position Summary:

Plans and implements classroom instruction, specializing within one or more areas of curriculum, to specifically meet the educational needs of students and to encourage the best possible student educational experience.

### Education & Experience:

Bachelor's degree and eligibility for formal certification such as N.J. Teacher of Disabilities (or of the Handicapped) required. Must be fluent in American Sign Language. Minimum of one year of teaching experience in special education preferred. Eligibility for Highly-Qualified Teacher status required. Prior experience working with individuals with developmental disabilities preferred.

### Contact:

Jennifer Perna, Talent Acquisition Partner

[Jennifer.perna@bancroft.org](mailto:Jennifer.perna@bancroft.org)

**Please apply using the link below:**

[Click Here to learn more and apply](#)

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# Special Education Coordinator

Boston, MA

Job Category: Full Time

Posted on Friday, 16. of September 2016

## Description

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.

## 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

## 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.

## To Apply

[http://uncommonschoools.force.com/careers/ts2\\_JobDetails?jobId=aoxFo00001PnaG4IAJ&tSource=](http://uncommonschoools.force.com/careers/ts2_JobDetails?jobId=aoxFo00001PnaG4IAJ&tSource=)

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## Assistant Professor of Education

Bethlehem, PA

Job Category: Tenure-Track Assistant or Associate Professor

Posted on Tuesday, 13. of September 2016

### DESCRIPTION:

The Moravian College Education Department invites applications for tenure-track positions in mathematics, literacy, and special education. The positions begin Fall Term 2017. Members of the Moravian College Education Department view and carry out their work in the context of the College's liberal arts ethos.

Successful candidates will have opportunities to teach undergraduate courses in early childhood, middle level, and secondary education. Candidates with experience, knowledge, and coursework in the area of educational technology and who can also teach courses that prepare all teacher education candidates effectively to employ the use of technology are preferred.

Candidates must be ready to share in the work of a thriving Education Department engaged in processes of both growth and redesign. Other instructional opportunities exist, including the teaching of foundations, educational technology, and adolescent psychology. The undergraduate program offers certificates in early childhood education (PreK-Grade 4), middle level education (Grades 4-8), most areas in secondary education (Grades 7-12), as well as certification in the PreK-12 areas of art, music, and world language.

Opportunities to teach in other undergraduate areas in support of the liberal arts curriculum, as well as within the graduate education program, are also available. In addition to awarding the Master of Education and Master of Arts in Teaching degrees, the graduate education program offers certification for principals, supervisors of curriculum and instruction, reading specialists, ESL teachers, and special educators.

All positions are subject to budget availability.

## QUALIFICATIONS:

Qualified applicants must have a record of at least three years of successful child-centered, public school teaching and hold an appropriate doctorate degree. ABD considered. In addition, successful candidates must demonstrate a genuine desire to participate fully in a liberal arts environment and be committed first to teaching and next to scholarship and service.

## TO APPLY:

Please send a letter of application, curriculum vitae, and three letters of reference in a digital Microsoft Word format to [search.education@moravian.edu](mailto:search.education@moravian.edu). Subject line should state "Attn: Education Department" and either "mathematics education, literacy education, or special education applicant." Materials not available in Word format should be sent to Dr. Joseph Shosh, Chair, PPHAC 327, Education Department, Moravian College, 1200 Main Street, Bethlehem, PA 18018-6650.

Complete applications will be considered beginning October 15, 2016 and continue until appointments are made.

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## Special Education Teacher

Gilbert, Arizona

Job Category: Special Education Teacher

Posted on Thursday, 08. of September 2016

### Description:

- Support HUSD Vision, Mission and Goals.
- Implements instructional activities that contribute to a climate where students are actively engaged in meaningful learning experiences.
- Identifies, selects, and modifies instructional resources to meet the needs of the students with varying backgrounds, learning styles, and special needs.
- Assists in assessing changing curricular needs and offers plans for improvement.
- Maintains effective and efficient record keeping procedures.

- Provides a positive environment in which students are encouraged to be actively engaged in the learning process.
- Communicates effectively, both orally and in writing, with students, parents, and other professionals on a regular basis.
- Collaborates with peers to enhance the instructional environment.
- Models professional and ethical standards when dealing with students, parents, peers, and community.
- Ensures that student growth and achievement is continuous and appropriate for age group, subject area, and/or program classification.
- Establishes and maintains cooperative working relationships with students, parents, and schools.
- Assumes responsibility for meeting his/her course and school-wide student performance goals.
- Demonstrates gains in student performance.
- Participates in professional growth training.
- Meets professional obligations through efficient work habits such as: meeting deadlines, honoring schedules, coordinating.

## Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.
- Must hold valid Arizona Teacher Certification with approved area/endorsement as needed for position.
- Must be Highly Qualified in subject area of position at time of hire.
- No convictions for felonies or crimes against children.
- Finger Print Clearance Card.

## Benefits:

- **Paid Employee Benefits:** On the first day of the month following 30 days of employment with HUSD, all employees working at least 30 hrs. per week are eligible for health insurance.
- **Paid Employee Life Insurance:** \$50,000 in life insurance is provided to all full-time employees (30 hours/week)
- **Voluntary Health Benefits:** All full-time employees (30 hours/week) are eligible for voluntary benefits , e.g. dental, vision short-term disability
- **Before/After School Care:** Discounted rates for all employees including drop-in options
- **State Retirement:** District matches employee contribution of 11.47%
- **General Leave:** Employees earn 1 day/month (10 total per contract year)
- **Liability Insurance:** All employees are covered at no cost to the employee
- **Disability Insurance:** Long-term disability insurance is provided by the State after 180 days. Short-term disability insurance is available to the employee as a voluntary benefit at the employee's expense

## Contact:

<http://www.husd.org/domain/767>

Sheila Sorenson

[sheila.sorenson@husd.org](mailto:sheila.sorenson@husd.org)

480-279-7131

# Curriculum Coordinator

Ridgely, MD

Job Category: Curriculum

Posted on Wednesday, 24. of August 2016

## Description:

The Curriculum Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the curriculum resources (print, technology, and created) for the school in order to meet the needs of our students in accordance with the COMAR regulations set forth by the Maryland State Department of Education. The CC serves as the school Test Coordinator for all state mandated testing (Alt-MSE, NCSC, etc). The CC will work collaboratively to ensure a strong use of state of the art technology in instruction. Coordinate/manage core curriculum needs for The Benedictine School in conjunction with the Education Director, Team Leaders, and others as necessary. Work with each classroom teacher/team to ensure appropriate curriculum and materials (including technology) is available for student needs in conjunction with team leaders. Identify and assess potential core curriculum, materials, and technology to supplement and enhance current tools/methods. Oversee and manage instructional technology (hardware and software) related to education technology for the school. Assist staff in adapting age appropriate General Education curricula to the learning needs of students. Identify curriculum training needs of the school in conjunction with team leaders. Coordinate required state testing such as Alt-MSA, NCSC, etc. Assist classroom staff in curriculum needs as they apply to implementing state testing. Develop and monitor school-wide policies on educational and other technologies. Work with school staff to design and develop instruction using technology. Support school and residential staff in the implementation, training and use of new education technologies. Work collaboratively with Communication and IT Departments in supporting the instructional and clinical needs of students.

## Requirements:

Bachelor's degree in education or related field with a minimum of 5 years' experience as an educator; Master's degree preferred. Minimum 5 years teaching experience in special education, excellent computer and technology skills, must have knowledge of state testing requirements, must have experience in designing and implementing functional and academic curriculum, including with the use of technology. Must have experience creating IEP's

## Benefits:

The following benefit programs are available to eligible employees:

- Health, Dental, and Vision Insurance

- Short-Term Disability
- Long-Term Disability
- Life Insurance
- 403(b) Retirement Plan
- Dependent Care Benefits
- Educational Assistance
- Credit Union
- Employee Assistance Program
- Paid time off

## Contact:

Erin - HR Generalist  
410-364-9616

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## PRINCIPAL – STEM<sub>3</sub> ACADEMY

Valley Glen, CA

Job Category: Full Time

Posted on Tuesday, 23. of August 2016

### DESCRIPTION:

Founded in 1975, The Help Group is the largest, most innovative and comprehensive nonprofit of its kind in the United States serving children with special needs related to autism spectrum disorder, learning disabilities, ADHD, developmental delays, abuse and emotional problems.

We are seeking an engaged, knowledgeable, enthusiastic individual to take on the position of Principal for a new STEM Academy for students with social and learning differences, including autism. STEM<sub>3</sub> Academy is for students in grades 9 through 12 who have a talent and passion for STEM-related activities. The Principal would be involved in the day to day running of the school, as well as overseeing teacher planning and execution. STEM<sub>3</sub> Academy is committed to experiential learning, and the development of 21st Century skills through integrated group projects and assignments. We expect the Principal to be actively involved in the development of the Academy to further its goals of achieving lifelong success through college and career for its students.

### DUTIES INCLUDE:

- Ensure compliance with school district policies and procedures.

- Hire, orient, train, supervise and evaluate teaching staff.
- Ensure that classroom curriculum is appropriate and meet the needs of each student.
- Supervise behavior management program.
- Transition new students into school program.
- Develop extracurricular programs.
- Serve as coordinator of interdisciplinary team.
- Attend student Individual Education Program (IEP's) or send an administrative designee.
- Serve as liaison to parents and school district.
- Coordinate with transportation carrier.
- Oversee outcome evaluation study to ensure program is achieving its goals.
- Manage curriculum and reinforcement.
- The Principal should meet routinely with teachers and observe in classrooms to ensure conformity with the goals of the program.
- The Principal should remain current with best practices on educating students with ASD, ADHD, SLD, ED and related needs, as well as those who are gifted.

To learn more about **The Help Group** visit: [www.thehelpgroup.org](http://www.thehelpgroup.org).

To learn more about **STEM3 Academy** visit: [www.stem3academy.org](http://www.stem3academy.org).

## QUALIFICATIONS:

Minimum 3 years' experience as a classroom teacher or 3 years of a combination of teaching and school administrative experience required.

## BENEFITS:

The Help Group offers wonderful training opportunities, a supportive, professional work environment and excellent benefits, including:

- Excellent benefits, including a 100% employer-sponsored health insurance plan
- Dental, vision, and life insurance
- 403b retirement plan
- Flexible Spending Account
- Sick Leave

## CONTACT:

To apply for this exciting opportunity, please send your resume, cover letter and salary history to [careers@thehelpgroup.org](mailto:careers@thehelpgroup.org).

## Intervention Specialist, Grades 9-12

Columbus, Cincinnati, Akron, Cleveland Ohio Areas

Job Category: Intervention Specialist

Posted on Monday, 22. of August 2016

### **Description:**

At Life Skills High Schools we strive to provide our unique students with the best education possible. It is our goal each and every day to Educate, Innovate, Inspire, and Love each and every individual that comes to our schools. We pride ourselves in knowing that our students are not only receiving the best education that they deserve, but also developing the necessary life skills needed in this day and age to become the successful person that is in us all.

Our Intervention Specialists provide effective education to students with learning and/or developmental disabilities.

### **Some examples of the duties our Intervention Specialists fulfill are:**

- Assist with the implementation of the IEP for each student served
- Write lessons plans to accommodate IEP curriculum
- Work with the teaching staff to improve standardized and proficiency testing results
- Plan and deliver services for students with special needs
- Provide resources for classroom teachers for areas of disability
- School activities — the Intervention Specialist is required to attend and/ or participate in such other activities as directed by the Administrator such as: faculty meetings (before or after school hours), open houses, commencement exercises, chaperone student activities, provide guidance for students, participate in professional learning communities, study and help resolve school problems, and participate in the preparation of courses of study -- these activities demonstrate valuable support for the Life Skills High School
- Perform student home visits as required

### **Minimum qualifications for this position are below:**

- Bachelor's degree minimum, Master's degree in Special Education or related field preferred
- Valid Intervention Specialist K-12 licensure through ODE in Mild/Moderate or Moderate/Intense field
- Considered Highly Qualified in Special Education
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Successful completion of state mandated FBI and BCI criminal history check(s)
- Physical ability to lift up to 25 lbs

## IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN THE NEW AND INNOVATIVE WAVE OF EDUCATION, APPLY TODAY!

### Benefits:

- Competitive pay
- Company paid Life Insurance
- Tuition reimbursement
- STRS
- Professional development

### Contact:

Samantha Stender

Human Resources, Recruiter

**PH:** (330) 252-8921

**Fax:** (330) 252-8821

**SMStender001@lifeskillshs.com**

**Website:** [www.lifeskillshs.com](http://www.lifeskillshs.com)

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## Special Education Teachers

Manassas, Virginia

Job Category: Teacher

Posted on Friday, 29. of July 2016

### **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](mailto:recruit@pwcs.edu)

703.791.8950

Learn more about us at [www.pwcs.edu](http://www.pwcs.edu) .

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[To top](#)

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## Acknowledgements

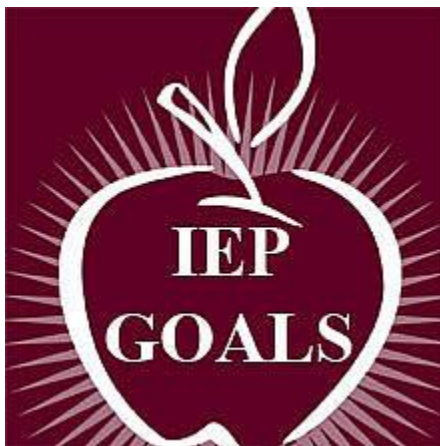
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- Committee on Education and the Workforce
- FirstGov.gov-The Official U.S. Government Web Portal
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- National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth
- National Institute of Health
- National Organization on Disability
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- U.S. Department of Education
- U.S. Department of Education-The Achiever
- U.S. Department of Education-The Education Innovator
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- U.S. Department of Labor
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration
- 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

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