



CPSD
Real Lives, Real Work

Collaboration
to Promote
Self-Determination

ALL KIDS COUNT

SEPTEMBER 2012

Recommendations from a roundtable discussion of the nation's leading experts in special education policy that focused on the academic achievement and measurement of students who take an alternate assessment on alternate academic standards. Hosted by the Collaboration to Promote Self-Determination (CPSD), a coalition of national consumer and family-led disability groups that advocate for public policy systems reform on behalf of citizens with significant disabilities.

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Introduction

A Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), guaranteed by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), is the right of every eligible child with a disability in this country to be educated in public schools with the supports, services and protections delineated in these statutes. Combined with the IDEA's Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) provision, ***schools are required to provide FAPE in the LRE that is appropriate to the individual student's needs.*** The law presumes LRE to be the general education classroom setting unless the student in question can't be educated satisfactorily there even with supplementary aids and devices. Overwhelming evidence demonstrates that when students with disabilities are provided a FAPE in the LRE, are fully engaged in the general educational setting and have the opportunity to participate and make progress in the general education curriculum, the result is higher academic performance for students with disabilities as well as their non-disabled peers.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is an expansive statute that provides federal funds for both elementary and secondary education in the United States. ESEA does not address LRE or FAPE, but does emphasize equal access to public education. Periodically, ESEA is revised by Congress and the "reauthorized" bill becomes law. The last reauthorization of ESEA resulted in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. NCLB was the first federal legislation to mandate school accountability for the academic performance of each subgroup of students at the school, including the subgroup of students with disabilities. Together IDEA and ESEA hold great promise for students with disabilities. However, the gap between that promise and reality remains far too wide.

Because Congress has not reauthorized ESEA in the 112th Congress, the Department of Education (DOE) has allowed states to submit ESEA Flexibility Requests that waive certain provisions of NCLB. In order to receive approval, these Flexibility Requests are supposed to include "State-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction" (<http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility>). As education reform gathers steam, it is critical that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are incorporated into the career preparation and college readiness plans of state education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs), including the plans articulated in their state's ESEA Flexibility Request. In addition, states and LEAs must be held accountable for fulfilling the purposes of IDEA by providing these students with the individualized special education and related services and supports necessary to prepare each student



for further education, employment, and independent living. This is important not only for the futures of individual students but also for the health of our country, both economically and socially.

ESEA must continue to work in conjunction with IDEA to promote a learning environment in which all children are given the opportunity to become proficient on grade-level content. The integration of IDEA, Section 504 and ESEA must be enhanced to ensure that all students, regardless of disability status, receive an appropriate education. ESEA holds the bar of expectation high for an educational experience that fosters academic and social growth by providing a challenging, meaningful, and enriched learning environment through equal access to grade level curriculum. IDEA ensures an individualized approach that builds upon each student's strengths and addresses individual needs through the provision of services and supports. IDEA monitoring remains a critical part of the process because IDEA states clearly that the primary focus of federal and state monitoring activities is to be on "improving educational results and functional outcomes for all children with disabilities." 20 USC 1416 (a) (2) (A); 34 CFR §§300.600-300.604.

We are pleased that the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is undertaking reform efforts to move towards a more comprehensive and meaningful monitoring system; the product of which must be an enhanced ability to measure outcomes and improve results for students with disabilities. Valuable time, resources, and money are spent on data collection. Such effort can only be well spent if it leads to action.



The Collaboration to Promote Self-Determination

The Collaboration to Promote Self Determination (CPSD) is a coalition of national organizations that advocates for innovative public policy reform focused on promoting the effective transition of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities into adulthood by preparing them to pursue and obtain optimal outcomes in the areas of employment, economic advancement, and independent living. Based on extensive research and data, we strongly believe that all students with disabilities, including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, should have access to the grade-level general education curriculum, attain the academic standards set forth by states and participate in fully inclusive general education classrooms and other school settings. CPSD also believes strongly that public policies should promote students with disabilities as part of the general education population and not as a segregated subpopulation.

CPSD and its partner organizations have concerns about trends in education that are making it more difficult for students who take an Alternate Assessment on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AA-AAS) to participate and make progress in the general curriculum and nearly impossible to earn a high school diploma in most states. A lack of public school accountability for the academic achievement of students with disabilities may lead to a lowering of expectations that have been raised over the past decade through the accountability provisions of NCLB. High expectations have been proved to be among the most important indicators of positive outcomes for young adults with disabilities.

The Expert Roundtable

On May first and second of 2012, CPSD invited national experts on IDEA and ESEA, as well as state education representatives, to a roundtable aimed at developing a set of agreed-upon policy recommendations on a few specific topics. The discussion focused on the population of students with disabilities who take an AA-AAS. The dialogue included thoughtful articulation of recommended criteria regarding:

- What constitutes “college preparation and career readiness” for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (for inclusion in federal legislation and administrative regulations);
- How to measure academic growth for purposes of systems accountability and teacher/principal evaluations; and
- How to ensure improved educational results and functional outcomes for all students with disabilities, given the DOE’s stated intent to redesign its monitoring activities.

This paper will discuss key research, statutory and regulatory background shared by experts and will provide the recommendations developed in breakout sessions attended by the experts and state representatives and CPSD member representatives. These topics are interrelated, so it is important to note that background information from one topic often informed recommendations for another topic.

The recommendations and topics discussed in this paper do not represent all of CPSD’s positions on education policy; they merely reflect the topics that were explored during the May roundtable. For a complete set of CPSD’s education policy positions, please visit our web site at: <http://thecpsd.org>.

1. College and Career Readiness Outcomes for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Problem: The current ESEA reauthorization has been heavily focused on “college and career readiness.” There is no clear definition of what that this means. We must be sure that as specifics unfold, this term is interpreted to include postsecondary programs and paid integrated employment for students with intellectual disabilities. IDEA’s purpose has always been “to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free and appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living.” 20 U.S.C. § 1400(d)(1)(A). The goals of college and meaningful employment are important. However, even though employment is a stated purpose of IDEA, there are currently few effective bridges from high school to employment. What is being taught to students with disabilities in high school does not prepare them for success after they exit public schools.

What We Know:

A main component of this issue is that goals for postsecondary life for students with disabilities are unclear. Even though the [National Longitudinal Transition Study \(NLTS2\)](#) tracked academic growth of students with disabilities for ten years and then measured it, post-school outcomes are inadequate. In fact, there has been no change in outcomes for students with disabilities over a fifteen year period. The sheer numbers of students who transition into sheltered workshops demonstrate that the majority of students have not been prepared for integrated work in their communities or postsecondary education options or that these options are not being considered regularly as attainable goals. Additionally, low employment rates of young adults with significant cognitive disabilities are further evidence of a lack of preparation in public schools for post-school employment. Findings from a 2011 study indicate that 74 percent of individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) received sheltered employment, day habilitation services, or non-work community integration services, while only 26 percent were working in integrated employment¹.

What we do know is that predictors of paid future employment for students with disabilities should be an integral part of best practices to ensure college and career

¹ Butterworth, J., Hall, A.C., Smith, F.A., Migliore, A., & Winsor, J. (2011). StateData: The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes. Boston, MA: Institute for Community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts Boston

readiness for all students. Research shows that the strongest predictors of future paid employment for students with disabilities are:

- **Prior work history:** Students who have worked during their high school years in summer and/or after-school employment are more likely to be employed after exiting high school.
- **Student Demographic Factors:** Males are more likely to be employed than females.
- **Skill-related factors:** Those students with high ratings on classroom social skills had better chances of being employed.
- **Family-related factors:** Young adults whose parents expected that they would work are 3.5 times more likely to work than those whose didn't.
- **School-related factors:** The shocking conclusion in this study is that no educational factors currently designed for employment success translated into employment outcomes².

Numbers of postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disabilities are increasing; there are approximately 200 programs in 37 states (www.thinkcollege.net). However, many educators are not aware of available resources or programs and therefore their students do not have a postsecondary vision. One study showed that 76% of family members who responded did not receive information or guidance from the school regarding postsecondary education programs for students with intellectual disabilities³. As Meg Grigal, Co-Director of Think College, reported, according to NLTS 2, only 11% of students with intellectual disabilities had the goal of attending a two- or four- year college as compared with 58% of other students with disabilities. Unfortunately, 33% of students with intellectual disabilities had the goal of sheltered employment compared with 8% of students with other disabilities⁴.

Postsecondary programs and technical assistance centers that serve students with intellectual disabilities are not yet part of the college readiness conversation. Think College, an initiative of the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at the University of Massachusetts Boston, has a number of initiatives supporting postsecondary education for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities, including a grant under

² Carter, E. W., Austin, D., & Trainor, A. A. (in press). Predictors of postschool employment outcomes for young adults with severe disabilities. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*. doi: 10.1177/1044207311414680.

³ Griffin, M.M., McMillan, E.D., & Hodapp, R.M. Family Perspectives on Post-Secondary Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities, *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 45(3), 339-346.

⁴ Grigal M., Hart, D., Migliore, A. (2011) Comparing the transition planning, postsecondary education, and employment outcomes of students with intellectual and other disabilities. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 34(1), 4-17.

the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA) to serve as a national coordinating center for the model demonstration programs created under HEOA. Eligible students enrolled in approved Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary programs created by HEOA may now access federal financial aid, including grants and Work Study Jobs Think College. In a study conducted by ICI⁵, individuals with intellectual disability who had postsecondary experience were 26% more likely to attain paid employment than were their peers who did not; their weekly income was 73% higher than their peers without any postsecondary education.

Twenty years of research has consistently demonstrated that the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms results in favorable outcomes for all students. Inclusion in general education classes has been shown to be a moderate predictor of positive post-school outcomes, such as employment, postsecondary education and independent living⁶. The NLTS2 shows that more time spent in a general education classroom is positively correlated with fewer absences from school, fewer referrals for disruptive behavior and better outcomes after high school in the areas of employment and independent living⁷. No studies since the 1970's have demonstrated an academic advantage for students with intellectual disabilities educated in separate settings⁸. Neither the development of necessary social skills nor academic skills can happen outside of an inclusive environment; in fact, academic skills aren't developed where education is based on low expectations for students with intellectual disabilities. In spite of the research, students in disability categories that are associated with the AA-AAS have far lower rates of inclusion than other students with disabilities.

The focus of education for children with disabilities at the high school level isn't on job development or post-secondary education, despite the fact that paid, integrated employment should be the ultimate goal of the transition process. It is clear, from the information cited above, that public schools must change their focus in order to prepare students with intellectual and developmental disabilities for employment and postsecondary programs.

⁵ Migliore, A., Butterworth, J., & Hart, D. 2009. Postsecondary Education and Employment Outcomes for Youth with Intellectual Disabilities. Fast Facts Series, No. 1. Boston, MA: Institute for Community Inclusion

⁶ Test, D., Fowler, C. Kohler, P., Kortering, L. (2010). Evidence-based Practices and Predictors in Secondary Transition: What we Know and What we Still Need to Know. National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center.

⁷ Wagner, M., Newman, L., Cameto, R., and Levine, P. (2006). The Academic Achievement and Functional Performance of Youth with Disabilities: A Report from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2). (NCSE 2006-3000). Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

⁸ Falvey, Mary A. (Spring 2004) Toward realization of the least restrictive educational environments for severely handicapped students. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*. 29(1), 9-10.

Meg Grigal, Co-Director of Think College, highlights in her work the fact that accountability systems are only one piece of the puzzle when it comes to post-secondary outcomes for students with disabilities. Such systems, Grigal notes, are only overtly connected to employment because of the nature of income and employment and college. Educators and Transition specialists need to be mindful of the importance of teacher preparation so that teachers focus on both training and high expectations for their students. The focus should be on both academics and job development, with post-secondary and employment goals as measurable professional measurable standards.

It is important to note that CPSD supports current law and administrative policy that state assessments should focus solely on academic skills and knowledge. Therefore, our use of the term “college and career ready” as it relates to content and achievement standards and growth measures is limited to academics. However, best practices for providing student instruction that leads to success in postsecondary education and paid integrated employment should also include a broader range of skills and knowledge. This is true for students with and without disabilities. Our discussion and recommendations related to “college and career readiness best practices address academics as well as other types of skills and knowledge.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The academic component of college and career readiness:
 - An AA-AAS, like the regular assessment should solely focus on assessing the academic component of college and career readiness because the alternate academic achievement standard is aligned to the same State content standards as apply to all students.
 - Instruction must be driven by an AA-AAS and goal setting that is based on high expectations for college participation and/or employment/career options after school.
 - No out of level testing, meaning that a student who is in one grade is assessed using a level of a test that was developed for students in another grade (<http://www.cehd.umn.edu/nceo/onlinepubs/Policy9.htm>).
 - Students need full access to academic content for life-long learning with an achievement standard aligned to content standards for the grade enrolled.
 - To the extent possible, students should be prepared for a regular High School diploma and/or inclusive access to typical college content with nondisabled student peers.
 - Self-advocacy for accommodations should be promoted by all four assessment consortia.

- Even though the State assessments focus solely on academics, all students should receive instruction that promotes the following types of skills and knowledge for the attainment of integrated paid employment and/or participation in college:
 - Academic skills and knowledge (especially literacy) to support life-long learning
 - Communication competence--with access to Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), when needed
 - Social skills that are practiced in settings with typical peers.
 - Independent work behavior
 - Knowledge of how to access supports
 - Collaboration skills
 - Competence with computers and other technology
 - Problem solving
 - Self-advocacy.
- Personnel preparation courses are needed that:
 - Create the vision for integrated paid employment and participation in college for students with intellectual disabilities, and
 - Prepare general and special educators to promote all the skills and knowledge, listed above, as part of academic instruction in general education classes.
- Preparation to attain college and career readiness must begin in Early Childhood programs and continue in Elementary and Middle School with links to High School/transition services.
- Skills and knowledge needed by adults must be mapped backward from the goal to develop a skills development plan early and follow it until the student no longer receives IDEA services.
- Inclusion and Universal Design for Learning (www.udlcenter.org) should be emphasized from early childhood through postsecondary education.
- Key components of Early Childhood Programs that are designed with college and career readiness in mind:
 - Inclusive environments
 - High expectations
 - Accommodations
 - Self-advocacy
 - Skill development.
- High School services must be coordinated with vocational rehabilitation and developmental disability agencies, the Department of Labor and other local community services, (e.g. employers, community partners).

- High School services must be tailored to include integrated paid jobs before exiting school and to lead to college participation (including high quality alternative college programs) and/or competitive, integrated employment.
- IEPs should focus on these post-school outcomes.
- Key Components of High School services designed for college and career readiness
 - Supports for inclusive education
 - Universal design for learning
 - On the job training (array of field-based work experience in real jobs)
 - Summer focused planning early in the second semester to ensure summer employment
 - Intentional sequencing of content instruction toward grade level academics and the other knowledge and skills that lead to the attainment of integrated paid employment and/or participation in college
 - The same job/career support and job fairs provided to all other students, including access to informed guidance counselors
 - The same job/career information for families.
- For students 18 and older (age for exiting varies by State), the LRE is NOT on the High School campus
 - LRE for that age group is dual enrollment in college and/or integrated paid employment, with transportation.
 - In addition to the current definition of LRE, there should be clarification as to how LRE pertains to preschool and how it pertains to transition or job training programs in high schools, community settings or college campuses (for students still eligible for IDEA services).
- Statutory and regulatory provisions are needed that describe requirements for “highly qualified transition specialists” that include skills in job development and customized employment.

2. Growth Measurement Systems Accountability and Teacher/Principal Evaluations

Problem: Many states that are using growth measures as part of systems accountability and teacher/principal evaluations do not have an appropriate way to measure growth based on their AA-AAS. In addition, many states have much higher proficiency rates on their AA-AAS than for students with disabilities on other assessments. This practice leads to student scores “topping out” or reaching a plateau where they have scored as high as possible on that assessment but are not moved up to a more challenging assessment. What this tells us about many states is that some of the wrong students are taking the AA-AAS and/or that the AA-AAS is not challenging enough. In order to accurately determine growth for students who take an AA-AAS, states must have a high-quality, challenging assessment before they develop measures for student growth.

What We Know:

The AA-AAS has moved more firmly into a standards-based accountability world, due in large part to the NCLB and the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA (Quenemoen, Rigney, and Thurlow, 2002)⁹. However, developing growth models that are valid and reliable for both systems accountability and teacher/principal evaluation purposes is challenging for all student assessments—not just for students who take the AA-AAS. If additional outcome measures besides assessment data, referred to as “multiple measures,” are to be used in growth models, it is critically important to ensure that the correct measures are chosen. We must make sure that the measures that are used capture growth related to outcomes that are important and relevant to this population. It is important to rigorously assess which outcomes are the essential priorities.

The National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) Alternate Assessment Consortium and Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) are two projects under a General Supervision Enhancement Grant (GSEG); the goal of these GSEG grants is to develop a system of assessments supported by curriculum, instruction, and professional development to ensure that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities achieve increasingly higher academic outcomes and leave high school ready for postsecondary options.

The quality of an assessment is only as good as its underlying assumptions and whether increasing expectations are evident in tests and standards from year to year. NCSC and DLM are working on developing summative assessments for use in system


⁹ <http://www.naacpartners.org/toolsforAA/validityGSEG.aspx>.

accountability, for potential inclusion in teacher evaluation systems, and for use in conjunction with classroom assessment data to inform instruction. Different assessment designs are used for different purposes, and no one test will usually serve all functions well. The challenge for developing a growth model becomes: which type of model for measuring academic growth to use, exactly which growth measures to use and how much weight should be given to each measure.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- As long as growth measures based on assessment data are being used for accountability and principal/teacher evaluation, the AA-AAS must be included in this process.
- DO NO HARM. The challenges involved in developing valid, reliable and fair growth measures for accountability and principal/teacher evaluation purposes can lead to unintended, inaccurate and harmful conclusions, which must be avoided (e.g. do not want to inadvertently incentivize schools to focus only on small groups of students whose growth will “count” more or discourage schools from moving students from AA-AAS to the regular assessment).
- Education policy must be flexible enough to adjust as the field evolves.
- Examples of what we already know should NOT be done
 - Growth measures should NOT be based on IEP goals.
 - Growth measures should NOT be based on comparisons of students with disabilities to other students with disabilities.
 - Out of level assessments should NOT be used for systems accountability and principal/ teacher evaluation purposes.
 - Growth measures should NOT be based on value added models if they build in lower expectations based on status (e.g. disability) or prior performance.
- General rule for Measuring Growth for Systems Accountability (School, LEA, State) and Principal/Teacher Evaluation Purposes:
 - Use growth models based on content standards for the grade enrolled that meet the following requirements--
 - They are based on technically defensible assessments;
 - States must be able to show that they are using growth measurement methods that are valid, reliable and fair for the intended purposes of systems accountability and principal/teacher evaluation; and
 - Confidence must be demonstrated within an acceptable margin of error.

- If multiple measures are used to determine the growth component of systems accountability and principal/teacher evaluations, the measures used in addition to growth based on assessment data --
 - Must be relevant and meaningful for all subgroups;
 - Must not hide poor student performance in the subject areas being tested; and
 - Must be weighted appropriately.
- Examples of Acceptable Multiple Measures for Principal, General and Special Educator Evaluations
 - Use of evidence based practices for teaching academic content for the grade enrolled to all learners.
 - A measure related to ensuring students' communication competence.
- Other requirements related to growth measurement for principal and teacher evaluations
 - Need high quality “within year” tools to ensure appropriate targets for standards-based classroom progress monitoring data.
 - Need training and protocols to train principals and other observers on evidence-based practices.
- Examples of Acceptable Multiple Measures for School, LEA and State Accountability:
 - Graduation rate
 - Can measure progress by decline in percentage of students with disabilities exiting with certificates or other exit document that is not a regular high school diploma, and increase in percentage of students graduating with a regular high school diploma.
 - There should not be a provision allowing any other exit document (e.g. diploma based on receiving FAPE or IEP goals) to count as if it were a regular high school diploma for the purpose of calculating graduation rate.
 - Attendance
 - Assessments on content areas other than math and reading/language arts, provided that an AA-AAS is available for that subject that has been peer reviewed for ESEA purposes.
- The following research is needed to support the work in the field on growth measurement for students taking an AA-AAS:
 - A content-based review on whether the models of measuring growth in the current AA-AAs use and those proposed for students taking the AA-AAS in the ESEA Flexibility Requests reflect true growth in content domain understanding.

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- Research on how students with the most significant cognitive disabilities acquire domain-specific or subject-area knowledge and apply these processes to the problems they encounter.
 - Research on using multiple measures, including classroom-based progress monitoring measures, to inform growth determinations for system accountability and principal/teacher evaluation purposes.

3. IDEA Monitoring

As part of the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA, regulations related to Section 616(a)(12) of the statute were enacted that established requirements for state monitoring, enforcement, and annual reporting. The primary focus of the state's monitoring activities were around improving educational results and functional outcomes for all children with disabilities and ensuring that public agencies met program requirements. IDEA is considered a civil rights and not merely an education statute. Each state was required to monitor local education agencies (LEAs) using quantifiable indicators in priority areas, specifically relating to:

- Provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE).
- State exercise of general supervision, including Child Find, effective monitoring, the use of resolution meetings, mediation, and a system of transition services as defined in 34 CFR 300.43 and in 20 U.S.C. 1437(a)(9).
- Disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services, to the extent the representation is the result of inappropriate identification.

In 2012, the DOE announced that it would suspend IDEA monitoring in favor of Results Driven Accountability. OSEP stated that:


All components of accountability will be aligned in a manner that best supports States in improving results for infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities, and their families ... The current system places heavy emphasis on procedural compliance without consideration of how the requirements impact student learning outcomes. In order to fulfill the IDEA's requirements, a more balanced approach to determining program effectiveness in special education is necessary.

It is unclear what a more balanced approach will look like or whether DOE will continue to rigorously enforce, through monitoring visits, the basic tenets of IDEA: a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The effort to move to Results Driven Accountability must include the following in its process:
 - Meaningful involvement of diverse stakeholders.
 - Parents as well as advocacy and civil rights organizations representing parents and students need to be meaningfully involved: at all levels in the monitoring process and in evaluating data and developing improvement plans – at the school, LEA, state and federal levels.
 - Disability advocates should not be in a separate stakeholder group, but rather interspersed among groups (including CPSD).
 - Transparency
 - A high degree of transparency and public disclosure of data needs to be provided at the federal, state and LEA levels, including public reporting of all State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) data, determinations, corrective action and Maintenance of Effort issues.
 - Information should be posted in a timely manner and be easy to locate on websites.
- Data from monitoring must assure that:
 - Parents have accurate and timely information in order to be meaningful partners in the special education process;
 - Diverse stakeholders working towards system change have access to the information that will form the basis for their efforts;
 - LEAs are accountable for implementation of the IDEA and for meaningful outcomes for students with disabilities on an ongoing basis; and
 - OSEP and States have the data they need to ensure the law is implemented and on which to base continuous improvement efforts.
- LRE Data in Indicators 5 and 6 should be reported by disability category at the State and the LEA level, in a timely manner and be easily located.
 - It is particularly important for students with intellectual disabilities that this data be disaggregated. Poor LRE data for students with intellectual disabilities is masked by LRE data for larger populations.
 - IDEA Section 618 data on educational environments had been available by category and by state until 2009. This information is no longer publicly reported and should be.
- The LRE data collection for SPP Indicator 6 (preschool inclusion) needs to be revamped.

- The current data collection system has resulted in preschool classes that are 50% students with disabilities and 50% students “at risk” as being considered inclusive.
- “Credit” should only be given when the percentage of students with disabilities reflects natural proportions.
- Monitoring determinations must be based on both compliance and results. Failure to do so undercuts the value of monitoring.
- If the State complaints and due process data are collected through another source, the results still need to be included effectively in OSEP monitoring planning, reports and determinations.
- Develop criteria for when cases will be referred to the Justice Department (as authorized in IDEA 2004).
- Rather than eliminating SPP indicators, consider prioritizing and “weighting” the most important indicators more heavily.
 - Develop a “decision tree” to drill down when the data for a particular indicator is poor.
 - For example if the LRE data in general, or for a particular disability category is poor, then consider (as data availability allows)
 - Are the communication needs of the students being met, including communication devices when needed?
 - Are the principles of Universal Design for Learning being utilized?
 - Do the students have access to the general curriculum?
 - How does the state/district rate on the Quality Indicators of Inclusive Education (<http://njcie.net/pdf/tools/quality-indicators-for-inclusive-education-manual.pdf>)?
- Transition: SPP Indicator 13 should require that the transition goals include paid integrated employment (not sheltered workshops) and/or or postsecondary education (through dual enrollment or otherwise paid for by the LEAs) for the 18 to 21 year old students still eligible for IDEA services.
- Focus on the greatest degree of monitoring and technical assistance on priority states most in need of improvement (and states targeting LEAs most in need of improvement).
- Provide financial incentives to high performing states with grants for specific purposes, such as implementing Universal Design for Learning, working to ensure that all students have access to communication support and access to the general curriculum, etc. This approach would be similar to the Race to the Top Grant Program idea.
- Consider how monitoring could support the concept of “communicating by kindergarten” to ensure students have the communication support, language, and tools they need.

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- Consider how monitoring could help keep children and schools safe through a monitoring role regarding restraints and seclusion.

Conclusion

It is clear from the analysis and recommendations contained within this paper that there is a serious systemic problem in the way the students who take an AA-AAs are prepared for post-school life and in the way they are assessed. High quality assessments can drive high quality instruction. However, the language and implementation of the regulations for the AA-AAS are actually undermining IDEA in many LEAs and schools. One example is that placement in the AA-AAS is often used as an excuse to segregate these students in special education classes and to limit access to the curriculum, which in turn limits their opportunity to earn a regular high school diploma. Another example is that many students who need communication systems to participate in instruction and demonstrate knowledge are not being provided with these tools.

The DOE must create an initiative to fix these unintended and negative consequences that have resulted from the use of the AA-AAS by some LEAs and schools. The creation of the two consortia that are developing new AA-AAS options is a very positive step for the states that are participating in them. However, the DOE must ensure that every state, LEA and school is faithful to IDEA and ESEA in their implementation of the assessments and that ALL students, including those who take the AA-AAS, are prepared to transition to postsecondary education and/or integrated paid employment upon graduation.

CPSD 2012 Education Roundtable Panelists and Attendees

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Candace Cortiella	Advocacy Institute
Lou Danielson	American Institutes for Research
Susan Goodman	National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC)
Meg Grigal	Think College
Tom Hehir	Harvard Graduate School of Education
Stephanie Smith Lee	National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS)
Lynda Lupp	Pennsylvania Department of Education
Denise Marshall	Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA)
Melody Musgrove	US Department of Education
Rachel Quenemoen	National Center on Educational Outcomes/ National Center and State Collaborative GSEG
Carol Quirk	Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education
Curtis Richards	Institute for Educational Leadership
Ricki Sabia	National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS)
Alan Sheinker	Dynamic Learning Maps
Diane Simaska	Pennsylvania Department of Education
Debbie Taub	Keystone Assessment
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