Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities

Identifying Successful Practices for
Students with Disabilities in Ohio Schools

Presentation for
Ohio Association of Pupil Services Administrators
February 6, 2014; Columbus, OH
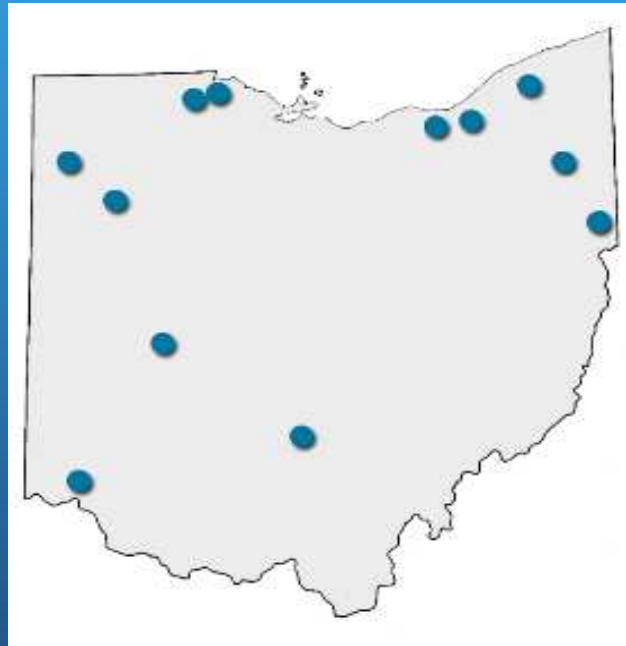
Research Team

Karen Sanders, Ph.D.

(Principal Investigator)

Sonia Jurich, MD, Ed.D.

Kavita Mittapalli, Ph.D.

Laura Taylor, M.Ed.

Sincere appreciation extended to participating school districts…

Presentation Outline

- Study Design

- Literature Review

- Field Study

- Conclusions & Recommendations

Audience Reflection

From your perspective…

How can this study be used to leverage the implementation of evidence-based practices for students with disabilities in Ohio?

Do you have comments or feedback that you would like to share with the OCECD?

Study Design

Purpose of the Study

To enhance understanding of the educational achievement of students with disabilities in Ohio with a particular focus on the reasons (best practices) that help shape various levels of achievement among similar (same typology) schools.

Timeline for the Study

- Fall 2012 – Study Design, Literature Review, Protocol Development, Logistics for Site Visits

- Winter/Spring 2013 – Site Visits

- Summer 2013 – Final Report

Research Questions

Overarching Research Question:

How are policies and practices different for high performing and lower performing districts?

Study Design

- Two stages:
  - Literature Review
  - Field Study

- Design: Comparative case study (one high-achieving and one low-achieving LEA for each typology)

- Cross-typology analysis to identify those programs and practices common to high-achieving and/or low-achieving public school districts and public charter schools, regardless of demographic and geographic characteristics.

Sample Districts

- For each of the typologies, one high-achieving and one low-achieving district identified for a total of six high-achieving and six low-achieving public school districts (N=12); and

- One high-achieving and one low-achieving public charter school (N=2).

- Achievement calculated as the average district score on the Ohio assessments for 2012.

(Note: Sample sites selected by the Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children)

Reports from the Study

- Evidence-Based Practices in Special Education: A Review of the Literature

- Final Report (full report)

- Executive Summary (condensed report)

Available at: www.ocecd.org

Literature Review

Literature Review: Purpose

- Focus: To identify research related to best practices in special education in American public, private, and charter schools, from kindergarten through high school.

- Purpose: To develop the conceptual framework for the second stage of the project (field study); the framework informed the development of the data collection instruments and data analysis process.

Literature Review: Process

- Timeline: October to December 2012.

- Search: peer-reviewed research journals, technical documents, and books written in the past 12 years.

- Focus: research on schools successful in the education of students with disabilities. Students from low socio-economic backgrounds were also included for two reasons:
  - The two groups overlap;
  - Exploring successful strategies for the two groups adds to the generalizability of the findings and feasibility of replication.

Literature Review: Criteria

- The review includes only documents that reflected research, although no limitations were imposed on the quality or types of research.

- The documents had to provide information on the criteria used to define success or high-performance and for what groups of students.

- The documents had to describe the practices that could explain successful performance.
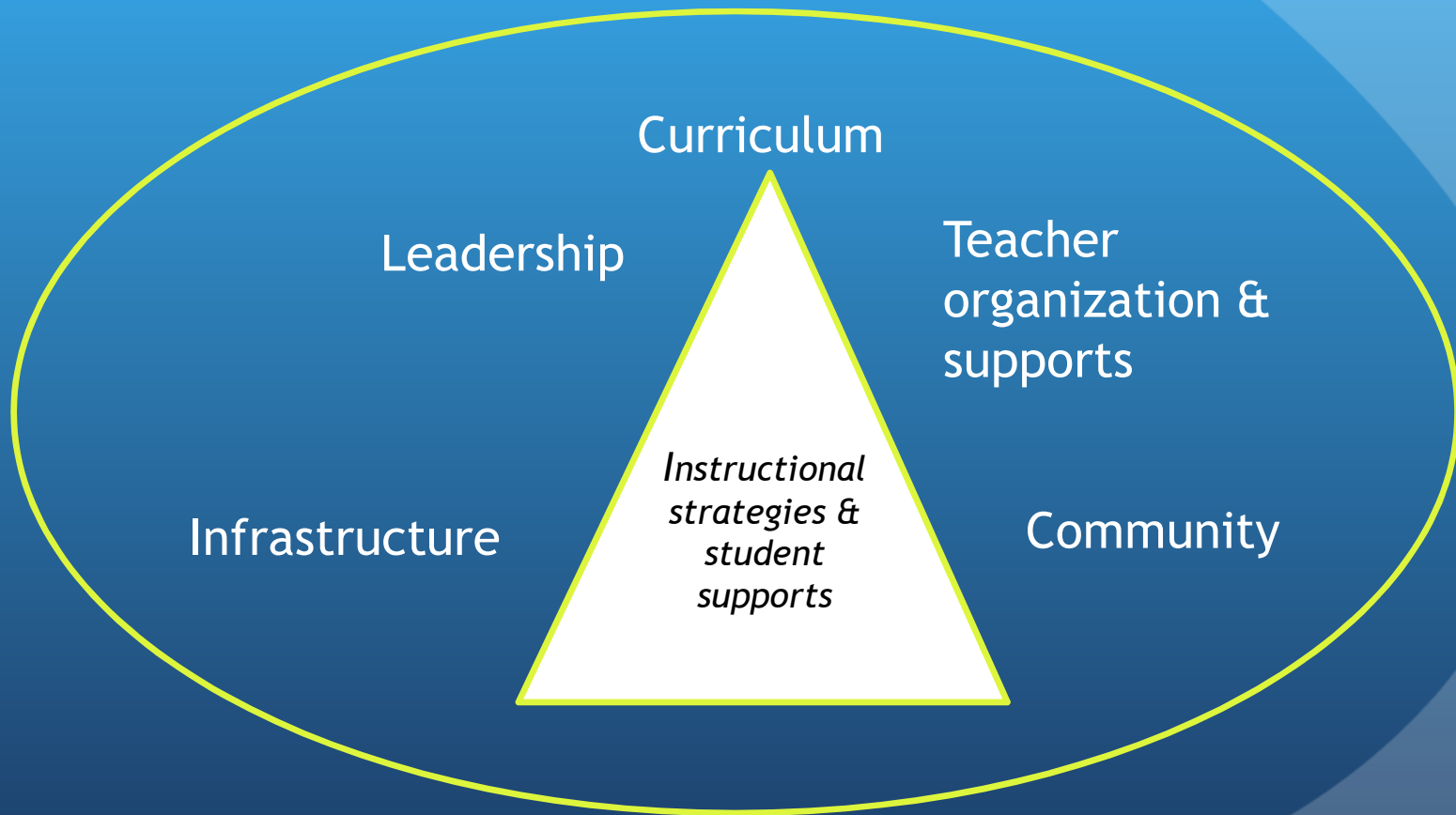
Literature Review: Documents

- 19 documents – 7 on high achieving schools for students with disabilities; 12 on high achieving schools for economically disadvantaged students

- Documents used diverse research methods – case studies, review of literature, auditing, statewide survey

- The studies examined practices adopted in schools or school districts in Alabama, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington. Five of the studies involved Ohio schools.

Literature Review: Findings

Group A: Students with Disabilities		Group B: Economically Disadvantaged Students	
Findings	N	Findings	N
Teacher collaboration	6	Teacher collaboration	6
High expectations for all	4	High expectations for all	12
Access to core curriculum	4	Alignment of curriculum and standards	3
Ongoing assessments/data to inform instruction	4	Ongoing assessments/data to inform instruction	10
Administrators as instructional leaders	3	Administrators as instructional leaders	10
Ongoing professional development tailored to teachers' needs	3	Ongoing professional development tailored to teachers' needs	6
Districts focused on hiring and maintaining high quality personnel	3		
Number of studies in the group	7	Number of studies in the group	12

Conceptual Framework

IDEA

Curriculum

Leadership

Teacher organization & supports

Instructional strategies & student supports

Infrastructure

Community

NCLB

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Field Study

Field Study: Process

- Data Collection: April and May 2013

- One to three-day visits to 27 elementary, middle, junior high, and high schools

- 10 LEAs and 2 public charter schools

- 97 interviews – superintendents, special education directors, curriculum directors, school administrators, student services personnel

- Survey of teachers in participating LEAs (395 participants; 49% response rate)

Field Study: Data Collection

District Level:

- Interviews with superintendent, treasurer, special education director, education services director, and curriculum director

School Level:

- Interviews with principal, counselor, and school psychologist

- Guided classroom walk-through observations

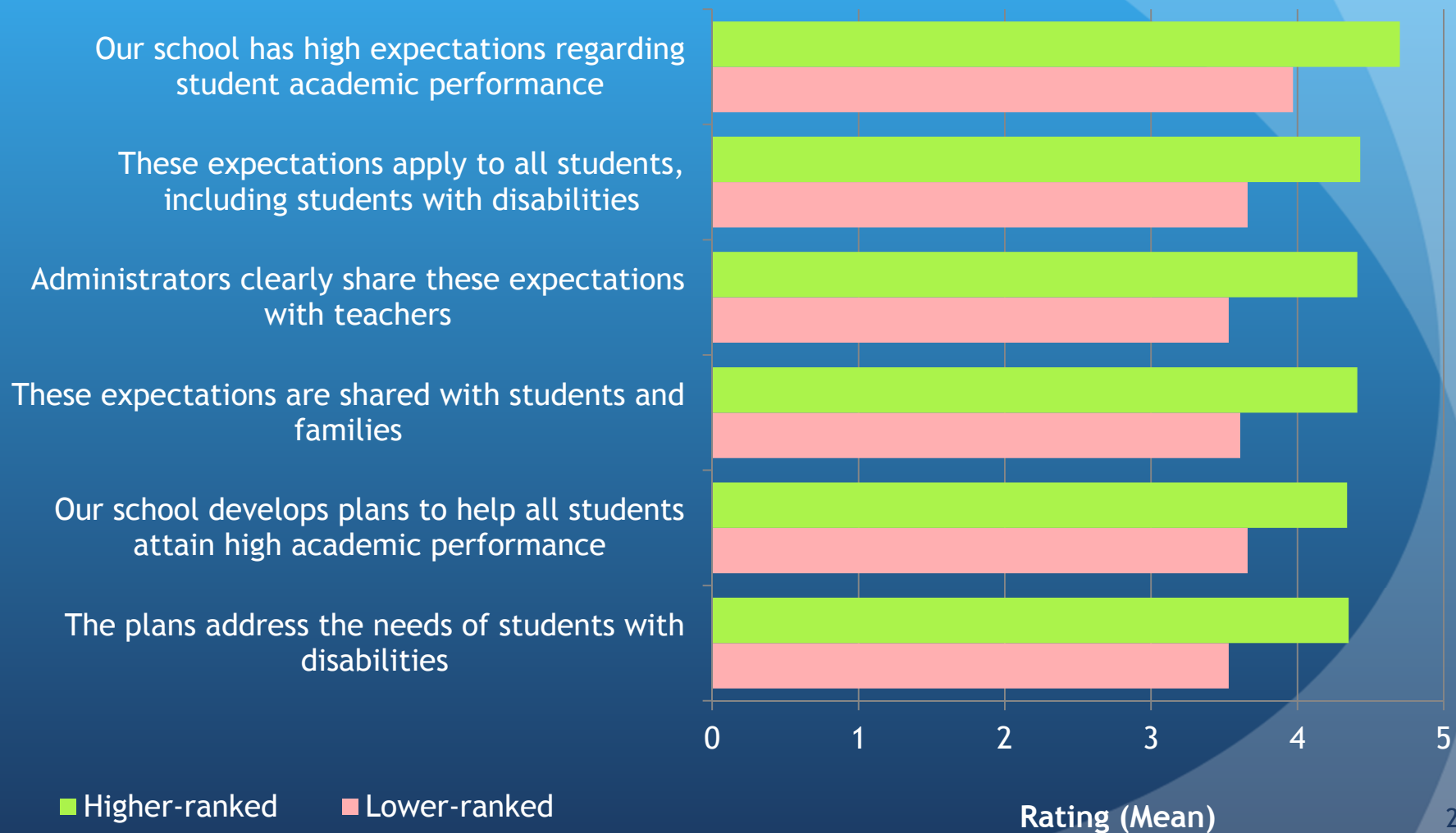- Survey of special education and general education teachers

Main differences across sites by typology

	Charter	Rural	Small Town	Urban	Urban/ Suburban	Urban/ Suburban
LEADERSHIP						
Higher-ranked	Transient	Stable	Stable	Stable	Stable	Stable
Lower-ranked	Transient	Transient	Transient	Transient	Transient	Transient
MULTITIERED SYSTEMS OF INTERVENTION						
Higher-ranked	Mature	Mature	Mature	Does not use	Mature	Mature
Lower-ranked	Incipient	Incipient	Incipient	Incipient	Incipient	Changing

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Main differences across sites by typology

	Charter	Rural	Small Town	Urban	Urban/ Suburban	Urban/ Suburban
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT						
Higher-ranked	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
Lower-ranked	Weak	Weak	Weak	Weak	Not Clear	Strong
TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT INSTRUCTION						
Higher-ranked	Available	Available	Available	Available	Available	Available
Lower-ranked	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Available

Teachers' perceptions regarding schools' educational vision

Our school has high expectations regarding student academic performance

These expectations apply to all students, including students with disabilities

Administrators clearly share these expectations with teachers

These expectations are shared with students and families

Our school develops plans to help all students attain high academic performance

The plans address the needs of students with disabilities

■ Higher-ranked ■ Lower-ranked

Rating (Mean)

Relationships general and special education teachers

Teachers' perceptions of LEAs support for professional development

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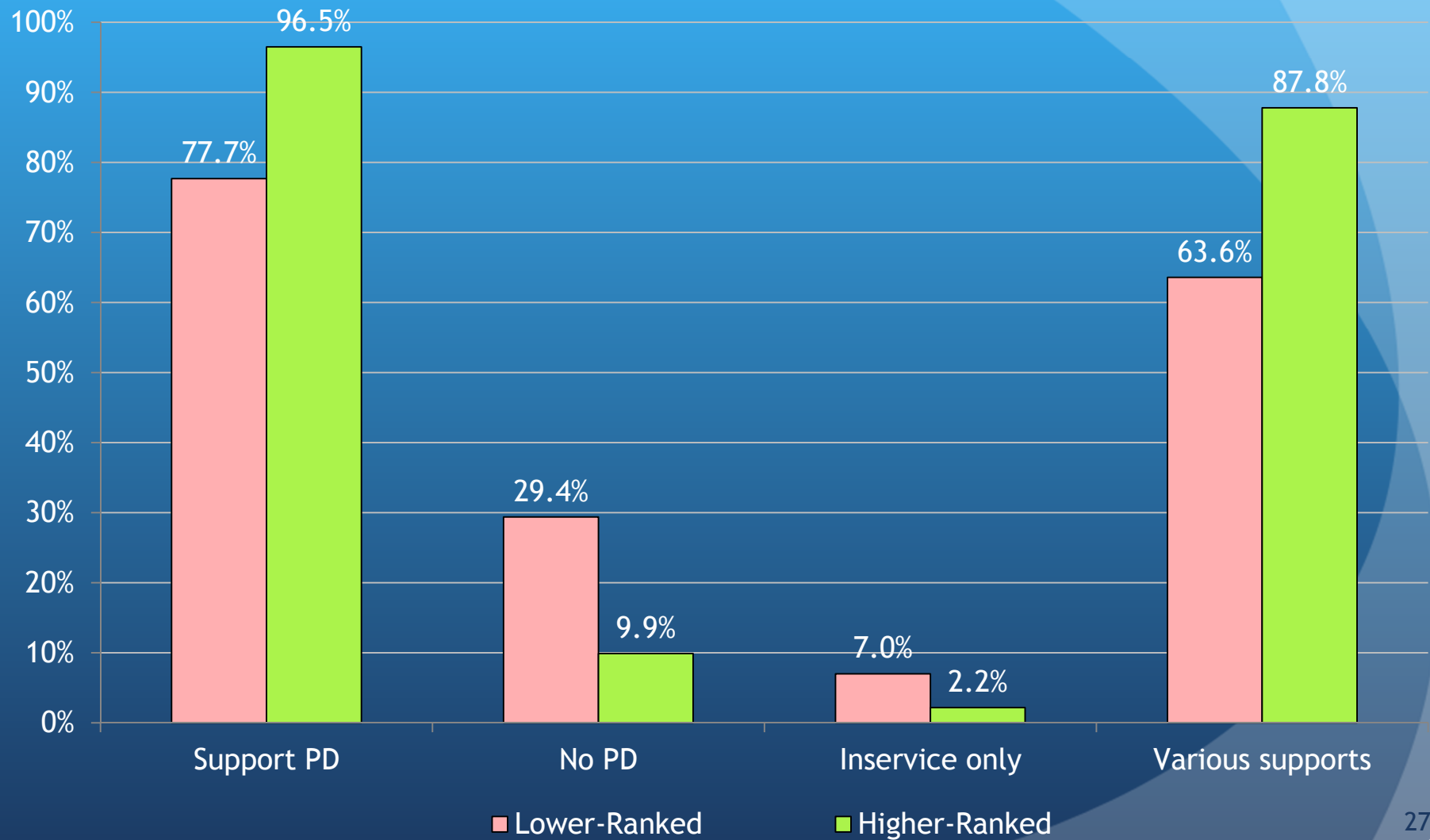
Teachers' perceptions of availability of resources

The majority of students have access to technology that supports instruction

Teachers have access to technology for adapting instruction to students with disabilities (e.g. visual aids, manipulatives)

Teachers have access to technology to support instruction (e.g. computers, Smart Board, document camera, other)

The school leadership makes an effort to focus school resources to support instruction
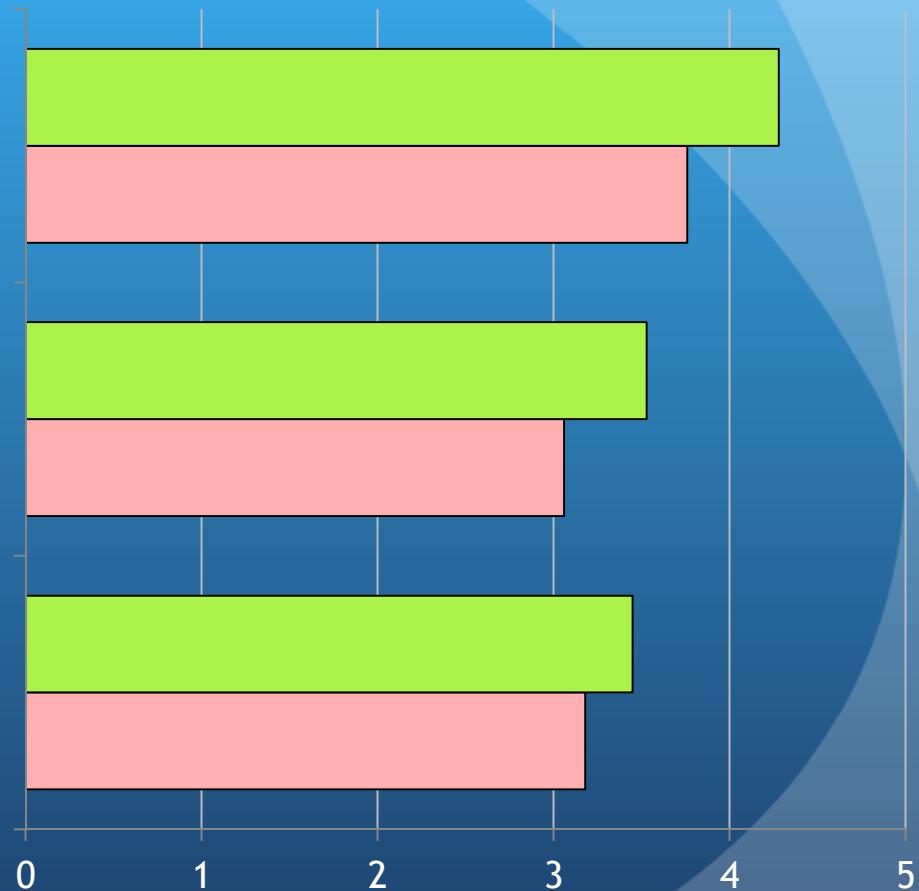
■ Higher-Ranked ■ Lower-Ranked

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Teachers' perceptions regarding supports for striving students

Students who are struggling academically are provided with additional targeted intervention

An academic intervention team meets regularly to review students' progress (or lack of) during supplemental intervention
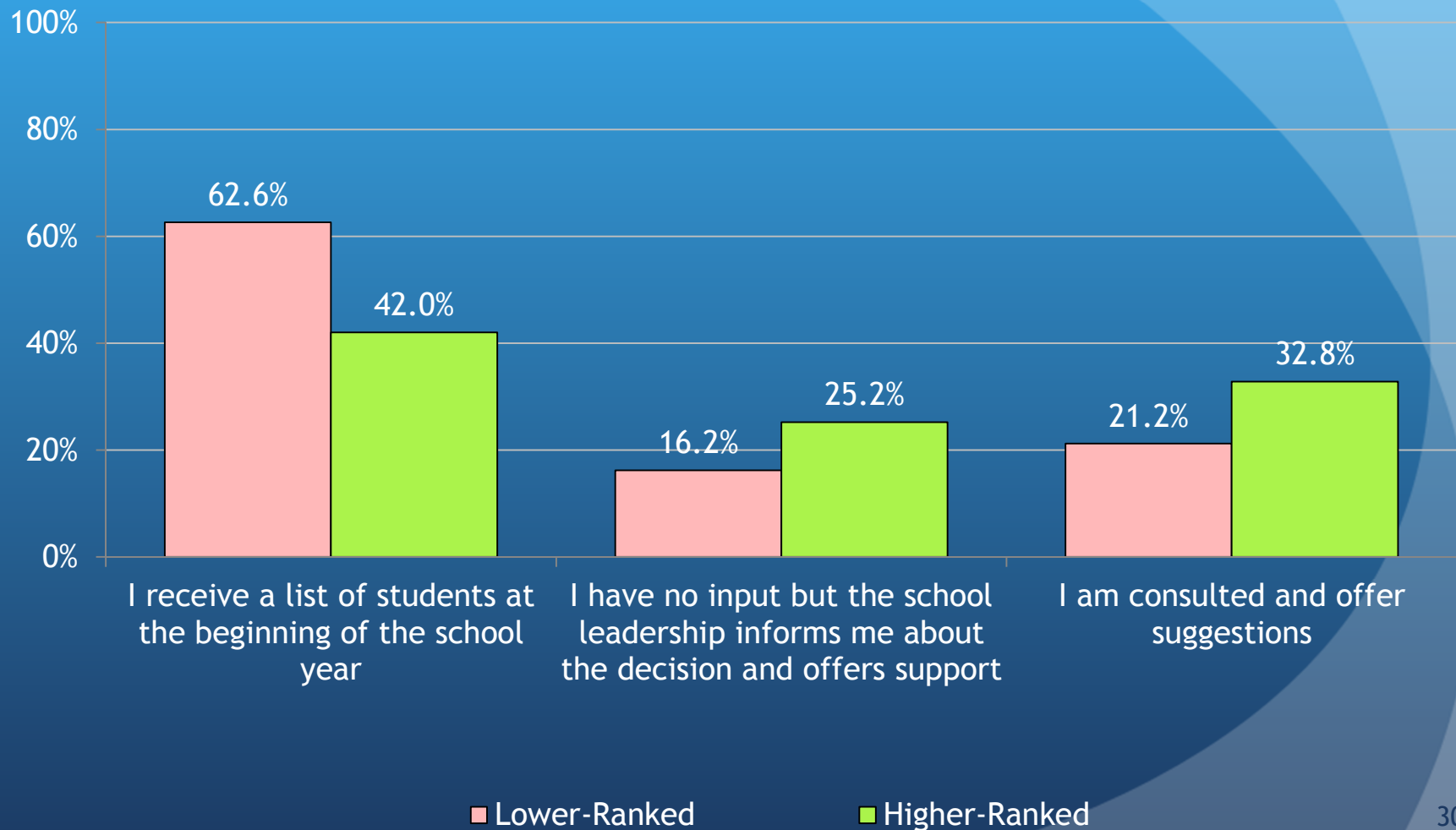
Students are grouped according to their learning needs regardless of having an IEP or not

■ Higher-Ranked   ■ Lower-Ranked

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General education teachers' involvement in assignment of students with disabilities to their classrooms

Cross-Typology: major findings

Higher-ranked districts , when compared to lower-ranked districts across typologies, were more likely to

Have more stable leadership structures (leaders who stay for five years or more)

Provide greater support to teachers and school administrators and involve them in decisions regarding curriculum and instructions

Have well-developed multi-tiered systems of intervention and use them well

Focus on prevention - recognize the students' needs as soon as possible and to ensure that the implemented interventions are appropriate to address these needs

Have technology available to teachers and students to support instruction., and train teachers in using the technology

Be located in stable and supportive families and communities that value education (social capital)

Challenging Factors

Changing perspectives	Teachers tend to see special education as separate from general education; difficulty understanding that education is responsibility of all
Professional development	Teachers, particularly new teachers, come unprepared and require intensive professional development – heavy investment in times of scarce resources
Changing demographics	Open enrollment policies are changing demographics and impacting both the sender (losing the best students) and the receiver school (too many students, not enough resources)

Conclusions & Recommendations

Lessons Learned

Implementation

Whatever you decide to implement, do it well, give it time to correct mistakes and familiarize teachers with the process, and keep evaluating to be sure that implementation is done with fidelity. This is the main difference between the higher and lower performing districts as they implement multitiered systems, inclusion, collaboration and co-teaching, and use of student data.

Lessons Learned

Teacher Preparation

LEAs are focused and spending heavily on PD. Part of this is inevitable as it relates to new state and federal initiatives. However, part is basic instructional practice and how to work collaboratively. The need for such preparation might be reduced, particularly when there are struggles to contain cost.

Lessons Learned

Early Intervention & Personalized Instruction

Early intervention is reflected in the care with which high-performing schools implement multitiered systems of intervention. Unique strategies include one-on-one mentoring, dedicated time for academic assistance, and student-led IEPs. Personalized instruction is the underpinning component of technology initiatives including 1:1 devises.

Recommendations for Practice

Cluster 1: Leadership for Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices

Cluster 2: Special Education & General Education Alignment
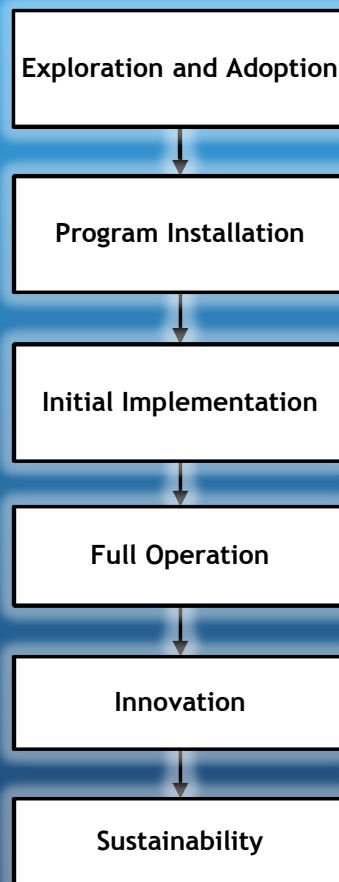
Cluster 3: Leveraged Focus

Cluster 1: Leadership for Implementation of Evidence-based Practices

Recommendation—Implementation

Develop leadership capacity for implementing evidence-based practices at the district and school levels, with an emphasis on consistency and sustained focus.

STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS
(Fixsen: Implementation Science)

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┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Exploration and Adoption │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│   Program Installation   │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│  Initial Implementation  │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│      Full Operation      │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│        Innovation        │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│      Sustainability      │
└─────────────────────────┘
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## ESSENTIAL IMPLEMENTATION OUTCOMES
(Fixsen: Implementation Science)

- Changes in adult professional behavior (knowledge and skills)

- Changes in organizational structure and cultures, both formal and informal

- Changes in relationships to consumers, stakeholders, and systems partners

Cluster 2: Special Education and General Education Alignment

Alignment

General Education   Special Education
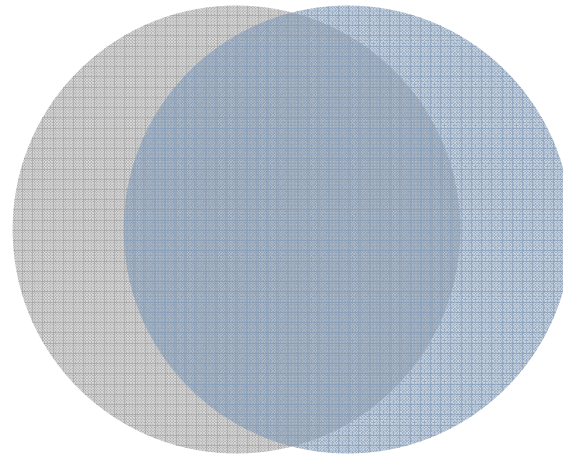
Special Education and General Education Agreement Strategies
Multi-Level Systems of Intervention and Supports
Co-Teaching
Teacher Preparation and Professional Development

Cluster 2: Special Education and General Education Alignment

Recommendation—Multi-tiered systems of interventions and supports

Fully implement multi-tiered systems of interventions and supports and use data to inform continuous improvement and redesign.

Cluster 2: Special Education and General Education Alignment

Recommendation—Co-teaching

Fully implement co-teaching models that enable access to the general education curriculum and intentional collaboration between special education and general education teachers. Use data to inform continuous improvement and redesign.

Cluster 2: Special Education and General Education Alignment
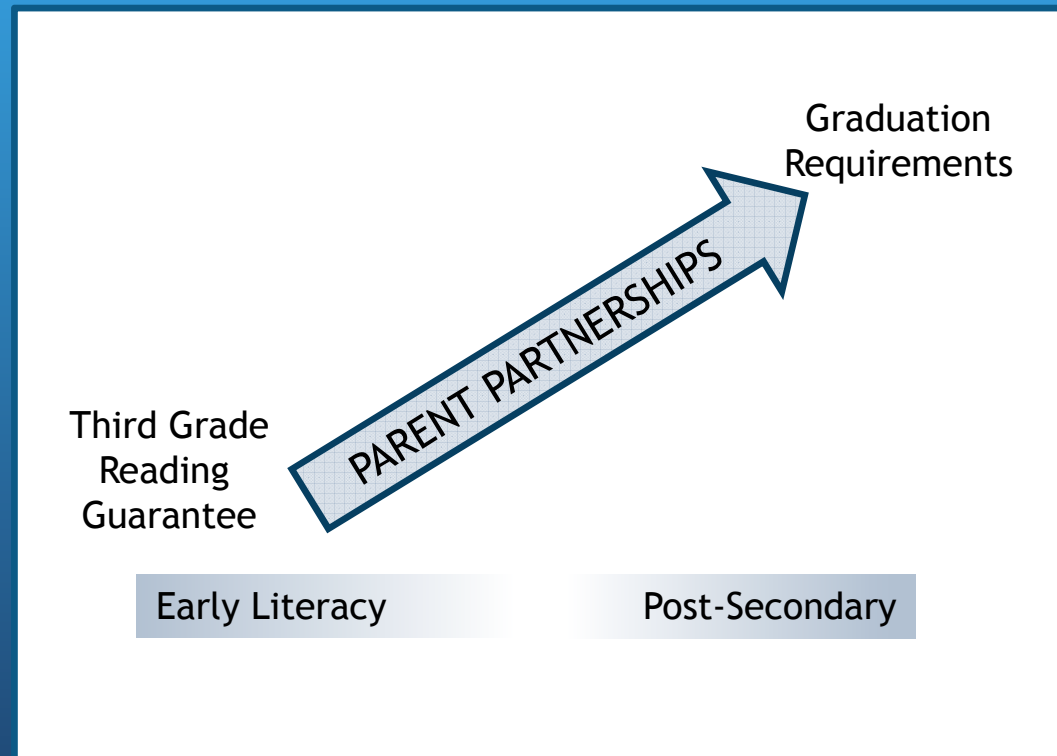
Recommendation—Teacher Preparation

Redesign teacher preparation programs to prepare students more completely for competencies needed to work collaboratively within inclusive settings, including new roles and responsibilities for intervention specialists and differentiated instruction for general education teachers.

Cluster 2: Special Education and General Education Alignment

Recommendation—Professional Development

Provide collaborative PD opportunities including supports for job-embedded professional learning within inclusive settings.

Cluster 3: Leveraged Focus

Graduation Requirements

PARENT PARTNERSHIPS

Third Grade Reading Guarantee

Early Literacy   Post-Secondary

Cluster 3: Leveraged Focus

Recommendation—Early Literacy

Focus attention and commitment on students with disabilities within the context of early literacy initiatives and the new third grade reading guarantee. Implement evidence-based practices and use data for continuous improvement. Draw from the most current early intervention research and incorporate findings.

Cluster 3: Leveraged Focus

Recommendation—Post-Secondary Readiness

Focus attention and commitment on students with disabilities within the context of college and career readiness initiatives and new graduation requirements. Implement evidence-based practices and use data for continuous improvement. Draw from the most current research and incorporate findings.

Cluster 3: Leveraged Focus

Recommendation–Parent Partnerships

Focus attention and commitment on partnerships that strengthen parental capacity to support student learning and make informed decisions for and with their children with disabilities.

Recommendations for Further Research

- Teacher Perceptions

- Value-Added Consequences

- IEP Process

- Pre-K-3 Literacy Development

- Postsecondary Readiness

Recommendations for Further Research

- Promising Technologies (personalized learning)

- Finding Efficiencies (productivity)

- Open Enrollment

- Parent Choice

QUESTIONS?