

What Are We Learning About NCLB Implementation?

NCSET

National Leadership Summit

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A stylized silhouette of a mountain range in shades of teal, located at the bottom right of the slide.

Implementation of High Stakes Accountability

Sources of Information:

- ◆ Analyzed information obtained over 12 years
- ◆ Qualitative study – case studies, interviews
- ◆ Quantitative analyses
- ◆ Elementary and middle schools in 8 states and 13 districts have been intensively studied

Implementation of High Stakes Accountability

The Early Years:

- ◆ Good schools “had inclusion” schools
- ◆ Access to the “taught” curriculum was the goal & the curriculum was loosely linked to standards
- ◆ Primary delivery model used was “one-teaching/one-supporting”
- ◆ Participation in assessments was not universally supported
- ◆ Accountability for performance non-existent

Implementation of High Stakes Accountability

The Middle Years

- ◆ Accountability “hit” schools and general education teachers resulting in loss of control over curriculum
- ◆ “We can’t expect ‘those’ students to learn this material.”; “This is not what they need to learn.”
- ◆ Keeping students with disabilities in the “taught” curriculum remained the goal
- ◆ Assessment participation increased
- ◆ Accountability for performance was uneven

Implementation of High Stakes Accountability (NCLB)

The Latest Years

- ◆ Accountability “hits” special education - we finally have performance data at the school-level
- ◆ Assessment results drive school decisions
- ◆ All teachers talk about students needing to be prepared to take the assessments
- ◆ Special education teachers losing control over IEP goals
- ◆ “We can’t expect ‘those’ students to learn this material.”; “This is not what they need to learn.”
- ◆ Providing access to standards is the goal

What Are We Learning?

- ◆ Some schools *consistently* achieve better than expected results – but school-level performance is erratic due to size of the subpopulation***
- ◆ School-level performance of students with disabilities mirrors that of other sub-groups.
- ◆ Overall “school effect” for students with disabilities - all subgroups go up BUT they may not meet the annual performance target

What Are We Learning?

Inside "Good" Schools

- ◆ Curriculum is linked to standards and all teachers know what is in the curriculum
- ◆ General education teachers who know how to teach the intended curriculum
- ◆ Special education teachers with strong pedagogy and who are flexible
- ◆ Strong sense of collective responsibility in the school – shared expectations for improving school performance

What Are We Learning?

Inside "Good" Schools (cont.)

- ◆ Shared language based on standards – reflected in the way teachers talk about students with IEPs as learners: “He is just about at the [standard] so we are really focusing on his writing processes this year.” “He has difficulties with [specific components] so I pull him out to work on [these skills]”
- ◆ Collaboration occurs around what and how to teach the large chunks of standards (i.e., intended curriculum)
- ◆ Flexible, almost informal, communication and problem solving

What Are We Learning?

Accountability is working for students with disabilities

- ◆ Students are increasingly given access to challenging and meaningful standards-based curriculum
- ◆ Transparency and public accountability is an important policy tool
- ◆ Focus on student achievement is a powerful tool for improving opportunities for students with disabilities

and...

- ◆ NCLB has really brought home to schools and school districts who the students with disabilities are and what they are learning

What are the Challenges?

- ◆ ***Technical issues*** – can be fixed through regulation, policy guidance, R & D, and technical assistance
- ◆ ***Conceptual issues*** – concerned with the underlying assumptions of NCLB and the core policies and entitlements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)