



Strategies for Supporting Students With Disabilities

Lessons From the COVID-19
Pandemic

June 16, 2023

Amy Colpo, Technical Assistance
Consultant



Agenda

1. Setting the Stage
2. What challenges have you noticed or experienced after the pandemic?
3. Leveraging Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funds
4. Thinking Ahead: What happens after ESSER funds are used?
5. Questions?

Setting the Stage

Challenges Impacting Special Education: Students

Academic Fallout

- » Students with disabilities saw sharper **declines in test scores** than their peers during the pandemic.
- » More states saw **declining graduation rates** for students with disabilities during COVID-19.

Pandemic Learning Experiences

- » Schools struggled to meet **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requirements** during remote learning.
- » Schools reported **challenges delivering supports** for students with disabilities.
- » Parents of students with learning disabilities were more concerned about their children's learning during the pandemic.

Recovery Challenges

- » A majority of parents say supporting students with disabilities should be a priority for schools' use of COVID-19 relief aid.

Challenges Impacting Special Education: Personnel

Special Educator Recruitment and Retention

- Special education teachers leave the profession at nearly twice the rate of general education teachers.
- Enrollment in teacher preparation programs is down 35% over the last 5 years.

Special Educator Preparation

- With many special educators entering the classroom from alternative pathways (i.e., not a teacher preparation program), they lack the skills needed to support students receiving special education services.
 - > Explicit instruction, collecting and utilizing data to inform student learning, individualized education program writing and implementation, and so on

What challenges have you noticed or experienced after the pandemic?

Leveraging ESSER Funds

Using ESSER Funds to Address Shortages

District Strategies

- » Increase partnerships between educator preparation programs and districts that support teaching residencies and schools.
- » Increase the availability of qualified teacher residents to support educators, students, and staff.
- » ESSER III required districts to spend at least 20% of their allocation addressing learning loss.

State Strategies

- » Establish teaching as a Registered Apprenticeship.
- » Invest in teacher residency programs.
- » Expand loan forgiveness or scholarship programs.
- » Increase teacher compensation.

Higher Education Strategies

- » Increase the number of teacher residency programs and program capacity.
- » Work with states to establish teaching as a Registered Apprenticeship.
- » Establish or expand loan forgiveness or scholarship programs.

How Districts Have Used ESSER to Support Special Education



Districts in **California** have used state and federal recovery funds to **increase compensation**, develop **high-retention pathways** into teaching, invest in their **hiring capacity**, and support students and teachers.



Districts in **New Hampshire** are addressing learning through Recovering Bright Futures—a **learning recovery program** that allows school districts and communities to offer small-group, multi-age, trauma-sensitive instruction to students who may need additional support.



Across 35 states, districts are **addressing learning loss** by

- expanding access to broadband and digital technology tools,
- investing in professional development for teachers,
- expanding extracurricular programs before and after school,
- investing in high-quality curricula,
- offering tutoring, and
- hiring staff to reduce class sizes.

District Examples

» Extended School Periods and Days

- > Chicago Public Schools: Grade 9 students received double math time and, as a result, saw significant improvement in algebra test scores and better long-term outcomes, including increased educational attainment.

» Tutoring

- > Milwaukee Public Schools (Wisconsin): Initial results from a summer 2020 online tutoring program created found “testing showed participants made, on average, 2½ months’ worth of progress in one summer month.”

» Community Partnerships

- > Ogden School District (Utah): Community organizations create additional summer learning opportunities. The community school’s initiative is led by a cross-boundary leadership team that includes the mayor, superintendent, school district Full-Service Community Schools leadership team, college and university presidents, the United Way, and prominent parent and community groups.

Strategies for Addressing Learning Loss

- » Identify missed learning standards and content that are prerequisites to future learning.
- » Create a *different* schedule for the first few months of the school year with longer blocks for addressing missed learning standards and content that are prerequisites for future learning.
- » Create 6-week catch-up courses to address specific critical missed standards and content.
- » Build daily extra help and direct instruction intervention time into schedules for students who need it across elementary, middle, and high school.
- » Take advantage of any staff attrition to add reading, math, and English teachers to provide "extra-time" interventions.
- » Invest in high-leverage practices (HLPs) for all students.

What are HLPs?

“A set of practices that are fundamental to support K–12 student learning, and that can be taught, learned, and implemented by those entering the profession.”

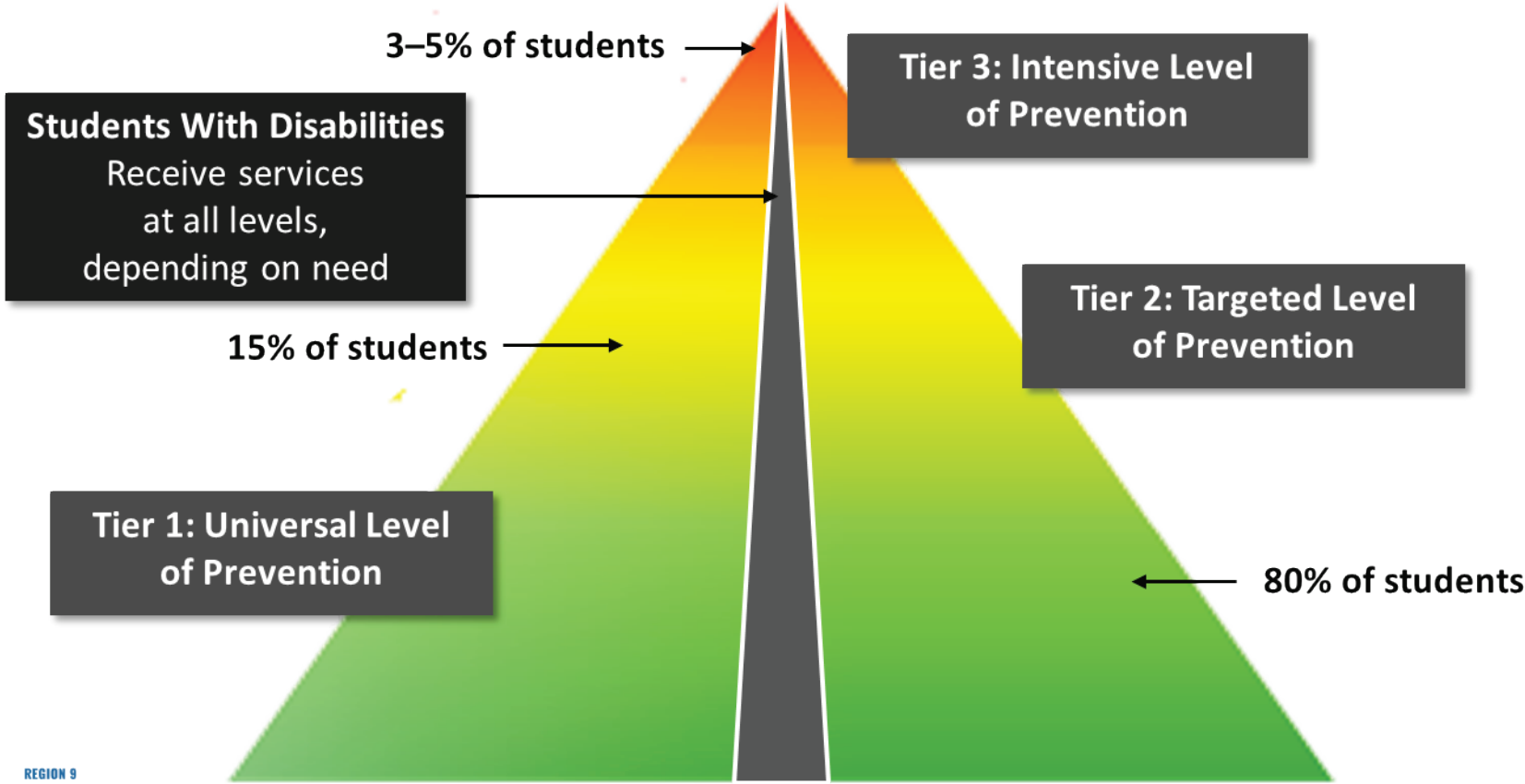
—*Windschitl et al., 2012, p. 880*

How are HLPs used?

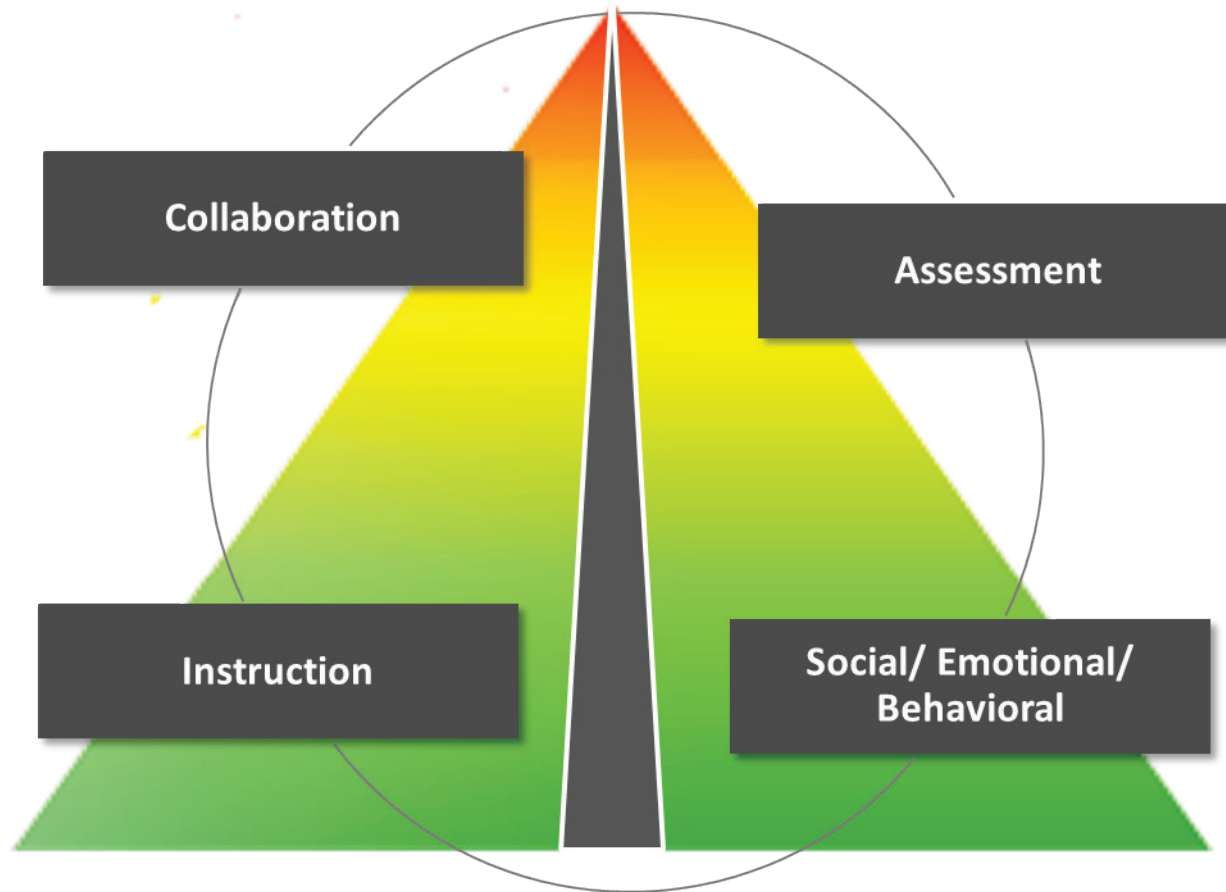
HLPs are practices that can be woven into **core instruction** in the general education setting to **intentionally design, deliver, and assess instruction** that leads to equitable learning outcomes for *all* students, including students with diverse learning needs.



Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) as a Multilevel Prevention System



MTSS and HLPs



Thinking Ahead:

**What happens after
ESSER funds are used?**

Strategies Funding Guide

Potential Funding Sources	Pathways Into the Profession		Attract					Prepare					Retain							
	Grow Your Own	Alternative Programs	Status of the Profession	Incentives	Preparation Program Recruitment & Selection Practices	District Recruitment & Hiring Practices	Credential Reciprocity	Workforce Diversity	Professional Standards, Preparation Program Standards, & Advanced Teaching Standards	Evidence-Based Practices	EPP & District Partnerships	Practice-Based Coursework & Clinical Experiences	Initial Certification	Accreditation	Continuous Improvement	Professional Learning and Support	Professional Learning and Support	Professional Learning and Support	Career Advancement	Teaching Conditions
Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) Grants: ESEA, Title II-B, Subpart 4, Section 2242	•	•		•	•	•			•	•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•
★ Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) Program: ESEA Title V, Part B, Subpart 1	•	•		•	•	•	•			•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•
Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) Program: ESEA Title V, Part B, Subpart 2	•	•		•	•	•	•			•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•
Student-Centered Funding Pilot: ESEA, Section 1501(b)(2)	•	•								•	•				•					•
Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities: IDEA, Subchapter IV (Part D Discretionary/Competitive Grants)				•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Part of the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders' Educator Shortages in Special Educator Toolkit

»» Attract

- > Pathways into the profession
- > Recruitment, selection, and hiring

»» Prepare

- > Preparation program content and pedagogy
- > Certification and licensure
- > Program approval/implementation

»» Retain

- > Professional learning and support
- > Career advancement
- > Teaching and learning conditions

Strategies Funding Guide

Potential Funding Sources	Attract							Prepare					Retain														
	Pathways Into the Profession		Recruitment, Selection, and Hiring					Preparation Program Content & Pedagogy			Cert	Program Approval/Imps	Professional Learning and Support			Career Advancement	Teaching Conditions										
	Grow Your Own	Alternative Programs	Status of the Profession	Incentives	Preparation Program Recruitment & Selection Practices	District Recruitment & Hiring Practices	Credential Reciprocity	Workforce Diversity	Professional Standards, Preparation Program Standards, & Advanced Teaching Standards	Evidence-Based Practices	EPP & District Partnerships	Practice-Based Coursework & Clinical Experiences	Initial Certification	Accreditation	Continuous Improvement	Educator Evaluation and Professional Learning Systems	Alignment from Preservice to Inservice	Mentoring and Induction	Recertification and Continued Licensure	Teacher leadership	Tiered Licensure	Extending the Reach	Collaboration	Empowerment	Leadership	Diversify, Equity, & Inclusion	Social and Emotional Learning
School Improvement Funds: ESEA, Title I, Section 1003				•			•											•	•	•			•		•	•	
Improving Basic Programs Operated by LEAs: ESEA, Title I-A							•													•			•		•	•	

Strategies Funding Guide

Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) Program: ESEA Title V, Part B, Subpart 1	
Eligible entities and funding mechanisms	
Eligible entities: LEAs that meet certain criteria	
Mechanism: Annual entitlement grants administered by the U.S. Department of Education. LEAs apply for funding directly through Grants.gov.	
Resources	
Program information: https://www2.ed.gov/programs/reapsrsa/index.html	
Program webinar: https://www2.ed.gov/programs/reapsrsa/reapwhatleasneedtoknowinfy2019presentation.pdf	
Authorized activities	
The purpose of the SRSA program is to fund initiatives in rural LEAs focused on increasing academic achievement. SRSA funds may be used for any activities authorized under ESEA Title IA, IIA, III, IVA, and IVB. Allowable activities include:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring and Induction • Recruitment and Retention • Professional Development • Teacher Leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Ladders/Teacher Advancement • Teacher and Leader Academies • Teacher and School Leader Residencies • Merit-Based Compensation

School Improvement Funds: ESEA, Title I, Section 1003	
Eligible entities and funding mechanism	
Eligible entities: Local educational agencies (LEAs) with comprehensive or targeted support schools	
Mechanism: State educational agencies (SEAs) reserve funds from annual Title I entitlement/formula grants administered by the U.S. Department of Education. LEAs submit application to SEAs. SEAs may allocate awards to eligible LEAs on a competitive or formula basis.	
Resources	
Program information:	
https://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html	
https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/legislation/title-i.html#sec1003	
Authorized activities	
Section 1003 school improvement funds support the implementation of strategies to improve student achievement in schools identified as comprehensive or targeted support schools. Funds may be used for activities, listed in its SEA-approved improvement plan, that the LEA determines will help an identified school elicit improved outcomes. Example allowable activities include:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and Retention • Mentoring and Induction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Development • Instructional Coaches

Review and Discuss

- » Take time to review the funding guide.
- » With others, discuss the following:
 - > What funding can we use to strengthen special education in our setting?
 - > Is this feasible?
 - > Have we used this funding before?
 - > What team members can help us pursue this funding?

Questions?

Contact Us

Web:

> region9cc.org

Twitter:

> [@region9cc](https://twitter.com/region9cc)

Newsletter:

> [region9cc.org/
content/newsletter](http://region9cc.org/content/newsletter)



Amy Colpo

Special Education Specialist

*Center on Great Teachers
and Leaders*

acolpo@air.org

This material is in the public domain. While permission to reprint is not necessary, publication should be cited. This material is prepared by the Region 9 Comprehensive Center under Award #S283B190010 for the Office of Program and Grantee Support Services (PGSS) within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) of the U.S. Department of Education and is administered by the American Institutes for Research®. The content of the presentation does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the PGSS or OESE or the U.S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

Notice of Trademark: “American Institutes for Research” and “AIR” are registered trademarks. All other brand, product, or company names are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners.



American Institutes for Research®
1400 Crystal Drive, 10th Floor
Arlington, VA 22202-3289
+1.202.403.5000 | AIR.ORG