SCALING THE MODEL:
HOW TO MAKE INCLUSION WORK FOR EVERYONE

Cassie Martin, PhD
Inclusion Specialist
cassiem@uw.edu

Gaye Bungart
Special Education Director
Highline Public Schools
Gaye.Bungart@highlineschools.org

Reeba Miller
Differentiation Specialist
Highline Public Schools
Reeba.Miller@highlineschools.org
OBJECTIVES

• Examine how historical barriers and social structures can (and continue to) impact inclusion
• Identify some practices that can contribute to a culture of inclusion and systemic change
• Observe a case study that outlines a potential method for inclusive school reform
• Outline what is needed to scale up inclusion reform to provide district wide supports
Inclusion: Past, Present and Future

• Where we were: history, basis for attitudes, where they came from
• Where we are now: exploring current attitudes
• Where we need to go: what we need to do, how to get there, how to change attitudes
Goals for Inclusion: Present

- Shift from inclusion as a special education policy and practice to designing educational arrangements to promote membership and achievement of all students.
- Emphasis on unifying school resources and integrating categorical programs in ways that benefit all students in general education classrooms.
- All students are presumed competent and able to benefit from the general education curriculum.
- Educators believe that they can gain the knowledge and skills they need to effectively teach all students by engaging in collaborative working arrangements.
Social Structures and Barriers

- Organizational structures
- Institutional discrimination
- Fear
- Existing beliefs about what it means to be inclusive
- Research shows that most schools focus on classroom practices associated with inclusion but ignore the organizational, structural, and cultural conditions necessary for inclusion
Examples of Organizational Barriers

- Scheduling
- MTSS structures do not typically account for students with more significant learning needs
- Organizational behaviors
- Inconsistent and competing demands on time
- Gaps in research-practice around formative data
- Language in IDEA
- How IEPs are written and how that translates to service delivery
- Funding structures
Considerations for Equitable Systemic Change

- Internal ownership of the change and change process
- Creating a master schedule with all students in mind
- Facilitative leadership, empowering stakeholders
- Integrating inclusive structures/practices in professional learning communities
- Structures that ensure continued communication between stakeholder groups
- Flexible funding structures
- Ongoing reflection, feedback, development
Examples of Cultural Barriers

- Inclusion as a special education initiative
- Differing philosophies around teaching, learning, roles and responsibilities
- Definitions of what constitutes an ‘educational benefit’
- Past experiences with “inclusion”
- Emphasis on impairment, medical model
- Classifications (beliefs, attitudes, stereotypes)
- Language in IDEA
To Consider a Cultural Shift

- When introducing curriculum or school based initiatives, consider approaching with a perspective of universal design for learning
- Presume competence
- Create safe spaces where professionals and families can share and discuss their fears and insecurities about teaching/learning
- Approach from a framework of social justice, (relationships, structures, knowledge of better alternatives)
- Keep in mind that what is better for students is typically better for adults
- Consider inclusion as a cultural initiative
Professional Practices that Contribute to Inclusive Environments

- Flexible service delivery model
- Issues of Clarity: Philosophy, roles, and responsibilities
- Students before labels
- Professional learning communities
- Communicating/Collaborating with families
A case study: McMicken Elementary

Focus school for Special Education

Piloted one coteaching classroom (Fall 2016) – showed promising findings and piloted intervention blocks for all grade levels

McMicken was in the process of examining ways to maximize resources and improve student outcomes

Very engaged and reflective teaching community
Overarching Goal:

• Create an inclusive learning community (elementary school) to be used as a site for research, professional development, teacher preparation, and as a model demonstration site for best practices in inclusive education
Basic Tenets

• Put Students First
• Teach teachers to differentiate
• Bridge preservice and in-service learning
• Build capacity for Universal Design for Learning
• Empower stakeholders to build an inclusive education philosophy
• Scale the model
Research Goals

• Foster an inclusive culture, by focusing on what is working already
• Discover strategies that work (or are already in place) to meet the broad learning needs of students
• Use a strengths-based approach where all stakeholders are being utilized to their full potential
• Articulate what it means for McMicken to be an inclusive school
Research Question

• What have you experienced that has worked at McMicken to support the learning and membership of all students?
The 4-D Cycle

**Discover**
- Interview
- Data Analysis

**Dream**
- Member Check
- Data Analysis

**Design**
- Focus Group
- Provocative Propositions
- Data Analysis

**Deliver**
- Re-conceptualization of Service Delivery and what it means to be inclusive

Inclusion
Other Notable Findings

• Increase in iReady scores and improved SBA comparison data
• Removal from Focus school status for special education
• Increased number of students in co-taught classrooms met their IEP goals, even as goals became more rigorous
• Teachers reported greater and broader use of accommodations
• Students reported feeling more confident and engaged
• Teachers reported collateral benefit of professional growth
• Increase in collaborative planning and differentiation
• Special education teachers reported shared ownership of student outcomes for all students
Takeaways from McMicken

- **Takeaway 1:** Focus on what is working to aid in school based reform
- **Takeaway 2:** Approach inclusion as a cultural initiative instead of a special education initiative
- **Takeaway 3:** Examine school culture and resources to identify which changes will have the greatest impact on student learning
- **Takeaway 4:** Importance of strong site based leadership
- **Takeaway 5:** Continuously improve
McMicken’s Continuous Improvement Plan

- Expand on co-teaching within an Integrated Kindergarten
- Student with low incidence disabilities attending their neighborhood school
- Implementation of morning meeting
- Visible learning and goal setting for all students
- Continue to improve on and approach students who receive services through Emotional Behavioral Center as a service instead of a place.
- Examine the data and continue building formative assessment systems for all students.
Scaling the Model

• Choose additional site to replicate process (not model, but take the best from previous reform efforts moving forward)
• Continue to seek out innovative and equity focused school leadership
• Examine what might have been “missing” or what else needs to happen to demonstrate efficacy from previous reform efforts
• Identify successes and also examine road blocks in order to identify structures, attitudes, philosophies that are common barriers for inclusion-based reform
• Start to identify those non-negotiables - - what needs to happen to support a more efficient reform process?
What does this case study tell us about what we need to consider district wide?

• Develop non-negotiables (Examples, all students attend neighborhood schools, no students pulled from core content, formative assessment for all students, special education as a service and not a place)
• Focus on formative assessment for all students
• Create model demonstration sites or visit a model demonstration site to develop your own takeaways
• Look to leverage what is working in schools – develop non-negotiables but remain cognizant of a school’s strengths and culture
• Always look to the why (research, PLCs, data, priorities)
• Start from a place or provocation
Keep in mind

- School culture matters
- Shift an organizational culture based on “what works”
- Organization reform don’t happen overnight
- Examine what it means when we say “all means all”
- Inclusion is both a vision and a practice: Determine systems for both the implementation of inclusive models and inclusionary practices
- Schools are in a constant state of reform, therefore so are our ideas, strategies, culture of what it means to be inclusive
- What are those non-negotiables your school district can commit to?
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