Florida Statewide
Problem-Solving Initiative

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Why Problem-Solving?
BIG IDEAS

• AYP and Disaggregated Data (NCLB) move focus of attention to
  student progress, not student labels
• Building principals and superintendents want to know if students are
  achieving benchmarks, regardless of the students’ “type”
• Accurate “placements” do not guarantee that students will be exposed
to interventions that maximize their rate of progress
• Effective interventions result from good problem-solving, rather than
good “testing”
• Progress monitoring is done best with “authentic” assessment that are
  sensitive to small changes in student academic and social behavior

Big Ideas (con’d)

• Interventions must be “evidence based” (IDEA/NCLB)
• Response to Intervention (RtI) is the best measure of problem
  “severity”
• Program eligibility (initial and continued) decisions are best made
  based on RtI
• Staff training and support (e.g., coaching) improve intervention skills
• “Tiered” implementation improves service efficiency
Problem Solving

- A process that uses the skills of professionals from different disciplines to develop and evaluate intervention plans that improve significantly the school performance of students

Problem Solving

- Can be applied to the student, classroom, building and district levels
  - Student-academic and/or behavior problem
  - Classroom- discipline, returning homework
  - Building- bullying, attendance
  - District- over-/under-representation
  - Problem- any problem shared by numbers of students

Problem-Solving: What It Is and Is Not

- What it is...
  - A process designed to maximize student achievement
  - A method focused on outcomes
  - A method to ensure accountability and intervention evaluation
  - It is all about student progress, regardless of where or who that student is
- What it is not...
  - A way to avoid special education placements
  - A less expensive way of schooling
Child-Study vs Problem Solving

- Focus on interventions (not test scores)
- Assessment linked to interventions (not to diagnoses or categories)
- Balance between needs/resources (not strictly to eligibility)
- Change process (not a "fix")
- Student outcome-based, not placement-based
  (What students DO is important, not what students are CALLED)

Contextual Issues Affecting The Problem-Solving Process in General and Special Education

- IDEA Re-Authorization
  - Focus on academic outcomes
  - General education as baseline metric
  - Labeling as a "last resort"
  - Increasing general education options
  - Pooling building-based resources
  - Flexible funding patterns
- ESEA Legislation-No Child Left Behind
- National Emphasis on Reading
- Evidence-based Interventions

Contextual Issues Affecting General and Special Education-cont'd

- Authentic/Curriculum-Based Assessment
- Evidence-based Interventions
- Response to Intervention
- Accountability-Student Outcomes
- Early Intervention Programs
- High-Stakes Testing
- Problem-Solving as Primary Service Delivery Process
Reauthorization...

- Ensure states align accountability system with NCLB (e.g., AYP)
- Align IDEA with NCLB
- Provision for use of funds for prevention/intervention
- Problem-solving process
- Reduce over-identification/over-representation

Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act

- In general. Notwithstanding section 607(b), when determining whether a child has a specific learning disability as defined in section 602(29), a local educational agency shall not be required to take into consideration whether a child has a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability in ...

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

- (b) Additional authority. In determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, a local educational agency may use a process that determines if the child responds to scientific, research-based intervention.
Status of Reauthorization

- Title: “Improving Education Results for Children with Disabilities Act”
- Passed House in 2003, Senate in 2004
- 2 Weeks Ago, Senate and House conferees appointed
- LAST WEEK, announcement of hope to pass by end of year
- Virtually identical language in both versions

House-Senate Statements

- ...hailed by school administrators as “the best special education policy revisions we’ve seen in decades.”
- Act focuses on, “...improved education results, reducing paperwork, addressing problem of over-identification, and reforms funding

- Representative Ric Keller (R-FL) on committee
- 5 Republicans, 3 Democrats

Implications for Problem Solving Teams

- Services must link with accountability systems (AYP, FCAT, NCLB)
- Intervention plans must attend to academic progress issues (Reading!)
- Response to intervention will be a primary eligibility criteria for access to some services (e.g., LD, “ii”, “iii”) 
- Effective problem solving process a high priority
Implications...

- Assessment focus will move to authentic criterion (e.g., CBM, DIBELS, FBA)
- Interventions must attend to evidence-based criterion
- Program/intervention accountability a priority
- Less process, more outcome

The Job Ahead

- Implement PS as efficiently as possible
- Use Multi-Level System
- Use Graduated Skill Base
- Use existing evidence-based interventions
- PS Process Increases in Complexity with Intensity of Problem

Problem Solving Process

- Define the Problem
- Evaluate: Is it Effective?
- Problem Analysis: Identify Variables that Contribute to Problem
- Develop Plan
- Implement Plan: Implement As Intended, Progress Monitor, Modify as Necessary
Levels of Intervention

- **Intensive**: 1–7%
- **Strategic**: 5–15%
- **Core**: 80–90%

**Multi-Level Process**

- **Level I**: Consultation Between Teachers-Parents
- **Level II**: Consultation With Other Resources
- **Level III**: Consultation With Extended Problem Solving Team
- **Level IV**: IEP Consideration

**Screening Criteria**

- All K through Grade 5 students on IEPs
- Students in Grade 2 and 3 below 51 percentile on SAT-10
- Students below level 3 on FCAT-995 or below 18 percentile on FCAT-918 in grade 4-12
- Entering ES students with IEPs focused on language deficits

**School-Wide Systems to Support Student Achievement**

Adapted from Sugai and Horner
Steps in the Problem-Solving Process

1. Identify replacement behavior
2. Determine expectation level
3. Develop hypotheses (brainstorming)
4. Develop predictions/assessment
5. Develop interventions in those areas for which data are available and hypotheses verified
6. Collect data for hypotheses not verified
7. Follow-up schedule and data sharing

Functional Behavior Assessment: Integration with the PSM

- Step 1: Clear Description of the problem behavior (PSM: Replacement Behaviors)
- Step 2: Identification of events, times and situations that predict when the behavior will and will not occur. (PSM: Hypotheses and Predictions)
- Step 3: Identification of the consequences that maintain the problem behaviors (function behavior serves). (PSM: Hypotheses)
- Step 4: Development of hypotheses
- Step 5: Direct Observation data that support hypotheses. (PSM: RIOTS)
- (O’Neil, 1997)
Research on Integrity of Problem Solving
(Flugum and Reschly)

- Use of Behavioral Definition
  - 41% of Teachers/45% of Related Services
- Use of Direct Measure/Baseline
  - 38% of Teachers/27% of Related Services
- Use of Step-by-Step Intervention Plan
  - 93% of Teachers/44% of Related Services
- Graphing Results
  - 7% of Teachers/2% of Related Services
- Compare Results to Baseline
  - 14% of Teachers/11% of Related Services

Response to Intervention

- Ensure adequate instruction in general education
- Identify that “discrepancy” exists-initial intervention
- Problem solve-intensive intervention in general education
- Special Education Services-response to intervention will determine continued eligibility (Fuchs, Fuchs, and Vaughn)

What We Know:
Evaluation of Practices to Improve Student Performance

- Treatment/Intervention/Practice
  - EMH Sp Ed Prog ES - .14
  - Slow Learner/Sp Ed ES - .34
  - SLD/EBD ES + .29
  - Applied Behavior Analysis ES +1.00
  - CBM+Graph+Formative Eval ES +.70
  - CBM+Graph+Formative Evaluation + Reinforcement ES +1.00

Source: Dan Reschly
A Decade of Building Capacity (1992-2004)

Structures to Build Upon

- The Problem-Solving Process
- Assessment/Progress Monitoring
  - CBM/DIBELS
- Intervention Support
- Program Evaluation and Accountability
- Organizational Development and Systems Support

Implementation in Florida: Critical Components

- Integrate with existing initiatives
  - PBS
  - Reading First
  - Early Intervention
- Efficient Training
  - Problem Solving Method
  - Data Collection and Interpretation
    - CBM, DIBELS, PBS, Local Initiatives
  - Evidence-based Interventions
    - Broward Model, PBS, Reading First
  - Response to Intervention
    - Reading First, Fuchs Model
Critical Components Con’d

- Technical Assistance
  - State and Regional Levels
  - District Personnel (Student Services et al)
  - Technology
- Coaching Model
  - Building Level
- Strong Project Evaluation Model
- Demonstration Districts
- Schools within Districts
- RFA process with commitment and incentives

Timeline

- 2004-2005
  - Hire Central Staff
  - Establish Training Materials and Network
  - Establish RFA Process for Districts
  - Hire TA, Coaching Staff for selected districts
- 2005-2006
  - Initiate in a minimum of 3 Districts with demonstration schools
  - Evaluate implementation and initial outcomes
- 2006-Beyond
  - Expand implementation based on evaluation data from 05-06

Criteria for Demonstration Districts

- Can identify 3 schools to participate
- Commitment of local staff
- Acceptance of coach
- 3-Year Commitment
- Commitment to Data Collection
- Commitment to use of Technology support
Criteria for Schools

- Demonstrated “Need”
  - Academic
  - Behavior
  - Both
- 3-Year Commitment
  - Basic Understanding of PSM
- Staff Support
- Willing to accept coach and TA
- Willing to support development in future schools

Training Modules

- Problem-Solving Method
- Evidence-Based Interventions
- Progress Monitoring
- Response to Intervention
- Building-Level Implementation
- Coaching

Project Structure

- Regional Assistance Centers
- Training
- Technology
- Intervention Resources (EBIs)
- Demonstration Districts
  - Selected by RFPs
  - Coaches
- Pilot Buildings within Districts
Effective Leadership

- Effective leadership is essential for successful implementation…
  - Building principal who focuses priority on student outcomes
  - Superintendent that supports principals through prioritizing staff training and support
  - District policies and procedures that give priority to practices that relate directly to improving outcomes
  - District policies and procedures that minimize practices that do not have a direct relationship to improving outcomes