



"Special education leadership is as complex, unique, and diverse as the students it intendsto serve. The roles, duties, and responsibilities of special education leaders change as swiftly as the policies, budgets, best practices, and systems of accountability that governstheir ability to meet the challenges of the students under their charge. Moreover, special education leadership is a multifaceted educational enterprise that is predicated on the ideal of social justice, in that it is based on the ideals that all children can learn, all children should have access to a quality education, and all children should be included in the educational system irrespective of their respective disabilities" (Seltzer, 2011).

Ready

Lead an inclusive school by answering the question, "What do you believe the goals of education should be?" by addressing the following concepts:

- Outcomes;
- Attitudes;
- Dispositions;
- Skills (Villa, 2017, p. 17).

Know special education leadership factors:

- Core special education legal foundations and elements;
- Match instruction to the learning characteristics of students with disabilities;
- Special education is a set of services and supports tailored to the needs of individual students so that they can progress in the general education curriculum;
- Include all students with disabilities in standards, assessments, and accountability requirements;
- Integrate special education into all aspects of school improvement (McLaughlin, 2009, p. 4).

SET the stage for strong building-level leadership and support of high leverage practices in special education by checking out:

Your **TTAC Library** resources:

- High-Leverage Practices in Special Education, which defines the activities that all special educators need to be able to use in their classroom from day one. High-leverage practices are organized around four aspects of practices: collaboration, assessment, social/emotional/behavioral practices, and instruction.
- Leading the Co-Teaching Dance: Leadership Strategies to Enhance Team Outcomes, which provides school leaders with strategies, resources, best practices, techniques, and materials to establish and maintain successful coteaching teams.

Podcasts:

- Inclusive Education Podcasts, which seek to inform and engage educators, parents, and community members in what works in today's schools and inclusion of children with disabilities in the general Education classroom.
- Better Leaders Better Schools, which provides interviews of the top leaders in a variety of fields and highlights the strategies they use on a day-to-day basis, as well as how these strategies could improve schools.
- Transformative Principal, which focuses its podcast each week on an interview with a principal or educational leader

GO to the following sites to learn more about special education leadership development opportunities and support in state or national organizations:

The Council for Exceptional Children, a professional association of educators dedicated to advancing the success of children with exceptionalities through advocacy, standards, and professional development.

Council of Administrators of Special Education, an international professional educational organization which is affiliated with the Council for Exceptional Children, which provides leadership and support to members by shaping policies and practices which impact quality of education.

The Leadership in Effective and Developmentally-appropriate Services (LEADS) in Virginia Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), an initiative of the Virginia Department of Education designed to create and support a network of statewide leaders responsible for administrative oversight of local ECSE programs by connecting, supporting, and empowering local leaders to building capacity and provide high-quality programs.

The Aspiring Special Education Leaders Academy, a program established by the VDOE to assist school divisions and state-operated programs with succession planning and is designed to help prepare potential leaders for future administrative positions in special education.

References and resources

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Murawski, W., & Dieker, L. (2013). Leading the co-teaching dance: Leadership strategies to enhance team outcomes. Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

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Sousa, D.A. (2003). *The leadership brain: How to lead today's schools more effectively*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

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This news brief is a collaborative effort of the Virginia Department of Education Training and Technical Assistance Centers at George Mason University and James Madison University. This issue was prepared by the staff of the VDOE TTAC at James Madison University. For questions about content, please contact Gina Martin (martingk@jmu.edu), Jacki Nickel (nickeljr@jmu.edu), Cathy Cook (cookch@jmu.edu), or Jesse Rodriguez (rodri3jm@jmu.edu) or call 540.568.6746.

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