**Breaking Down Silos**  
**Akron Public Schools, OH**  
Presenters: Bernie Burchett, Antoine Campbell, Charlie Glasgow, Ellen McWilliams, and Larry Petry

When the Akron Public Schools made significant gains in student achievement, everyone asked about our curriculum and programs. They were asking the wrong questions. Student achievement does not come from products, initiatives, and programs. Real student gain comes from a systemic integrated focus across all departments and stakeholders. We have the highest performing urban district in the state of Ohio because of the deeply integrated way we do our work. This school year, we were asked to present about our INTEGRATED process to the a) 21 urban districts in Ohio; b) Ohio Superintendent Zellman and her senior level staff as part of the Harvard Leadership Project; c) Ohio Department of Education Leadership Advisory Council; d) Ohio Department of Education Intervention Council; e) National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems (NCCREST) Ohio Community of Practice; and f) we were asked to do a joint presentation at the National Title 1 Conference in Long Beach with the US Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Education regarding integrated processes across all systems. Participants will gain an understanding of how to break down the silos across departments, such as, special education, Title 1, curriculum and instruction, and testing and assessment, and create integrated processes to ensure that all your diverse children meet their potential.

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**An Administrator’s Learning Community That Moved the Data!**  
**Austin Independent School District, TX**  
Presenters: Joan Altobelli and Brenda McCullar

For the past three school years, a Learning Community made-up of Principals, Associate Superintendents for Elementary Schools, and Special Education Directors, met monthly for the purpose of learning how to work together to move District data that had taken a negative trend. The concerns originally centered around Statewide Testing results and its effect upon campus accountability ratings. After only a few meetings, the focus of the Learning Community became completely child centered and crossed lines between general and special education students and services. The group began to develop processes that would open doors and change outcomes for children in the area of reduced referrals for special education evaluation, reduced identification of students as students with disabilities, increase in inclusive placements, increase of participation of special education students in grade-level state assessments, increase in passing rate of special educations students, and support for struggling general education students in lieu of referral to special education. The data has taken an incredible turn for the better and Austin Independent School District is proud to share the learning process and results of this administrative partnership with our colleagues from other districts at the Urban Collaborative Spring 2007 meeting.
**Brockton High School: Collaborating for the Success of All Students**  
*Brockton Public Schools, MA*  
Presenters: Maria LeFort and Dianne Tarmey

The focus of our presentation will be around how Brockton High School has taken huge steps to break the barriers between special education and general education to collaborate for the success of all students. Through many professional development opportunities, we have begun to change the culture and belief system of the staff, students and parents at Brockton High School.

We have gone from almost all substantially separate programs and service delivery models to many inclusive opportunities via the co-teaching model. By reallocating staff from self-contained classrooms to inclusive classrooms, we have been able to keep budgetary concerns to a minimum. Through professional development activities, we have shared many techniques and strategies to ensure the success of all students in a classroom.

While we maintain a population (67) of students who are in our “Life Skills” program, we provide opportunities for participation in socially and emotionally rewarding interactions with their peers while providing the skill set needed to become fully functional members of our community.

As one of the largest high schools in New England, we have very unique demographics. Despite this, Brockton High is able to boast incredible results on state-wide assessments and on AYP. While we still have challenges to face, we believe we are on our way to building a truly inclusive and performance-focused high school.

**Broward County’s Struggling Reader Plan**  
*Broward County Public Schools, FL*  
Presenters: Eleanor Goldberg, Barbara Krakower, and Dorett Wade

Broward County is one of the fastest growing districts in the nation, with a unique urban/suburban mix of students. During the 2006-07 school year, the District served the educational needs of over 260,000 students. Our district serves a diverse multicultural, multiethnic population with students from 163 countries speaking 55 languages. There are over 35,000 students with disabilities enrolled in Broward County schools.

In 2002, the Deputy Superintendent in Broward County recognized the need to address a district-wide concern for all struggling readers. From that concern a task force consisting of educators and administrators from general education, special education, Title 1, and bilingual education departments was created. This committee collaborated to develop a plan that addressed the needs of all struggling readers in Broward County. From this action, departments united to utilize a selection approach to align reading assessments to research-validated reading interventions. This presentation will share the results of this ongoing project to advance student achievement in the nation’s sixth largest public school district.
Building Relationships that Benefit ALL Students  
Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, NC  
Presenters: Laura Hamby, Gina Smith, and Trish Tanger

The Charlotte Mecklenburg School (CMS) system is the largest school system in North Carolina. In an environment where academic achievement is the top priority, it took an intentional, systematic plan to align special education to general education. This alignment included curriculum, textbooks, materials, professional development and participation with general education colleagues on system wide initiatives. It also required a comprehensive look at special education functions such as compliance, service delivery models and staffing.

Recent achievement data collected from general education and special education students in a co-taught class indicated that general education students benefited more than their special education peers in Algebra I, Geometry, Grades 4 and 8 Reading, and Grades 3 and 8 Math.

Ongoing challenges include high rates of turnover in principals, general education and special education teachers. Other challenges include leading schools to build cultures that are open to all students.

This presentation will provide practical and effective strategies for building relationships that lead to successful collaboration between general and special educators, and positive outcomes for all students.

Dallas Achieves! Creating a Rigorous and Coherent Educational Program for All Students  
Dallas Independent School District, TX  
Presenters: Rosemarie Allen and Meredith Smith

The Dallas Independent School District has partnered with the Institute for Learning to win the coveted Broad Prize for Urban Education in 2010. Awarded each year, the Broad Prize honors urban school districts that demonstrate the greatest overall performance and improvement in student achievement while reducing achievement gaps for poor and minority students. In the district’s reform effort known as Dallas Achieves!, staff are engaged in careful and extensive professional development designed to support instructional strategies and techniques that encourage equity and access to the general curriculum for all students. All students are taught a rigorous curriculum matched to the standards. A three-tier intervention model is in place that provides for additional time and more instruction for struggling learners. As part of the comprehensive plan, special education teachers are assigned to the core academic content areas to provide instructional support to students in general education classrooms. Special education teachers receive training alongside their general education teacher counterparts to ensure alignment and coherence in the delivery of instruction to all students. This important training and the theory of action for teaching and learning have far-reaching implications for students with disabilities. Positive outcomes for special education students and district staff have resulted from this districtwide effort. In the past two years, special education students in the Dallas ISD have made greater gains than other student groups in most academic areas on state performance assessments.
Design and Implement An Effective Inclusive Reading Intervention Plan for All Students At The Secondary Level
Dallas Independent School District, TX
Presenter: Corey Golomb

The Reading, Multilingual, and Special Education departments of Dallas ISD reviewed the needs of their students to maximize their resources to provide the best opportunity available to secondary students to improve their reading ability. Each department faced the challenge of too many secondary students who were not reading at grade level. The goal of the resulting collaborative plan was to build effective, tiered interventions accessible to all students.

This presentation will review the plan adopted by Dallas ISD, the implementation of one of the interventions from the plan, and report the gains in student achievement. The district selected a computer-based, one hour, 5 days per week intervention designed to provide significant reading improvement tied to the reading curriculum and course credit. The data driven decisions for student placement and the three years of reading improvement data will be shared. The data will demonstrate that Dallas ISD provides an effective intervention for all student populations represented in the collaborative reading plan.

Including Students with Emotional Disabilities in the General Education Setting
Dallas Independent School District, TX
Presenter: Andre Banks

Nearly half a million children and adolescents have been identified with an emotional disturbance (ED) according to the U.S. Department of Education figures. Researchers argue that up to 2.3 million additional students suffer from an emotional disturbance but are not served—a total of almost 3 million students nationwide. Unfortunately, research also indicates that students with ED experience significantly worse outcomes than their peers and are all too often educated in restricted academic environments. These figures are staggering given the social and economic costs of this disability.

Transitioning students with ED from more to less restricted learning environments offers multiple benefits at many different levels. While creating an effective inclusion process that maximizes the student’s chance for success and reassures the educators in the regular education environment is challenging, it is possible. The purpose of the presentation is to discuss a Response to Intervention (RtI) behavioral model that incorporates student progress data to successfully promote inclusion in Dallas ISD. Since implementing the district’s inclusion practice there has been a significant reduction year after year in the number of self contained behavioral classes, more effective use of special education resources, and increased acceptance of students with ED by regular education teachers and administrators.
Inclusive practices is a major systems change for general education teachers and special education staff. Not only are you changing the cultures of each school but the way the entire district does business to serve every student’s needs. When a district starts moving into changing service delivery to students with special needs general educators thinks special education is making changes when, in fact, it changes the way every person does business, including general education. Inclusive practices affects all departments including: curriculum, transportation, facilities, technology, professional development, human resources, public relations, grading and assessment for all students, teacher evaluation, discipline, etc. Systems change has a domino effect on all aspects of the district.

This session will give specifics as to how systems change regarding inclusive practices affects both general education staff and special education staff in all aspects of the day. It takes both general educators and the special educators making committed changes as well as role changes to serve the needs of students with disabilities.

Deer Valley USD is a school district in Phoenix, Arizona, with a student population of 36,000 students identified needing special education services. Deer Valley educators will share how they are moving through systems change in their district and will offer tools and strategies to help other districts.

Katy ISD is the fastest growing school district in the Houston metropolitan area and the state, serving over 50,000 students. The school district earned the Texas Association of School Psychologists’ award for “Outstanding Delivery of School Psychological Services.” We believe our efforts to provide comprehensive psychological services to all students contributed to the recent recognition by our peers. A primary responsibility of our Licensed Specialists in School Psychology (LSSPs) is to provide consultative support to general and special education staff, make programming recommendations for general and special education students, and to provide direct services to any student in need. Direct services consist of individual and group counseling, suicide intervention, and campus-wide crisis intervention. Our department is comprised of both LSSPs and school counselors, which facilitates team approaches to direct service provision and continued professional training. Our LSSPs participate in Katy’s early-intervention collaborative process, which has effectively reduced the number of special education referrals for emotional or behavioral concerns. We face the challenge of aligning our early-intervention process with current Response to Intervention (RtI) initiatives. A primary goal of our LSSPs will be to facilitate data-driven practices for all students.
Achieving Equity: On the Road to Secondary School Reform
Miami-Dade County Public Schools, FL
Presenters: Jill Brookner, Will Gordillo, Caryl Grant, and Cathy Orlando

Road trip! Join The Miami-Dade team on our journey towards achieving equity for ALL students in the secondary school reform restructuring and reculturing process. We will take you down the sometimes smooth and sometimes bumpy road as this large district transforms high schools to benefit all students. Where does a district begin, who’s on board, and how do you assure that everyone is going to the same destination? Effective strategies such as distributed leadership teams, school site design teams and collaborative planning will be presented. Participants will receive planning and scheduling resources to assist them in their own restructuring process.

Tried and Tested: Curriculum Adaptations that Work
New York City DOE, District 75, NY
Presenters: Ruchika Chopra, Penny Ryan, and Tracy Walsh

District 75 of the New York City Department of Education provides instructional services to approximately 23,000 students with significant disabilities; 1646 of these students are fully included with their peers in public school and college classrooms. Administrators from a District 75 school, a general education school, and District 75 Office of Inclusive Education will present on their collaborative journey that successfully built an exemplary instructional environment that addresses the needs of diverse learners. This presentation by the administrators of the two public schools and the school district representative will focus on the successful collaboration that supports the accessibility of curriculum for students with significant disabilities. Strategies for adapting the curriculum, materials, and environment will be shared as well as models of professional development for staff.
How Do We Get There From Here? Using a State Funded Special Education Performance Grant to Forge a Partnership for All Students
School District of Philadelphia, PA
Presenters: Renay Boyce and Joyce Dukes

The presentation will focus on how the School District of Philadelphia’s Office of Specialized Services has partnered with our general education colleagues and a state training agency (PaTTAN) in utilizing a Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education grant to support academic achievement for students prior to special education placement, as well as students receiving special education services, through the use of targeted interventions to improve reading and behavioral outcomes. Specifically, the District sought to improve academic and behavioral performance in students, grade 4 through 12, with Individualized Educational Programs (IEP) or placement in Tiers II or III of the District’s RTI process. Grant activities strengthened and intensified the use of research-validated instructional practices and interventions by increasing teacher skills, building institutional capacity, and broadening the scope of the District’s School Intervention Model. General and special education school staff participating in the grant received training in research-validated and skill-building academic, behavioral and dropout prevention interventions and in a reliable web-based system for progress monitoring. School staff also received school-based coaching and booster training sessions focused on the enhancement of teacher skill in implementing and maintaining all of the interventions.

Inclusion: From the Classroom to the Workplace
Pittsburgh Public Schools, PA
Presenters: Mary Jane Conley and Marjorie Eckman

The starting place for all students with disabilities is the general education classroom so, during the transition years, the starting place for students with disabilities is the general community. Based on this philosophy, Pittsburgh Public Schools had developed a continuum of transition programs and services to meet the needs of students in a variety of community environments. Two of these programs will be highlighted in this presentation:

- **The Start on Success Program** is a four year transition program for students with learning disabilities; beginning the Freshman year of High School. Classroom instruction is linked with community experiences that include a mentorship, a service learning project, a college decision making class at a local university, and a two-year paid internship with colleges/universities and hospitals in the area.

- **C.I.T.Y. Connections** is a community-based functional program for students with moderate to severe disabilities, aged 18-21, who have completed four years of high school. Their education continues in a community site, such as a home or a college classroom, rather than a high school building. The primary focus is on employment, agency linkages, independent travel, friendships, finances, and community participation.