Re-conceptualizing Underachievement

Underachievement: "The child does not achieve adequately for the child's age or to meet State-approved grade-level standards..."

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*Let's spend some time with the standards before we visit underachievement in context of special education eligibility

Before we visit eligibility

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*Unpacking the Standards and IEPs
*Emphasis on progress
*Grading of sped students

If meeting standards is the new bar

*The mastery of Common Core standards must represent the long-term goal for special education students as represented on their IEPs.

* *U.S. Dep't of Education 71 Federal Register, pg. 46,653*

* *Mastery of standards requires access to standards!*

*It's all about standards

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*IDEIA 04 states that students with disabilities must have **access to the general education curriculum** (content standards).

*Measuring progress to standard

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*1976 – Attend the same school as general education peers

*1997 – Included within the general education environment

*2004 – Students must be involved in and make progress in general education curriculum as tested by state assessments

*What does Access mean?

*In the guidance paper, we identify the literacy standards realizing that there are modifications made for different grade levels

*Literacy Standards

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*Key Ideas and Details
*Craft and Structure
*Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
*Range of Reading/Text Complexity
*Print Concepts
*Phonological Awareness
*Phonics and Word Recognition
*Fluency

*Literacy Standards

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*Example literacy standard:
*Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visual and quantitative, as well as in words.

*Unpacking a standard

*Understand literary devices such as simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia, alliteration

*Same standard- 3rd grade

*Each standard exists from elementary school through high school-just updated based on expected increases in achievement and maturity

*Same standard- different grade

*Our job in assessment and IEP development is to assess where on the standard continuum, is the student

*Unpacking standards

*By definition, sped kiddos are not at standard. And pretty much by definition, they aren't going to reach standard this year.

*Its all about progress

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*What is a logical grade for a sped student?

*Standards-based grading assumes that standards will be reached this year and that the grade represents to what degree standards are mastered

*The illogic of standards-based grading with respect to sped students

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*If standard is not going to be met due to where student is starting out, then mastery of standard should not be the criteria for a successful grade. It must be progress to standard

*It's all about standards

*IEPs are written with progress monitoring in mind;

  *Student's ORF will increase from 80cwpm to 100
  *Student's ability to answer inferential comprehension questions on 4th grade passage will go from 50-80%

  ***Our job is to make sure that the progress is to standard and that the grading reflects progress**

*Measuring progress to standard

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*The above set of slides that focus on standards apply to students already with an IEP. We are here today to focus on the student who is being considered for special education as SLD.

*But what about eligibility?

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*WSASP position- the SLD student is one who has not made adequate progress toward standard (underachievement) and despite the implementation of focused, even individualized intensive research-based intervention, is not on a trajectory that will get him(her) to standard in the near future(RTI)

*PSW provides a framework for understanding and communicating why a student has been unable to make the necessary progress

*SLD in the new WSASP position paper

*From current OSPI SLD guide (Dec 2011 pp.4) with respect to assessment of CLD populations:
  *An analysis of the pattern of scores (strengths and weaknesses) combined with RTI data over time may provide better information in cases where overall scores lack reliability and validity.
*We believe this to be the best approach for ALL referrals and all re-evaluations

*Our position for ALL students suspected of having a specific learning disability

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*Data sources to document underachievement
  *Norm-referenced tests (e.g. WIAT; WJ; KTEA)
  *State Assessments
  *Classroom-based Common Core Assessments
  *Grades
  *Universal Screening Data
  *Observation

*We believe

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*Issues surrounding grade equivalents
*Issues surrounding percentiles
*Issues surrounding sampling and cultural bias
*Of standard scores, standard errors and discrepancy tables

*Norm-referenced assessment: deeper issues

*The grade equivalent in a norm-referenced test represents a score typically earned by students of that particular grade.

*A G.E. of 6.5 indicates that this score is typical of students midway through 6th grade.

*It does not imply that the testee can solve a single problem of mid 6th grade difficulty

*Lets talk about Grade Equivalents

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*A HS student reads HS passages but only answers the literal comprehension questions. Their raw score- their gr. eq._____

*A 6th grader writes a passage with poor conventions such as punctuation. Their gr. eq._____

  *Do you want to be be one to tell parents that their child is performing equivalent to that of a _____?

*The grade equivalency trap

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*When a 4th grader is two grades deficit, we worry and we are prepared to jump in with supports, but when a 10th grader is two grade levels deficit, nobody jumps

*A 10th grader reading at 8th grade level is well within average range but it sounds terrible to a parent or teacher

*How far behind grade level is significant?

* A real problem: our society is used to thinking of 80-90% as being good; less than 60%-failing.
* On our standardized tests, 50% is average with avg. range being more 25%-75%
* Outside clinicians/evaluators often speak of 45% as 'below average' alerting parents

*Let's talk percentiles

* The issue is that we, as a society, have trouble distinguishing Percent, from Percentile. 60 % achievement is bad; achievement that reaches the 60th%ile is good.

*The issue?

* Toppenish: 92% Latino/Amer. Indian
* To what extent is the WIAT;WJ;KTEA appropriate for a student from Toppenish?
* Normed on the 2010 census data. There will be 1% Am.Indian in the norm sample and table
* Does this mean that the test is appropriate for your population?

*Let's talk sampling and cultural bias

*When assessment sampling is conducted, the census is matched precisely, but only in a broad sense.

*The US is divided into major regions (North, East, South, Midwest, West) and Alaskan/Native

*the rest of the world-even broader (Asian, Europeans, Pacific Islanders; Hispanic)

*What constitutes an adequate sample?

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*While there might be an appropriate number of data points in the sample, there is no evidence that the test you are using is appropriate for the student in front of you

*The consequence

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*Given: Every score has a confidence interval dependent on standard error of measurement

*Tendency to use the Std error card if our data doesn't match our perceptions and there is no severe discrepancy

*We can't

*Of standard scores, standard error and discrepancy

*Current SLD discrepancy regression tables take into account the standard error of measurement.

*Instead of one standard deviation separation, its one standard deviation + std. error of measurement. 100/82 instead of 100/85.

*Miss by one, miss by a mile

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*For all norm-referenced tests, we are defining significant underachievement as a standard score of <=81, which translates to the 10%ile

*Resolves issue of "within average range of achievement considered significant underachievement due to high average FSIQ"

* If no discrepancy, define underachievement

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*Current: professional judgment to be used, "If the evaluation group determines that the full scale score or overall composite score does not accurately reflect the student's intellectual ability, then a data-based professional judgment must be made regarding the existence of severe discrepancy…"

*Professional Judgment

*Recommended: collecting and incorporating data from multiple sources such as transcripts, observations, other testing- but this only refers to the perceived inadequacy of the full-scale score to reflect cognitive functioning.

*No mention of academic achievement scores being inadequate estimations

*Professional Judgment

*Every eligibility decision is to be a professional judgment based on input from multiple sources, with analysis of the results of systematic intervention efforts, and supported by a cognitive (and academic) pattern of strengths and weaknesses that reflect the suspected disability.

*WSASP position

*Standard error
*Inter-test reliability
*How close is close?

*State assessments: deeper issues

*We tend to compare WASL to MSP without much regard to differences. Next year- SBAC

    SBAC will have computer and classroom assessment input. Linked to national common core in literacy and math

*Can we track at all?

*For individual score- +/- 3
*For school- dependent on size of school but could be quite large
  *Typical elementary- 300- +/- 5
  *Typical secondary- 1000- +/- 2.8

*Standard error of the MSP/HSPE

*Washington state results (2012-13)
*Reading
  *3rd-6th gr stable
  *significant drop 7th and 8th then big gain
*Math
  *significant drops in 6th and 8th grade then gain
*You can't use one years results to predict outcome of next year's results

*Let's talk inter-year reliability

*While the reliability is suspect, reviewing past performance can be beneficial

*If standards met earlier in educational career- SLD, really?

*Sudden drop in MSP might be more a reflection in change in learning environment than SLD

*Value of studying trends

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*WSASP views scores in level 1 of the MSP as indicative of a significant underachievement (lowest 10%ile).

*Approximately 8-9% of students 2011 MSP were in level 1

*Do not use "met or unmet standard" as the criteria- standard error interferes

*Significant underachievement

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*Classroom-based assessments-more closely linked to EALRs and recognize the characteristics of quality work that define good performance in each content area.

*Classroom-based common core assessment data

*Provide data for which state-level assessment is not feasible – oral presentations and group discussion, for example.

*Classroom-based assessment data

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*Classroom-based assessments-
  *Evidence of learning related to the EALRs.
  *Sensitive to developmental needs
  *Flexibility for learning styles of children with special needs

*Classroom-based assessment data

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*Data from oral interviews, presentations, experiments and projects, or exhibits of student work collected over a week, a month, or the entire school year.
*Thus can represent more than a snapshot-very valuable info

*Classroom-based assessment data

Slide 1

*Teachers feel like they are truly contributing to the eligibility decision, not just completing a questionnaire or crossing fingers that there is a significant discrepancy

*Strength

Slide 2

*Tendency to use class as frame of reference rather than objective criteria such as MSP.

*Tendency to be 'overly-helpful' to students on IEP-bend over backwards less predictive of MSP etc.

*limitations

Slide 3

*Number one source of referral

*Least valid of all data sources

*Non-standards based (include attendance, assignment completion behavior, extra credit, class participation, effort, even dress)

*Often a function of interaction between student and teacher (learning environment)

*Little reliability between years

*Grades

2/24/2014

*Psychs sometimes do not attend referral meetings-who then keeps grades in perspective and directs collection of data from multiple sources?

*Grades as source of referral

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*Most if not all WA districts use some type of universal screening in reading

*Re-test in a week or two to validate result

*The screening results should trigger intervention not referral

*Referral comes from progress monitoring

*Universal Screening as a source of referral

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*Screening identifies students At-Risk

*Screening hopefully prevents students from falling through cracks by over-identifying

*Screening can be used more globally to evaluate a class, grade level or even a school-wide intervention

*Strengths of screening

Districts/schools begin to use them as the criterion for sped referral

Teams use them as progress monitors since they are given three times per year

How appropriate is the screener for ELL students?

*Limitations of universal screening

WSASP recommendation: if a student is not in the "red zone" or lowest 10%ile, they are probably not underachieving to the point of disability

*Performance of SLD students on universal screeners

Strengths
- Identification of most at-risk
- Resource allocation

Limitations
- Who is your frame of reference?
- False positives and false negatives

*Local Norms

* Ysseldyke and Christenson (2000)
* Instead of 20-30 minute passive observation
* A set of in depth interviews and observations designed to assess the learning environment of the student
    * Interview the teacher, parent, and student as to what the problem is
    * Observe the student in several settings
    * Basically an FBA for academic struggle

* The functional observation (FAAB)

* WSASP advocating for professional judgment, ALL OF THE TIME
* Data is not to come from one source, the norm-referenced test, but rather from multiple sources- all valued
* Criteria for underachievement for all sources:<10%ile
* Data from EVERY source requires team discussion (analysis and interpretation)

* Summing it up

* **What if the data from our five sources are inconsistent? Should one source have more weight than another?**
* **Expect inconsistency-our test's reliability and validity are not perfect. Team must discuss the value of each piece of data**

* Frequently Asked Questions

*How flexible is the criterion of 81 on a norm-referenced test in determining significant

   underachievement?

*It is not our intent to replace the severe discrepancy table with another strict cut-score table. We are encouraging teams to think and talk about data. 81 is a guideline that represents the lowest 10%ile

*Frequently Asked Questions

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*Do we need to be monitoring progress more than three times per year (when universal screening is conducted)?

*Universal screening is not the process that leads to either special education referral or eligibility. It should lead to intervention. Progress monitoring leads to referral and contributes to eligibility decision

*Frequently asked Questions

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*Is a significant deficit in the area of Reading Fluency sufficient for an area of underachievement?

*It is according to IDEIA '04 and WAC- It should be considered, as fluency represents the best single predictor of overall reading. Remember that it consists of:

   *Reading speed
   *Reading accuracy
   *Prosody

*Frequently asked Questions

*Hopefully we have supported the positions that:

* More than one source of data should be considered when determining underachievement

* Achievement levels should be in the lowest 10th%ile to be considered characteristic of disability

* MDT professional judgment is the rule, not the exception as multiple data sources are considered

* Every source has 'deep' issues that need to be understood as the data from that source is considered

* Its all about progress toward standards

*In closing