



Northeastern States NCLB/IDEA Invitational State Leadership Forum

*Joining Forces: High Achievement
For Each and Every Student*

September 27-28, 2005

**Springfield Sheraton Monarch Center
Springfield, Massachusetts**

Proceedings Document

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NCLB/IDEA Forum Proceedings Document

Executive Summary

The purpose of this document is to twofold: First, it serves to summarize and record the content and comments from the presentations and breakout sessions during the Northeastern States NCLB/IDEA Invitational State Leadership Forum: *Joining Forces: High Achievement For Each and Every Student*, September 27-28, 2005. Secondly, we hope to capture the spirit of the event, along with the passion and commitment of the presenters and participants.

The forum brought together state leaders from general and special education to focus on how to improve results for all students, with a particular focus on students with disabilities. Keynote presentations were made by leaders from general and special education perspectives. Topical breakout sessions gave participants the opportunity to delve more deeply into specific issues. Presentations were made by schools that have demonstrated that they know how to do “what works” to bring all students to high standards. State team planning time provided an opportunity for interstate general and special education collaboration.

Goal and Purposes of the Forum

This State Leadership Forum was intended to provide state leaders and policy makers with the opportunity to:

- Explore, in depth, possibilities for real “break the mold” collaboration across states
- Learn about “what works” in specific school districts throughout the region that are meeting AYP for all students
- Share and develop state and local strategies for addressing AYP and improving results for students with disabilities
- Explore the impact that NCLB and IDEA 2004 will have on service delivery, management, and policy in general and special education
- Share approaches to communicating with the public and the press regarding results of state and local accountability systems
- Access regional and national technical assistance resources

It is our hope that this NCLB/IDEA State Leadership Forum will be the first in an ongoing series of collaborative events in the Northeast, co-sponsored and hosted by our technical assistance partners and state and local leadership organizations.

Introduction

The Northeast Regional Resource Center (NERRC) recently hosted a regional invitational state leadership forum, focusing on No Child Left Behind and the IDEA: *Joining Forces: High Achievement for Each and Every Student*. The forum was held September 27-28, 2005 at the Springfield Sheraton Monarch Center in Springfield, Massachusetts. Co-sponsored by all of the major federally funded technical assistance providers from the Northeast and a number of OSEP-funded national specialty technical assistance centers, the forum provided a starting point for dialogue on how to meet the challenges of NCLB and IDEA: high achievement for all students, with a special focus on students with disabilities. Co-sponsors included: The Access Center: Improving Outcomes for All Students K-8; Brooklyn College, City University of New York; the Education Alliance at Brown University; the IDEA Partnership at NASDSE; Learning Innovations at WestEd; the New England Comprehensive Assistance Center (NECAC) at EDC; the New York University Equity Assistance Center; the Northeast and the Islands Regional Technology in Education Consortium (NEIRTEC); the Region 1 Parent Technical Assistance Center@SPAN; and the Rhode Island Technical Assistance Program (RITAP).

Impetus for the forum came from the growing concern that many schools targeted for improvement under NCLB are failing to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) due to the subgroup of students with disabilities. The forum was an opportunity for state policymakers, leaders of state organizations, and parent organizations to come together to consider how to use their leadership positions and influence to leverage the power of NCLB and IDEA to make a difference in what happens in schools and in the outcomes for all of our children; including and especially those children who are most at risk of being left behind in our society.

Critical issues on the agenda included possibilities for “break the mold” collaboration across states, “what works” in schools that are meeting AYP for all students, and state and local strategies for addressing AYP.

Other issues included the impact that NCLB and IDEA 2004 will have on service delivery and program management in general and special education, approaches to communicating results of state and local accountability systems, and regional and national technical assistance resources.

Over one hundred people attended the forum, representing general and special education perspectives from the eight Northeastern states, including Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The conference featured three keynote speakers: Nicholas Donahue, “Special Master” for the Rhode Island Department of Education and former Commissioner of Education for New Hampshire; Lawrence C. Gloeckler, Executive Director of the Special Education Institute at the International Center for Leadership in Education; and Ray McNulty, Senior Consultant for the International Center for Leadership in Education.

Participants at the event were invited because of the potential that they, as individuals and as representatives of state organizations, represent for change, for new ways of thinking and for improving the performance of each and every one of our children. Each of the invitees can influence the thinking and actions of others in their respective states. They have the power to shape state policy, local implementation, parent understanding and participation, and public knowledge and opinion.

The forum was an invitation to join together to problem-solve and support one another in determining how to take advantage of the opportunity presented by the No Child Left Behind Act and IDEA 2004 to leverage change, support improved performance, and ensure accountability for the education of all children, especially those children who are most at risk of being left behind.

Background and Objectives

States and local school districts are struggling with the implementation of NCLB, particularly with regard to the inclusion of students with disabilities in state accountability systems. Many schools that do not meet AYP requirements in their state are designated as schools “in need of improvement” due to the subgroup of students with disabilities. As state leaders, educators, and parents, we need to develop collaborative strategies to increase student achievement and to ensure that each and every child has access to a high quality education through accurate and inclusive assessment, high-quality instruction, and full inclusion in our school communities.

This State Leadership Forum was designed to provide state leaders and policy makers with the opportunity to:

- Explore, in depth, possibilities for real “break the mold” collaboration across states.
- Learn about “what works” in specific school districts throughout the region that are meeting AYP for all students
- Share and develop state and local strategies for addressing AYP and improving results for students with disabilities
- Explore the impact that NCLB and IDEA 2004 will have on service delivery, management, and policy in general and special education
- Share approaches to communicating with the public and the press regarding results of state and local accountability systems
- Access regional and national technical assistance resources

Summary of Presentations

Opening Keynote Address: Nicholas Donahue, “Special Master,” RI Department of Education, for Providence, RI and Former Commissioner of Education, State of NH

Nick Donohue, former Commissioner of Education for the State of New Hampshire, now “Special Master” under contract with the Rhode Island Department of Education to support school improvement efforts in Hope High School in Providence, RI, opened the forum with a call to action from the participants. Nick noted that we are in a “new day” of accountability under NCLB that is having “seismic repercussions” across states and school districts. While some approached NCLB with a “wait it out and it will pass” attitude, others adopted a “herd” mentality and went along for the ride, not really sure where we were headed but in support of the final destination, nevertheless. As a status check, where are we in NCLB implementation? Nick pointed to the following highlights:

- IDEA and NCLB are maturing
- There has been an impact on every school
- We are experiencing fights about money
- Performance is improving.

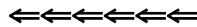
Further, Nick pointed out that we have had some successes but still face challenges:

- How can we keep the focus on core subject areas....without losing the rest (of the curriculum)?
- How can we maintain higher standards...but measure them in a multiple of ways?
- How can we improve performance of all “subgroups”...without leaving any behind?
- How can we impose consequences...that make things better?
- How can we provide assistance...that is sustained and effective?

Nick used Hope High School in Providence, Rhode Island as an example of a school on the road to improvement. Five-year goals included increasing the attendance, graduation, and proficiency rates, decreasing the dropout and suspension rates, and making sure that students are ready (*really* ready) for higher education. “Steps toward Hope” include a focus on performance and literacy, personalization, professionalism, small and thematic units, treating parents and community members as partners not guests, and a focus on student needs and interests.

Finally, Nick challenged concerns about reaching proficiency under NCLB but asserted that proficiency is not good enough! We have moved from a focus on *some* of the students, to *all*, but we need to be concerned about *each and every one*...now! He encouraged participants to consider new ways of thinking about education:

- Give more to fewer.
- Tell the truth and make people mad.
- Redefine “proficiency” at much higher levels.
- Get “real” and get out of the building.
- Acknowledge the huge need for improvement at all levels.
- Fight against racism, classism, and ageism...fiercely.
- Fight for preschool...at almost any cost.



Plenary Session: Special Education/General Education Collaboration.

Larry Gloeckler, Executive Director, Special Education Institute, International Center for Leadership in Education

Raymond McNulty, Executive Director, Successful Practices Network, International Center for Leadership in Education

Larry Gloeckler and Ray McNulty presented as a team, modeling the collaboration between general and special educators that we hope to increasingly experience at the federal, state, and local level. Prior to joining the International Center for Leadership in Education, Larry had been the long term Deputy Commissioner for Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) for the New York State Education Department. Ray had been the Commissioner of Education for Vermont and most recently a consultant for the Gates Foundation. Together, Gloeckler and McNulty represented a dynamic duo of perspectives that challenged participants to think “outside the box” and to take the opportunity offered by NCLB and IDEA to do things differently.

Special Education Perspective

Larry Gloeckler’s message was straightforward: NCLB and AYP have put the spotlight on subgroup performance. The subgroup that most people are struggling with is students with disabilities. We can take two approaches in dealing with this. We can complain and say it is unfair and unrealistic to expect these students to achieve standards or we can look at the data, realize that no matter what difficulty we are having with NCLB policies, the fact is that the performance of these students is dismal, and begin to develop strategies to change that. When you look at who is “in” special education today, the low performance does not match the potential of the students. We also know that where states and districts have begun to attack the reasons for low performance, they are making gains. Larry shared strategies states and districts are using that *are* making a difference and pointed out results that provide evidence that substantial improvements in performance of students with disabilities is possible.

To help participants think differently about the subgroup of students with disabilities, Larry presented data showing the percentages of students within specific disability categories. The data indicate that few students are identified as those with severe cognitive disabilities. He then posed the questions: Who are we talking about? and Have we lost focus? Since the percentages of students with severe cognitive disabilities is minimal, then shouldn’t we see improved performance? Do low expectations permeate society in general? Consider for instance, employment data indicating that the unemployment rate for persons with disabilities is at 60% and only 5% of persons with disabilities own homes.

What do we know about the subgroup of students with disabilities?

- Most students with disabilities are not significantly cognitively disabled.
- A disproportionate number are minority students, and they are more separated from their non-disabled peers.
- Wide variation in results for students with disabilities occurs in the country.
- Students with disabilities are making real progress in the elementary years.
- Students with disabilities in the cities are significantly behind their counterparts in districts with greater resources.

NCLB/IDEA: Larry showed participants how NCLB and IDEA relate. The core messages of both statutes are essentially the same:

- All students must progress
- Special Education and General Education are interrelated and interdependent
- Personnel preparation is instrumental in improving the performance of all students, including students with disabilities
- Subject matter preparation is a critical element in achieving outcomes

He also emphasized NCLB's emphasis on data, disaggregated data for each subgroup of students, and IDEA's alignment with NCLB in the areas of personnel qualifications for highly qualified special education teachers in core subject areas. IDEA 2004 has moved us from a culture of process to one that is more results oriented; highly qualified teachers is a critical element for success; the focus of monitoring is on the areas most closely related to results.

Larry called our attention to the significant achievement gaps that persist between students with disabilities and their nondisabled peers and pointed out that these gaps result in differential experiences and outcomes for adults with disabilities who have lower rates of labor force activity, more restricted choice of occupations, are less likely to work full-time and less likely to work in higher-paid jobs.

General Education Perspective

Three Key Ideas about Systems

- The quality of a system is determined by the quality of the relationships within it, (Bonstingl).
- Systems fail their people, long before people fail within their systems, (Bonstingl).
- Don't fix blame. Fix the system. That's where your problems are, (Deming).

Predictions of Developing Trends in Education

- Accountability and the Achievement Gap: Pressure for accountability in education and closing the achievement gaps among students will continue to increase.
- Changing Perceptions about Outcomes: We need to work toward changing the expectations of educators, parents, community members, and students regarding what is possible.
- Increased Expectations: The growing need for personalization and customization will influence not only the way business is conducted but also how schools will function.

Ray counseled participants by describing, from his experience and research, how highly successful schools are making a difference for children and families.

Ten Key Research Components of Successful Schools

- Create a culture
- Use data
- Set high expectations
- Create a framework
- Use real-world applications
- Provide multiple pathways
- Provide professional development
- Encourage parent and community involvement
- Provide a safe and orderly school environment
- Focus on leadership development

Ray shared some of his experiences with schools that are struggling to improve achievement for students with disabilities.

Common Issues in Struggling Schools

- Classification rates that are too high
- Expectations that are too low
- Ineffective prereferral interventions
- Struggling with behavior
- Struggling with achievement gaps
- High dropout and low graduation rates
- Access to general education curriculum
- Staff development is uneven

What are successful districts doing?

- Strategic plans – not shelf ornaments
- Culture of high expectations
- Prereferral interventions that work
- Staff development that is continuous
- Providing access to the curriculum
- Special educators are part of the team
- Data driven systems including ease of use
- Positive school climate

Ray closed by challenging participants to do things differently! There are tremendous challenges, but there are solutions as evidenced by data. “Create a culture that embraces the belief that all students need a rigorous and relevant curriculum and all children can learn,” guided by the following principles: *All* students are part of the general education system and all students require instruction that is guaranteed, viable, rigorous, and relevant. *Some* may require additional support and instruction based on their abilities.

Concurrent Breakout Sessions

Following the Gloeckler/McNulty Keynote, participants were divided into two large groups representing general and special education. Participants were arbitrarily assigned based on their roles or positions as described in their registration information. This resulted in cross-state and cross-role groupings each including state, local and parent participants. Within each large group, participants were subdivided into state, local, and parent/community small groups. The groups participated in a facilitated generation of issues and strategies, each from their respective points of view. Larry and Ray were “observers” in each session, recording their impressions of the participants' discussion. Following the breakouts, Larry and Ray shared their observations with the large group.

Each breakout group was asked to respond to the following:

Given the presentations that we have just heard and the knowledge and experience that we each bring:

1. What are the issues that need to be addressed if we are to provide a quality education that results in high achievement for each and every student?
2. What needs to change?
3. What are some actionable strategies that we could implement?

Each group was asked to present their flip chart suggestions for issues, changes, and strategies. See Appendix D for a verbatim listing of the issues, changes, and actionable strategies at the state, local, and parent/community levels that were generated by small groups.

Observations & Reflections

Larry and Ray wrapped up the afternoon by sharing their observations of our discussions, issues, changes, and suggested strategies. Were there similarities or differences in terms of what general educators are concerned about compared to special educators? Were we putting our emphasis too much in one area and not enough in another? What were Larry's and Ray's recommendations for what we need to think about as we move forward together to improve educational opportunities and improve results for all students in the Northeast?

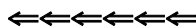
Based on their observations, both presenters commented that most groups did not really get to "thinking outside the box" and encouraged us to take more risks. The State Education Agency (SEA) needs to become a facilitator rather than a regulator of change at the local level. It is important to broker relationships with partnering agencies at the district and school level. For example, to redefine teacher certification requirements, SEAs need to form partnerships with Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs). They need to facilitate the flow of stakeholder input into practices and encourage interchange between local and SEA staff. Most of the issues raised by both of the general and special education groups could be collapsed into broad categories that relate to what we really want to see happen: access to high-quality content for all children. We need to stay focused on the expectation and fundamental belief that all children can learn. Compliance with the law is one issue, but that is not the same as raising the achievement level of the child. We need to build support structures around the child. This is a leadership issue, not a funding issue. Systemic reform must start within the school building, moving to a data driven decision-making system – within the building itself. Get everyone on board with consensus around the ultimate goal: that every child can learn. We want to change communication so that everybody who is involved understands the necessity for accessing high quality content for all kids; currently this is communicated more as a mandate than a belief. You have to believe it!

Suggested Strategies

- SEA needs to communicate the belief that all kids can learn to high standards.
- SEA needs to communicate this to all, including community and business leaders.
- SEA needs to revise standards for teacher preparation.
- IHEs need to model research-to-practice and incorporate research into their practice in training teachers.
- School districts need access to IHEs for professional development for currently employed teachers.
- SEAs and school districts need to improve curriculum and instruction models, through a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach.
- SEAs should promote and reward co-teaching and make good use of mentoring and coaching.
- Consider working with parents of students with disabilities to mentor teachers.

Concluding Comments

The keynote presenters encouraged us to create transparency in the system. Ray commented, "That means talking about things that are difficult, and it is emotional. Data may show us that the system that we love so dearly has some real problems. We need to separate our passion for our profession and the system.... We need to establish a fundamental belief that all children can learn – any time, anywhere." Larry challenged us to come back next year and say that we are "educating ALL kids" but NOT feel that we needed to add "...including students with disabilities."



Topical Breakout Sessions

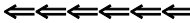
The A-LIST of Achieving Adequate Yearly Progress: Assumptions, Applying Research, and Actual School Stories

Melissa Storm, ACCESS Center, Judy Saccardo, Rhode Island College/RIDE and Vicki Hornus, NERRC

This session addressed assumptions that may get in the way of student progress and school improvement efforts, examined effective research-based practices that result in improved performance for all students, and highlighted local schools that are meeting the AYP challenge. Participants had the opportunity to reflect upon past practices and to share strategies that have resulted in improved performance for all students through collaboration across general and special education.

A way to think about teaching and learning for students with disabilities

Less of a focus on.....	More of a focus on
Student disability/deficit	System responsibility and responsiveness
Weaknesses	Strengths
Identifying levels of ability	Figuring out how everyone can learn
One size fits all	Individual differences, learning styles, multiple intelligences, interests
Learning a specific topic and performing on a point in time test	Continuous and ongoing improvement and assessment
Learning what is taught	Teaching so all learn
How teachers teach	How students learn
Ability and Disability	Progress and achievement, learning by all
Student responsible for inability to learn	Teacher responsible for student learning



Communication with the Public and the Media

Max McConkey, WestEd
Larry Gloeckler, International Center for Leadership in Education
Jane Nesbitt, Learning Innovations at WestEd

This session addressed the importance of accurate communication of data, information, progress and challenges to the public and the media. Presenters focused on both general communication with the press and a specific example of a tool that New York State used over a period of years to inform the media about the achievement of student with disabilities. Participants had the opportunity to explore public communication issues, enhance their understanding of the role of the press, learn about building relationships with the press and how to maximize their chances for effectiveness and accuracy through public communication. Participants also had the opportunity to exchange insights, tips and real stories from their own experience.

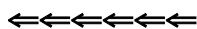
From his perspective as a former State Director of Special Education, Larry Gloeckler shared strategies for communicating with the public and the press in order to gain public support for the potential of students with disabilities to perform at higher levels and the value of supporting quality instructional programs for students with disabilities. Ideas were shared on how to use data to inform public opinion as well as the thinking of policy makers. Real examples were given contrasting the media's focus on the cost of special education in the mid 90's compared to a focus in the past few years on increasing educational performance of students with disabilities. Educational leaders need to improve their skills at using data to support good public policy and see as an important role that of educating the public and the media as to the successes of educational programs.

Larry presented strategies for working with the press and communicating with the public that he used in New York State during his tenure as the Deputy Commissioner for Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID). He explained how the quality and tone of newspaper reports on the achievement of students with disabilities changed over a four-year period. Initially the headlines were dire and relayed mostly bad news about the

achievement of students with disabilities. NY used the document, *A Pocketbook of Goals and Results*, to explain simply and directly the annual statewide progress data relative to several key performance indicators. Over time, through communication of a consistent message and the use of the *Pocketbook* as a reporting and communication tool, the press began to report on substantive information that highlighted both successes and ongoing challenges. Larry noted that it is important to use jargon-free language and display the data so that it is understandable to the general public. He also advised that being available to the press after an important press release or press conference was critical to being able to get the message out.

As an example of the changing landscape of public opinion, Larry offered the following quote from a Superintendent of Schools: "I have a *different* problem this year in dealing with the achievement gap in my district. The special needs students out performed the general education population on our state tests. We need to use the strategies that have helped improve results for our special needs students with our general education programs." Now that's progress!

To successfully work with the media, Max McConkey advised that educators "... need to mentor the new journalists." You can't "manage the message." Rather, he suggested that establishing relationships and maintaining mutual respect are both critically important. Communicating with the press must be a regular activity.



Disproportionality: Policies, Procedures, and Practices for Improved Outcomes

Joan Dawson, New York Equity Assistance Center
Pauline Bynoe, Brooklyn College, City University of New York
Charity Welch, NERRC

Presenters discussed the issue of disproportionality as impacted by NCLB/IDEA and AYP. Emphasis was placed on policies (IDEA/NCLB), crucial questions, implications for procedures and practices that may identify practical and behavioral components of disproportionality within the framework of a unified educational system. Participants had the opportunity to explore the role for higher education in preparing teachers to enable diverse students to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP).



Highly Qualified Teachers for Students with Disabilities in Special and General Education: Working at the Intersection of Policy, Practice and People

Joanne Cashman, IDEA Partnership Project
Karen Mikkelsen, NERRC

The "highly qualified teacher" provisions of NCLB and IDEA have generated much discussion and debate. This session examined "teacher quality" as an instrumental strategy in achieving better results for students and looked at the implications for special and general education service delivery. Participants learned about a dialogue strategy that promotes real understanding across groups and shared how states are addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by the highly qualified teacher provisions.

The most important core message of IDEA '97 was that all special education children are general education students first. NCLB has focused more attention on the relationship between general and special education, but has made us accountable. NCLB requires AYP and progress among disaggregated subgroups and the Highly Qualified Teacher requirement is a critical provision in how we're supposed to get there.

We need to be sure that our state systems are aligned to provide the highly qualified personnel that we need to meet the student accountability and highly qualified teacher requirements of NCLB and the IDEA. State Systems of personnel preparation and development include these components:

- Standards – What we want teachers to know and be able to do in the classroom.
- Program approval – What we want teacher preparation programs to do.

- Certification and Licensure – A process that encompasses the standards and considers the requirements for Highly Qualified Teachers.
- Re-licensure and Ongoing Professional Development – Which considers ongoing efforts to achieve excellence in teaching and provides opportunities to meet the Highly Qualified Teacher requirements.

The Center for Improving Teacher Quality (CTQ) is connecting states that have been monitored with those who haven't, to share information about the visits and give them an idea of what the U.S. Department of Education is looking for. The Center is working with 40 states and wants them to consider using the INTASC Model Standards for All Teachers of Students with Disabilities (www.ccsso.org/intasc). "If you prepare teachers to these standards, you will probably be able to serve most all students," advised Joanne Cashman, "But remember, certification does not equal highly qualified." We need to get networks of people working together. The Center will continue to promote conversation at national level.



Parental Involvement Round Table Discussion: Where Are We and Where Should We Be Headed?

Debra Jennings, Regional I Parent Technical Assistance Center @ SPANN-NJ
Pamela Kraynak, NERRC

Both NCLB and IDEA require meaningful parent involvement. The experience of families and results of research tell us that strong parent involvement impacts student achievement favorably. This session highlighted important trends in changing parent involvement and provided an opportunity for participant discussion about current parent involvement efforts. Participants generated action steps that they might take upon return to their states and districts.

Research: A strong research base on the validity of parent involvement documents the benefits of direct parent involvement. Effective methods of parent involvement need to be focused on improving achievement in any/all areas and should be designed to engage families in specific knowledge and skills (e.g. "back to school night"). They also need to make efforts to engage families from diverse backgrounds. Successful family engagement practices should: (1) focus on building trusting, collaborative relationships among teachers, families, and community members; (2) recognize, respect, and address families' needs, including class and cultural differences; and (3) embrace a philosophy of partnership where power and responsibility are shared.

NCLB Definition: Parental involvement is the participation of parents in regular, two-way, meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities (www.pta.org). Parents have the right to be informed of the content and quality of their children's education. IDEA/NCLB conceive of meaningful parent involvement on both the individual and statewide level.

Effective Parent Involvement Programs include activities addressed by the following six standards:

- Communicating
- Parenting
- Student Learning
- Volunteering
- School Decision Making and Advocacy
- Collaborating with Community—What are the assets that assist the school in making AYP?

Parent/Caregiver Involvement under IDEA

- Procedural safeguards, including an individual right of action, result in significant rights and responsibilities for parents of children with disabilities;
- Parent "involvement" including systems change/school improvement (SPP & APR/"broad stakeholder input") roles;
- PTIs and/or CPRCs have been funded in every state to educate and support individual parents as they access the system.

Similarities between NCLB and IDEA Parent Involvement Provisions

- Similar definitions of parent
- Emphasize participation in child's education (IDEA: IEP participation; NCLB: "meaningful participation" and "actively involved").

Differences

- IDEA: private right to sue
- NCLB: no private right of action

Types of Required Stakeholder Involvement under NCLB:

- "Develop jointly" and "agree with" written parent involvement policy
- LEAs required to assist schools in planning and implementing parent involvement
- LEAs required to build schools AND parents' capacity for "strong" parent involvement.
- Must pay particular attention to economically disadvantaged, disabled, LEP, etc.

At the local level, think about "What does parent involvement look like?"

- Do we have plans and policies for parent involvement? Are they effective?
- Capacity building for parents and educators: homework, conflict resolution skills, IEP meeting and team facilitation, and stakeholder involvement in decision-making.
- How can you craft and design parent involvement that is more inclusive?

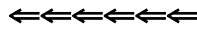
Participant Reactions/Comments:

- Seems that what we're really talking about is a very broad array of issues and activities defining parent involvement. The notion of when a parent is a partner with a school and then somehow emerges into a "stakeholder" is interesting. Before, the parent was seen as a "change agent" rather than "stakeholder." The parent's role, particularly with NCLB/IDEA, is more than stakeholder.
- What constitutes a stakeholder? IDEA/NCLB don't exist without parents—they're more than stakeholders—they are critical partners. There's a more active role for parents that isn't being acknowledged.
- Negative reaction to parents being defined as "stakeholders"—it's distancing.
- Biggest frustration is gap between paper and practice. Writing it is one thing, getting it to happen is another. What exists in terms of school surveys that involve parent participation? Where is your value in including parents in IEP meetings? Dropout rates? If the school's culture doesn't shift to welcoming and embracing parents, the implementation doesn't happen. I'm at the table, "but I don't know how to get them to listen to me. It's not a negotiated dialogue."
- Concerned about growth about the "stakeholder industry" in our state. It's always the same group. There are parents, but they're always the same parents. It's the PTI's charge to take action and go back and get the parents to the table. The state DOE has checked off their box as long as a parent is in attendance.
- Stakeholder design is very limited and not working.
- The states are all at different points, places, and levels of understanding. Participants aren't getting beyond needing to support teachers. Weren't able to look "outside of the box." Need to have a common understanding of where we need to go among the different stakeholders present at this meeting.
- There are different incentives/motives competing for resources. There is lack of trust between school districts and parents. Schools talk about what schools are doing "to" their children rather than "for" their children. Until we can pull apart the adversarial culture, it's hard to build trust and move forward. There are great financial and accountability issues that are not assisting the culture in becoming more trusting.

Discussion Groups: At the end of this session, participants formed discussion groups and addressed the following questions:

- What is going on in your state with respect to parent involvement under NCLB/IDEA?
- What's working?
- What are the challenges?
- Share some ideas of how people are working in their state and with their state in the area of parent involvement?

Resource for parent involvement and conflict prevention strategies:



Assessment Issues: Including Students with Disabilities in State Accountability Systems

Dan Wiener, Massachusetts Department of Education
Kristin Reedy, NERRC

How best to include students with disabilities in state accountability systems under NCLB continues to be a topic of concern to policy makers at the federal, state, and local level. This session reviewed issues as perceived by the field, current options for flexibility, and highlighted Massachusetts's approach to including all students.

Many constituents are concerned that the NCLB requirement for all students to reach proficiency is "unrealistic" and "unfair." Negative comments are being made about students with disabilities by the public and the press, targeting the special education subgroup as the reason that schools are not making AYP. NERRC surveyed Region 1 states to try to determine to what degree this was an issue. The following chart shows of the schools/districts in the state that did not make AYP, the percentage of those that did not meet AYP solely due to the subgroup of students with disabilities. There was wide variation across states. Some of the concerns that have been raised by experts from across the U.S. include:

- Conflict between goals of IDEA and NCLB: Individualized vs. Uniform content/standards
- Unrealistic to expect all students with disabilities to become proficient
- Flexibility needed to appropriately assess students with disabilities and include them in AYP determinations
- Some possible approaches:
 - Alternate assessments for "gap kids"
 - Separate starting points and growth trajectories
 - Growth models
 - Multiple assessment measures
 - Reconsider whether one set of content and achievement standards will be sufficient for ALL students

Region 1 AYP Data 2004

State	% Schools did not make AYP	Of those, % due only to SWD Subgroup
CT	18%	16.6%
ME	17%	79%
MA	27%	24%
NH	27%	89%
NJ	37%	15%
NY	64%	44%
RI	17%	24%
VT	19%	15%

The U.S. Department of Education has responded to these concerns with the provision of additional flexibility for states in terms of how to include students with disabilities in states' accountability systems:

- More flexibility for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students
- 1% flexibility for students with the “most significant cognitive disabilities”
- 2% flexibility for students with “persistent academic disabilities”
- Considering “growth models”
- Maintaining “safe harbor” provisions

Caution: Unintended Consequences of additional flexibility

- Lowered expectations
 - Students designated for lower-level tests
 - Less pressure/incentive to teach at high levels
- So far, few schools/districts benefit (AYP)
- Pressure to design new assessments
 - Time, resources, capacity, compelling rationale
- Difficult to limit to 2%, once modified assessments are in place
 - State can guide, but not limit IEP teams

The word from Massachusetts—Lessons Learned

- Virtually *all* students with significant cognitive disabilities have at least partial access to the general academic curriculum
- Most teachers:
 - Teach differently
 - Focus on modified learning standards
 - Write IEP goals that reflect this
 - Assess more effectively
 - Manage MCAS-Alt portfolios
 - Address measurable outcomes
 - Collect instructional data

Schools-That-Work

As we planned for the forum, we wanted to showcase schools or districts in the Northeast region (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont) that have a history of making AYP or meeting state standards for all students, including the subgroup of students with disabilities. We wanted to identify examples of real schools that can point to specific strategies that they used to successfully meet AYP and/or those schools that have been able to demonstrate significant changes or improvement, with a balance between rural/urban, high, middle, and elementary schools.

Specifically, we were seeking schools or school districts that:

- Met AYP or state standards for the subpopulation of students with disabilities
- Met AYP or state standards for other subgroups
- Demonstrated demographics that included:
 - High poverty rates
 - Average to above average rates of identification of students with disabilities (percentage of students on IEPs)
 - High rates of diversity
 - Average to above average rates of placement of students with disabilities in least restrictive settings
- Reflect a balance among rural/urban, high, middle, and elementary schools
- Were within the Northeast region (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont)

We requested nominations from Planning Team members and from State Directors of Special Education in the Region 1 states. Nominations were screened and two schools: Woodrow Wilson Elementary, Framingham, MA and West Babylon High School, West Babylon, NY were invited to present.



Promising Practices in Special Education in State Wide Assessment

**Steve Ellis, Senior Manager, and
Robert Gaudet, Senior Research Analyst, University of MA, Donahue Institute**

Joe Rappa, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Office for Educational Quality and Accountability

**Pamela Kaufmann, Special Education Director, and
Robin Welch, Principal of Woodrow Wilson School, Framingham, MA**

This presentation provided an overview of the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute’s “Study of MCAS Achievement and Promising Practices in Urban Special Education” and highlighted successful strategies at the Woodrow Wilson Elementary School, Framingham, MA. First, researchers at the Donahue Institute presented findings from a year-long study of MCAS achievement and promising practices in urban special education. The study found that while the scores of special education students lagged behind those of regular education students, some districts’ students with special needs performed better than their peers in demographically comparable districts. The study engaged educators from ten schools in five urban districts through a structured interview process. The products of this research included case studies of promising practices within each district and school, and a cross-case analysis that identified promising practices that were consistently observed across cases.

Among the schools whose students with special needs outperformed demographically similar schools was the Woodrow Wilson School in Framingham, Massachusetts. This community school serves Framingham’s poorest neighborhood, with substantial proportions of minority and LEP students. The school was historically perceived as under-performing, but in recent years, its students, including its students with special needs, have strongly over-performed against statistically predicted expectations on the grade 4 MCAS English Language Arts and Math exams.

The Woodrow Wilson principal, Robin Welch, has led the school a stunning turnaround, to the benefit of all students. He shared the story of his school’s success, which served to illustrate the promising practices highlighted through the research project.

Key Elements of Woodrow Wilson’s School Improvement Initiative

- Leadership
- Culture and Climate of the School
- Use of Data to Inform Decision-Making
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Professional Development
- Parent Involvement

Comment about this session: “Robin was a dynamic speaker. He restores our faith in Education!”



West Babylon-Making AYP at the High School Level

**Lisa Carelli-Lang, Director Student Services, and
Charles Larson, Chairperson, Sr. High, West Babylon Schools, NY**

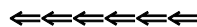
This session focused on school district data, strategies used to address the achievement gap, high school data, and special education supports for high school students, service offerings and outcomes, parental involvement, and future challenges. West Babylon is an independent, K-12, school district in Suffolk County, New York. The size of

the district is designated a “5” (Scale 1-6; 1 Small; 6 Large). West Babylon High School has demonstrated success in making AYP for students with disabilities and other subgroups under NCLB. The school was recognized as a higher performing/gap closing school under NCLB by the NY State Education Department. West Babylon is an inclusive school community with an overall special education child identification rate of 11.7% (average for NY State), with 56% of students with disabilities placed in the general education classroom for 80-100% of their school day and 95.6% of students receiving services in general education buildings. Twenty-eight percent of students with disabilities graduated with a Regents Diploma 2003-04 compared to 69% of all students. The school has demonstrated substantial improvement in achievement for students with disabilities over the past three years. For example, the percentage of students with disabilities who scored at the proficient level (scores from 55-100) on the Regents math exam went from 31% in 2002-03 to 82% in 2004-05.

Goal for each and every student: “Exiting ready to continue in the world.”

Strategies to address the achievement gap:

- Academic Intervention Services (AIS): Remedial Reading and Remedial Math
- Tutorials /Focused Tutorials
- Project Prepare: Prepares students who have not previously been successful on the 11th grade English Regents (some Saturdays and after school)
- Staff Development (Wilson, Differentiated Instruction, Writers Workshop)
- Individualized Student Programs
- Academic Center for students requiring extra help after school
- Academic Eligibility Policy for students who participate in HS sports
- Board of Education Policy, which states that a child who earns between 55-64 on the Regents and participates in some form of AIS can take the regents again. If they are not successful a second time, they earn RCT credit toward a local diploma.
- Attendance Policy: 15 unexcused (or 30 excused) absences and the student loses credit for the course. For *more* than 15 unexcused (or 30 excused) absences, the student may forfeit the option of attending summer school.
- Stakeholders review, analyze and report school district data to the Board of Education through a Continuous Improvement Report, three times per year.
- Through weekly Superintendent’s Management Council meetings and monthly Superintendent’s Management Team meetings, district data is discussed and best practices are encouraged. Expectations for stakeholders are clarified and monitored.



State Team Time

States had a brief, one-hour block of time to meet as state teams, followed by a report-out by the facilitators. States were asked to use the Participant Guide Matrix (Appendix B) and to review participants’ personal notes, ideas, and insights from the prior two days. After Round Robin Sharing of key insights, challenges, and ideas for actions at the state, local, or parent/community levels, groups looked for themes and prepared for a report back to the large group on one key insight, one key challenge, and one action step for which they have the “authorizing environment,” the will and the tools to make the change.

Summary of State Team Reports: (Taken from oral presentations made by facilitators)

Connecticut: Facilitator, Tom Hidalgo, NERRC

- ✓ Need to change expectations and belief systems.
- ✓ Thinking about putting together a presentation from the forum and taking it back to the state to inform new ways to do business.

Maine: Facilitator, Melissa Storm, ACCESS Center

- ✓ Need to determine who are the stakeholders and how can they be connected to and utilize use one another as resources?
- ✓ Committed to use of data.

Massachusetts: Facilitator, Charity Welch, NERRC

- ✓ Talked about the role of higher education.
- ✓ Have new teachers welcomed by other stakeholders in community.
- ✓ Discussed Joyce Epstein's work; what parent involvement should look like and developing policies around family involvement.

New Hampshire: Facilitator, Karen Mikkelsen, NERRC

- ✓ Participants came up with a list of items each person can commit to on a personal or professional level.
- ✓ Continue to use Joyce Epstein methods and support schools that are using it in addition to expanding its use.
- ✓ Issues related to Highly Qualified Teachers and IHE teacher prep were discussed.
- ✓ Concerns that there are no forums for dialogue prompted a personal pledge, at the state level, to set time aside at state level to discuss issues such as the start of a professional learning community.

New Jersey: Facilitator, Pat Mueller, NERRC

- ✓ Coming away from the conference pledging to "stop blaming."
- ✓ Set aside the positions that we all come from and work together.

New York: Facilitator, Lucy Ely Pagán, NERRC

- ✓ Be clear what each person is getting and giving through any partnership.
- ✓ Build new relationships among participants.
- ✓ NY focuses on outcomes.
- ✓ How to ensure meaningful stakeholder involvement before implementing policy?
- ✓ Policy decisions need to be carefully made to ensure there are no unintended consequences.

Rhode Island: Facilitator, Cheryl Williams, Learning Innovations at WestEd

- ✓ Acknowledged the diversity of participant role groups.
- ✓ Participants talked about "What can I do in my area to help bridge special and general education?"
- ✓ Current state structure divides more than unites these areas.
- ✓ No longer OK to point fingers and just say, "It's *their* problem."
- ✓ Look at special education as a service not a place.

Vermont: Facilitator, Pamela Kraynak, NERRC

- ✓ Discussed parent communication and how hard it is to communicate data sets, assessment approach, etc. in a way that makes sense to parents and those in the field.
- ✓ Participants knew one another so they are already on the verge of efforts that would help all students achieve and the pressure points for this movement are Grade Level Expectations (GLEs). GLEs combined with student progress monitoring will help the state make great progress.
- ✓ Unifying idea: Do student progress monitoring for all students.

Commonalities among State Team Reports

Cheryl Williams, Facilitator, summarized her impressions of state team reports

- Bridging in general as a theme
- Make connections between what happened at forum and what is real, necessary, and important in someone else's life.

Challenges Ahead

As we move forward in NCLB/IDEA implementation, there are a number of formidable challenges that schools, teachers, parents, states, and TA providers face to improve student results and close achievement gaps. Here are some of them:

School Districts

- How to make AYP for ALL subgroups?
- How to close achievement gaps?
- How to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers?
 - Core academic subjects
 - Specialty areas, e.g. special ed., ELL, etc.
- How to increase parent involvement?

Teachers

- How to meet the diverse needs of all students in the general education setting?
- How to collaborate with colleagues across general and special education to address diverse student needs?
- How to acquire the training, credentials, and professional development needed to meet NCLB's "highly qualified standards"?

State Departments of Education

- How to develop accountability and assessment systems that appropriately include all students?
- How to close achievement gaps?
- How to align systems of professional licensure, teacher preparation and professional development?
- How to support schools in need of improvement?

Parents

- How to make sense out of all the information?
- How to make good educational choices for their children?
- How to support and encourage their children to meet states' and schools' high standards?
- How to communicate with teachers and school administrators?

Implementation Challenges

- How to stay true to the goals of NCLB *and* IDEA while acknowledging the idiosyncratic nature of state contexts, resources, capacities and needs?
- How to provide adequate guidance, regulations, resources and TA in a timely and responsive manner?
- How to maintain political support for the statute(s)?
- How to strike the right balance between flexibility and responsiveness to states while maintaining the "bright line principles" of NCLB *and* IDEA on the other.

TA Providers

- How can TA providers model the general education/special education collaboration that we are urging states and school districts to adopt?
- How can we leverage our collective resources to more effectively support states?

Action Steps

Here are steps that we can take to further our mission of **increasing state capacity to improve results for each and every student**.

- Create opportunities for dialogue at the national, regional, state, school, and community levels.
- Make these opportunities participatory and interactive engaging diverse stakeholders in collaborative problem solving.
- Step outside our categorical boundaries, reach out to those who have different points of view but who have ideas to share and resources to contribute to jointly addressing our common responsibility: high quality education for each and every student.

Appendix A
Conference Agenda

**Northeast Region
NCLB/IDEA State Leadership Forum
Joining Forces: High Achievement
For Each and Every Student
September 27-28, 2005
Springfield Sheraton Monarch Center
Springfield, Massachusetts**

AGENDA

Goal and Purposes of Institute

This State Leadership Forum will provide state leaders and policy makers with the opportunity to:

- Explore, in depth, possibilities for real “break the mold” collaboration across states
- Learn about “what works” in specific school districts throughout the region that are meeting AYP for all students
- Share and develop state and local strategies for addressing AYP and improving results for students with disabilities
- Explore the impact that NCLB and IDEA 2004 will have on service delivery, management, and policy in general and special education
- Share approaches to communicating with the public and the press regarding results of state and local accountability systems
- Access regional and national technical assistance resources

Tuesday, September 27, 2005

10:00	Registration	Mahogany Foyer 2nd Floor
11:30	Luncheon and Opening Key Note Address: <i>Nicholas Donohue</i> <i>Commissioner of</i>	Mahogany Room 2nd Floor
	<i>“Special Master” for RI</i> <i>Department of Education; Former</i> <i>Education, State of NH</i>	
1:15	Plenary Session with Opening Keynotes: <i>Lawrence C. Gloeckler</i> <i>Ray McNulty</i>	Mahogany Room 2nd Floor
	<i>Executive Director of the</i> <i>Special Education Institute at</i> <i>the International Center for</i> <i>Leadership in Education,</i> <i>Rexford, NY</i> <i>Senior Consultant for the</i> <i>International Center for</i> <i>Leadership in Education,</i> <i>Rexford, NY</i>	
2:15	Break	
2:30	Concurrent Breakout Sessions: Break into facilitated discussion/reaction/dialogue groups led by Lawrence Gloeckler and Ray McNulty Lawrence Gloeckler	Charles Room 2nd Floor
	Breakout Session	

Presenters: - Pauline Bynoe, Brooklyn College
- Joan Dawson, NY Equity Assistance Center
- Charity Welch, NERRC

In this interactive session the presenters will discuss disproportionality as impacted by NCLB/IDEA and AYP. Emphasis will be on policies (IDEA/NCLB), crucial questions, implications for procedures and practices that may identify practical and behavioral components of disproportionality within the framework of a unified educational system. Participants will also explore the role of higher education in preparing teachers to enable diverse students to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP).

- **Highly Qualified Teachers for Students with Disabilities in Special and General Education: Working at the Intersection of Policy, Practice and People** Longford Room 3rd Floor

Presenters: - Joanne Cashman, IDEA Partnership Project
- Karen Mikkelsen, NERRC

The “highly qualified” provisions of NCLB and IDEA have generated much discussion and debate. In this session, we will: examine teacher quality as an instrumental strategy in achieving better results; look at the implications for special and general education service delivery; consider a dialogue that will promote real understanding across groups and learn how states are addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by the highly qualified provisions.

- **Parental Involvement Round Table Discussion: Where Are We and Where Should We Be Headed?** Stonehaven Room 2nd Floor

Presenters: - Debra Jennings, SPAN-NJ
- Pamela Kraynak, NERRC

Both NCLB and IDEA require meaningful parent involvement. The experience of families and results of research tell us that strong parent involvement favorably impacts student achievement. Debra Jennings, Executive Co-Director of the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network of NJ and an expert in both NCLB and IDEA, will note highlights of important trends in changing parent involvement and lead our participants in a discussion about their own efforts and what actions they might take upon return to their states and districts.

- **Assessment Issues and the New 2% Flexibility Under NCLB** Worthy Room 2nd Floor

Presenters: - Kristin Reedy, NERRC
- Daniel Wiener, Massachusetts, Department of Education

Review of statewide assessment and accountability issues as they pertain to students with disabilities, with particular focus on new requirements for counting students with disabilities for AYP (1% Rule and 2% Flexibility). The accountability model of one state, Massachusetts, will be examined in-depth, as well as the progress made by students in that state.

10:30 Break – Refreshments Mahogany Foyer 2nd Floor

11:00 Schools that Work Presentations – Two Concurrent Sessions

Woodrow Wilson Elementary School, MA

Charles Room 2nd Floor

• **Promising Practices in Special Education in State Wide Assessment**

- Presenters:*
- Steve Ellis, Senior Manager,
University of MA, Donahue Institute
 - Robert Gaudet, Senior Research Analyst,
University of MA, Donahue Institute
 - Joe Rappa, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Office for
Educational Quality and Accountability
 - Pamela Kaufmann, Special Education Director, Framingham, MA
 - Robin Welch, Principal of Woodrow Wilson School, Framingham, MA

Presentation will provide an overview of the UMAS Donahue Institute's "A Study of MCAS Achievement and Promising Practices in Urban Special Education."

West Babylon High School, NY

Worthy Room 2nd Floor

• **West Babylon-Making AYP at the High School Level**

- Presenters:*
- Lisa Carelli-Lang, Director Student Services
 - Charles Larson, Chairperson, Sr. High
West Babylon Schools, NY

The session will focus on school district data, strategies used to address the achievement gap, high school data, and special education supports for high school students, service offerings and outcomes, parental involvement, and future challenges.

12:30	Lunch	Mahogany Foyer 2nd Floor
1:30	Breakouts by States: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CT -- Worthy Room 2nd Floor• MA -- Mahogany Room 2nd Floor• ME -- Longford Room 3rd Floor• NH -- Suffolk Room 3rd Floor• NJ -- Waterford 3rd Floor• NY -- Stonehaven Room 2nd Floor• RI -- Mahogany Room 2nd Floor• VT -- Charles Room 2nd Floor	
2:30	Break - Refreshments	Mahogany Foyer 2nd Floor
2:45	Final Plenary Session <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report out from State Groups	Mahogany Room 2nd Floor
3:45	Evaluation and Wrap-up <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Closing comments, insights, and parting thoughts• TA resources available to states• Next steps	
4:00	Adjourn	

Appendix B
Participation Guide(s)

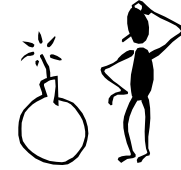
Session: _____

What are the issues?

What needs to change?

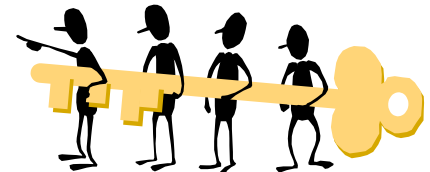
PARTICIPATION GUIDE

	STATE	LOCAL	PARENT/COMMUNITY
COMMUNICATION			
POLICY			
PRACTICE			
PERSONAL			



NCLB/IDEA State Leadership Forum State Dialogue Guide

1. Using the Participant Guide Matrix, silently review your personal notes, ideas, and insights from the past two days. (5 minutes)
2. Round Robin Sharing: What were your key insights, challenges, and ideas for actions at the state, local, or parent/community levels? (25 minutes; record on flip charts.)
3. Look for Themes: What themes have emerged from your Round Robin sharing of insights, challenges, and ideas for action? (10 minutes)
4. Prepare for Report-out (20 minutes): Using the Change Paradigm as a reminder, try to reach agreement on:
 - a. One key insight from your group
 - b. One key challenge
 - c. Optional (only if you are ready): One action step for which you have the “authorizing environment,” the will and the tools to make the change.
 - d. Who will represent the group to report-out?



NCLB/IDEA State Leadership Forum
Guiding Questions for the Breakout Sessions
Larry Gloeckler & Ray McNulty

Given the presentations that we have just heard and the knowledge and experience that we each bring:

1. What are the issues that need to be addressed if we are to provide a quality education that results in high achievement for each and every student?
 - State Level
 - Local Level
 - Parent/Community Level

2. What needs to change?
 - State Level
 - Local Level
 - Parent/Community Level

3. What are some actionable strategies that we could implement?
 - State Level
 - Local Level
 - Parent/Community Level

NCLB/IDEA State Leadership Forum
September 27
Larry Gloeckler (Charles Room) &
Ray McNulty (Worthy Room)
Breakout Sessions and Large Group Report Out
Suggested Process

Breakout Sessions 2:30-3:30

Each breakout will have about 50 participants. There will be a NERRC Facilitator/Moderator assigned to work with the presenters (Larry and Ray). The groups will be assigned in advance, based primarily on their roles (general ed. or special ed.) All groups will have SEA participants, some LEA participants, and a number of parent representatives. Each breakout session will have an LCD projector and laptop set up, and a flip chart. There will be a note takers and flip chart recorders assigned as well.

2:30-2:45: Review of what was just covered in the large group presentation- Larry or Ray. NERRC facilitator/moderator: Explain that this group is primarily either general ed. or special ed. in terms of the perspective that they bring to NCLB/IDEA implementation issues. Then explain the process that will be followed.

2:45-3:15

Divide the large group into three smaller groups:

- State Level
- Local Level
- Parent/Community Level

Ask each group to appoint a recorder and reporter. Ask them to address the three guiding questions, spending about seven minutes on each question, applying them to the “level” they have been assigned: State, Local, or Parent/Community. Facilitators should keep track of time and warn groups when about ten minutes are remaining so that they can prepare for the report out. See below. Larry and Ray should float between the groups, listening for issues and concerns that are raised but not participating in the group discussions. NERRC staff and Planning Team members should spread out across the groups.

3:15-3:30

Ask each of the three groups to report out to the large group. Each group should give one issue, one thing that needs to change and one strategy. Collect the notes from each group. Record the report outs on flip charts as well as on notes (laptop or hand written). So, the “product” would be three flip chart pages, one for the State Level, one for the Local Level, and one for the Parent/Community Level. Each page would list the issue, what needs to change, and the strategy. Be sure to label each flip chart page: State, Local, or Parent/Community and whether it is from Ray or Larry’s group. Bring these three pages back to the Highland Room.

Large Group Reconvenes 3:45-4:45

3:45-4:00: Larry and Ray each briefly summarize the discussion in their respective groups. What did you “hear” as you were floating between the groups? What was the special ed. group concerned about? What was the general ed. group concerned about? It will be interesting to see where there are similarities and differences.

4:00-4:30: Ask each group to present their flip chart suggestions for issues, changes, and strategies. There should be six presentations: two for the State Level, two for the Local Level, and two for the Parent/Community Level. Post the flip charts on the wall if possible. Each presentation can only be five minutes.

4:30-4:45: Larry and Ray will wrap up the afternoon by sharing their observations of our discussions, issues, changes, and suggested strategies. Are there similarities or differences in terms of what general educators are concerned about compared to special educators? Are we putting our emphasis too much in one area and not enough in another? What are Larry’s and Ray’s recommendations for what we need to think about as we move forward together to improve educational opportunities and improve results for all students in the northeast?

In closing, ask the group for any final observations or insights.

Explain that the thinking and sharing of perspectives, issues, changes, and strategies from today will inform our work together the following day, in our topical breakout sessions when we look at specific problem areas, as we are hearing the school district presentations, and as the state groups work meet together in the final session.

For the following day: Type up the flip chart pages showing the issues, changes, and strategies suggested for the State, Local, and Parent/Community levels. Print out and give to participants in the AM day two.

Appendix C
Participant List

Northeast Region
NCLB/IDEA State Leadership Forum
Joining Forces: High Achievement
For Each and Every Student
September 27-28, 2005
Springfield Sheraton Monarch Center
Springfield, Massachusetts

Participant List

Connecticut

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CT State Board of Education
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Ph: 860-584-9009
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Appendix D

Issues, changes, actionable strategies

**NCLB/IDEA State Leadership Forum
Sept. 27-28 2005**

Breakout Discussions following Larry Gloeckler and Ray McNulty Keynotes:

What are the issues? What needs to change? Actionable Strategies?

State Level

What are the issues?

- Issue is the need to bring about change within the Department of Ed. by thinking outside of the box in order to achieve high expectations for all children, teachers, and state level leaders in a way that ensures that all stakeholders are working together.
- DOE setting philosophy on students with disabilities.
- DOE being clear in communication and priorities
- Funding issues
- DOE listening to parents
- More coordination/less duplication
- Explore “each and every” student: What does this really mean?
- Have DOE see service providers and parents as partners.
- How to eliminate “silos” when that is the federal structure?
- How to get colleagues at the DOE to develop belief system.
- Need to address content specialists available for all general ed. and special ed. collaboration
- Governors and legislators need to have greater understanding of issues.
- IHEs need to be part of the discussion on reform.
- How to get struggling districts to share information?
- Communication, collaboration, coordination with all stakeholders
- Resources, funding, sharing info
- Special ed. teachers seeking a new identity
- All teachers need to be effective

What needs to change?

- State becomes a facilitator vs. a regulator
- Brokering relationships with partnering agencies that support timely delivery of services to districts/local level that is barrier free
- IHEs need to provide better preparation.
- Re-training, meaningful professional development
- Regulations or legislation may need to change.
- Raise expectations for general ed. teachers.

What are some actionable strategies?

- Redefine certification requirements in order to maximize capability of teachers in partnerships with IHEs that may lead to one licensure for all teachers.
- Hold a summit that includes all stakeholders to kick-off the initiative.
- Facilitates the flow of stakeholders between local to state, roles and responsibility to ground and inform effective practices.
- Provide equal access to ensure high quality content for all kids K-12
- Revise standards for teacher education
- Revise curriculum and instructional models for all kids
- Provide all teachers with access to high quality, research-based instruction.
- Provide peer mentoring/coaches/parents as trainers
- Use universal design principles
- Provide access for teachers to higher ed.
- Encourage cross-disciplinary content
- DOE promote co-teaching with rewards
- IHEs to model research to practice
- Expectations and understanding of high standards, all kids
- Real world outcomes; include business and community
- Provide and insure equal access to high quality content for all kids
- DOE believe, communicate and model high expectations that all kids learn to high standards
- Include real work outcomes, involving community and business
- DOE revises standards for teacher preparation
- IHEs model research to practice
- Access to IHEs and other professional development for teachers
- DOE promotes and rewards co-teaching
- Mentoring, coaching and parents as trainers

Local Level

What are the issues?

- School structure; segregating students
- Expectations
- School climate
- Coordination/collaboration between schools and the community
- Definition of parental involvement
- Equal access to high quality instruction and learning what is high quality instruction
- Eliminate tracking and segregating students
- Professional development
- Rethink giftedness
- Look at data to identify staff, professional development methodology of accessing and reporting achievement to parents
- Data driven instruction
- Structure of the school day and availability of staff

What needs to change?

- High quality teacher qualifications need flexibility

- Open communication between school, staff, community
- Reading by 4th grade
- Culture: Included as part of “customizing”; each local school is different—high expectations and respect
- Make schools more user friendly for the community, students, and parents
- Bring concern for “all” children to the forefront
- Focus on literacy
- Rethink “structure”
- Clarify “high achievement”

What are some actionable strategies?

- Provide tailored professional development
- Mentoring
- Give special ed. students actually have access to general ed. curriculum
- Raise community awareness regarding giftedness; using data
- Flexibility in hiring
- Standards are for all; customizing re: culture, difference, etc.
- Accountability for all
- Equal access
- Include all stakeholders in local decisions
- Communication with unions
- Use performance data to drive professional development and instruction
- Teachers sharing data and strategies/mentoring
- Movement of students to different learning environments and classrooms based on student needs and teacher qualifications

Parent/Community Level

What are the issues?

- High versus low expectations of community
- Community and parents may not understand what “high expectations” mean
- Schools not holding on to most challenging children
- We really mean each and every child
- Customized education
- Parents need more info on tests and to how to advocate when the student needs support
- Money and resources
- Lacking school building level autonomy
- Lack of collaboration and communication
- Parents come with prior education experience in mind
- Engaging parents in school system and community
- Broadening definitions of engagement
- Defining shared interests/commonalities
- Use data for problem solving
- Lack of focused conversations around data
- Lack of school system investment in communities
- Accountability

- Really meaning each and every child
- Lack of communication
- Money
- Different perceptions and expectations
- Engaging community and parents
- Limited cultural competence
- Where, when, how to ask for partnerships
- Focus on money, feel have no impact
- Compartmentalization
- Lack of consensus
- Poor leadership
- Culture of one-way of learning
- No celebration of successes

What needs to change?

- Expectations
- Community resources
- Shared visions, communication, common understanding
- Building greater partnerships

What are some actionable strategies?

- The fundamental belief that all kids can learn and achieve is the foundation. We will continue to emphasize this... We need a system that will allow for this to happen.
- No one thing is the answer. It takes constant communication...all other pieces.
- Keep the child in the center... surrounded by a supportive classroom, system and overall vision.
- Partnerships: development, training, defining expectations and information dissemination; start with a small group
- Define partnerships and expectations of partnerships
- Learning to work around barriers/structures that impede implementation of a strategic plan
- Train school leadership and parents on building and sustaining partnerships.
- Communication campaigns
- Excite and motivate campaigns
- Excite and motivate community
- Make it personal/shared interest
- Create task force made up of core groups of community, parents, and schools

Appendix E

Letter of Invitation

Northeast Regional Resource Center

LearningInnovations at WestEd



June 24, 2005

Subject: NCLB/IDEA Invitational State Leadership Forum, September 27-28, 2005

To: State Educational Leaders in the Northeast

I write to invite you (or your designee) to participate in the **Northeast NCLB/IDEA Invitational State Leadership Forum, September 27-28, 2005**. This Forum will bring together the state leaders and policy makers who have the power to shape the agenda for school improvement in the northeast. Hosted by the Northeast Regional Resource Center (NERRC), the Forum is being co-sponsored by many organizations and technical assistance providers who have a stake in improving achievement for all students, including students with disabilities.

Co-Sponsors include: The Access Center: Improving Outcomes for All Students K-8, Brooklyn College, City University of New York, Education Alliance at Brown University, the IDEA Partnership, Learning Innovations at WestEd, the New England Comprehensive Assistance Center (NECAC) at EDC, the New York University Equity Assistance Center, the Region 1 Parent Technical Assistance Center@ SPAN, and the Rhode Island Technical Assistance Program (RITAP).

States and local school districts are struggling with the implementation of NCLB, particularly with regard to the inclusion of students with disabilities in state accountability systems. Many schools that do not meet AYP requirements in their state are designated as “in need of improvement” due to the subgroup of students with disabilities. As state leaders, educators, and parents, we need to develop collaborative strategies to increase student achievement and to ensure that each and every child has access to a high quality education through accurate and inclusive assessment, high-quality instruction, and full inclusion in our school communities.

This State Leadership Forum will provide state leaders and policy makers with the opportunity to:

- Explore, in depth, possibilities for real “break the mold” collaboration across states
- Learn about “what works” in specific school districts throughout the region that are meeting AYP for all students
- Share and develop state and local strategies for addressing AYP and improving results for students with disabilities
- Explore the impact that NCLB and IDEA 2004 will have on service delivery, management, and policy in general and special education
- Share approaches to communicating with the public and the press regarding results of state and local accountability systems
- Access regional and national technical assistance resources

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Maine _ New Hampshire _ Vermont _ Massachusetts _ New Jersey _ Connecticut _ Rhode Island _ New York

We believe that the information resulting from this Forum will have widespread interest and value to state leaders throughout the region. We also hope and intend that this initial effort will not be a one-shot event, but one that will become part of a long-term collaborative effort to improve results for all our students.

Registration for the Forum is open only to those who receive an invitation or their designees. Online registration is available at <http://www.wested.org/nerrc/nclbideaforum>. If you do not have access to the Internet or have difficulty with the online registration, please use the attached paper registration form or contact: Norma Sheehan at (802) 951-8221.

Hotel Reservations: Please call the Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel, Springfield, MA at 800-426-9004. Please ask for the NCLB/IDEA block of rooms in order to get the room rate of \$109.00 plus tax. Rooms will be held until September 6, 2005. Reservations will be accepted after this deadline on the basis of room and rate availability.

Please join us for this timely and important opportunity to engage in learning and dialogue with your peers and colleagues in the northeast region.

Sincerely,

Kristin Reedy, Ed.D.
Director
Northeast Regional Resource Center (NERRC)
20 Winter Sport Lane
Williston, VT 05495

Appendix F
Evaluation Summary

**NCLB/IDEA Invitational State Leadership Forum
September 27-28, 2005**

Evaluation Summary

There were ninety-nine (99) participants at the NCLB/IDEA Forum held in Springfield, MA. All eight NERRC Region 1 states were represented from SEAs (special and general education), LEAs (administrators and teachers), parent organizations (PTIs) and TA & D Projects. Of the 99 participants, 45 completed an evaluation form which assessed participant satisfaction with the overall Forum and keynote presentations (response rate = 45%). Participants were also given the opportunity to rate the break out sessions. Both types of evaluations are included in this summary.

Overall Evaluation Form Data and Comment Summary

Respondents rated their level of agreement with the following statements on a 6-point scale (1 = disagree, 6 = agree).

1.	Overall, event was of high quality.	4.81
2.	Event/TA support was relevant to my work.	4.86
3.	Event/TA support was timely.	5.20
4.	Event/TA support was useful.	4.70
5.	Event planning and organization were high quality.	4.97
6.	There were opportunities for networking with colleagues.	5.20

Keynote Speakers' presentations were of high quality:

7.	Nick Donohue	5.00
8.	Larry Gloeckler	4.97
9.	Ray McNulty	4.92

To what degree did you have opportunities to:

10.	Explore, in depth, possibilities for real "break the mold" collaboration across the states.	3.58
11.	Learn about "what works" in specific school districts throughout the region.	4.02
12.	Explore the impact that NCLB and IDEA '04 will have on service delivery, management, and policy in general and special education	3.97
13.	Share approaches to communicating with the public and the press.	3.27
14.	Access regional and national TA resources	4.11

The second part of the evaluation consisted of four qualitative questions, ending with an "additional comments" item. The results for each question are summarized below.

How do you plan on using what you learned at this event in your leadership role in your state?

Respondents overwhelmingly indicated that they planned on sharing "information and discussions with others who could not attend to help build and inform future practice." Several commented that they would use the information gained to "foster collaborations and partnerships to effect positive policy making." Parent representatives reported they planned to share information with their respective constituency groups.

In sum, the themes for this question were to share information, continue the dialogue and increase collaboration with stakeholders to work towards "talking about ALL students, that all students deserve high expectations, and use that theme in their (my) work."

Please describe how participation in this event will enhance your state's capacity to implement NCLB and IDEA '04?

Many respondents indicated there will be better collaboration with all stakeholders as a result of participation in the event, specifically between general and special education and with parents. Participation in the event broadened

respondent awareness of: common beliefs, understandings, challenges, strategies, issues for dialogue and available resources. Some noted that it was important for state members to meet in this type of Forum as that doesn't happen in "home" states. Some reported they didn't know at this point how participation will enhance their state's capacity around these issues.

In sum, the primary theme for this question was that the event helped to build and improve communication and collaboration among and between stakeholder groups (general education, special education, parents).

Suggested improvements for this event.

Responses to this prompt generally fell into the following categories. Suggested improvements included:

- More attention to *state level initiatives* to move forward on these issues.
- More information from *local schools*, superintendents and SEA directors, and parents where there is evidence of "best practice" and success.
- More *time* for: teams, hands on work, discussion sessions, specific topics, keynote speakers to talk about specific schools they are working with, lessons learned and research effective practices.
- *Include stakeholder* groups: private and collaboratives, require SEAs to send representatives from both general and special education.
- *Format*: Vary types of discussions: panel vs. plenary, more discussion with other states, intentional reading time built into the conference time.
- *Related to logistics/speakers*: earlier receipt of agenda and some pre-prep, less food on Day 2, never have only white male keynotes, skip report out's, ensure up to date data on all slides, have state tables for resource-sharing, invite Robin Welch to keynote (his energy could have been better used at the beginning of this event).

Follow-up requested after this event.

Respondents requested:

- To receive notes/questions raised during topical sessions and report out data. Email updates, conference calls.
- To convene at the state level, involving all stakeholders.
- To bring teams back to report on what has been accomplished since this event.
- Continue sharing resources, especially TA (national/regional) services. Promote collaboration across TA providers.
- Possible regional forum with panels of practitioners, along with state level policy makers etc.

Additional comments.

- Related to *logistics*: only being able to choose one plenary session was difficult, temperature of conference rooms was cold at times, and request that cell phones be turned off (including keynote speaker).
- Related to the *materials/resource binders*: very helpful, also handout on notes from previous day's session, also participant list, and notebook is great but unwieldy, need tote bag.
- Related to *TA providers*: might want to introduce the TA providers on Day 1.
- *Kudos*: Great job! I applaud NERRC and leading this effort! The best conference I have attended in a long while for planning; versatility, focus, collaboration time! Thank you for pulling this together. Great idea! Let's make it an annual or biannual at the very least. I greatly enjoyed the networking opportunities. I thought you had a well planned forum, food, rooms etc. were super. Hotel: easy check in/check out very much appreciated, also health club.



For more information, contact Kristin Reedy, Director at kreedy@wested.org

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