

How Can Charters Best Support Students with the Highest Needs?

June 27, 2016

**Illinois Network of Charter Schools
Massachusetts Charter Public School Association, MA Collaborative Access Network
National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools
New Schools for New Orleans**

Panelists

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Session Objectives

Share innovative programmatic and policy approaches to supporting charter school capacity to serve students with disabilities and English language learners, through Massachusetts, Chicago, and New Orleans case studies.

Agenda

- Introductions
- National Special Education and English Language Learners Statistics
- Overview of State/City Initiatives
- Political Challenges
- Tools/Resources

What is the Problem we are Trying to Solve?

- On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the ideal, rate the degree to which the charter schools in your state consistently provide exemplary services to students with disabilities?
- On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the ideal, rate the degree to which charter schools in your state provide exemplary services to English language learners?
- On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being a significant struggle, to what extent do charter schools in your state struggle to recruit or retain special education teachers?
- On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being a significant struggle, to what extent do charter schools in your state struggle to secure adequate resources to provide services to support students with diverse needs?
- On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the most committed, quantify your commitment to ensuring the charter schools in your state provide ready access and high quality services to students with a diverse range needs?

Summary of National Statistics on SPED

Key Trends in Special Education in
Charter Schools: A Secondary Analysis of
the Civil Rights Data Collection 2011-2012

Key SPED Findings

Data Point	Traditional Public Schools	Charter Schools
Enrollment of students with disabilities (K-12)	12.55%	10.42%
Placement of students with disabilities in general education 100% of the time	67%	84%
Suspension of students with disabilities	13.40%	13.45%
Expulsion of students with disabilities	0.46%	0.45%

Summary of National Statistics on ELLs in Charter Schools

- $\frac{1}{3}$ of charters not reporting data on ELL and hypothesis is this reflects both low enrollment and under-reporting (GAO, 2013)
- From 2000/01 - 2012/13 enrollment of Hispanic students in charter schools increased from 20-29% (National Center for Education Statistics)
- Data from NYC confirms there is a gap between ELL students enrolled in charter schools relative to TPS (Winters, 2014)
- NYC greatest gap attributed to ELL students significantly less likely to enroll in Kindergarten (Winters, 2014)
- NYC charter schools-greater rate of declassification of ELL students (Winters, 2014)
- Research on charter schools in Boston documented that enrollment of ELL students has increased from 2.5% to 12% over four years (Pioneer Institute, 2015)

State-Specific Work

- State charter context
- Status of special education
- Initiatives to support quality special education programs in charter schools
 - Chicago
 - Massachusetts
 - New Orleans

Chicago

	Relevance at school level	Relevance across multiple charter schools	Sector wide relevance
Advocate for better SPED policy (state and local level) <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Open communications with authorizer & SPED leadership○ Secured more timely and accurate SPED allocations○ Pushed for a revision of the appeals process○ Advocated for charters with .2 or lower time clinician allocations to have access to district staff	X	X	X
Collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Regular meetings in the 2015-16 school year○ Combination training and connecting○ Increase access to authorizer's SPED staff○ Active listserve	X		
RSP/Clinician supply <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Provider guide, school needs inventory, more access to providers	X		
Support in serving ELs <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ University cohort for bilingual endorsement○ Workshops on ELL strategies at INCS events			

Massachusetts

	Relevance at school level	Relevance across multiple charter schools	Sector wide relevance
Statewide School Support <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Trainings focusing on Academics and Behavior○ Communities of Practice (SpEd, ELL, Behavior)○ Specialist Network○ Collaboration with State Department of Education	X		X
Regional Partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Peer Reviews, Complex Case Analyses, Critical Friends, Shared resources		X	
Individual School Support <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Model Demonstration Schools (Capacity Building/ Systems/ Structures)	X		

New Orleans

	Relevance at school level	Relevance across multiple charter schools	Sector wide relevance
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Development of 2-year Special Education Leader Fellowship with goal of building skill of special education leaders in their unique roles and allowing for greater collaboration across schools	X	X	X
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Partnership with TFA and TNTP's teachNOLA Fellows to revamp training for novice special education teachers○ Partnership with Relay, TNTP to offer add-on certification in special education	X		X
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Development of citywide database with reviews of related service providers (RSPs)○ Trainings on best practices for contracting with RSPs	X	X	X

Key Political Challenges

Chicago	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Upcoming budgets cuts (up to 39% - <i>so they are saying</i>)● Majority of charters not their own LEAs● Perception: charters are not welcoming/push out students with special needs● Funding formula for SPED is based on allocation of teachers/could change● Cuts have severely reduced central office SPED staff resulting is less support
MA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Perception that charter schools don't/aren't willing to serve ELL students and Students with Disabilities● Vitriol around charter cap lift/deeply divided lawmakers preclude any statutory relief around lottery to ensure equitable or strategic distribution of high need students● Funding formula does not compensate for high-cost programming● Regulatory scrutiny for disproportional disciplinary data
New Orleans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● RSD charters are their own LEA and lack economies of scale in serving students with disabilities● Range of services and entire ecosystem's ability to collaborate and plan● Community perception of differentiated funding model for students with disabilities

Q&A

Organization Websites and Contact Information

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