

CESA #11 CREATE H - DISTRICT NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

2008-09 and 2009-10 Activities

School districts in Wisconsin identified as having a disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services or having specific disability categories that is the result of inappropriate identification are required to participate in an evidence-based process of assessment of district practices that may lead to this inappropriate identification. District teams must examine policies, procedures, and practices in general and special education that have been shown to contribute to institutional factors that surround disproportionality.

The National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems (NCCRESt) was selected to assist districts in this evidence-based process, and CESA #11 was selected to work with both NCCRESt and identified districts to develop professional development tools to be implemented June 29 – July 31, 2009, and sustained over time to support district improvement activities. 26 district teams attended this professional development activity, in conjunction with the CREATE Conference.

The tools used and created assess four Standards: Core Functions, Instructional Services, Individualized Education, and Accountability. Districts teams reviewed local data and rated each of the 23 Focus Areas as “Beginning”, “Developing” or “At Standard”, then selected their top goals to be addressed over the next year. Districts left the CREATE conference with a completed district rubric, and beginning Sept. 10, have the ability to complete their local improvement activities and plans on a web-based tool accessed through the Wisconsin CREATE website. District improvement plans are due the DPI by October 15, 2009.

To further assist districts in their professional development and improvement planning and implementation efforts, a Needs Assessment was conducted. Districts answered questions about the type of technical assistance needed over the next two years, and how to best provide this information. Needs clustered into four main types of needs:

Classroom Practices/Instructional Strategies (e.g.)

- Inclusive teaching practices
- Creating successful learning environments for all students.
- Speakers or trainers or consultant on intervention strategies or transition.

Differentiated Instruction/Diversity Training/Disproportionality (e.g.)

- What does a culturally responsive classroom look like? What should an administrator see/hear?
- Best practices for reducing disproportionality in a school district that is similar to ours.
- Staff development regarding differentiation of instruction, cultural awareness of native cultures and how it effects academic and behavioral functioning.
- Professional development for all staff members in culturally appropriate classrooms.

Needs Assessment/Data Collection and Use/ Technical Assistance (e.g.)

- A comprehensive needs assessment for school improvement plan to address unique needs.
- Professional development and technical assistance in disaggregating and using district-wide data to drive instructional practices.
- Need to develop a comprehensive data collection system that identifies gender, LRE, progress on IEPs, attendance, transfer students and performance.

Parent Education/Family Involvement/Community Involvement (e.g.)

- Method/models for gathering input from families, with examples of efficient ways to do this and get a response.
- Parent Education Opportunities, e.g. "Parent College", where they learn about IEP roles, new IEP forms using parent portal, etc.

Additional Considerations

- Districts are looking for on-going professional development rather than one-shot trainings.
- They want “experts” in their topics of interest, model schools to visit, and print and on-line resources they can go to when needed.
- They asked that the CREATE conference and workshops continue, and for on-going support from the DPI and the CREATE coordinators.

- They are seeking guidance in changing perspectives to develop diverse cultural practices in all staff and administrators, and for information to support for families and students in their communities.

Next Steps

The information gathered will be used by other CREATE Coordinators to design and deliver professional development to districts identified under Indicators 9 and 10. CESA 11 CREATE H will provide on-going technical assistance for districts' planning efforts and progress towards the 23 Focus Areas so that most or all of the focus areas achieve an "At Standard" rating. Districts will have the opportunity to utilize a newly created web-based program to record baseline ratings (June 2009) and progress ratings (April 2010), follow the NCCRESt model of improvement planning, develop a Comprehensive Disproportionality Improvement Plan, and track goals, changes, successes, all within the Wisconsin Personnel Development System. This will ensure districts utilize their data to review progress and set future goals.