



Leading for Success in Special Education and Driving Toward Continuous Improvement

Conversation with Special Educators
and Leaders

February 12, 2019

Agenda

Public Consulting Group Overview

Getting to Effectiveness: From Compliance to Outcomes

Shifts in Special Education

Special Education Results-Driven Transformation Model

Re-tooling People, Process, and Cultural Mindset



Public Consulting Group

Overview

- Public Consulting Group, Inc. (PCG) is **solving problems that matter** in the areas of education, health, and human services – worldwide
- We offer consulting services, technical assistance, operational support, professional development and technologies to improve lives and outcomes across the globe
- Celebrating 32 years of service to public sector clients across education, health, human services, and technology divisions
- We service clients from 50+ local offices across the United States
- We employ 2,500+ people across the United States, Canada, and Europe



PCG Education Services



PCG New Jersey

13 Years of Local Impact

Making a difference in NJ education since 2005

Serving 100% of NJ's Schools

All New Jersey districts work with PCG in some capacity today

Supporting Sustainability

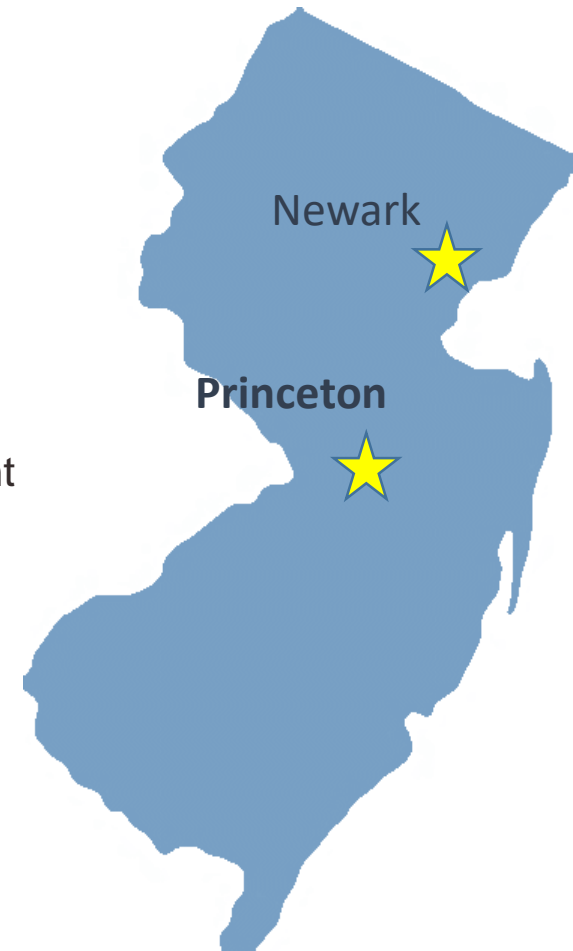
Nearly \$135million per year in Federal reimbursement to support special populations

National Perspective & Local Insight

PCG employs over 2,500 educators, technologists, and project managers who support our work

170+ staff members in New Jersey

PCG employs over 170 full-time employees across two local offices



PCG New Jersey

Current Initiatives

NJ SMART

- Provides the statewide education data system as well as a statewide professional development system for building LEA capacity to use data effectively

Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI/MAC)

- PCG administers aspects of the school-based Medicaid claiming program, generating ~\$500M in last five years

New Jersey Special Education Annual Summit

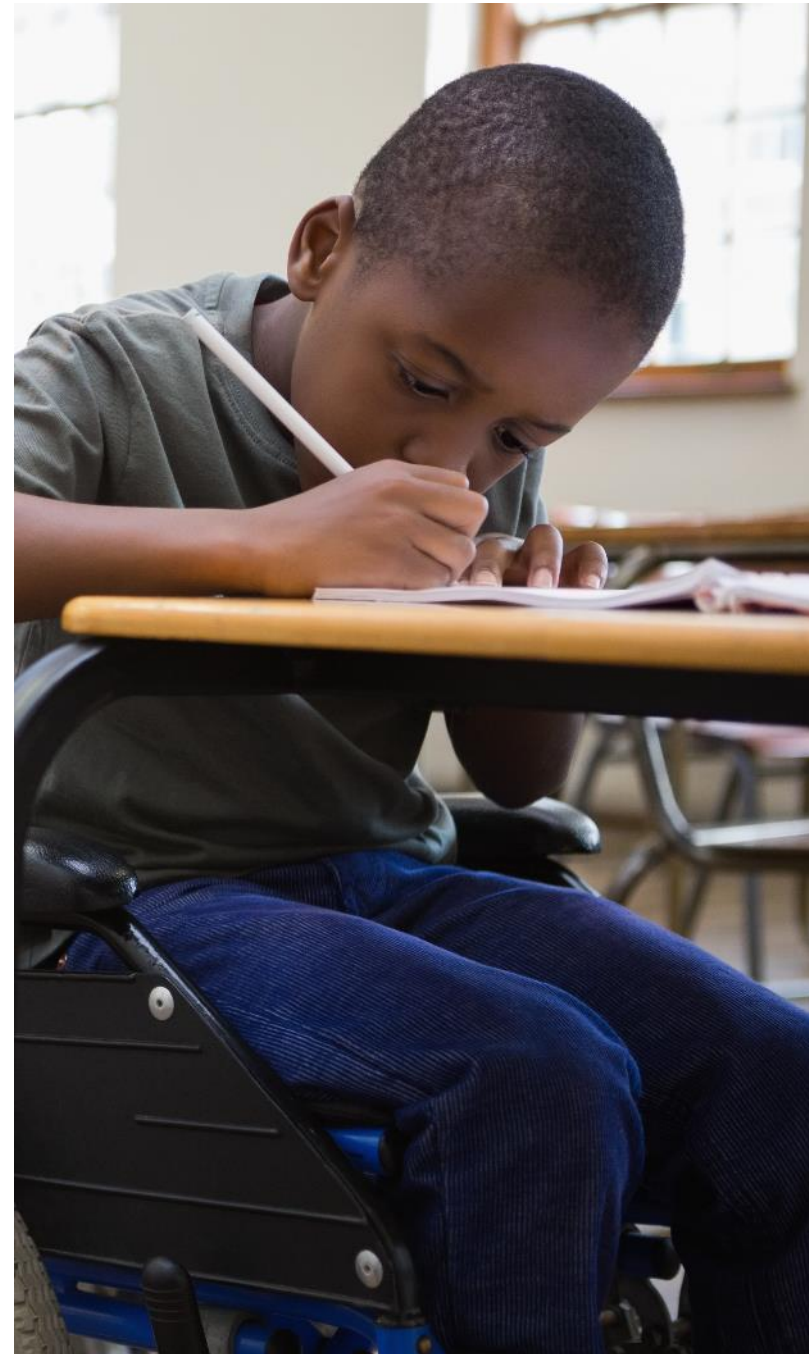
- Delivers annual best practices summit for policy makers and practitioners in special education issues

Special Education Consulting

- Provides program reviews and technical assistance in best practices for instruction, service delivery, and compliance across large urban districts

EDPlan

- Proprietary web-based IEP development and case management solution that manages the information of 1 out of every 5 special education students in the U.S., and supports the teaching and learning of all children



Getting to Effectiveness: Moving from Compliance to Outcomes

People, Process, and Cultural Mindset

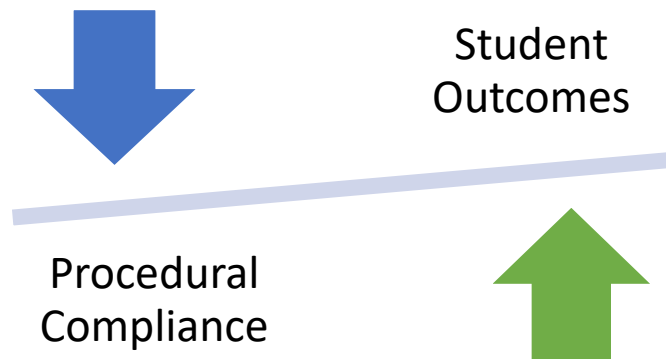
Objectives

- Discuss two recent shifts in special education:
 - (1) Results Driven Accountability and
 - (2) the *Andrew* Decision
- Articulate how this shift is effecting districts and schools
- Learn about the four phases of the PCG Special Education Results Driven Transformation Approach
- Leave with tangible next steps on how special educators and district leaders can transition orientation from compliance to outcomes through focusing on:
 - (1) people,
 - (2) process; and
 - (3) cultural mindset.

Shifts in Special Education

The culture of compliance has shifted to a culture focused on improving student outcomes.

- Results Driven Accountability (RDA) (2014) has shifted the focus to include much **greater focus on student outcomes** while still **maintaining procedural compliance**
- Designed to be **transparent** and **understandable** and to drive **systemic improvements**.



Why RDA?

Educational outcomes of students with disabilities have not improved as expected, despite significant efforts to close achievement gaps.

- In 2009, the gap between the average mathematics scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) of students without disabilities and those with disabilities was **22 points**. By 2015, the gap had grown to **28 points**.
- Nationally, about **5.9 percent** of students drop out of high school. But among children with learning and attention issues, about **18 percent** drop out of school.
- Across the United States, 63 percent of students with disabilities graduated from high school in 2014 — a rate of graduation **roughly 20 percent lower** than the national average.

Shifts in Special Education

- ***Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District RE-1*** (2017) sets the level of educational benefit schools are required to provide to students with disabilities under IDEA as “merely... more than de minimis”
- **Significant impact** in the classroom:
(1) the design and development of rigorous IEPs; (2) the implementation of students IEPs with fidelity; and (3) increased progress monitoring of IEP goals.

PCG Special Education Brief

Understanding the *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District* Supreme Court Decision

By Sue Gamm, Esq. and Will Gordillo

March 27, 2017

PCG | Education

Getting to Effectiveness: People, Process, and Cultural Mindset

Special Education Results-Driven Transformation Model



Re-tooling your people, processes, and cultural mindset will promote results-driven program effectiveness.

Getting to Effectiveness: People, Process, and Cultural Mindset

- **People**: The talent required to drive special education programming and meet the individual needs of students with disabilities.
 - e.g., Supporting teachers, related service providers, CST members, administrators, administrative assistants; data capacity
- **Process**: The action steps taken in order to achieve high quality special education programming.
 - e.g., IEP creation, technologies to support IEP development, team meetings, due process; data systems
- **Cultural Mindset**: The established set of attitudes held by educators. People- and organizations- can have “fixed” or “growth” mindsets about intelligence, abilities, and talents (Dweck, 2012).
 - e.g., ‘de minimis’ vs. ambitious IEPs, compliance vs. results; data culture

Paper Work Phase

1 Paper Work Phase

- Time Consuming
- Inconsistent & Disjointed Processes
- Compliance Issues
- Incomplete Data



Focus on
Forms

- **People:** Inclusion is a new concept; limited training; heavy clerical requirements; timelines and monitoring largely a process managed by people
- **Process:** Carbon paper, typewriters, early word processors; limited data available; Education for Handicapped Child Act and IDEA 1990, 1997 as procedural drivers
- **Cultural Mindset:** Largely fixed mindset

Efficiency Phase

2 Efficiency Phase

- Standardized Procedures
- Improved Timelines
- Increased Communication
- Streamlined Processes

Focus on
Process

- **People:** Less clerical work; shift of timelines and process/procedures from people to computers; LRE concept evolving, from 'segregated resource rooms' to 'mainstream'
- **Process:** Use of word processors, early computer-based IEP programs; IEPs driven by IDEA 1997, 2004; standardization of processes
- **Cultural Mindset:** Still largely fixed mindset, compliance oriented

Compliance Phase

3

Compliance Phase

- Valid Evaluations & IEPs
- Timeline Monitoring
- Accurate Reporting
- Proactive Planning

Focus on
Accountability

- **People:** Processes and timelines are almost entirely maintained by IEP systems; heavy training focus on federal outcomes for compliance; belief structure focused on LRE
- **Process:** Use of online IEP management systems that are siloed from other student information management systems; IDEA 2004 as primary driver; APR and SPP indicators; emphasis on valid and reliable data and state/LEA determination status
- **Cultural Mindset:** Shifting from fixed to growth, primary focus on compliance, with underlying elements of importance of outcomes

Effectiveness Phase

4

Effectiveness Phase

- Student Outcomes and Performance Growth
- Ambitious and Meaningful IEPs
- Continuous Improvement Cycle
- Results-Driven Decisions
- Real-Time Progress Monitoring
- High Quality Service Delivery
- Inclusive Practices & Staff Collaboration
- Preventing Disproportionality
- Equity & Access

Focus on
Outcomes

- **People:** Processes and timelines are almost entirely maintained by IEP systems; new training and attention focused on RDA and *Andrew*
- **Process:** Use of integrated, online suite of tools that includes IEP management in addition to early warning & intervention management; new drivers from RDA
- **Cultural Mindset:** Growth; ambitious and meaningful IEPs

The Special Education Two Hat Dilemma

- **Risk Management.** Understanding potential blind spots and pitfalls to proactively take corrective actions to ensure compliance.
- **Continuous Improvement.** Setting rigorous and achievable goals, identifying ways to improve student outcomes, and evaluating success.

Never forget there are more than 755+ process requirements in IDEA '04 regulations. And even if you could be in compliance with all 755, you would have no assurance of results.

Dr. W. Alan Coulter, Louisiana State University, Health Sciences, Human Development Center

Getting to Effectiveness: People, Process, and Cultural Mindset

Special Education Results-Driven Transformation Model



Turn to the person next to you and discuss: Where is your district? What are your challenges to moving beyond compliance to effectiveness?

How Do These Changes Impact You?

Preparing for What You Can Do

What are Some Key Components of an Effective Special Education Program?

1. Robust Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for struggling learners
2. Full complement of licensed, highly qualified special education teachers and related service providers with a growth mindset
3. Continuum of appropriate least restrictive environment (LRE) placements differentiated on a child-by-child basis
4. Creative approaches to instruction, differentiation, and progress monitoring
5. Transition planning and focus on postsecondary outcomes



All of these are drivers of Results Driven Accountability – Shifting the mindset from a focus on compliance to one that emphasizes results.

Getting to Effectiveness Through Your People

- Provide **intensive professional learning opportunities on instruction and interventions** within an MTSS framework and inclusionary practices
- Invest in professional development opportunities for all district staff that support **a culture and climate of shared responsibility**
- **Collaborate** across district departments and community stakeholder groups and establish a **shared vision** of special education services within the district
- Work in **partnership with teacher preparation programs** and training for school and district leaders that are strong and focused on instruction and support for students with disabilities
- **Expand inclusive practices** by providing professional development and job-embedded coaching to improve collaboration and implement high yield co-teaching models
- Place **special education teachers** in subjects that are relevant to their training, subject matter expertise, and teaching certification. Include them as peers within general education grade or departmental meetings.

Getting to Effectiveness Through Your Processes

- **Use flexible, web-based case management systems** that identify students at risk, support the documentation of student interventions, and drive the creation of IEPs with SMART goals – **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant and **T**ime Bound. Tie all student IEP goals to your state’s learning standards. Build systems to measure the progress of these goals by using student data.
- **Build MTSS into the all district processes that support struggling learners**
- **Study your state’s State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR).** Compare your results performance against your state’s identified measurable result (SIMR).
- **As needed, leverage outside expertise to support your district’s special education data and reporting needs.** Conduct an external review your special education programming; assess your district’s MTSS, instructional outcomes, inclusive practices, and family engagement.

Getting to Effectiveness Through Cultural Mindset

- **Build a system-wide culture of academic optimism.** Cultivate the idea that all students can achieve at high levels, regardless of their disability or other factors. Create an unrelenting expectation regarding instruction.
- **Establish Special Education Expectations and Guidelines.** Be clear that schools must be responsible and accountable for the teaching and learning process while central office is to provide adequate resources, clear guidance, and professional development, and support schools in the consistent and effective implementation of programs and services.
- **Assess instructional beliefs and practices** by conducting an annual survey to measure teachers' instructional beliefs and practices and analyze the results by school and role.
- **Strengthen links between school and home** to help culturally and linguistically diverse parents help their children learn and gain equal access to your district's educational programs and services.
- **Celebrate your district's diversity and the strengths it brings** to create a culture that promotes the successful inclusion and integration of students with disabilities and other underserved, at-risk and economically disadvantaged students.

Effectiveness Phase

Turn to the person next to you and discuss:

- What resources do you need to enact these changes?
- What are the public/political implications in your community?
- What are opportunities & accomplishments in your district on which you can build for students with disabilities?

Effectiveness Through Collaborative Program Evaluation

THE POWER OF COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM EVALUATION

A PCG Education White Paper

February 2013

By Christine Donis-Keller, Julie Meltzer, and Elizabeth Chmielewski

"Is our program working?" This is a key question in education today, particularly in this era of heightened accountability. A collaborative program evaluation model is an extremely useful way to answer this question when education organizations want to find out if their initiatives are achieving the intended outcomes, as well as why this is the case.

In the collaborative program evaluation model, the client (e.g., districts, states, public and independent schools, nonprofits, and foundations) works with the external evaluator to determine the questions that will be explored through the evaluation. They continue to work collaboratively to ensure that the context is understood, that multiple stakeholder perspectives are taken into account, and that data collection instruments are appropriate in content and tone. The model produces data that can proactively inform program implementation, provide formative information that supports program improvement, and offer summative information on the effectiveness of the program.

This PCG Education White Paper describes the benefits and essential elements of a collaborative program evaluation model. The paper is based on the experience of PCG's research and evaluation team.

PCG | Education
Public Focus. Proven Results.™

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PCG has a unique understanding of the benefits of program evaluation as the national leader in the collaborative program evaluation model:

- **Special Education Reviews.** An evaluation of a district's special education program to determine program effectiveness and to identify both areas of strength and areas for improvement in the organization and delivery of these services. May be either comprehensive or targeted in nature.

Contact Us!



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