

**CCSSO Inclusive Leadership Webisode #9:
*Forward Together: Policies and Practices to
Support Students Who Learn Differently***

Meghan Whittaker, NCLD
Shivohn Garcia, Understood for Educators

Wednesday, February 12th 12-1PM ET

For more information about the CCSSO Inclusive Leadership Webisode Series, please e-mail kizzy.blackwell@ccsso.org



Tech Norms

- ⌘ Log in to the WebEx system
- ⌘ Engage camera (helps with understanding in virtual meetings)
- ⌘ Upon entering, please share your name, role, and organization in the chat pod
- ⌘ Be in control... mute and unmute yourself
- ⌘ Please ask questions either via chat pod (at any time) or by raising your hand in WebEx (hand icon during discussion pieces)

CCSSO Inclusive Principal Leadership Webisode Series

Date and Time	Title	Description
<p>Wednesday, February 12th: 12-1PM ET Join the Webisode: http://bit.ly/CCSSO-ILWebisode9</p>	<p><i>Forward Together: Policies and Practices to Support Students Who Learn Differently</i></p>	<p>This webisode will focus on findings from NCLD's <i>Forward Together: Helping Educators Unlock the Power of Students Who Learn Differently</i> report and an associated school leader's guide on creating inclusive schools. Meghan Whittaker of NCLD and Shivohn Garcia of Understood for Educators will present.</p>
<p>Wednesday, March 11th: 2-3PM ET http://bit.ly/CCSSO-ILWebisode10</p>	<p><i>Supporting Principals to Strategically Address Educator Shortages</i></p>	<p>This webisode will focus on the principal's role in recruiting, supporting, and retaining effective teachers of students with disabilities. Lindsey Hayes and Lynn Holdheide of the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders and Ryan Saunders of the Learning Policy Institute will present.</p>
<p>Tuesday, April 7th: 2-3PM ET http://bit.ly/CCSSO-ILWebisode11</p>	<p><i>Strengthening Executive Function Skills: Evidence-Based Opportunities to Support All Learners</i></p>	<p>This webisode will focus on bolstering school leaders' knowledge of evidence-based practices to enhance executive function skills for all learners. Karen Alexander of Brain Futures and Dr. Jacquelyn F. Gamino, Director of the Adolescent Reasoning Initiative at Center for BrainHealth, The University of Texas at Dallas will present.</p>



Agenda

- ⌘ **Overview and Framing** – James M. Paul and Kathleen Airhart
- ⌘ ***Forward Together: Policies and Practices to Support Students Who Learn Differently: The Research and the Guide for Leaders***— Meghan Whittaker and Shivohn Garcia
- ⌘ **Question and Answer and Conclusion—Moderated** by James M. Paul, CCSSO (10 min)

Supporting Inclusive Schools for the Success of Each Child

- ⌘ We, in partnership with the National Collaborative on Inclusive Principal Leadership (NCIPL), CEEDAR Center, and Oak Foundation believe inclusive principal leaders are vital to supporting students with disabilities and other diverse learners
- ⌘ Together, we released *Supporting Inclusive Schools for the Success of Each Child: A Guide for States on Principal Leadership* (www.ccssoinclusiveprincipalsguide.org)



Strategy 4: Promote Principal Development on Inclusive Practices

- ⌘ **Articulate a clear set of practices that advance inclusive and learner-centered leadership as guidance to augment current principal development work**
- ⌘ Provide and promote effective systems of in-service support, evaluation, and professional development for principals at the state and local levels using those practices
- ⌘ Establish incentives for principal mentoring, coaching and induction programs to include a deliberate focus on supporting the skills leaders need to establish optimal inclusive learning environments
- ⌘ **Ensure that all leaders are knowledgeable of evidence-based and high-leverage practices teachers need to advance positive outcomes for students with disabilities**
- ⌘ Consider developing and using micro-credentials to ensure principals pursue professional development opportunities that hone their skills to support students with disabilities



FORWARD TOGETHER

Helping Educators Unlock
the Power of Students
Who Learn Differently

Introductions



Shivohn Garcia

Senior Director, Impact
Understood



Meghan Whittaker

Director, Policy & Advocacy
NCLD

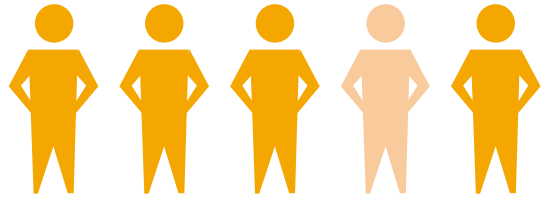
Agenda

1. **Forward Together:** Understanding the Context and Findings
2. Reflection & Questions
3. **School Leader's Guide:** Leveraging Actionable Tools and Resources to Advance Mindsets and Practices.
4. Final Reflection & Questions

Forward Together

The Research:

Background

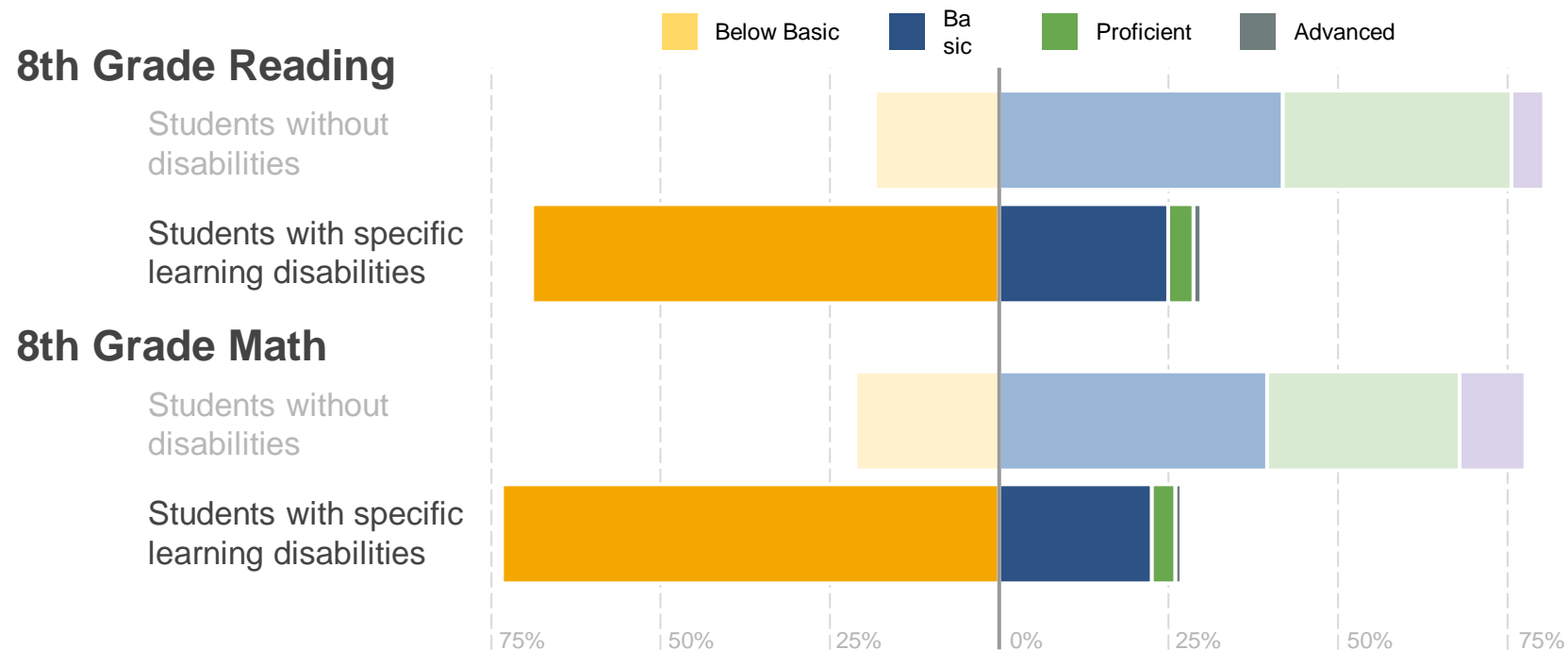


1 in 5

children struggle with brain-based learning and attention issues that affect reading, writing, math, organization and focus.

Our education system is systematically failing the 1 in 5.

The 1 in 5 **have average or above-average intelligence** and yet lower self efficacy and worse academic outcomes than their peers without learning and attention issues. In 2013, **more than 96 percent** of 8th graders with learning disabilities scored **below proficient** in reading and math on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).



Which causes a ripple effect of negative outcomes

Because we're not yet effectively reaching and teaching the 1 in 5, outcomes for students with learning disabilities are poor:



3x

as likely to **drop-out of high school**



41%

college completion rate



2x

as likely to be **jobless**



50%

chance of involvement with the **criminal justice system**

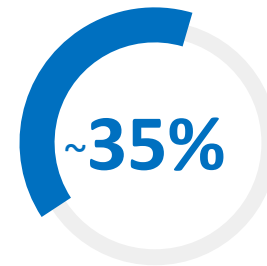
Where low income students and students of color face even greater challenges

Low-income students, students of color, and English language learners are **more likely to be identified** as having specific learning disabilities

Black and Latino students are more **likely to attend schools in high-poverty districts that lack the resources** to provide them with the services they need to catch up



Black males with IEPs received out of school suspensions compared to **1 in 10 white males** with IEPs



Black, Hispanic, and Native American students with disabilities left HS without a regular diploma compared to **25% Asian and White students** (2014-2015)

We sought to unpack and address this problem by asking four critical questions



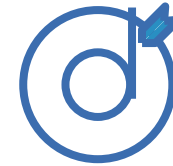
Who are the 1 in 5 and what is their experience in the classroom?



What do general education teachers currently know and believe about teaching the 1 in 5?



What do general education teachers need to know and believe about teaching the 1 in 5?



How can teachers build the effective mindsets, knowledge, and skills to positively impact the 1 in 5?

Our Approach in Brief



1,350 teachers surveyed nationally



13 teacher focus groups conducted



150 academic, empirically driven articles reviewed



50 states researched for teacher certification requirements



With input and pressure testing by: **Understood's Educator Advisory Council**, **NCLD's Professional Advisory Board** and other experts.

Research Partners



SRI Education



WHAT TEACHERS SHARED

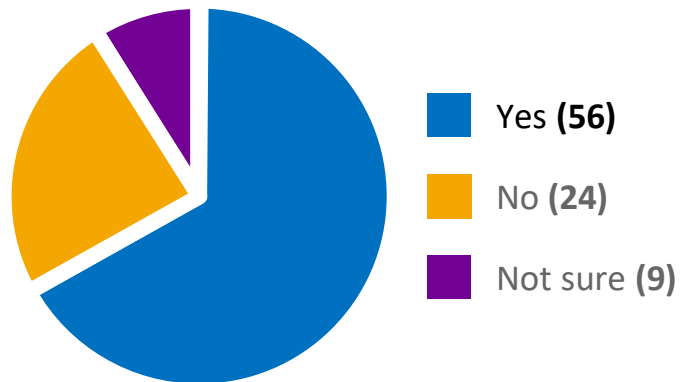
What do teachers currently know and believe?

#1: Many teachers feel unprepared to teach the 1 in 5

**Only 17% of teachers feel “very prepared” to
teach students with mild to moderate disabilities**

Many teachers have engaged in professional development classes on teaching the 1 in 5

Two-thirds of teachers have taken professional development classes for teaching students with mild to moderate learning disabilities.



However, teachers report that most of these trainings were not effective or intentional

- Few teachers believed it was **beneficial or still relevant**
- **On-the-job training and trial-and-error learning** informed how they taught the 1 in 5

Their perceived level of preparedness depends on the severity of the student's disability or issue

Focus group teachers felt that they were prepared to teach struggling learners **depending on the type of “struggle”** the student faces

While they may be equipped to teach a child with dyslexia or slower processing skills, they are not prepared to teach an emotionally disturbed student

The students **who struggle to learn and also exhibit behavioral issues** provided teachers with the largest amount of trouble, regardless of school type or teacher mindset

Managing behaviors takes more time and has a greater impact than learning issues

Focus group teachers said if there are 3-4 students with learning & attention issues, then they can usually manage them, however, **when there are more than 3-4 students, they are not prepared**

“
Challenges of behavior...

“

“The storming out and yelling, hitting people and punching people [have negative impacts on the classroom].”

– California Positive Mindset Teacher, Grades K-

5

Virtually all states set a low bar for preparing general educators to teach students with disabilities

Most state standards and licensure requirements do not articulate the specific skills, knowledge, or training that general educators should have for working with the 1 in 5

7

states have **specific coursework** for teaching students with disabilities at elementary and secondary level

2

states have **comprehensive standards** related to teaching students with disabilities

2

states require **specific clinical experiences** with students with disabilities

1

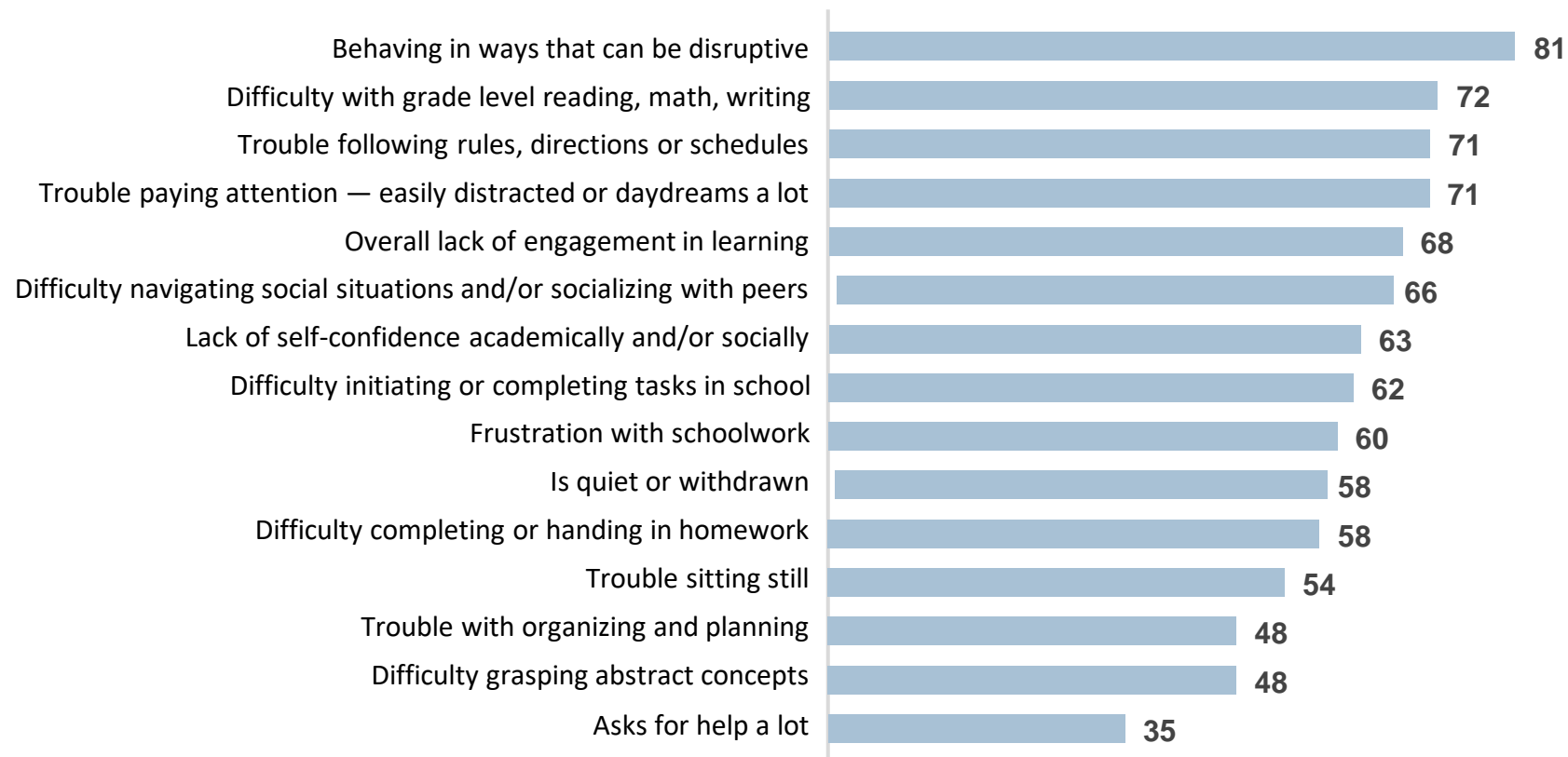
state has **standards, coursework, and clinical preparation requirements**

#2: Teachers' understanding of 1 in 5 learners is incomplete

A portion still hold on to misunderstandings that have been debunked by research

Teachers are more aware of the effects of learning and attention issues than the cause

Q: Looking at the following behaviors, which, if consistently exhibited by a student would indicate to you that there may be an underlying challenge to address?



Some express beliefs suggesting they are unaware of evidence showing these are based on differences in brain structure and function



believe
learning and
attention
issues can be
outgrown



view
students'
learning and
attention
issues as
laziness



believe
ADD/ADHD is
a result of
bad
parenting

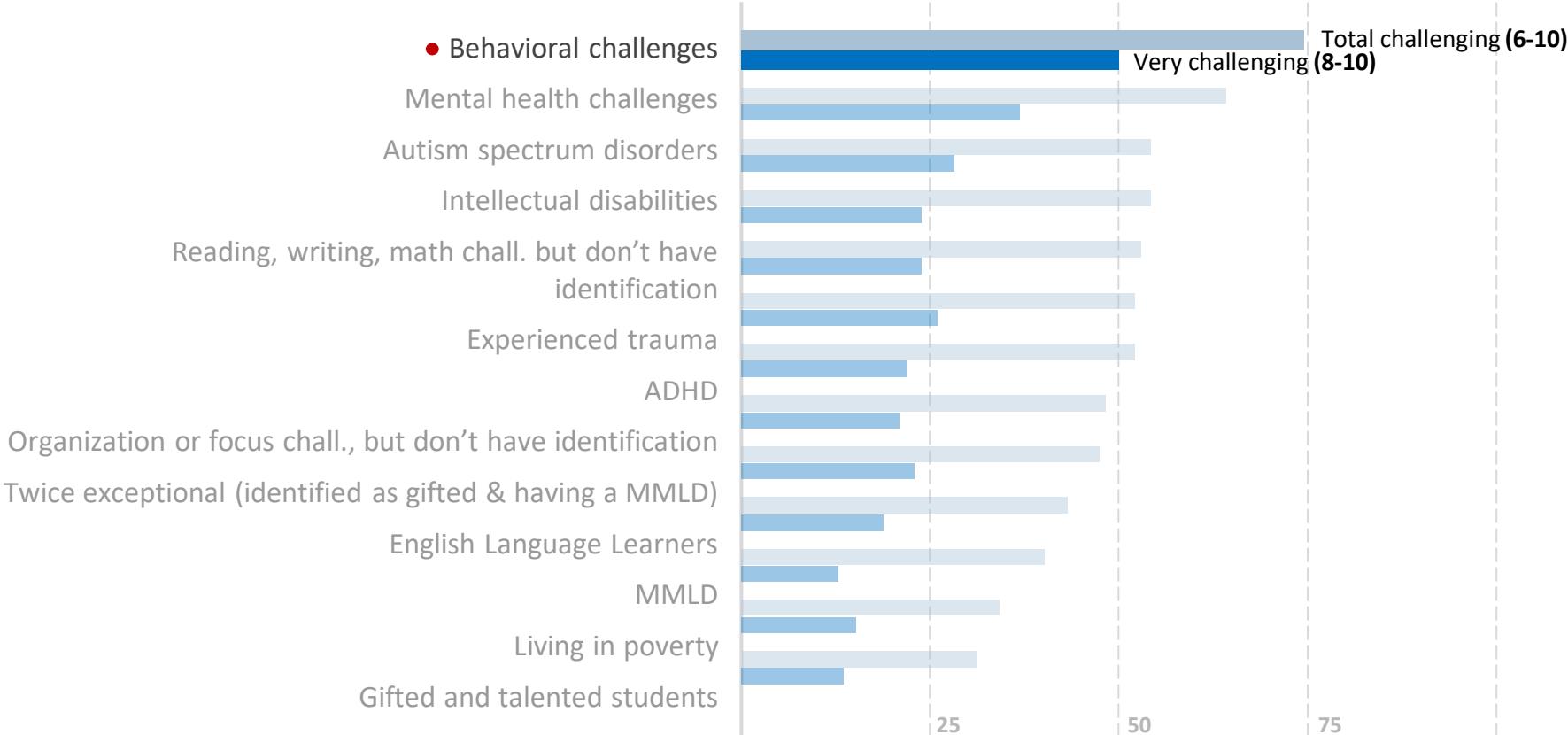
#3: Many feel overwhelmed and unsupported in teaching the 1 in 5, but want to improve

Only 30% feel that when they try their best, they can be successful with the 1 in 5

Teachers report finding students with behavioral challenges most difficult to teach

Surveyed teachers report that students with behavioral challenges are the most challenging to teach, more so than disabilities

Q: How challenging is it for you to teach the following types* of students?

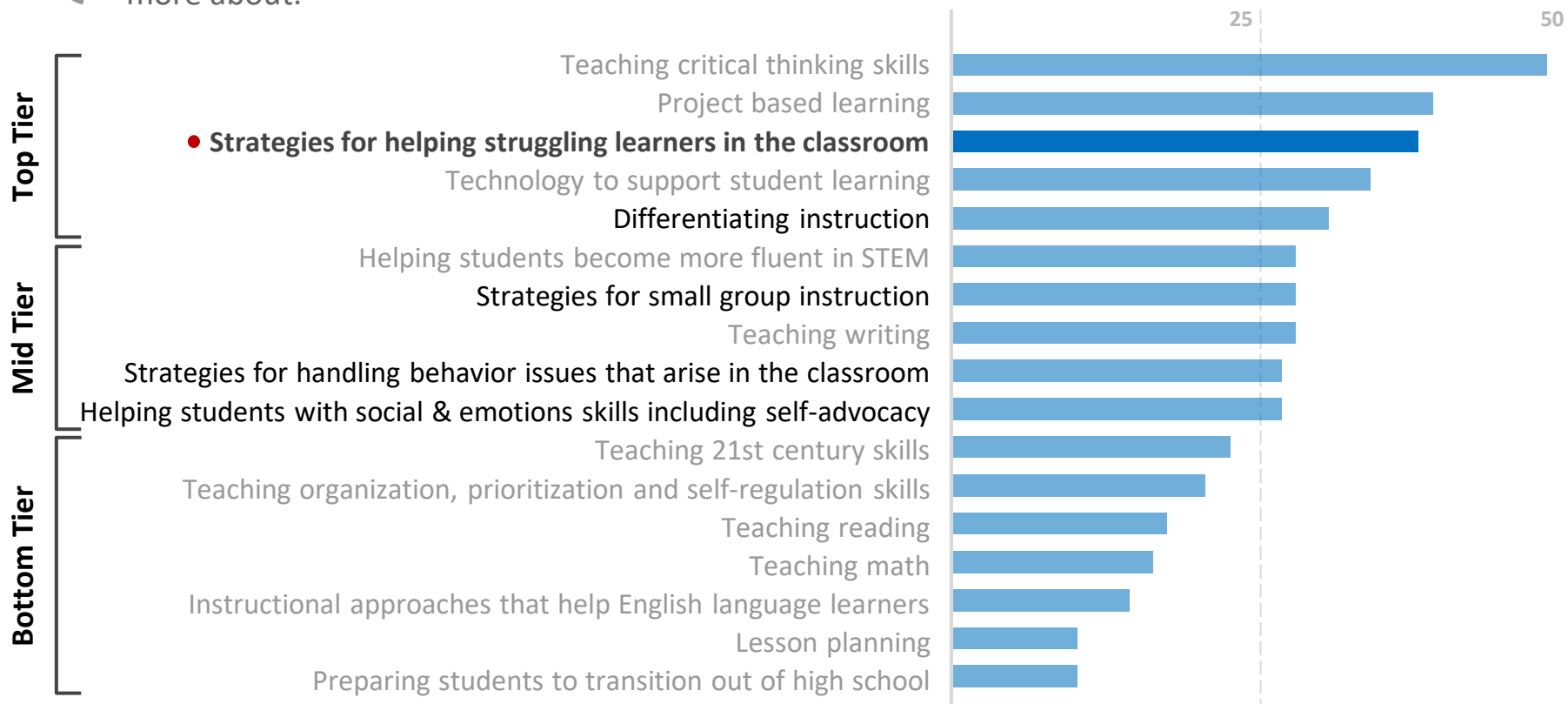


*Truncated for formatting (omitting "Students with" or "Students who are")

But rank interest in learning more about the 1 in 5 in their top choices

Teachers are highly interested in learning about “strategies for supporting struggling learners.”

Q: Please choose up to five topics from the following list that you would be most interested in learning more about.



#4: Teachers' beliefs about inclusion and what the 1 in 5 can achieve vary

Only 50% feel strongly that the 1 in 5 can achieve at grade-level standards

While most teachers feel inclusion benefits students with MMLD, they vary on whether inclusion benefits others



feel inclusion benefits **students with mild to moderate disabilities**

“Bad behavior can be a **deflection** to distract the teacher or other students from what the student can’t do”



feel inclusion benefits **students without mild to moderate disabilities**

“The feeling that **time is being taken away from the other students**”
“Students who are truly struggling to learn are **not receiving the instruction and time they deserve**”



feel inclusion benefits **them as a teacher**

“The challenges of **lack of time and the ability to manage the class** while also handling **behavioral problems or various student needs**”

While all believe the 1 in 5 have a right to access and instruction, only half believe they can meet grade level standards



feel strongly that students with mild to moderate learning disabilities re capable of reaching grade level standards

Not all agreed on whether accommodations **lower the standards** or if they are a **tool to get the struggling students to grade level standards**

Teachers had **mixed reactions** to the statement: *“All students, regardless of whether they have a mild to moderate special need or not, should be expected to be on grade level”*

When it comes to accommodations, the teachers recognized that they are in place to help the struggling student, but **some question if all of the accommodations are needed**

There was also some talk that there should be a **goal of weaning students off their accommodations**

Elementary teachers’ potential mindset is not as strong as upper grades. **Less experienced and urban teachers** also have weaker mindsets regarding student potential

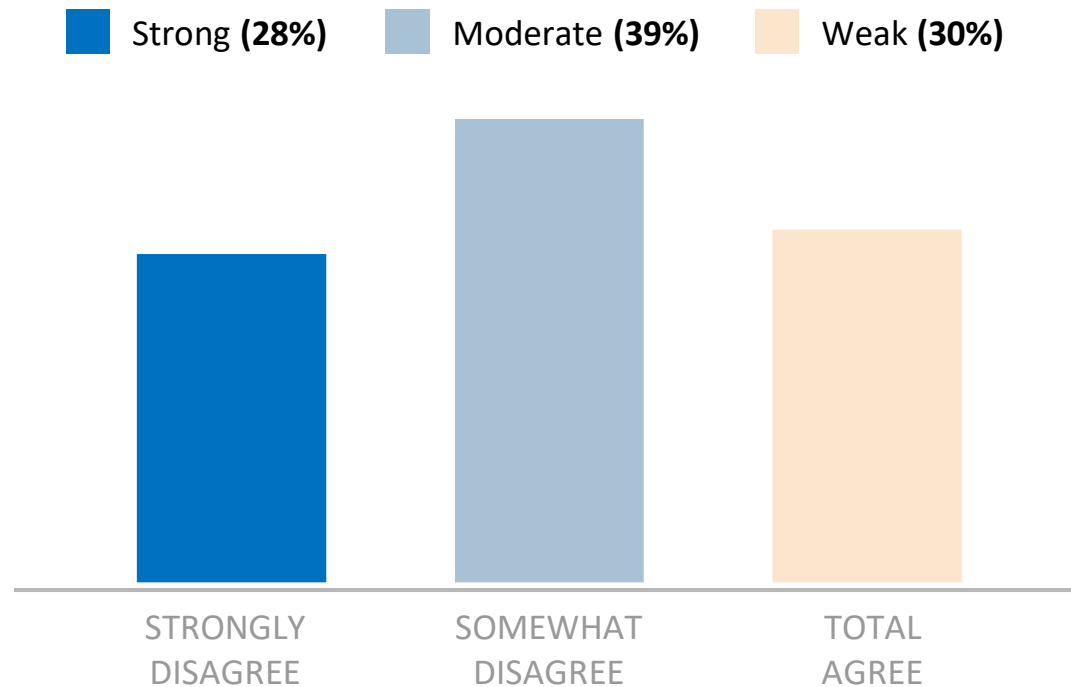
#5: There is a connection between teachers' self-efficacy and their belief mindset

The more experience and belief in their own abilities to be effective, the stronger the teacher's mindset toward inclusion

Teachers show low “Self-Efficacy”

Only 30% of surveyed teachers currently feel strongly that they can be successful with students with mild to moderate learning disabilities when they try their best.

Q: I find that I often do not succeed with my students with mild to moderate learning disabilities even when I try my best



Teachers' own self-efficacy and experience may drive their attitude toward students

Some teachers focused on their **own sense of helplessness or ineffectiveness** in meeting the needs of students with these learning and attention issues, rather than a sense that something was 'wrong' with the students. The greater experience a teacher had, the higher belief they had in students' potential.

“ I struggle ”

*“**Most of the responsibility falls on us.** I know we would like to have parents involved...but I feel like a lot of the responsibility falls on us because **we are the teachers.**”*

– CA K-5 Positive Mindset Teacher

*“We don't get to choose the kids that we get...but whoever I get needs me in some way and it is my job to touch each kid and start where they are and grow them as far as I can get them. **I feel that is what my job is. It doesn't matter what they come to me with. I am supposed to meet them.** Wherever they come to me that is where I start and we grow from there.”*

– NC K-5 Positive Mindset Teacher

WHAT WORKS FOR THE 1 in 5

And works for *all* kids?

Research shows moderate evidence for three critical educator mindsets



Have a **positive orientation towards inclusion** and take responsibility for **all** students in their classes.



Have a strong **sense of self-efficacy**: the belief in their own ability to teach their struggling students successfully



Have a **growth mindset**: the belief that people can improve their intelligence and performance through practice and hard work

- *Believe that they can improve their practice as teachers.*
- *Believe that all of their students can learn.*

Strong evidence for eight key highly effective educator practices

While the review shows strong evidence for some educator skills and behaviors, the list is **not exhaustive** and the items are at **various grain sizes**.



Explicit, targeted instruction makes learning processes systematic, overt, and clear



Universal Design for Learning (UDL) offers a framework to design differentiated learning experiences in flexible ways



Strategy instruction teaches students cognitive strategies and metacognitive strategies for learning content



Positive behavior strategies help teachers better understand and set expectations for student behavior.



Flexible grouping uses data to frequently rearrange students in the classroom according to needs/strengths



Collaboration involves general educators, special educators, specialists, and paraprofessionals working together in service of students



Culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy understands, responds to, incorporates, and celebrates students' cultural references.



Evidence-based content instruction leverages practices based on multisensory, explicit, structured, and sequential content instruction for literacy and math

FORWARD TOGETHER

How can we build teacher
knowledge, skills, and
mindsets?

We all have a role to play to move forward together.

Teachers

**Teacher
Preparation**

School leaders

**District
leaders**

**Families &
Caregivers**

**Teacher
certification**

Policymakers

A few actions we can all take



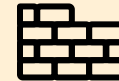
Build a deep understanding of the science of learning and what learning and attention issues are.

- Explore [Understood.org](https://understood.org) and NCLD's [resources](#) and [tools](#) that build educators' [understanding](#) of the 1 in 5.



Learn and promote evidence-based strategies and best practices

- *The 8 Key Practices are a strong start to better reaching and teaching the 1 in 5 across general education and special education.*



Break down silos.

- *We all have a role to play in breaking down the silos of SPED, Gen Ed, family partnerships, school and district administration, teacher preparation, and state and federal policy*

DISCUSSION:

What resonated most?

Was most surprising?

**What additional questions
did it raise?**

School Leader's Guide

The Guide:

Background

We designed the guide to reflect on-the-ground experience and intersectional issues



Two **subject matter experts** were identified and recruited for each “section” of the Guide.




Additional **experts from the following “lenses”** reviewed and provided feedback on the Guide:

Learning Disabilities
Broader Disability
Black and LatinX
Communities
Low-Income Communities
Transition
School Leaders



Individual educators and schools provided vignettes and experiences to ground some of the practices in the Guide.

School Leader's Guide: What It Is

- 
- **Introduction, definition** and **examples** of the mindsets and key practices related to success for the 1 in 5.
 - **Research for why** these mindsets and practices work for the 1 in 5.
 - A **self-assessment (reflection) tool** for leaders to determine how closely their practices align to the practices in the Guide
 - **Next steps** educators might take to strengthen their practices to improve outcomes for the 1 in 5.

School Leader's Guide: What It Is Not



A **comprehensive resource** for professional learning or fully turnkey PD.



A **complete representation** of ALL of the features of high quality instruction for all students, including the 1 in 5

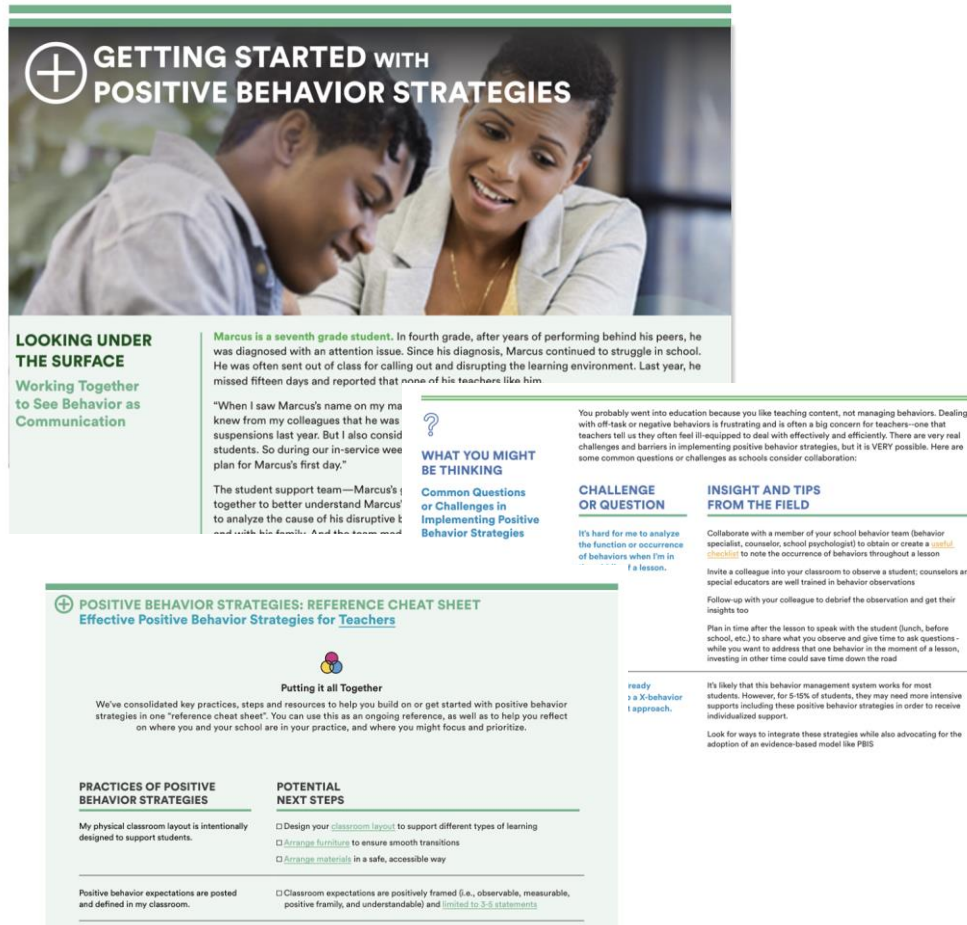


A **replacement for evidence-based instruction** and specialized instruction designed by special educators or related services providers.

The Guide:

How to Use

Structure of the Guide



GETTING STARTED WITH POSITIVE BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES

LOOKING UNDER THE SURFACE
Working Together to See Behavior as Communication

Marcus is a seventh grade student. In fourth grade, after years of performing behind his peers, he was diagnosed with an attention issue. Since his diagnosis, Marcus continued to struggle in school. He was often sent out of class for calling out and disrupting the learning environment. Last year, he missed fifteen days and reported that none of his teachers like him.

"When I saw Marcus's name on my map, I knew from my colleagues that he was suspended last year. But I also considered students. So during our in-service we planned for Marcus's first day."

The student support team—Marcus's teacher, his counselor, and his principal—met with him to discuss his behavior and how to support him.

WHAT YOU MIGHT BE THINKING
Common Questions or Challenges in Implementing Positive Behavior Strategies

You probably went into education because you like teaching content, not managing behaviors. Dealing with off-task or negative behaviors is frustrating and is often a big concern for teachers—one that teachers tell us they often feel ill-equipped to deal with effectively and efficiently. There are very real challenges and barriers in implementing positive behavior strategies, but it is VERY possible. Here are some common questions or challenges as schools consider collaboration:

CHALLENGE OR QUESTION
It's hard for me to analyze the function or occurrence of behaviors when I'm in the middle of a lesson.

INSIGHT AND TIPS FROM THE FIELD
Collaborate with a member of your school behavior team (behavior specialist, counselor, school psychologist) to obtain or create a useful checklist to note the occurrence of behaviors throughout a lesson.

Invite a colleague into your classroom to observe a student; counselors and special educators are well trained in behavior observations.

Follow-up with your colleague to debrief the observation and get their insights too.

Plan in time after the lesson to speak with the student (lunch, before school, etc.) to share what you observe and give time to ask questions - while you want to address that one behavior in the moment of a lesson, investing in other time could save time down the road.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES: REFERENCE CHEAT SHEET
Effective Positive Behavior Strategies for Teachers

Putting it all Together

We've consolidated key practices, steps and resources to help you build on or get started with positive behavior strategies in one "reference cheat sheet". You can use this as an ongoing reference, as well as to help you reflect on where you and your school are in your practice, and where you might focus and prioritize.

PRACTICES OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES	POTENTIAL NEXT STEPS
<p>My physical classroom layout is intentionally designed to support students.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Design your classroom layout to support different types of learning</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Arrange furniture to ensure smooth transitions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Arrange materials in a safe, accessible way</p>
<p>Positive behavior expectations are posted and defined in my classroom.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Classroom expectations are positively framed (i.e., observable, measurable, positive family, and understandable) and limited to 3-5 statements</p>



Establishing Common Beliefs



Building an Inclusive Culture










Implementing Effective Instructional Practices

What Each Section Includes

- **Vignette:** School Based Example
- **What it is:** Defining the Practice
- **Why It Is Important:** For the 1 in 5 and All Students
- **What It Looks Like:** Examples and Frameworks
- **What You Might Be Thinking:** Common Questions and Challenges
- **For Further Growth:** Additional Resources
- **Related PSEL Standard**
- **Inventory for Action:** Checklist of Practices and Next Steps (for Leaders and Teachers)
- **Planning for Action:** Self-Reflection

How to Use the Guide

-  **Read first** for understanding and complete prompts
-  Engage your **leadership team meeting** in a self-reflection
-  **Prioritize one practice**, based on data and feedback , to focus on as a team and school
-  Leverage tools and excerpts for **all-staff meetings** (create a learning sequence over the year to drive to action planning, reflection and practice))
-  Begin with **one grade level, subject, or group of priority students**. Start small, but identify strategies for the target students that can be applied consistently across all classrooms these students are in.
-  Discuss the guide with your **special educator(s) and/or related service provider** colleagues - identify strategies you can collectively take to support implementation of these practices
-  Review the guide with your **district leader and/or regional superintendents** to advocate for district support of critical policies, allocation of professional development investments, consideration of the practices in curriculum decisions, and structure that enable further collaboration

Discussion, Reflection and Moving Forward, Part II

Discussion and Reflection

- ⌘ What questions or comments do you have for Meghan and Shivohn?
- ⌘ What additional questions did the presentations spark for you?

Moving Forward

- ⌘ How could the work and resources Meghan and Shivohn shared be applied in your context?
- ⌘ Do you have resources or work underway that aligns to Meghan and Shivohn's presentations that could help peers?

Conclusion

Thank you for joining us. Please reach out to James M. Paul at james.paul@ccsso.org with any questions about the webisode series. Please join us for upcoming webisodes.

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