Evolution of Change - LD to SLD
Coeur d’Alene School District Experience

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Objectives

- How change began
- What’s working and what’s not
- How we make it work
- Where we would like to go from here...

CDA School District #271

- Our district serves 10,333 students:
  - one Kinder Center
  - 10 elementary schools
  - 3 middle schools
  - 3 high schools
  - a joint professional technical campus with adjoining school districts

- Our School Psychology team includes:
  - 5 full-time psychologists
  - 3 part-time and
  - 1 intern student
Role of CDA School Psychologist

- We work collaborative with our Resource Teachers, Specialists (SLP, OT, PT) on all evaluations.
- Each team member is responsible for their information in the eligibility report.
- The School Psychologist must make sure the student meets eligibility criteria.

Past ...

- Our change began September 29, 2009 with information shared in Southern Idaho (ISPA conference).
  Presentations focus on the multiple aspects of psychological and accommodations and the foundational contributions of RTI.
  Presenters included: Dawn Flanagan and Steven Feifer.

What is a Specific Learning Disability (SLD)?

As Defined by Idaho State Department: A specific learning disability (SLD) means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.
What is a Specific Learning Disability (SLD)? (cont)

Specific learning disability does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage. (34 CFR Sec. 300.8 (c)(10))

Would this student meet Idaho SLD Criteria?

- 6th grade student enters your school with a history of academic struggles and multiple schools (in and out of state). Mom speaks only Spanish at home, dad is bilingual. According to dad, the student was delayed in several areas including not speaking in sentences until he was 3 years old. In addition, his teachers have noted concerns for his inability to complete tasks and rarely is homework completed.

R/O Language Issues
- A. ELL (English Language Learners)
- B. Receptive/Expressive

R/O Executive Functioning Concerns

R/O Lack of Instruction
How: Through interventions and progress monitoring for 9 weeks

R/O Medical
How: Through developmental history/interview with interpreter

R/O Soc/Emotional Concerns
Stressors = multiple moves, friendship issues, family financial concerns

R/O Slow Learner
Nonverbal IQ (GNI)
Panic sets in...

- There was followed up one day training in North Idaho the following March
- Presenters
  - Milton Dehn
  - ID State Dept of Education
  - Northern Regional SpEd Directors
  - School Psychologists

Challenges

- Lack of training
- Lack of time
- Limited resources
- Sense of vagueness of key elements such as which model and how to define a weakness

What helped to support the change...

- Willingness to consider another way to define a Learning Disability
- RTI systems already in place at most elementary schools and “RTI like” systems at the secondary levels (benchmarking, etc.)
- Support of the SpEd Director
- Accountability – through data (ISAT, IRI)
Models – Approaches to SLD Identification

- Discrepancy-Consistency Approach Using PASS Theory (Naglieri, Das, & Kirby)*
- RTI & Cognitive Hypothesis Testing (Concordance-Discordance Model) (Hall, Wycoff, & Fiorello)*
- Ability-Achievement Consistency Model (CHC Theory) (Flanagan, Alfonso, & Mascolo)*
- Milton Dehen Model (Dehn)

*Essential of Specific Learning Disability Identification, 2011

Ability Achievement Consistency Model
(Cattell-Horn-Carrol Theory)

Evidence of a Processing Strength or Weakness
(Milton Dehn)

- Both intra-individual and normative scores to be considered a strength or weakness
- A low score in a process is not necessarily a deficit indicative of LD, unless it’s also an intra-individual weakness
Other Concerns and Limitations

- Lack of training for District Staff
- No time for training
- North vs. South
  - Dehn Model - PSW
  - CHC Model

Fidelity of the Model

- Consensus: The model used wasn’t as important as the fidelity of the model in place.
- Agreed that Idaho teams would accept the eligibility decisions of different regions of the state as long as criteria was met.

Out of district IEP students...

- Sufficiency Review:
  - Review of IEP – Services
  - Review of Eligibility Report
  - Notation of Relevant Information (s/a outside eval)
- As a team (including parents) discuss eligibility
- Plan: If meets eligibility ~ W/N and continue services
  - If doesn’t meet ~ Continue FAPE, gather documentation and document plan in a W/N
Challenges: District Staff Training

- School Psych Professional Development
- RTI – Elementary and Secondary Levels
  - Elementary level started in 2000 with 3 pilot schools – has grown from there
  - As a district, data decisions become more important (Title One, Level system at Elementary and Secondary level ~ Accountability)
- Tools = Aims Web, Benchmarking, ISATs

Skill Level Demands

- Understanding CHC Model or PSW Model
- Understanding what our tests are measuring and how
- Understanding achievement deficits
- Understanding how the process is interconnected to each other
- Understanding how to connect deficits to intervention that work

Is Digit Span of the WISC IV an example of Working Memory? (Digits forward and backwards)
What are the differences between long-term, short-term, and working memory?

- According to Cowan: Short-term memory "reflects faculties of the human mind that can hold a limited amount of information in a very accessible state temporarily."
- Working Memory: According to Miller (Miller et al. (1960), is memory used to plan and carry out behavior.
- According to Cowan, Working Memory includes short-term memory and other processing mechanisms.

Why......

- Learning disabilities involve brain processes, not artificial delineations between aptitude and achievement
- Aptitude-Achievement discrepancy models generate little information for IEP development
- Curriculum based measurement are fluency assessment which tell where a student lies with respect to curriculum. Not why.

Example: What is a Math Disability?

- Refers to children with markedly poor skills at deploying basic computational processes used to solve equations (Haskell, 2000). These may include deficits with:
  - Poor language & verbal retrieval skills
  - Weakness in: Working memory skills
  - Faulty visual spatial skills
  - **Weakness in: Executive functioning skills**
A Math Struggle Involving Executive Functioning may struggle with...

Processes of Executive Functioning

- Selective Attention
- Retrieval Fluency
- Planning Skills
- Self-Monitoring
- Organizational Skills

Selective Attention

Brain Region

Anterior Cingulate

Can present in the student as...

- Procedural/algorithm knowledge impaired
- Poor attention to math operational signs
- Place value misalignment
Dorsolateral Prefrontal Cortex

**Planning Skills**

- Poor estimation skills
- Selection of operational processes impaired
- Difficulty determining salient information in word problems

**Organizational Skills**

- Inconsistent lining up math equations
- Frequent erasers
- Difficulty setting up problems

**Self Monitoring**

- Limited double-checking of work
- Unaware of plausibility to a response
- Inability to transcode operations such as \((4 \times 9) = (4 \times 10) - 4\)

Can present in the student as…
How our state addressed challenges?
- Submission of one report from each district for review
- School Psychologists serve on peer review committee
- School Psy Symposium – Recorded Webinar and Handouts
- Academic Assessment by SLD Eligibility Areas of Concern
- SLD Eligibility report examples
  http://idahotc.com/specific-learning-disability

Professional Development
- We have a professional responsibility to seek out and engage in professional development
- School Psychologist roles should also involve providing professional development to staff
**Staff Development**

- Helping staff (teachers, principals, support staff) realize why the change (SLD) and the importance of process monitoring and implementation of researched or evidence based interventions (vs. accommodations)

**Staff Misconceptions**

**Accommodations or modification?**
- Sit near teacher
- Verbally give answers
- Use calculator
- Open book for quizzes and tests
- Use multiplication/hundreds chart, number line
- Reduce work
- Repeat directions
- More time

- Shorten assignment
- Re-do assignments, quizzes, tests
- Extra practice time with a volunteer
- Allow the student to retake the test or re-do the paper
- Use graphic organizers
- Take tests in an isolated setting to reduce test anxieties
- Allow the student to type answers

**Atlas Elementary Presentation**

- General Overview of Special Education
- General Overview of RTI Tier Model
- Tier Curriculum defined for Atlas Elementary
- RTI Flow Chart defined for Atlas
- Example goal writing, realistic growth
- Example graph with aim line, trend line, etc.
- Questions & Discussion
Looking Back.....
- A child’s intelligence was defined by one number — their IQ
- For a child to get help, they had to be identified as “Special Ed”

Special Education Manual 2007
- State Eligibilities continues to include 15 “categories” such as Autism, Hearing Impaired
- Biggest change in eligibility requirements has been with the identification of a learning disability
- Almost everything we do in Special Education is defined by Federal laws

Specific Learning Disability (SLD)
- Must involve a basic psychological process involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language
- A student is eligible for SpEd services (SLD) when:
  - They fail to respond to researched based interventions
  - There is data to demonstrate the problem is ongoing and severe (documented through intervention plans & progress monitoring graphs which includes a baseline, trendline, phaseline, and decision rules).
  - The student requires resources beyond those available in the general education
  - Specialized instruction (Special Education) is needed
Additional criteria for SLD

- Must exhibit a pattern of cognitive strengths and weaknesses in performance. Cannot be a "slow learner".
- Lack of learning should not be due to:
  - Lack of opportunity to learn (such as poor attendance, moving around a lot, ineffective "home schooling")
  - Not due to vision, hearing or motor difficulties
  - Not due to a Cognitive Impairment
  - Not due to an Emotional Disturbance
  - No environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage
  - Does not have Limited English Proficiency

Cognitive Strength & Weakness Example

Special Education SLD

Is not intended to target "slow learners" (students who have limited cognitive processes in the average range).
Review of RTI Model

Core Concept of RTI...
- Students receive high quality instruction in their general education setting
- General education instructors and staff assume an active role in students’ assessment
- School staff conduct universal screening
- Continuous progress monitoring
- Decisions are based on data

Where are we going?
Change...

“Stop asking me if we’re almost there; we’re Nomads, for crying out loud.”

Working together to build success

Building strong foundations while working together for our children
RTI Process Review for Atlas Elementary

- **Step 1**: Complete a “Request for problem solving” referral on the N drive.
- **Step 2**: Meet with your grade level and discuss your referral.
- **Step 3**: At your grade level, write the initial I-Plan.
- **Step 4**: The classroom teacher will be the case manager.
  - Teacher will contact parents and share I-Plan goals and interventions that have been put into place.
  - Teacher will contact the RTI calendar person. The calendar person will place the student on the calendar for the Follow-up meeting.
  - Teacher will graph weekly progress unless the student is already being progressed monitored by a different teacher.
RTI Process (contd)

- **Step 5:** The calendar person will notify the classroom teacher of the Follow-up RTI date with the RTI team.

- **Step 6:** Attend the Follow-up RTI meeting. Classroom teacher will call and invite the parent(s) to this meeting.

- **Step 7:** RTI team will either:
  - Discontinue the I-Plan
  - Write a new goal
  - Refer to MDT (evaluate for special education)
  - Other:
    - Schedule another Follow-up meeting, if needed.

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**I-Plan Example**

**Goal Rate of Improvement Example -- Reading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Realistic</th>
<th>Ambitious</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0 words/week</td>
<td>3.0 words/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5 words/week</td>
<td>2.0 words/week</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.0 words/week</td>
<td>1.5 words/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.85 words/week</td>
<td>1.1 words/week</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>.5 words/week</td>
<td>.8 words/week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reasonable Growth Measures:**

- **Reading**
  - Oral Reading Fluency
  - Maze
  - Nonsense Word Fluency
### Math

#### M-COMP (computation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Realistic</th>
<th>Ambitious</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5 point/week</td>
<td>.7 point/week</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.4 point/week</td>
<td>.6 point/week</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.5 point/week</td>
<td>.7 point/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.5 point/week</td>
<td>.7 point/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>.3 point/week</td>
<td>.5 point/week</td>
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</table>

#### M-CAP (concepts and applications)

<table>
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<th>Realistic</th>
<th>Ambitious</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>.2 point/week</td>
<td>.4 point/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.1 point/week</td>
<td>.3 point/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>.1 point/week</td>
<td>.3 point/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>.08 point/week</td>
<td>.2 point/week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Goal Rate of Improvement Example -- Math

#### Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Realistic</th>
<th>Ambitious</th>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0.38 words/week</td>
<td>0.5 words/week</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>0.34 words/week</td>
<td>0.4 words/week</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>0.32 words/week</td>
<td>0.4 words/week</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>0.28 words/week</td>
<td>0.3 words/week</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Realistic</th>
<th>Ambitious</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5 letters/week</td>
<td>0.7 letters/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.3 letters/week</td>
<td>0.5 letters/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.5 letters/week</td>
<td>0.8 letters/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.4 letters/week</td>
<td>0.6 letters/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.2 letters/week</td>
<td>0.5 letters/week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Legal Cautionary Stuff...

- **RTI is not a Prerequisite for Receiving Special Ed Services**

  Art Cernosia, Esq., presented on Evaluation and Eligibility which highlighted relevant case law in the area. Of particular note was the *El Paso Indep. Sch. Dist. v. Richard R.*, 2008 decision. The court found that the district failed in its child find efforts under IDEA. The student had multiple indicators of failure on state assessments, poor marks in multiple subjects, and continued difficulty even with 504 accommodations. The court found that the school should have suspected the student had a disability. The court also found that that when the parent requested a special education evaluation, and the school claimed that local policy was not to do an evaluation at that time and instead consider other interventions prior to the evaluation, the IDEA over-rode district procedures.
United States Supreme Court held that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) authorizes reimbursement for private special education services when a public school fails to provide a "free appropriate public education" (FAPE) and the private school placement is appropriate, regardless of whether the child previously received special education services through the public school.  
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forest_Grove_School_District_v._T._A

Respondent was evaluated by a school psychologist. After interviewing him, examining his school records, and administering cognitive ability tests, the psychologist concluded that respondent did not need further testing for any learning disabilities or other health impairment, including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).”

"The hearing examiner later found that the school district’s evaluation was legally inadequate because it failed to address all areas of suspected disability, including ADHD."
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forest_Grove_School_District_v._T._A

CDA Collaboration every Monday  
Book Study (Cross-Battery book, etc.)  
Case examples

At the State Level:
ISPA Conference  
Northern ISPA  
Peer Review SLD (3)  
School Psych Symposium (3)
Where we would like to go from here

- Tackle continuing challenges
  - State SpEd % = 10% vs. CDA District SpEd % = 8%
  - Misunderstanding of the intent of RTI (SLD, not CI, OHI)
    - RTI is being used when LD not considered
  - RTI model needs to be more standardized across the district
  - New Principal = New approach to how RTI is implemented
  - Fidelity of RIT ~ Interventions ~ Progress Monitoring
  - Report needs to be more parent friendly

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Cattell-Horn-Carroll (CHC) Theory of Intelligence

- Gc: Comprehension Knowledge (Verbal Comp; General Information)
- Gsm: Short-term memory (Number Reverse, Memory for Word)
- Gv: Visual Spatial Processing (Spatial Relations; Picture Recognition)
- Glr: Long-term Retrieval (Retrieval Fluency; Visual Auditory Learning)
- Ga: Auditory Processing (Sound Blending; Auditory Attention)
- Gs: Processing Speed (Decision Speed; Visual Matching)
- Gf: Fluid Reasoning (Concept formation; Analysis Synthesis)

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Linking CHC to Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Abilities</th>
<th>Possible Interventions</th>
<th>Possible Accommodations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gc</td>
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# Academic Assessments by SLD Eligibility Areas of Concern

## Academic Area of Concern: Basic Reading

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Test Name</th>
<th>Subtests</th>
<th>Descriptors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woodcock Johnson-III  Tests of Achievement (WJ-III)</td>
<td>Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>Measures vocabulary, reading, word recognition and language production skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Includes reading comprehension questions about each story read</td>
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A Brief Review ...

- How our process began
- Challenges
- Professional Development
- Tools

http://idahotc.com/specific-learning-disability

- Questions?