Evaluation Systems for special education and ELL teachers

Challenges and potential solutions

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Fundamental Components

- Legally defensible
- Perceived as fair
- Encourages teachers to work with students with disabilities and ELL students
- Promotes excellence in teaching students with disabilities and ELL students, both in general and special education
Value-added Models

- Are they legally defensible?
  - General education teachers account for about 20 percent of the variance in student performance
  - However, this 20 percent is comprised of the contributions made by the teacher, class composition, and measurement error
  - For self-contained teachers working in reading and math, reliability estimates range from .30 to .50

(Goldhaber, 2009; Hill, Rowan, & Ball, 2005; Roehrig, Brownell, & Schatschneider, 2010)
Value-added models

- Are they legally defensible?
  - Students with disabilities spend the majority of their day in general education
  - Time spent in instruction and instructional group size moderate the relationship between special education teacher effectiveness and student achievement

(Brownell et al., 2007; Danielson, McLaughlin, Brownell, & Fuchs, 2010; Steinbrecher, 2009)
Value-added models

- Are they perceived as fair?
  - The quality instruction that special education and ELL teachers provide could be impeded by poor general education instruction.
  - Plus, constraints on instructional time, caseloads, and other poor working conditions in special education influence the degree to which special education teachers can apply what they have learned.
  - Special education teachers often have little input into co-teaching and collaborative instructional situations.

(Boardman et al., 2010; Weiss, 1999)
Value-added models

- Are they perceived as fair?
  - Special education and ELL teachers may view themselves as contributing to the achievement gains of the students, but those contributions may not be recognized.
One special educator’s view of fairness

“...We work with general education teachers in inclusive settings; however, we did not share in the bonus. . . . I know for a fact that without our assistance some of those teachers on my campus would have not been rewarded. I do tutor for TAKS and I know of at least one teacher that wouldn’t have gotten a large bonus without the Special Education resource teacher helping the students in that class pass TAKS.”

(Prince, Schuermann, Guthrie, Witham, Milanowski, & Thorn, 2009)
Value-added models

- Will they encourage special education and ELL teachers to enter the profession?
  - Salary matters in decisions to select teaching as a career and to remain
  - Shortages of special education teachers are chronic, ranging from 10 to 13 percent

- Do they promote excellence in teaching?

(Chait & Miller, 2009; Muralidharan and Venkatesh Sundararaman, 2009)
More Defensible Framework for Compensation

- Includes student measures of performance, both academic and behavioral
  - state assessments
  - more sensitive academic measures, including growth on alternative assessments
  - office referrals, suspensions and expulsion, school completion rates

- Accounts for contributions of individual students, peers, and all teachers
More Defensible Frameworks

- Includes a classroom observation system that is sensitive to content taught and needs of students
  - Some evidence that what characterizes “good instruction” changes based on the students
- Incorporates administrator and possibly peer evaluation
- Addresses individual, peer, and school-wide incentives

(Brownell et al., 2007, 2009; Griffin, Jitendra, & League, 2009; O’Connor, Fulmer, Harty, & Bell, 2005)
More Defensible Frameworks

- More extensive preparation in special education
- Preparation in the content knowledge needed for teaching
- Put in place systems that support quality teaching
  - Currently, educational systems do little to improve teacher effectiveness; teacher experience seems to matter little except for special education teachers

(Feng & Sass, 2009; Goldhaber, 2009; Steinbrecher, 2009)
A Better System is Possible, but do we have the political will?