State your inquiry questions: If...then...

Our overarching If...then question for the project:
If we (classroom teachers, resource teachers, administration and system partners) work collaboratively through inquiry to review the impact of existing IEP’s on classroom instruction and explore the learning process required in achieving math curriculum expectations then students with a learning profile of Learning Disabilities will be better able to achieve learning goals.

How has the inquiry impacted your board’s practice of:
• “knowing the students” and “students knowing themselves as learners” through an integrated assessment and instruction process
• continuous improvement of IEPs and transition planning?

- Staff have an extended awareness of students with Learning Disabilities and the individual strengths and needs within that profile.
- Staff recognize that IEPs must be continuously reviewed and updated to reflect current strengths and needs and teaching strategies appropriate to each individual.
- Allowing each team to focus on a smaller number of students encouraged them to look more deeply at the actual learning progress for each of these students. This in turn led to great success for each of these students which becomes reinforcement for this practice.
- Staff were given opportunities to examine their own attitudes toward mathematics. This allowed the group to effectively explore the impact of mind set on both teaching and learning.
- Staff grew in their understanding of current best practices in teaching Mathematics.
- Staff have new understanding of effective teaching practices in mathematics for students with Learning Disabilities.
- Staff expressed that they feel more assured and confident in their teaching practices.
What evidence supports the above outcomes (board level, school level, classroom level)?

Teachers provided and shared evidence through various documentation of evidence (e.g., photos, technology, videos, chart paper, samples of math work, etc.)

Teachers also provided feedback through an anonymous survey:
Examples of comments:

“I used to think that there were fairly broad teaching solutions for students with LD profile. Now I think that surgical precision is necessary.”

“I used to think that learning tasks were grade specific. Now I think that tasks can be used across various grades to meet various expectations.”

“I used to think I was differentiating for my students. Now i think I can do better! There are more strategies and the IEP will help me to focus with them.”

“I used to think that students could only demonstrate their learning through pictures, numbers, and words. Now I think they can talk it out, draw it, show it with manipulatives, do a slideshow, use technology.”

“We didn’t know what we didn’t know.”

What has changed (in student learning and/or teacher learning)? How do you know?

- Increased awareness of the role of the Individual Education Plan and how to write an effective IEP,
- Increased ownership of the IEP within the school,
- Increased educator efficacy related to instructional strategies in mathematics (IE. Resource teacher, Classroom teacher, Administration)
- Increased understanding of the range of strengths and needs within the Learning Disability diagnosis and connecting this understanding to the choice of instructional strategies in math
- Increased awareness of gathering and monitoring evidence of learning.
- Feedback from participants indicated a wide range of learning, understanding of student profiles and supportive teaching strategies.
- Teachers indicated there were strategies that are appropriate to individual students of many different profiles. “Essential for some, good for all.”
What new questions have arisen as a result of your project this year?

Sample responses from the various learning teams:

“How can I better adapt lessons and build in activities that will engage all learners?”

“How can I use technology more effectively to engage students and to improve my assessment techniques?”

“How can we continue to plan rich tasks at the appropriate level and further address executive functioning issues for our students with LD profile?”

Additional Comments

Our project will continue next school year. Staff felt that they had only scratched the surface and wanted the opportunity to go deeper. They especially wanted to examine the role of technology.