

Special Education Funding & Service Delivery in Vermont

Testimony of
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(University of Vermont)
to the Education Committee of the Vermont Senate
February 11, 2015
Montpelier, Vermont

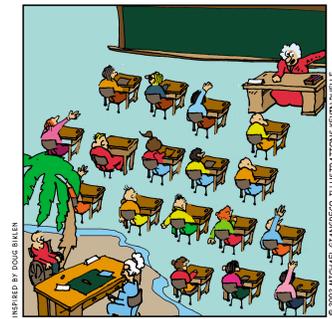
Funding Special Education

Concerns with the current reimbursement-based model of funding special education:

- unnecessarily burdensome & time consuming
- interferes with innovation
- incentivizes identifying students as “disabled”
- escalating “gamesmanship”
- drives practices in unhelpful ways
- hidden costs in personnel time

Equitable Access to Inclusive Schooling Opportunities

- Regular Class Placement Range for Students with Disabilities = 48% - >90% (for VT Supervisory Unions; wider by school)
- Misunderstanding or misapplication of LRE (Least Restrictive Environment) provisions of IDEA (see text, p. 8)
- Inclusion varies by disability category and age
- Even in regular class “micro-exclusion” occurs

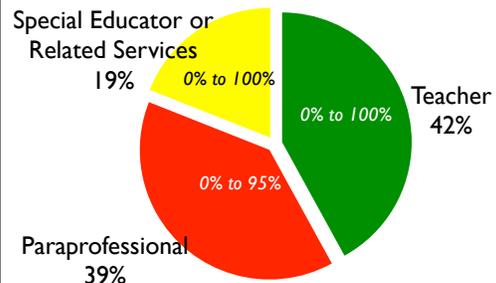


INSPIRED BY DOUG BILLEN
© 2009 MICHAEL GIANGRECO, ILLUSTRATIONS KEITH RUELLE
ISLAND IN THE MAINSTREAM
MRS. JONES AND MRS. COOPER ARE STILL TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHY FRED DOESN'T FEEL LIKE PART OF THE CLASS.

Equitable Access to Educational Supports from Highly Qualified Personnel

- Inverse relationship between intensity of special education need and access to highly qualified personnel
- Students with more intensive needs tend to get an increasing percentage of instruction from paraprofessionals
- Would this be acceptable for students without disabilities?

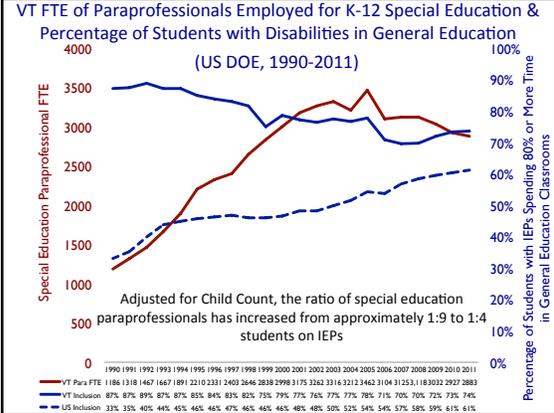
Average Instructional Time for Students with Disabilities Receiving 1:1 Supports in Regular Class
(n = 365 students)



We have created a system that has increasingly relied on paraprofessionals to function.

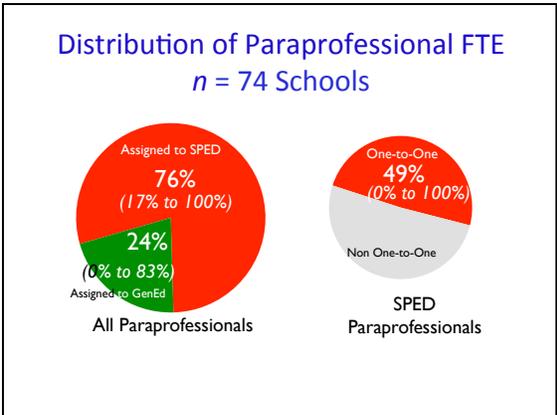
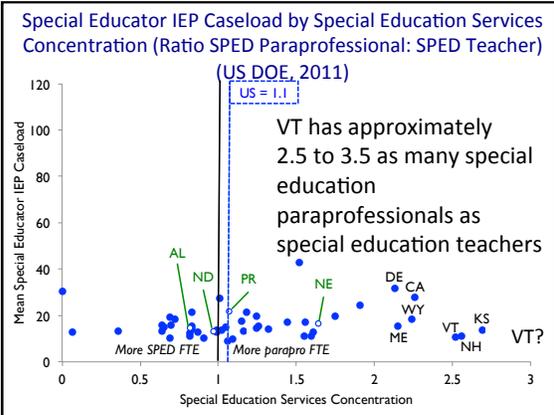
Interrelated Points & Data...

CAN QUALITY INCLUSIVE EDUCATION BE SUPPORTED ON THE BACKS OF PARAPROFSSIONALS?



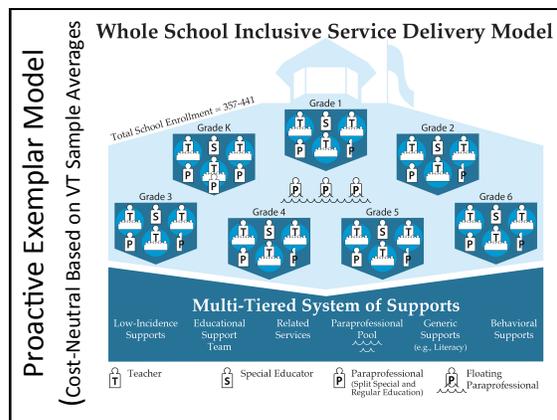
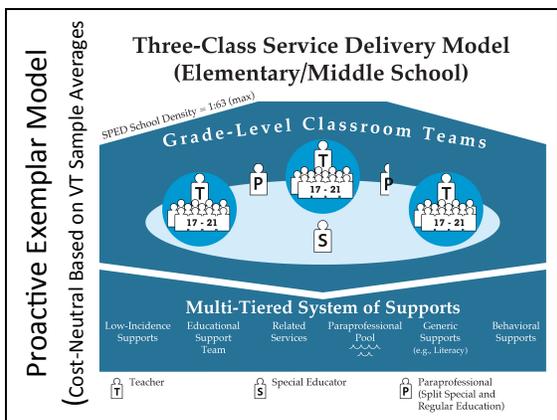
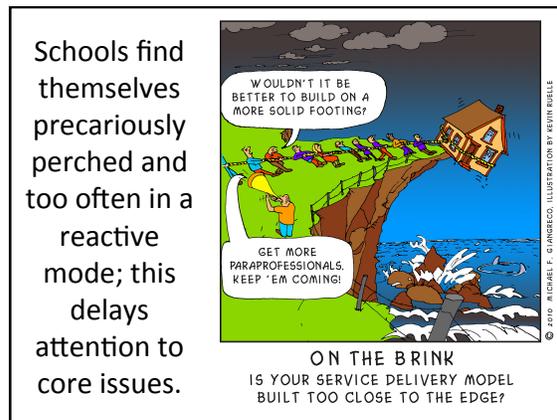
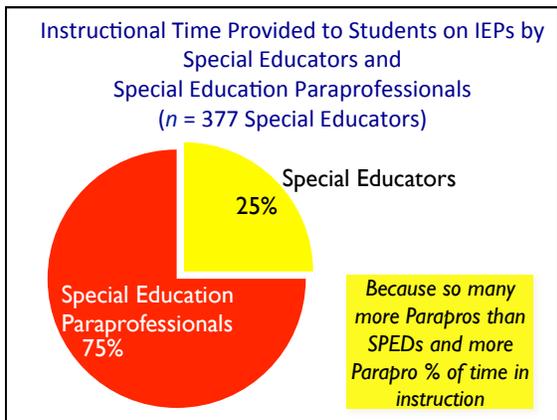
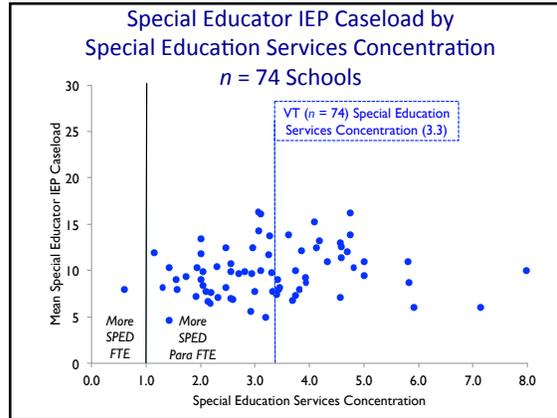
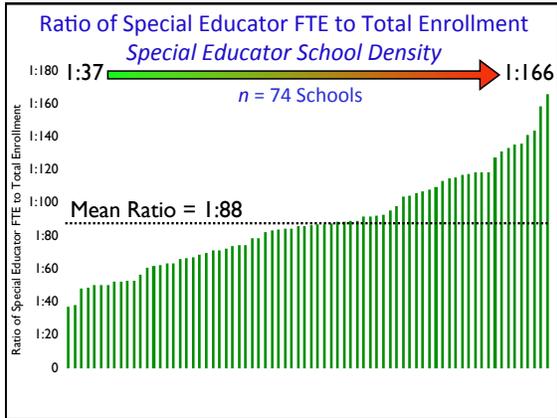
Paraprofessionals are valued in schools, but are not always used wisely (e.g., questionable roles, insufficient training, insufficient supervision).

GREAT PARAPROFSSIONALS, USED WISELY, ARE WORTH THEIR WEIGHT IN GOLD!

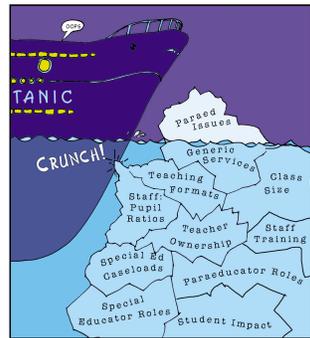


Research documents unintended detrimental effects of 1:1 paraprofessional supports.

JOEY NOTICED A MYSTERIOUS FORCE FIELD AROUND HIS ASSISTANT THAT CHILDREN COULD NOT BREAK THROUGH.



Cautions (see text)



PARAEDUCATOR ISSUES:
JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG

Potential Actions (see text)



CLEARING A PATH
FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
CLEARS THE PATH FOR EVERYONE!