

AR CO-TEACHING PROJECT ADVISORY REPORT JANUARY 2017

The Arkansas Co-Teaching Project continues to provide a tiered system of support to staff at schools interested in starting a co-teaching program or improving the fidelity of an existing program. A number of special education supervisors, principals, and co-teachers have taken advantage of the Tier 1 supports this fall. These supports include telephone and email technical assistance, informational resources, and access to the DVD co-teaching library. Many of these contacts were made as a result of the information posted on the Arkansas Co-Teaching Project's and the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) Special Education Unit's websites. Other contacts were made as a result of the collaboration between the ADE School Improvement Unit and the ADE Special Education Unit. The units regularly work together to provide support to schools identified as Needs Improvement Priority, and LRE targeted schools.

At this point in time, administrators from five districts who initially made contact for Tier 1 support have decided to access Tier 2 supports in the spring. These supports include a co-teaching overview, implementation planning professional development sessions, and onsite consultation. The administrators intend to access these services to address fidelity issues within their existing co-teaching programs. It is expected that some of these administrators may, as a result of their spring planning, decide to access Tier 3 supports in the fall of 2017. Tier 3 supports are the most intensive services provided and include year-long professional development packages with onsite coaching and other activities. The year-long professional development package is offered during the fall, and the activities occur throughout the school year.

In addition to responding to individuals who contact the Arkansas Co-Teaching Project directly, the project team is in the process of finalizing plans for a spring marketing plan to increase awareness of the services provided. The marketing plan will focus on increasing the awareness of the co-teaching model and its benefits for students with disabilities. In addition, Tier 2 activities are being planned to provide basic information on implementing the model for the first time or improving the fidelity of existing programs.

These activities are in addition to the Arkansas Co-Teaching Project's current Tier 3 intensive year-long professional development package, Boundless Learning Co-Teaching (BLC). Fifteen schools from nine school districts are currently participating in this professional development package. These include Cooper Elementary, Bentonville High School, Bentonville West High School (Bentonville District), Hill Farm Elementary (Bryant District), Crossett High School, Crossett Middle School (Crossett District), Marvel-Elaine High School (Marvel-Elaine District), Mountain Home Junior High (Mountain Home District), Jimmy Brown Elementary, Star City Middle School, Star City High School (Star City District), Park Avenue Elementary (Stuttgart District), Truman Intermediate, Trumann High School (Trumann District), and Vilonia Freshman Academy (Vilonia District).

BLC is offered to Arkansas schools as a result of a partnership between the Arkansas Co-Teaching Project and Johns Hopkins University's Center for Technology in Education (JHU CTE). For the 2016-17 school year, schools were able to choose between two blended, year-long, comprehensive professional development packages. Both packages are designed to assist schools in creating sustainable, effective co-teaching programs.

- Basic Boundless Learning Co-Teaching (BLC) - The Basic BLC blended package is designed to create co-teacher partnerships that work together to build a 21st century co-

teaching team in which each member is clear about the team's mission, goals, and roles. It includes a formal Kick-Off session, facilitated, online, competency-based modules (online learning events or "OLEs") for co-teachers; electronic learning communities for co-teachers and administrators, on-site co-teaching coaching visits, virtual administrators' support meetings, and a comprehensive implementation evaluation process. General and special education co-teaching partners and their principal or designated assistant principal from six of the 15 schools chose to participate in this package.

- Combined Boundless Learning Co-Teaching (BLC). The Combined BLC package includes all the components of the Basic package as well as a new School-Based Facilitator's BLC package. With the Combined BLC package, literacy and math facilitators or building administrators participate in their own online learning events (OLEs) to learn how to provide ongoing support to BLC co-teachers while strengthening their skills in coaching adults and working effectively with administrators. Nine of the 15 schools choose to participate in the Combined BLC package. In these schools, the current literacy and/or math facilitators or building administrators are being trained to provide onsite facilitative support to their co-teachers.

The professional development activities began with a series of Kick Off face-to-face traditional sessions during September 2016. During the morning portion of the sessions, participating administrators and co-teachers were provided with basic information about the co-teaching model. In the afternoon, co-teachers began their first OLE under the guidance of members of the professional development team from JHU CTE and the Arkansas Co-Teaching Project. Administrators and literacy and math facilitators met with the remaining team members to review implementation planning and discuss strategies for providing co-teachers with release time to complete the OLEs and for providing performance feedback. In addition, the team and participating administrators began preliminary scheduling for the first onsite coaching visit.

As of January 2017, the majority of the participating co-teachers have completed their first four OLEs. By completing these OLEs, co-teachers developed protocols for working collaboratively with each other, applied the Team Based Cycle of Instruction in co-taught lesson plans, and completed a spreadsheet planning tool that listed individual students' strengths, required accommodations, and teacher identified successful instructional strategies.

The OLEs are facilitated by JHU CTE and Arkansas Co-Teaching Project team members. This process provides co-teachers and facilitators with immediate feedback on their submitted work and opportunities to engage in dialogue with each other and the professional development teams in the electronic learning community.

In addition to ongoing feedback and email communication, all 15 schools have received their first onsite coaching visit. The focus of these visits was to provide co-teachers and facilitators with feedback on their application of OLE learning and to assist administrators in implementation planning. All 15 schools will receive at least one more onsite coaching visit. Differentiated support is available as needed, so some schools will receive additional site visits to address implementation issues.

In addition to the support provided to co-teachers, two virtual meetings have been provided to administrators and facilitators at participating schools. The focus of the meetings has been to review how to access and utilize materials posted in the Boundless Learning Co-Teaching site.

Participants also reviewed the OLE content and were provided strategies for supporting co-teachers in implementing what they've learned. The majority of administrators have participated in the live webinars. Recordings of these virtual meetings are available in the administrators' section of the Boundless Learning Co-Teaching online site.

During the September Kick-Off sessions, implementation evaluation data was collected from the administrators and co-teachers using the Needs Assessment/Action Planning Checklist and Colorado Assessment of Co-Teaching (CO-ACT) surveys. The pre-assessment data collected in September has been compiled and the data summarized into cohort and individual school reports. The individual school report summaries along with recommendations for improvement will be disseminated to participating schools during January 2017. The surveys will be administered again at the end of the school year. The pre/post data comparisons will enable the professional development teams and school administrators to measure changes in the co-taught classrooms and building/district level support for the co-teaching programs. Final grades of students with and without disabilities will also be collected as a means of demonstrating the impact of co-teaching model.

Federal Deafblind Grant - CAYSI (Children and Youth with Sensory Impairment and other disabilities)

- The CAYSI Project has received 32 referrals since January 2016. 16 students have been found eligible, 4 were found ineligible and 11 are outstanding.
- The annual Deafblind Census forms have been sent to the District Special Education Supervisors for review and update. Submission to the National Center for Deafblindness is May 1, 2017. Currently, CAYSI has 192 children on the registry.
- Parent groups in Siloam Springs, Little Rock, and Osceola have continued with topics around their child's communication needs and learning how they can effectively tell their story to individuals and groups.
- SPARKLE parent training is being planned for Mountain View in partnership with The Center for Exceptional Families and Arkansas' new Deafblind Family Leadership group.
- Arkansas' Deafblind Family Leadership is in the process of building a family network to increase awareness of the needs of children with dual sensory impairment and other disabilities. An application to become an affiliate of the National Family Association of Deafblindness will be submitted in the New Year.
- CAYSI welcomes Jennifer Walkup, Special Education teacher from the Pulaski County Special School District, as our new Education Consultant. Jennifer joined our team January 3, 2017.

Professional Development Activities

- Six **Special Education Training Modules** have been developed by a committee of Arkansas school district and agency special education personnel and finalized by the American Institutes for Research (AIR). These Modules were filmed in December 2016 and are under production at AETN at this time. It is anticipated that these Modules will be available to provide high quality professional development for paraprofessionals and all educational personnel with access to the Arkansas IDEAS Portal system in the Spring of 2017.
- Currently, the ADE-SEU supports students seeking certification as Speech Language Pathologists and Visual Specialists for Arkansas public schools through its Tuition Reimbursement programs. The ADE's Memorandums of Understanding with out-of-state programs allow certified Arkansas teachers to work toward licensure as Visual Specialists and Hearing Specialists. Staff at ADE-SEU work closely with personnel at ADHE to share information on teacher tuition programs that encourage new personnel to enter the field and current educators to acquire special education licensure.
- SEU Professional Development continues to actively participate with the ADE's Teacher **Recruitment and Retention** program and the ADE Licensure Unit to attract and support persons interested in becoming special education teachers. On October 10, 2016 a "Become an Arkansas Teacher" event was held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Little Rock from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. In December of 2016, a series of four additional targeted regional Recruitment/Retention events were held at selected Educational Cooperatives (Monticello, West Helena, Camden and Hope) across the state. The ADE-SEU participated at each of these events.
- The ADE-SEU continues to support **Educational Interpreters** in Arkansas. The first State organized EIPA assessment opportunity for interpreters working in educational settings is scheduled for January 21 and 22, 2017 in Springdale. The ADE-SEU team is working to expand its support for Educational Interpreters and Arkansas schools to meet the new standards.