



“The leadership dimension most closely linked to student achievement is leader involvement in teacher learning” (Robinson et al., 2008, p. 33).

Educational and instructional leadership is hard. Leading in isolation is even harder, and instructional leaders often need to make complex decisions. How does someone make sound decisions and drive instructional practices in a building when he or she may be the only one in a leadership position? The answers may seem obvious: collaborate, find a mentor or group of leaders in a similar position, share resources, and work through tough situations together. School leaders will find these practices will have a positive impact and help them to avoid leading in isolation.

The world (and education) is more connected than ever before, and because of all of the virtual instruction in the past few years, there is an abundance of online resources that are free and available on-demand. These are resources to provide you a strong foundation for being an instructional leader in the special education field.

Get **Ready** to learn more about high quality, effective instructional practices and support teacher effectiveness.

- [Supporting Principals as Leaders of Special Education](#) This article encourages leaders to seek out professional learning opportunities, to collaborate with special education teachers and other support staff, and to become familiar with different types of disabilities and effective instructional practices that will help ensure student success. Leaders encourage an understanding that each student's unique needs, regardless of their disability category, must be addressed.
- [10 Strategies to Improve Instructional Leadership](#) This article recommends co-observation with administrative or special education team members to take advantage of two perspectives during observations and provide opportunities for each to improve their instructional leadership.

Get **Set** to provide multiple sources of high quality, meaningful professional learning and development opportunities and participate alongside staff (CCSSO, 2017). As you develop professional development plans, take advantage of available resources to support special education research-based and high-leverage practices implementation.

- [The Survival Guide for New Special Education Teachers](#) This book offers practical guidance on roles and responsibilities, school environment and culture, classroom organization and management, collaboration with other professionals, and individual professional development.
- [High Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities](#) This website provides resources to support staff development in the implementation of HLPs, including [HLP Leadership Guides](#) and video series. The videos are a resource to augment training/professional learning, demonstrate HLP practice across degrees of intensity, show teachers' implementation of HLPs, and demonstrate practices that can be used with all students (Kennedy, et al., 2018).
- [HLP Highlight Tools](#) The highlight tools were developed to support implementation and are a valuable resource for planning growth opportunities.
- [Assistant Principals Webinar: Special Education Do's and Don'ts](#) This includes an overview of the HLPs, resources for school leaders to encourage implementation, and strategies to differentiate support for beginning teachers.

- [How Administrators Can Support the Development and Implementation of High-Quality IEPs](#) Specifically designed with school administrators in mind, this module offers guidance on how to support and facilitate the development and implementation of high-quality IEPs, including the monitoring of student progress (est. completion time: 2 hours).
- [Content Teaching Academy](#) (2022 dates for the Academy are June 27 - June 30) The annual academy offers high-quality professional development that includes in-depth studies in a range of content areas, including academies specific to special education practices: Best Practices in Inclusive Education, Co-Teaching for Reading and Math (elementary, middle, and secondary), Instructional Practices for Teachers (IPT) of Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities Academy, and the Special Education Teacher Support Academy for new teachers.

Go explore ways to support opportunities for teacher feedback to ensure that teachers learn and effectively use the instructional practices that research shows are most powerful in promoting student learning (Deshler & Cornett, 2012).

- [Using Performance Feedback to Increase Special Educators' Use of Effective Practices](#) Performance feedback is a strategy that can be implemented within the existing procedures and routines of a classroom and that has documented success in improving teachers' use of effective practices (Collins, et al., 2016). Performance feedback involves someone (e.g., colleague, coach) observing a teacher and providing specific feedback about the instruction to increase a teacher's use of a selected practice.
- [eBook: Feedback Strategies for Coaches and Administrators](#) This guide introduces the reader to well-supported feedback models, protocols, and scripts.

Use checklists and implementation guides to provide feedback specific to special education practices. Here are two resources to consider:

- [Administrator Support for Students with Autism Resources](#) VCU Autism Center for Excellence (VCU-ACE) provides a framework for evaluation of special education teachers and programs, online courses, instructional videos, and other resources to support administrators.
- [Virginia Professional Teaching Standards and High Leverage Practice Crosswalk \(VDOE TTAC at GMU\)](#) This crosswalk helps guide school leaders toward aligning Virginia PK-12 professional teaching standards with the 22 HLPs to improve teacher and student outcomes.

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