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Balancing Compliance and Instruction in Special Education



Presented by:
Dr. Cindy Felkins
Bleckley County
and
Tammy Simpson-Shirley
Commerce City



System Demographics

Bleckley County



Number of Schools **5 Schools**

Total Number of Students **2579**

Number of Special Education Students **386**

Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged **100%**



System Demographics

Commerce City



Number of Schools:	4 Schools
Total Number of Students:	1932
Number of Special Education Students:	287
Percent of Economically Disadvantaged:	40%



System Special Education Data



Special Education Data

Bleckley County



Total Special Education Students	386	15% of Total District Population
Least Restrictive Environment	343	Inclusion at least 80% of the time
Students Served on ACS	43	Alternate Content Standards



Special Education Data

Bleckley County



<i>Eligibility Category</i>	<i>Number of Students</i>
Specific Learning Disability	113
Other Health Impairment	83
Autism	54
Speech or Language Impairment	45
Significant Developmental Delay	42
Mild Intellectual Disability	19
Emotional/Behavioral Disorder	8
Moderate Intellectual Disability	8
Deafblind	1



Special Education Data

Commerce City



Total Special Education Students	287	15% of Total School Population
Least Restrictive Environment	239	Inclusion at least 80% of the time
Students Served on ACS	25	Alternate Content Standards



Special Education Data

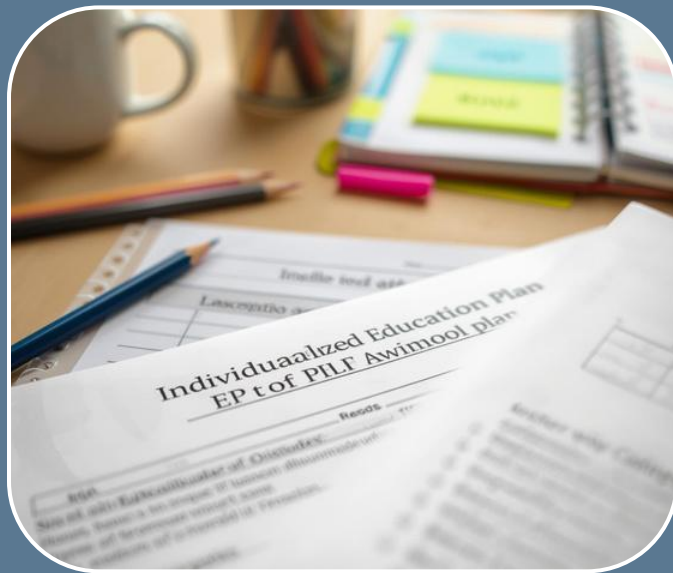
Commerce City

<i>Disability Category*</i>	<i>Number of Students</i>
Speech Language Impairment	150
Specific Learning Disability	95
Other Health Impaired	71
Significant Developmental Delay	36
Autism	29
Emotional Behavior Disorder	14
Moderate Intellectual Disability	13
Mild Intellectual Disability	11
Orthopedic Impairment	4
Hearing Impairment	3
Severe Intellectual Disability	2
Profound Disability	2

**Includes students with multiple disabilities*



How do you ensure that compliance with IDEA and state regulations enhances—rather than hinders—quality instruction?



Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
Crucial documents guiding education for students.



Timelines
Key for ensuring compliance and progress tracking.



Documentation
Essential for maintaining transparency and accountability.

In what ways are instructional best practices embedded into IEP development and implementation?








Instructional Excellence Through Intentional IEP Practice

Common Planning for Co-Teachers

- Collaborative time focused on instructional alignment and shared ownership

IEP Foundations That Drive Instruction

-  GO-IEP Checklist & District Templates
-  Strength-Based PLAAFPs
-  Aligned, Data-Driven Goals
-  Evidence-Based Accommodations
-  SDI Documented in Lesson Plans & Observed in Practice

Monitoring & Support Systems

- Progress Monitoring & Data Checks
- Pre-Submission Reviews by Leads/LEA
- Data Digs with Teachers to Analyze Growth
- Ongoing PL for PLAAFPs, Goals, SDI, and Behavior Supports

Remember:

IEPs are instructional roadmaps — not paperwork.



Are your compliance monitoring systems
aligned with instructional outcomes?

If not, how are you bridging that gap?



How do you support teachers in managing the tension between paperwork and meaningful instruction?



Supporting Teachers:

Balancing Paperwork & Purpose

Streamlined Systems

- Clear templates & shared resources in one place
- Centralized data tools — one entry, multiple uses
- Progress monitoring built into instruction

Structured Support

- 1:1 check-ins during teacher planning
- Monthly IEP Work Sessions with help available
- Option to use subs for **quarterly planning & IEP writing**
- Protected co-planning time for SPED + Gen Ed

Sustaining Culture

- Ongoing, targeted professional learning
- Collaboration across teams — no one works alone
- Celebrating efficiency *and* instructional impact

Mindset: Less paperwork. More teaching. Higher impact.





What data do you collect for compliance, and how is it used to inform instruction?



How do you build a culture where compliance supports equity and access?



What professional learning supports are in place to help staff balance legal requirements with instructional innovation?



Professional Learning Supports

Building Capacity • Ensuring Quality • Supporting Growth

Comprehensive Learning Opportunities

- **Annual Summer PL / Special Education Academy**
Focused on compliance, instructional best practices, and collaboration
- **Targeted Professional Learning**
Designed around staff roles, school data, and identified needs
- **Joint PL Days**
General and special education teachers plan and problem-solve together

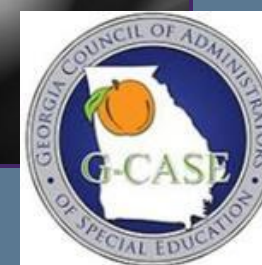
Ongoing Coaching & Support

- **Individualized Coaching and Feedback**
Personalized guidance aligned to teacher goals and student outcomes
- **Instructional Walkthroughs**
Observation and reflection to strengthen instructional practice
- **Job-Alike & Regional/State Trainings**
RESA, GaDOE, and network learning for role-specific growth
- **Continuous Follow-Up**
Ensuring professional learning translates into classroom impact

Goal: Continuous growth that connects **compliance, collaboration, and classroom excellence.**



How do you
engage families
in ways that
support both
compliance and
instructional
quality?



Family Engagement Nights

Build relationships, celebrate students, and keep families connected to learning.

Parent Questionnaires for IEP Meetings

Give families a voice in identifying strengths, priorities, and concerns early in the process.

Timely & Responsive Communication

Creates confidence and consistency — parents know they're heard and valued.

Transparency in Every Step

Clear explanations of data and instructional decisions foster trust and understanding.

Accessibility for All Families

Flexible meeting times, translation, and virtual options remove barriers to participation.

Parent Mentor Program

Provides peer support and guidance — a bridge between home and school.

FIEP (Facilitated IEP) Practices

Keeps discussions student-centered, collaborative, and solution-focused.

Shared Goal: Families aren't just invited — they're *involved* in every step of the journey.

What systems or structures have you implemented to reduce redundancy and increase time for planning?



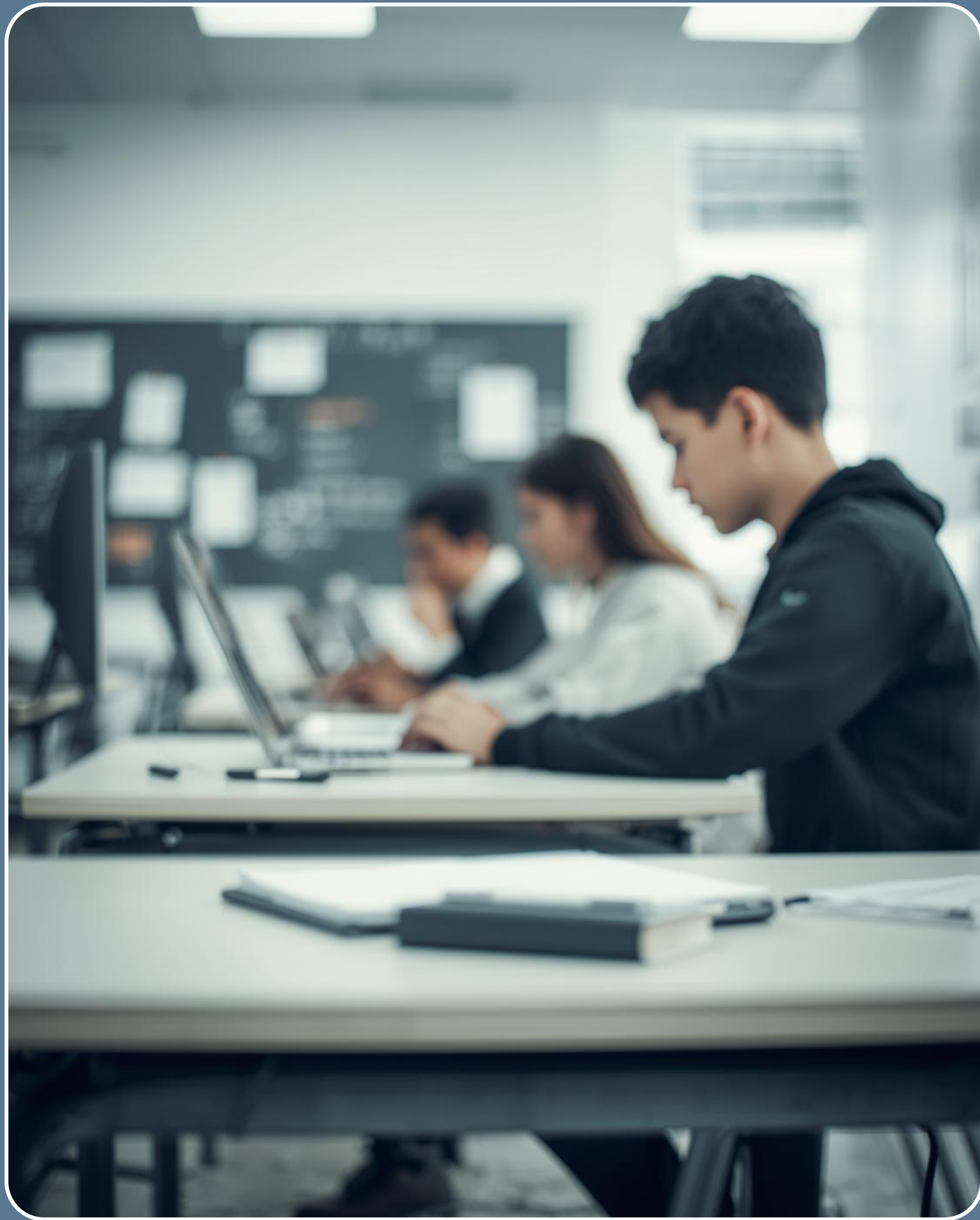
Collaboration

Educators working together fosters effective compliance strategies.



Technology

Adaptive tools enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.



How do you
define and
measure
instructional
excellence for
students with
disabilities?



Lessons Learned

Insights from our Journey in Education



Best Practices

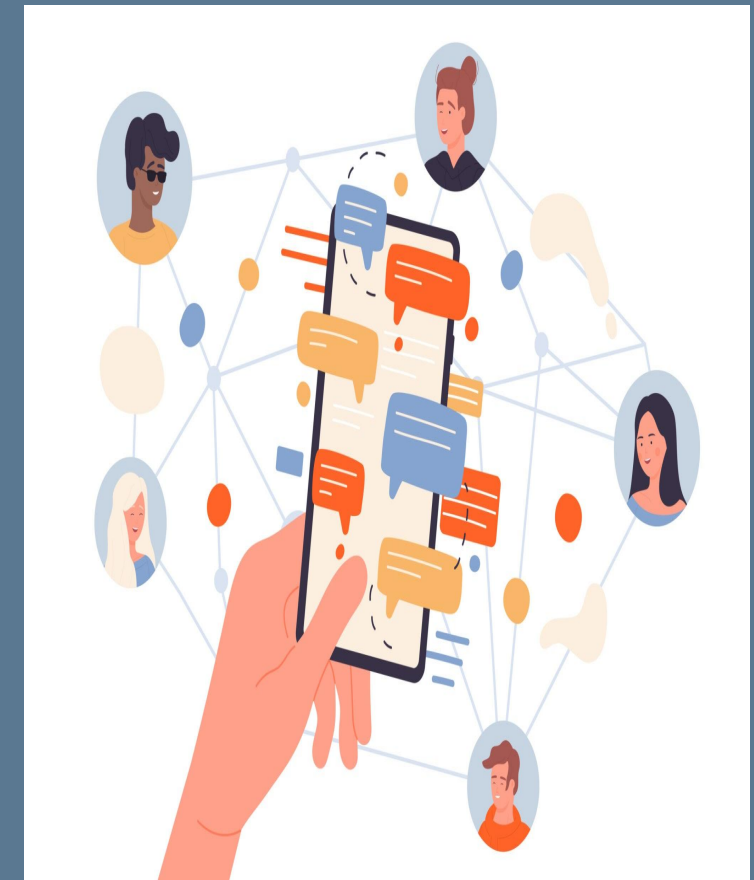
Proactive Planning



Ongoing Training



Stakeholder Communication



Recommendations

Strategies from YOUR System for Supporting Balance in Education



Recommendations for Leaders

Shared Vision: Rights + Rigorous Learning

Teachers – Bring instructional expertise and student data to the table

Leaders – Build systems, time, and supports for high-quality IEPs

Policymakers – Align guidance with real classroom realities

All Levels – Create feedback loops to listen, adjust, and improve

Collective Focus – Equity, access, and strong outcomes for every learner



Together: *Compliance protects students. Instruction grows them.*



Questions/ Feedback



Contact Information:
Dr. Cindy Felkins
Director of Student Support Services
Director of Federal Programs
Bleckley County Schools

Phone

478-934-2821

Email

cfelkins@bleckleyschools.org



Contact Information:

Tammy Simpson-Shirley
Special Education Director
Commerce City Schools

Phone

706-335-5500

Email

tammy.shirley@commerceschools.org

