National Center for Learning Disabilities

Welcome!

Personalized Learning: Meeting the Needs of Students with Disabilities & English Learners

May 4, 2016

#PLforALL

WELCOME

James H. Wendorf

Executive Director, *National Center for Learning Disabilities*

Agenda

1. Defining Personalized Learning
2. Opportunities and Implications for Students with Disabilities & English Learners
3. Panel Discussion
4. Questions & Answers

Defining "Personalized Learning"

Elizabeth Schneider

Chief of Staff and Senior Vice President for Strategic Initiatives, *The Alliance for Excellent Education*
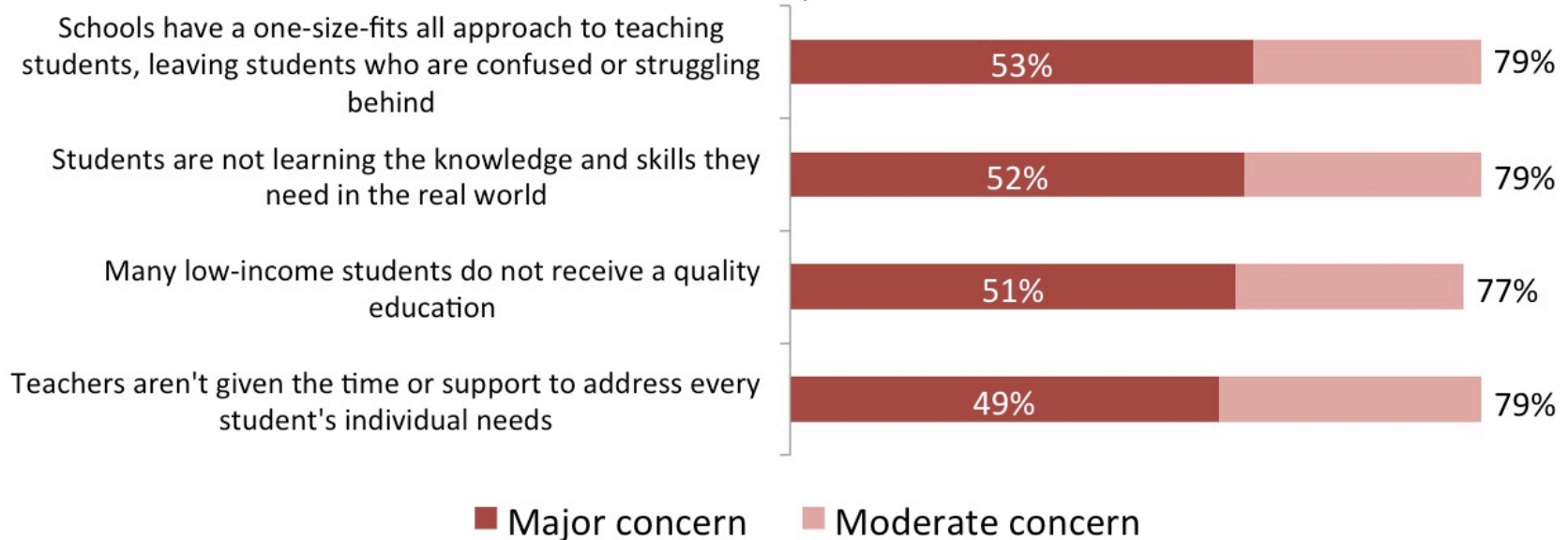
Personalized Learning

A Student-Centered Approach to Preparing Students for College, Career and Life

THE CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY

The Challenge and Opportunity

Below is a list of concerns some have about education today. Please say whether each is a major concern, a moderate concern, a minor concern, or not really a concern to you personally.

Parents – Top Tier Concerns

Concern	Major concern	Total
Schools have a one-size-fits all approach to teaching students, leaving students who are confused or struggling behind	53%	79%
Students are not learning the knowledge and skills they need in the real world	52%	79%
Many low-income students do not receive a quality education	51%	77%
Teachers aren't given the time or support to address every student's individual needs	49%	79%

■ Major concern   ■ Moderate concern

Darker colors indicate intensity

The Challenge and Opportunity

Below is a list of concerns some have about education today. Please say whether each is a major concern, a moderate concern, a minor concern, or not really a concern to you personally.
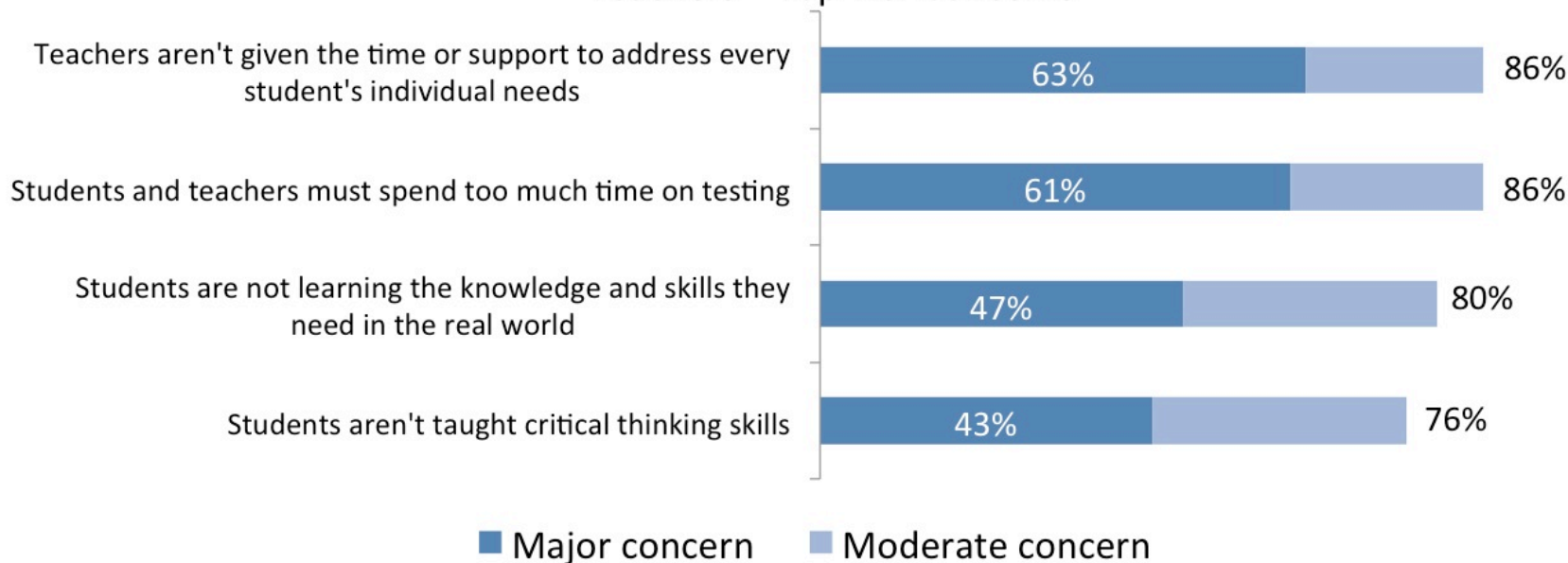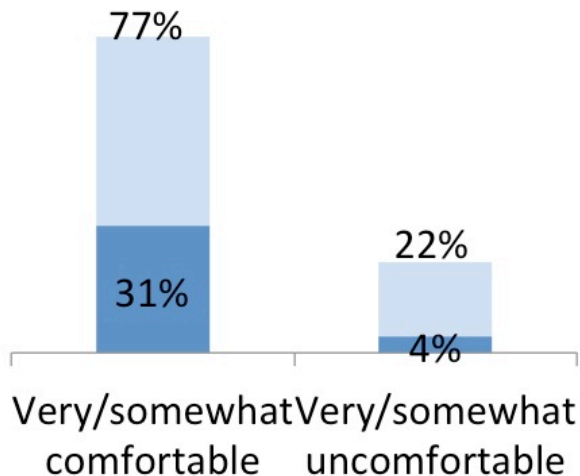
Teachers – Top Tier Concerns

Concern	Major concern	Total
Teachers aren't given the time or support to address every student's individual needs	63%	86%
Students and teachers must spend too much time on testing	61%	86%
Students are not learning the knowledge and skills they need in the real world	47%	80%
Students aren't taught critical thinking skills	43%	76%

■ Major concern   ■ Moderate concern

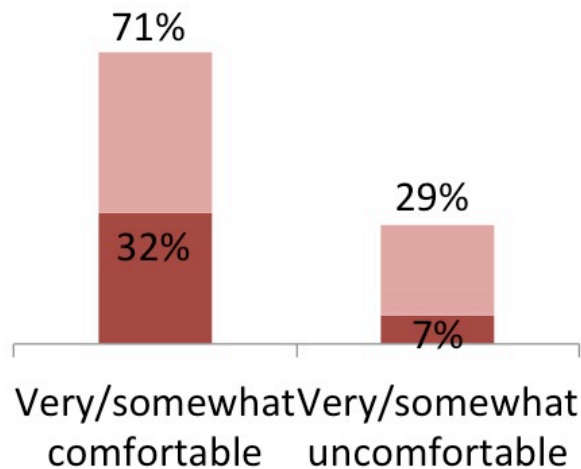*Darker colors indicate intensity*

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The Challenge and Opportunity

Generally speaking, how comfortable are you when [your school/your child's school] teaches lessons differently compared to when you were in school?

Teachers

- 77%
- 31%
- Very/somewhat comfortable
- 22%
- 4%
- Very/somewhat uncomfortable

Parents

- 71%
- 32%
- Very/somewhat comfortable
- 29%
- 7%
- Very/somewhat uncomfortable

Darker colors indicate intensity

The Challenge and Opportunity

EDUCATION WEEK
Education Secretary Urges State Chiefs to Seize ESSA's 'Opportunity'

the JOURNAL
Report: Shift to ESSA Can Bring Personalized Learning into Focus

Personalized learning can be a part of the solution.

WHAT IS PERSONALIZED LEARNING?

Understanding Personalized Learning

Under a personalized learning approach, teachers, school staff and, as appropriate, other adults help prepare students for college and career by:

- Developing **caring and trusting relationships** with their students who, because of these relationships, put more effort into their school work;

- Linking the curriculum to **students' interests,** strengths and aspirations;

- Providing each student with **targeted instruction,** practice and support in areas where they are struggling, while ensuring they learn challenging academic content and skills;

- Creating more **flexible learning environments,** incorporating multiple instructional approaches and the effective use of technology; and

- Connecting learning to **real-world applications.**

Understanding Personalized Learning

Personalized learning requires a willingness among educators to fully understand each student, their individual skills, and their aspirations, to help them meet their needs.

For district and school administrators and teachers to make personalized learning work for their students, they need sufficient focus, time, and support.

WHY PERSONALIZED LEARNING?

Why Personalized Learning?

Early **research on the impact** of personalized learning on student achievement is promising. A recent RAND study found that the impact of high-quality PL models on math and reading scores after two years was largely positive:
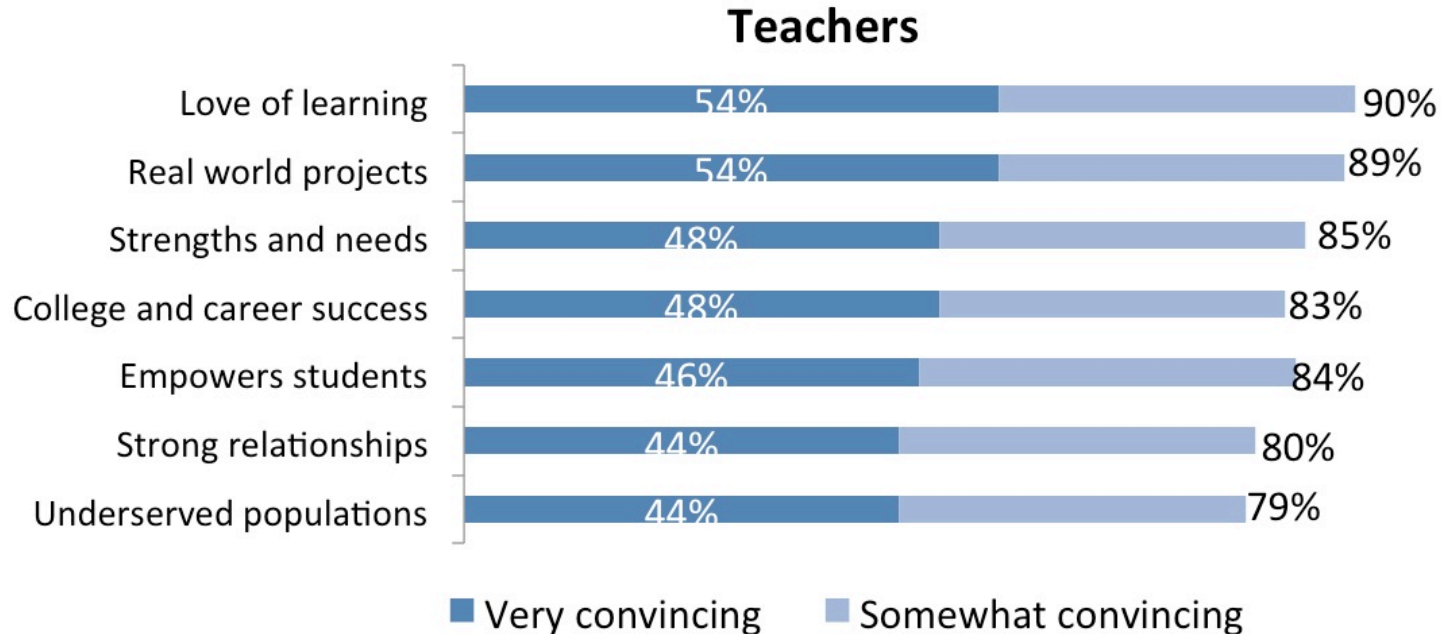
- Students in PL schools made greater progress when compared to their peers.

- Students who started below grade expectations were performing at or above national averages.

- The longer students experienced high-quality PL, the greater their growth.

Top Concerns

- **UNREALISTIC:** It is unrealistic to tailor lessons to all students individually.

- **TOO RELIANT ON TECH:** Personalized learning is too reliant on technology.

- **TOO EXPERIMENTAL:** We don't know if this type of educational model works, and it is unfair to test it on today's students.

- **STUDENT MATURITY:** Not all students are mature enough to develop their own academic path to success.

- **ONLY FOR GIFTED KIDS:** Personalized learning sounds like an approach that only works for the most gifted kids.

- **FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS:** Students' education is better spent in the classroom focusing on fundamentals.

- **TOO MUCH DATA:** Personalized learning adds to the already large amount of personal data collected about students.
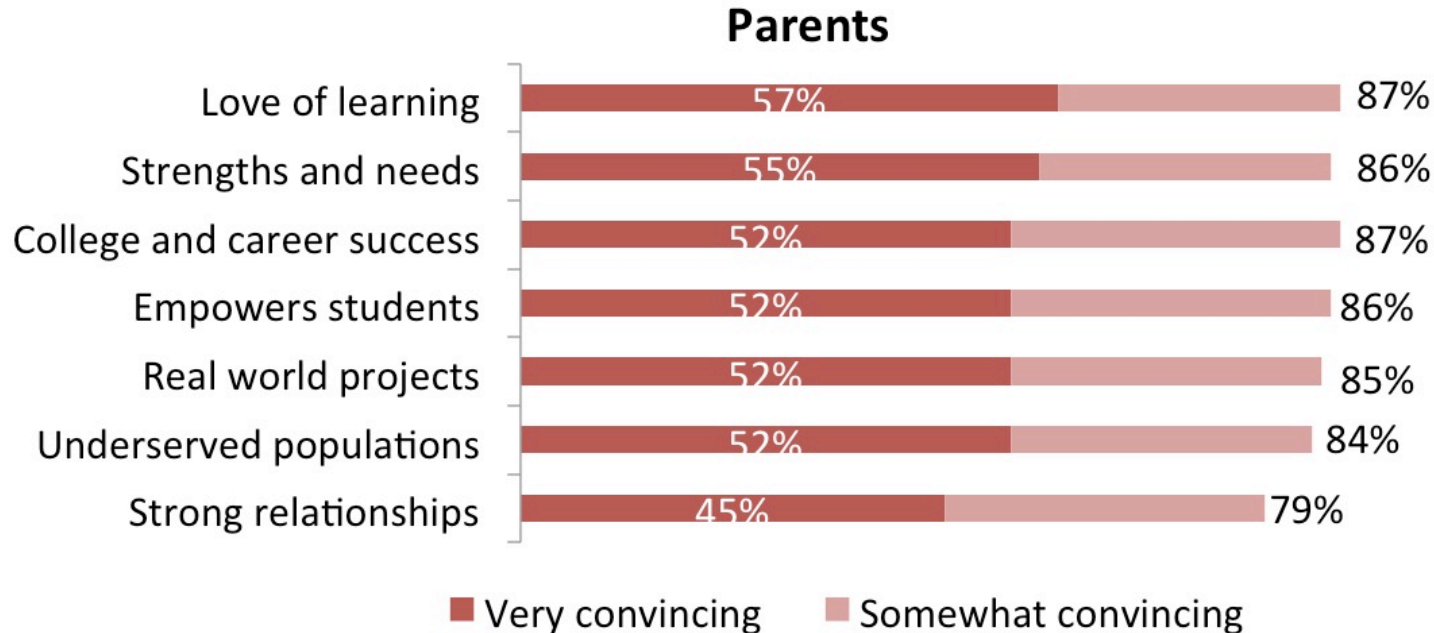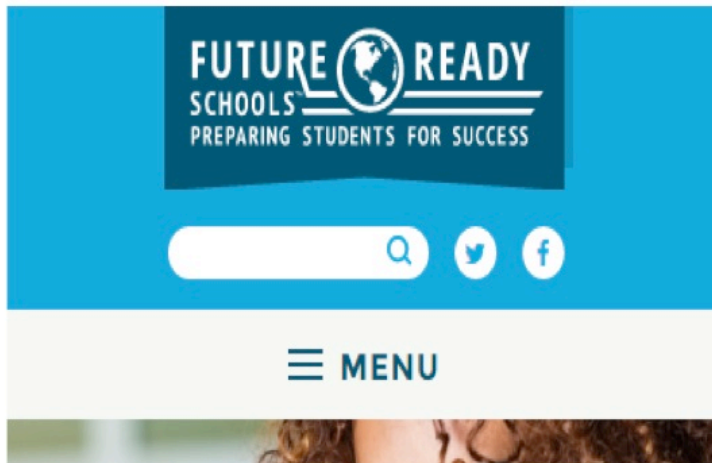
The Appeal for Teachers

Below are some of the things people have said in favor of this new approach that some are calling personalized learning. Please indicate if each is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing, or not convincing at all reason to support personalized learning in the classroom.

Teachers

Category	Very convincing	Total
Love of learning	54%	90%
Real world projects	54%	89%
Strengths and needs	48%	85%
College and career success	48%	83%
Empowers students	46%	84%
Strong relationships	44%	80%
Underserved populations	44%	79%

■ Very convincing   ■ Somewhat convincing

The Appeal for Parents

Below are some of the things people have said in favor of this new approach that some are calling personalized learning. Please indicate if each is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing, or not convincing at all reason to support personalized learning in the classroom.

Parents

	Very convincing	Total
Love of learning	57%	87%
Strengths and needs	55%	86%
College and career success	52%	87%
Empowers students	52%	86%
Real world projects	52%	85%
Underserved populations	52%	84%
Strong relationships	45%	79%

■ Very convincing   ■ Somewhat convincing

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PL IN PRACTICE

Take Action

District Leader Ready to take the next step?

See how the Future Ready initiative can help   @ futureready.org

Opportunities and Implications for Students with Disabilities & English Learners

Lindsay E. Jones, Esq.

Vice President, Chief Policy & Advocacy Officer, *National Center for Learning Disabilities*

Maria Moser

Senior Director of Teaching and Learning, *National Council of La Raza*

This is the time.

Personalized learning is expanding exponentially around the country...

...but discussions are happening in silos and students with disabilities are not always considered.

Personalized Learning in ESSA

1. Flexible Assessments

- Multiple ways to measure achievement
- Multiple interim assessments
- Computer adaptive testing

3. Flexible Uses of Funds

- Title I funds for direct student services
- Title II funds for teacher professional development on technology
- Title IV funding for education technology and professional development

2. State Grants

- Innovative Assessment pilot program
  - 7 states, 3 years more at Secretary's discretion

4. Research on digital learning

- IES study on impact of digital learning outside of classroom

ESSA and English Learners

Accountability moves to Title I

- All states will be required to report on the progress of all English learners in the state
- Reporting moves to Title I
- Title III funds will be allocated using a blended formula (census and state counts of students taking English Language Proficiency assessments)

Decisions about Assessment

- States are required to standardize entrance/exit into English language development programs
- States have new flexibility about some testing provisions

Personalized learning systems should include students with disabilities and English Language Learners now.

Avoid Retrofitting!!

What we've done

Defining "Personalized Learning"

PERSONALIZED LEARNING
WORKING DEFINITION

Students' **learning experiences**— what they learn, and how, when, and where they learn it—are **tailored to** their **individual needs, skills, and interests,** and **enable** them to take **ownership** of their learning.

Although **where, how, and when they learn might vary** according to their needs, students also develop **deep connections** to each other, their teachers and other adults.

What We've Done

Literature Review

100+ pieces of literature
- Reports
- Case studies
- Newspaper articles

Quantitative Research

Survey of 1000+ parents and 500+ educators and professionals
- Understood.org
- NCLD and partner email lists

Qualitative Research

Expert Interviews
- One-on-one interviews with select education and disability experts

Workshops with 30+ experts
- 9 one-hour-long, interactive webinars over 3 months with experts

Site visits
- Brooklyn Lab Charter School (Brooklyn, New York)
- E.L. Haynes Charter School (Washington, DC)
- Thurgood Marshall Academy (Washington, DC)

August 2015: Expert Convening

General &
special
educators

School &
district leaders

Personalized
learning
experts

Digital learning
& technology
experts

Policy leaders

What we've learned

To maximize the benefit, PL must align with other frameworks:

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
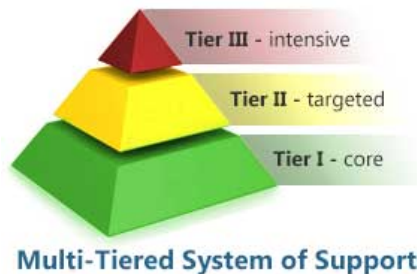

Recognition Networks
The "what" of learning

Strategic Networks
The "how" of learning

Affective Networks
The "why" of learning

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

Tier III - intensive

Tier II - targeted

Tier I - core

Multi-Tiered System of Supports

PL as a driver of self-advocacy

SPOTLIGHT on Self-Advocacy

All students must be self-advocates at times, but students with disabilities face a greater challenge. They must understand their needs, explain them and possibly ask for help or accommodations. Many will continue to need accommodations in college or in the workplace. It is critical to develop self-advocacy skills as early as possible.

3 Challenges to Including Students with Disabilities in PL

1. **Monitoring pace and progress** for students with disabilities is important

2. **Assessments and accountability** systems aligned with PL must **ensure equity** for students with disabilities; must produce **valid and reliable data** on performance and progress

3. **Parents** of students with disabilities are **uninformed,** but **must be included.**

3 Benefits of PL for Students with Disabilities

1. Focus on strengths and tailoring to interests leads to higher engagement and a **growth mindset**

2. Great opportunity to build **decision-making and self-advocacy skills**

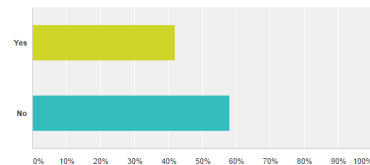3. **Can Reduce stigma** of special education

Many Parents are Uninformed, but Most are Interested!

<u>Survey Respondents</u>:
1000+ parents

<u>Findings</u>:

Only 40% of parents have heard of PL

But 95% of parents want to know more!
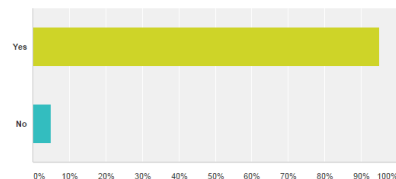

Have you heard about personalized learning?
Answered: 856   Skipped: 7

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	42.06%	360
No	57.94%	496

Would you like to know more about personalized learning?
Answered: 853   Skipped: 10

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	95.08%	811
No	4.92%	42

Personalized Learning:

Policy & Practice Recommendations for Meeting the Needs of Students with Disabilities

Educators, parents, and others have struggled for decades to find the best ways to teach and support students with disabilities. Students with disabilities can achieve at high levels if they receive specialized instruction tailored to their unique needs, supports that build on their strengths and mitigate their challenges, and an environment that is engaging and sparks their desire to learn. Personalized learning systems can help educators provide these things when implemented appropriately. As personalized learning efforts expand across the nation, now is the time for educators, parents, and others to understand what personalized learning is, how it works, and how it can help students with disabilities succeed.

UNITING THE FIELD TO CONSIDER THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

With funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, NCLD initiated a process to help educators, families and policymakers *understand, explain and address how school districts implementing personalized learning systems can systematically and appropriately include students with disabilities.* This work was part of a larger effort to develop recommendations addressing the needs of traditionally underserved groups of students and it included a parallel project by the National Council of La Raza, who focused on the needs of English learners.

Specifically, NCLD set out to develop policy recommendations at the federal and state level and recommendations for best practices in schools so that students with disabilities are appropriately and fully included in the development, implementation and evaluation of personalized learning systems. To do this, NCLD gathered top special education and personalized learning experts from across the nation — including educators, researchers, state and district leaders, school leaders, and parents of children with disabilities — and engaged them in discussions to learn and explore ways to ensure that personalized learning systems integrate and benefit students with disabilities.

National Center for Learning Disabilities

Roadmap for Parents & Families

What is PERSONALIZED LEARNING?

Over the past few years, personalized learning has been expanding across the country. Schools and districts have been trying to make learning more individualized for all students. Some states have even overhauled their education system to replace it with a more personalized approach. But no two schools or districts are doing the exact same thing. There is no one definition for personalized learning.

Personalized learning allows all children to receive a customized learning experience. Students learn at their own pace with structure support in challenging areas. Learning aligns with interests, needs and skills, and takes place in an engaging environment where students gain a better understanding of their strengths.

These terms may be used to describe personalized learning or may be used along with it:
- Competency-based education
- Project-based learning
- Flexible learning environments
- Learner profile
- Personal learning path
- Digital learning
- Blended or online learning

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National Center for Learning Disabilities

Roadmap for Educators

5 BENEFITS
of Personalized Learning

1. Increases student engagement and achievement
2. Encourages growth mindset
3. Builds decision-making and self-advocacy skills
4. Reduces the stigma of special education
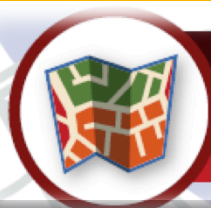5. Gives students who think differently multiple ways to show what they have learned

5 CHALLENGES
of Personalized Learning

1. Students with disabilities have widely varying needs and if these are not met, they may fall behind
2. Assessments and accountability systems must be aligned with personalized learning and equitable for students with disabilities so they produce valid and reliable data on performance and progress
3. Students with disabilities must have access to appropriate technology
4. Parents of students with disabilities must be included, informed and empowered
5. Educators must be aware of the great demand that personalized learning systems place on students' executive functioning skills and be ready to support students in this environment

What is EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING and how does it relate to PERSONALIZED LEARNING?

Executive functioning includes skills related to impulse control, emotional control, flexible thinking, working memory, self-monitoring, task initiation and organization. Students with executive functioning issues may struggle with tasks that require planning, organization or reflection on performance—features of many personalized learning systems. But with supports they can thrive. It's important for educators to be sensitive to how this dynamic might impact their students and be ready to provide extra support and assistance.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 **Personalized learning should align with other helpful frameworks that may be in place in schools.**

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
UDL is a set of principles for curriculum development that gives every student the opportunity to learn. UDL addresses:

- How information is presented (representation)
- How students demonstrate what they know (expression)
- How students interact and engage with the material (engagement)

Recognition Networks
The "what" of learning

Strategic Networks
The "how" of learning

Affective Networks
The "why" of learning

Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS)
MTSS is an evidence-based and system-wide practice that uses data-based progress monitoring to make decisions and respond to students' academic and behavioral needs through access to instruction delivered in varying intensities.

Tier III - Intensive

Tier II - Targeted

Tier I - Core

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Personalized Learning & English Learners

English Learners and Personalized Learning

Unique Opportunities

- Growing population in new geographic areas presents a challenge and opportunity
- Personalized learning requires high quality professional development
- Personalized learning can enable students to receive language support and "just in time" information

Challenges

- Psychosocial and cultural aspects of learning are particularly important for English learners
- Aligning English language development targets across all domains (R/W/L/S) with content goals
- Digital divide

PL/ EL top themes by area of expertise:

Teachers

- Accountability pressure
- ESL Guidelines and Services
- Teacher Training and Support

ESL Experts

- Family engagement
- Teacher training and support
- Language Acquisition

Tech Experts

- Teacher training and support
- Quality of resources
- Accountability
- School and Educator Culture

A Look Ahead

Upcoming State-Level Convenings

NEW HAMPSHIRE

NORTH CAROLINA

COLORADO

Today's Panel Discussion

David Chard
> Dean, *Annette Caldwell Simmons School of Education and Human Development at Southern Methodist University*

Brian Stack
> Principal, *Sanborn Regional High School, New Hampshire*

Maria Moser
> Senior Director of Teaching and Learning, *National Council of La Raza*

Audience Q&A