National Center for Learning Disabilities

Roadmap for School & District Leaders

As the biggest driver of successful personalized learning systems, school and district leaders have an important role to play in ensuring that all students benefit from personalized learning.

What is PERSONALIZED LEARNING?

Personalized learning can take many forms, but at its core: Personalized learning allows all children to receive a customized learning experience. Students learn at their own pace with structure and 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.

Have a CLEAR VISION

Whichever type of personalized learning you choose to pursue in your school or district **be sure you have a clear vision** and definition to guide your work. Different types you might consider include:

- Competency-based education
- Project-based learning
- Flexible learning environments
- Learner profile
- Personal learning path
- Digital learning
- Blended or online learning

CONSIDER: How does personalized learning align with other important frameworks in your school(s)?

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a set of principles for curriculum development that give 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)

MULTI-TIER SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS

Multi-Tier System of Supports (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.

STRONG LEADERS

are the biggest driver of successful personalized learning systems.

SPOTLIGHT on Supporting Educators

Successful personalized learning requires prepared and supported educators. Know the strengths and needs of your educators and provide continued professional development and support so educators can better meet the needs of all students.

For more information, visit: ncld.org/personalizedlearning or e-mail policy@ncld.org

PLAN for STUDENT NEEDS

Early on, consider how your personalized learning system will meet the needs of the full range of students with disabilities.

- When planning, include members of the school or district who have expertise in working with students with disabilities. At the district level, the special education director should be deeply involved in planning and implementation. At the school, special educators and specialized instructional support personnel should be included.

Learn from others through collaboration and the creation of professional learning communities.

- It's likely that someone else in your state has been exploring personalized learning. Reach out to learn about their work, ideas, challenges and successes.

Help parents understand how personalized learning can help students with disabilities succeed.

- Make parents part of your personalized learning implementation. Create opportunities for families (students and parents) to ask questions and provide input as you roll out personalized learning in your school or district.

Design competency-based systems in a way that allows for continued progress monitoring.

- MTSS is one way to track student progress and provide increasing levels of support and interventions for students with disabilities and those who may fall behind their peers.

SUPPORT EDUCATORS

Evaluate the roles of special educators and specialized instructional support personnel.

- Special educators and specialized instructional support personnel can add value to all school staff by sharing their expertise and serving as coaches for general educators.
- Make sure their time and expertise are dispersed throughout a school or district in a way that maximizes results for students.

Provide continuous, needs-based support to help educators meet the needs of students with disabilities.

All educators should receive training in:

- Executive functioning and how challenges with these skills may impact students with disabilities; and
- The effective use of technology for students with disabilities.

ENSURE EQUITY

Adopt hiring practices that prioritize the skills you'll need.

- Seek individuals who have expertise in personalized learning, familiarity with technology and experience working with students with disabilities.

Align existing UDL and MTSS frameworks with the school's personalized learning system.

- Make sure educators understand how these systems can work with personalized learning to provide effective instruction and supports for students with disabilities.

Make sure personalized learning initiatives are sustainable.

- Districts can choose one dedicated staff member to develop a deep understanding of federal and state funding, seek alternative and innovative funding, and train and support others on the topic.