REIMAGINING
SPECIAL EDUCATION

Using Inclusion as a Framework to
Build Equity and Support All Students

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Reimagining Special Education
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to Build Equity and Support All Students

by

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The individuals described in this book are composites or real people whose situations are masked and are based on the authors' experiences. Real names and identifying details are used by permission.

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Dr. Jenna Mancini Rufo is an experienced public school leader turned inclusive education consultant. Having served as an assistant superintendent, director of special education, state policy specialist, special education teacher, and inclusion facilitator, Jenna has practical experience in leading systems change for inclusion. She has shared her knowledge at numerous events, including *The Atlantic*'s Education Summit and the National Principals' Conference, and has been published in *School Administrator*. Jenna founded her own consulting business, empowerED School Solutions, with expertise in inclusion and special education. Jenna was inspired by her sister, Nina, who has multiple disabilities, to enter the field of education. Jenna views education as her calling and is passionate about providing quality programs for all students.

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teachers, paraprofessionals, and families across the United States to help them promote and improve inclusive practices. Her dynamic presentations focus on engaging ways to educate all students within the context of general education. Julie is the author of many books about inclusive education and has published articles in over 30 educational research and practitioner journals. She lives in Manlius, New York, with her wife, two fabulous teenagers, dogs, and cats.

To see more books by Julie Causton, visit https://brookespublishing.com /julie-causton-spotlight/

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Resetting School

Lessons Learned From COVID-19 Remote Instruction

We have a unique opportunity before us to press pause and reset school. What has always worked well in school? Did it work well for all students? What hasn't worked well? Now more than ever, we can take a close look at the old routines of schools and classrooms and keep the most effective pieces, let go of the practices that don't serve students, and create new, unimagined routines and environments.

Ultimately, we want to ask, what would it look like to reimagine school in a way that erases the practices that keep some students struggling while others thrive?

This chapter begins by briefly reviewing our educational system, highlighting the key moments where calls for change have occurred over the years. We also share news about the impact of COVID-19 on an already inequitable system. Then, we review the most effective distance learning practices that emerged during this period. We discuss how those practices benefit all students, especially those on the margins of what we have considered to be typical. Finally, we offer inclusive education as a necessary framework for redesign.

A SYSTEM LONG OVERDUE FOR CHANGE

For just about as long as schools have existed, there have been debates about how to improve education. Over the past century in particular, we have seen calls to move beyond what has been criticized as a factory model of education—a system characterized by uniformity and rigidity (Watters, 2015). This system was designed to prepare students for an industrial age that was governed by hard work, schedules, and factory whistles. As such, schools in the early- to mid-1900s mirrored those conditions. Children marched from

class to class at the ring of a bell. Students were instructed by teachers who delivered a common curriculum. Teachers judged students' ability to conform to a predetermined mold. Students who did not conform to this mold simply were not permitted to be at school. In particular, students with disabilities were largely excluded from public schooling.

Nearly 20 years after *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) found that separate or segregated education was inherently unequal, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 required that students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE), regardless of the severity of their needs. Yet, although schools were then required to educate students with disabilities, a model of sorting and labeling continued. Students who learned differently or who could not keep up were taught elsewhere in separate classrooms under the false premise that students with disabilities would learn better together and somewhere else.

They didn't.

As time went on, policymakers, advocates, and legislators realized that something was amiss with the education system in the United States. In 1983, "A Nation at Risk" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) was published, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The report highlighted inadequacies in the current system of education in the United States and cautioned that the system was not keeping pace with other countries. Yet, 20 years later, the concerns were unresolved. The No Child Left Behind Act (2001) of the early 2000s responded by imposing strict accountability measures on schools, with the goal of increased proficiency for all students.

Meanwhile, in 1997, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act was reauthorized as a newly christened Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). A renewed emphasis was placed on educating students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The LRE requires that students with disabilities not be removed from general education without first considering what additional services could be provided in the regular classroom, such as the use of accommodations, modifications, or specially designed instruction. At the next reauthorization of IDEA, in 2004, greater focus was on prevention services and quality general education. IDEA (2004) allowed districts to utilize up to 15% of federal funds for early-intervening services to support struggling students who were not yet identified as needing special education (D. Fuchs et al., 2010). The IDEA in 2004 also offered an alternative method to identify learning disabilities to ensure that students received quality instruction and research-based intervention prior to disability classification.

Yet, despite nearly 50 years of legislation aimed at improving educational outcomes for students with disabilities through increased access and inclusion, during the 2017–2018 school year, only 63.4% of students with disabilities in the United States spent the majority of their day in general education classrooms (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2019).

For students with more complex needs, the rates are even lower. Only a staggering 16.9% of students with intellectual disability were included in general education classes for 80% or more of the day with the publishing of the 2019 U.S. Department of Education report.

Educational outcomes for students with disabilities have remained similarly dismal. Students placed in substantially separate settings demonstrate poorer academic performance than their peers in general education (Hehir et al., 2016). Such placement reduces access to high-quality teaching, lowers expectations, and limits social interactions (Skiba et al., 2006). Students with disabilities are more likely than peers without IEPs to be retained in a grade, suspended, or expelled (Liu et al., 2018). Compared to the post-school outcomes of their general education peers, students with disabilities are less likely to be productively engaged in employment, post-secondary education, or job training after high school (Sanford et al., 2011).

If laws, policies, and regulations have done little to change our practices for students with disabilities—and really, for the education system as a whole—what might serve as the impetus for change? We venture that COVID-19 could. With the emergence of a highly contagious and deadly virus in 2020, schools across the world were forced to close. Although remote learning has presented us with a plethora of challenges, and it was downright unsuccessful in many cases, there are lessons that we can use to redesign education for the better.

WHAT SHOULD WE FOCUS ON AND WHY NOW?

We begin by sharing a tale of two COVID-19 distance learning plans. First, we share the story of Lina.

Lina is a fourth-grade general education student who does not receive supplemental support or enrichment services. At the beginning of each week during quarantine, Lina's teacher posted a series of PowerPoint files, websites, and worksheets in the electronic classroom to be completed by Friday. On the first Monday Lina was home from school, she sat down at her computer and completed all the assignments for the week . . . in 45 minutes. Lina's mother reviewed the work Lina submitted and found that the work was completed

correctly. Her mother contacted the teacher, who indicated that she would post additional work for the following week.

The next week, Lina sat at her desk again on Monday morning and reviewed the week's assignments. This time she completed the work in an hour. Lina's mother again reached out to the teacher. In the third week, optional activities were posted. When Lina's mother demanded that Lina complete the optional activities, Lina protested. "I already know this stuff!" she exclaimed. Lina's mother sat down with Lina and asked, "Is this how you feel in school? That you already know this stuff?" Lina shared, "I've basically been bored since Kindergarten. Sometimes, the teacher thinks I'm not paying attention because I'm daydreaming or doodling, but I already know it!" Lina's mother realized that her daughter had been flying under the radar as an advanced student for a long time. Lina was presumed to be an average student because her work was completed without complaint, and she did not independently go beyond what was expected. Yet, her true potential was much greater than what was readily apparent.

Let us contrast this story with Evelyn, a general education fourth grader in another district. Although the first week or two of remote learning were not perfect, Evelyn's teacher quickly adapted. During week three, the goal for Evelyn's English/Language Arts class was posted as "cite text evidence to analyze." Students were instructed to read a story about the Wright brothers and then, using evidence from the text, demonstrate why the Wright brothers were innovative through one of the following options:

- Write a newspaper editorial

- Develop a commercial for the flying machine

- Create a PowerPoint or visual representation of the Wright brothers' accomplishments

- Write a three-paragraph essay

- Create a podcast

- Develop a brochure of the Wright brothers' innovations

- Another option of the student's design (must be approved by teacher)

Evelyn's teacher included a four-point rubric for how the activity would be graded, and she reminded students, "Remember that your goal is to use text to explain why the Wright brothers were considered innovative!"

Evelyn elected to make a commercial about the flying machine. The morning that Evelyn received the assignment, her parents watched as she spent several hours absorbed in constructing a cardboard box model of the

machine. When the flying machine model was finished, Evelyn developed a script for her commercial and acted it out while her younger brother filmed her on her father's smartphone. The next day, Evelyn edited the commercial on her father's phone, adding special effects, transitions, and music. She was highly engaged throughout the entire activity and was sure to heed her teacher's reminder to use textual evidence in her project.

Meanwhile, Lina completed worksheets and was done with her work for the week within an hour.

Now we ask, which class would you rather be in—Lina's or Evelyn's? To us, the answer is obvious. Remote learning only highlighted the need for engaging assignments like the one Evelyn was given. Within the context of the two classrooms, let's consider students who receive specialized services and how they would fare in each classroom. Take a moment to think about a student with a learning challenge, a student identified as gifted, and a student who is just learning English. Of course, each of these students would fare better in Evelyn's classroom.

Re-Story Students

A system of exclusion that largely separates students with disabilities from their typical peers relies heavily on labels to identify students. These labels then sort students into programs—special education, gifted education, English as a second language (ESL) program, and Title I services, to name a few. We challenge you as you read this book to question how beneficial these labels really are. We ask our readers to instead re-story students. We implore you to tell a new story about a student. Focus on the student's strengths, gifts, and talents rather than their deficits.

Let us think about Lina and Evelyn. Lina, a general education student without identified needs, was not benefiting from her teacher's homogenous approach. Lina represents the imaginary middle—the students we think we are reaching when we teach in only one way. These are the students who are overlooked because they complete their work compliantly, but they are disengaged.

Is Lina considered average because she has a history of doing her work without complaint? On the other hand, should Evelyn be evaluated for gifted services because she was highly engaged, curious, and motivated to do the work that was assigned to her? Or, rather, are the characteristics that Lina and Evelyn demonstrate merely reflective of the instruction they are receiving?

By forcing a break in conventional teaching methods, COVID-19 highlighted the fact that we need to appeal to the strengths, interests, and talents of students to see them in their best light.

Instead of assigning labels to determine who needs support or enrichment, we urge educators to re-story their students. When we re-story a child, we focus on their strengths, and then provide an environment and instruction to match those assets. Additionally, we examine our instruction before we assume that a child is typical, gifted, has a disability, and so on.

Redesign Instruction and Assessment

In transitioning from live instruction to remote education during the COVID-19 pandemic, it became apparent that the multitude of standards, assessments, activities, and projects that were in place could not all continue in this emergency. Teachers were forced to prioritize essential content and skills to ensure that the precious time they had with students was used wisely. They had to identify what was important and let go of the rest.

There is something to be said for this approach that centers around the most critical skills and meaningful activities. We contend that the most successful educators in distance learning did not seek to replicate the traditional school day, but rather, recognized that this was a unique situation that required a novel approach. These teachers understood that although there will always be more content to cover, the manner in which it is delivered often can be streamlined. For example, how many activities or assignments throughout a typical school day are time fillers? Do students *really* need to complete 30 problems for homework, or would a simplified, more engaging approach work better?

If we extend the lessons learned from prioritizing content during COVID-19, we can identify the most essential skills that all students require and map backward from there. Any curricular unit might contain dozens of standards. Good teachers know that not all subject matter is created equally, and they focus on what matters most (Sousa & Tomlinson, 2011). Prioritization of content and activities is useful for all children; however, it can be especially powerful for students who are receiving modifications and adaptations to the curriculum.

Some of the best distance learning plans we have seen were those that varied their approaches and expectations in recognition that each student was experiencing a unique set of circumstances. Differentiated options for assignments and choice in work products allowed students to demonstrate their learning in the way that made the most sense for them.

In addition to greater flexibility in instruction, assessment, and environment, more flexible and responsive grading policies were born out of COVID-19. These policies shifted the focus from learning for the sake of grades to learning for the sake of learning. During this time, numerous schools also opted for consistent grading policies across subjects. This was a departure from previous practice in which each teacher set their own rules about when to turn things in, how work would be graded, and the percentage attributed to each assignment.

For many students at the middle school or high school level, removing the need to negotiate up to six or seven different sets of rules for each class they were taking proved helpful. Clear and consistent expectations across classrooms proved to be a valuable practice that should be continued. For students who have difficulty with transitions or who have executive functioning needs, streamlining expectations is especially valuable. A ninth grader whose school sent out a student survey about distance learning concurred: "I've never had grades better in my life! I am absolutely killing it when it comes to grades and I've never felt more proud of myself. I'm actually really glad that school is closed." How can we replicate this feeling of success and flexibility under more typical circumstances?

One potential reason why students received better grades during the pandemic was teacher flexibility. Due to the unprecedented situation, many teachers were more willing to work with students to develop personalized expectations, with flexible deadlines. This caring and compassionate approach allowed students to work more at their own pace. It acknowledged that students have lives outside of school, with very real stressors and responsibilities. Flexibility was provided within reason. In an insightful interview, Paul LeBlanc, president of Southern New Hampshire University, reflected on students in higher education, stating,

> "This [time] is less about having the most exacting academic standards. This is about taking care of people who are absolutely traumatized. We took the generation of learners with the highest record of depression and anxiety, and we added a pandemic and a recession . . . This is about dialing up compassion" (Boudreau, 2020).

LeBlanc's statement holds true for K–12 education, as well. The truth is that students have always had immense pressures outside of school. Yet, as educators, we have not always been willing to systematically recognize that. Let's take this softer approach and continue it in a post-pandemic system. Our students with emotional needs, those who have experienced trauma, and students living in challenging environments will benefit, but so will everyone else. There are points in everyone's lives when flexibility and understanding

are needed. Taking a humanistic approach and being responsive in our grading systems is necessary at this time, and it always has been.

Restructure Intervention and Enrichment

Prior to the school closures of 2020, systems of special education, intervention, and enrichment largely operated in isolation of one another. Henley et al. (2010) argued that students both in special education and in gifted education programs are at risk of not having their needs met due to isolation from the mainstream curriculum and from lack of collaboration among staff. These disjointed approaches are problematic for many reasons. Students with disabilities often lack access to the general education curriculum and fall further behind. Students who are gifted and academically advanced may participate in tangential programs that are fun and interesting, but which do not always provide extension or deeper learning of the core content. A lack of common planning time and collaboration among educators contributes to piecemeal educational experiences that fall short of the desired outcomes.

In shifting from in-person instruction to distance learning during COVID-19, the most successful programs we witnessed let go of models that operated in isolation. Effective school systems recognized that a global pandemic meant all hands on deck. The imaginary walls between special education, general education, ESL instruction, and gifted education were torn down. School systems that found success during distance learning realized that all students, regardless of the contrived labels assigned to them, required support during this time.

Although it seems counterintuitive, some teachers reported greater collaboration during remote instruction than when they were in brick-and-mortar classrooms. Remote video meetings, Twitter chats, and other creative approaches provided new opportunities for educators. In one such Twitter chat, Rebecca, a middle school mathematics teacher commented, "There's been much more of a team approach. I've been able to have more contact with my colleagues to make sure everyone is on track. We normally don't get to talk this much." (Rousseau, 2020). Joint efforts to divide and conquer when it came to designing instruction, intervention, and enrichment proved helpful. This collaboration must be cultivated and continue as we reimagine schools. Regular planning, cross-departmental work, and meeting structures and protocols should be implemented to build upon this progress.

Educators who collaborated successfully across roles realized that, on any day, there will be students who need extra support or additional challenge to truly engage in the content. Further, these individuals who are classified as

either struggling or advanced are not static. Flexibility in instruction, intervention, and enrichment are necessary to truly meet students' needs.

Revitalize Co-Teaching

When in-person instruction ended at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and schools shifted to remote learning, a superintendent we worked with in a large school district asked her administrative team, "Who are our teachers who are doing well with distance learning and who are the ones who are struggling?" Perhaps unsurprisingly, the administrators responded that their strongest teachers were doing well. Even those educators who were uncomfortable with technology but skilled instructionally were figuring it out. Similarly, the principals and supervisors remained concerned about the teachers who were on their radar pre-pandemic. We have seen similar phenomena with co-teaching pairs. While strong partnerships continued to thrive in a virtual environment, partnerships that were unequal still struggled.

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An example of a thriving co-teaching pair is Amanda and Brittany, two first-grade co-teachers in a culturally and linguistically diverse elementary school. This pair reimagined co-teaching through distance learning by applying many of the principles they used in person to remote instruction. Parity, or the idea that both co-teachers share equal responsibility for planning and instruction, continued virtually. Amanda, the general education teacher, shared, "We communicated every day! While Brittany is the special educator and I am the regular educator, we both just assume the role of 'teacher' to all students. We are both well versed in the accommodations and modifications our students need to be successful."

Amanda and Brittany also ensured that the differentiated supports their students received within the classroom remained available during distance learning. Choice boards, learning menus, and other differentiated tasks were provided. When students required modified work, it was assigned privately to individual students through the learning management system in place to protect confidentiality. Amanda and Brittany continued to work with small groups in a virtual setting, as well.

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Educational leaders can use the successes and challenges of co-teaching during school closures as a lever for positive change. These successes or struggles can serve as springboards for discussion. We have seen amazing things from stellar co-teachers such as Amanda and Brittany, but poor co-teaching

does little to improve educational outcomes. In an interview on co-teaching with Education Week in 2015 (Samuels, 2015), Marilyn Friend stated, "When [co-teaching] is really, really strong, it is clear that there are two different teachers with two types of expertise." But when co-teaching practices are weak, "you might as well keep pulling kids out. . . . Because they're not getting what they need." Building upon the strengths and examining the weaknesses of co-teaching during the pandemic can assist with making positive changes to collaborative teaching.

Realign Service Delivery

Co-teaching is the inclusive service delivery model most frequently used to support students with disabilities in general education settings, but there are other approaches that can be equally or even more effective. School districts that implement flexible service delivery models such as consultative support, targeted "push-in" support, and inclusion facilitation were strongly positioned to enter remote learning because their professionals did not rely heavily on an "extra body" to deliver student support.

Consultative Support Model   In a consultative support model, a special educator collaborates with general education teachers to support students with disabilities without being present in the classroom every day. When the consultative teacher is present in the class, they work collaboratively with the general educator to support students with disabilities, identify areas of need, and suggest strategies for improvement. On days when they are not scheduled, they may provide assistance with completing modifications and accommodations for students or check in with students in other grades.

Push-In Support Model   In a "push-in" support model, the special educator is regularly scheduled to support general education classrooms. The special education teacher "pushes in" to the classroom, bringing services to students rather than pulling students out of the classroom. This differs from co-teaching because the special educator may not be scheduled in the classroom every day. Additionally, in a push-in model, the responsibility for instruction primarily falls on the general education teacher rather than the shared ownership in a co-taught classroom.

Inclusion Facilitator Model   In an inclusion facilitator model, a special educator offers support to general educators through job-embedded coaching as well as by the design of accommodations, modifications, and behavioral strategies. In this indirect model, inclusion facilitators serve important behind-the-scenes

functions in working with the individualized education program (IEP) teams of students with significant needs to meaningfully include them in general education. Consultative and push-in models, on the other hand, provide a level of direct service to students in general education settings, but not with the same frequency or intensity of co-teaching. Although we elaborate on these models in Chapter 6, we share these approaches now to illustrate how the flexibility associated with the roles have been useful in remote learning, and how these positions are beneficial beyond school closures.

We provide the example of Rocco, a content-specific inclusion facilitator for a high school social studies department, to illustrate the utility and importance of this position. Rocco works with the history teachers in his school to modify curriculum so that students with intensive needs can be meaningfully included. One of Rocco's key functions is determining the most important curricular skills so that specific and targeted inclusive supports can be delivered to students who need them.

When mandatory school closures occurred, numerous schools scrambled to identify the essential content needed for students in a virtual environment because not all content could be covered. But not Rocco's school. Rocco and the other content-specific inclusion facilitators in his building had already identified the key learnings in each unit for their students with disabilities. Departments were able to use the resources developed by inclusion facilitators to pinpoint the most essential skills for all students.

Rocco's school expanded its inclusive service delivery options beyond co-teaching. This approach not only better supported students with the most significant needs, but it better supported the teaching staff as a whole. Rather than attaching Rocco to a co-teacher and limiting the number of students he could reach, his talents were shared with a whole department. He was much more beneficial to all teachers and, subsequently, to all students.

Reconceptualize Equity

Perhaps the greatest realization that formed from distance learning came from the spotlight it placed on inequities in schools and society at large. When schools could no longer provide in-person instruction, more affluent districts with better access to technology possessed the tools needed to begin distance learning immediately. Meanwhile, poorer systems either raced to acquire technology, provided students with paper packets, or shut down completely. Many school districts in which families had limited resources faced even greater challenges. Districts whose communities relied on schools for critical

services such as breakfast and lunch undertook heroic efforts to continue their meal programs throughout the closure. Numerous districts also worked to obtain internet access for families in need. Although the efforts to address these matters were truly admirable, wealthier districts did not have these concerns. Instead, those systems could focus on remote learning.

Students with disabilities experienced unique challenges. The related services or therapies they typically received in person often just didn't translate well in online environments. Some students struggled to engage with online learning in a meaningful way. Those who thrived on routine experienced major challenges with such a sudden closure. For children who worked with multiple professionals, their parents were now attempting to serve in all those roles while simultaneously working or dealing with other concerns. English language learners (ELLs) faced similar struggles. Learning from home required a great deal of effort from parents. It was unsurprising that families who do not speak English were presented with additional barriers during this time.

Inequities that were present long before COVID-19 were made even more palpable during the pandemic. While systems coped with varying degrees of success, the aftermath of the crisis in relation to student outcomes will continue to become apparent long after the virus is subdued. The need to reconceptualize the idea of equity and building safety nets for all learners is underscored now more than ever.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AS A FRAMEWORK FOR REDESIGN

Many of the practices identified as necessary to success in a remote learning environment have a striking resemblance to effective inclusive education strategies. We have always believed that inclusive education practices are strong instructional strategies in general. Thus, when reimagining schools, inclusive education serves as a valuable framework for redesign.

We believe that inclusive education is both a philosophy and a practice. As a philosophy, inclusion is rooted in the belief that everyone belongs, and everyone benefits. Not some students, not most students, but all students. It is the conviction that each child brings unique strengths and gifts to the classroom. It is the rejection of labels that create educational outsiders and insiders. It is the recognition that a system that excludes one is inequitable for all. Inclusive schooling lays the groundwork for inclusive societies.

In practice, inclusive education is about reimagining our current system of education to:

- **Re-story students** by designing experiences that recognize their inherent potential and build upon their strengths.

- **Redesign instruction and assessment** through meaningful, differentiated tasks that provide students with multiple ways to demonstrate knowledge and understanding.

- **Restructure intervention and enrichment** so that the receipt of services is not contingent upon artificial labels.

- **Revitalize co-teaching** to maximize the talents of staff and provide them with collaborative structures that support their work.

- **Realign service delivery** to more flexibly meet the needs of all learners.

- **Reconceptualize equity** so that disability is included as just another form of diversity, and to ensure that student outcomes are not predictive based upon demographic variables.

Subsequent chapters translate each of these inclusive education practices from theory to implementation to support you in reimagining not only special education, but a system of learning that is designed to meet the needs of all students in today's changing world.

"Should be required for all teachers! Rufo and Causton have found the brightest silver lining of the global pandemic: An opportunity to reimagine special education services."

—Jennifer Kurth, Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of Kansas

"This book illustrates perfectly the idea that good teaching for students with disabilities is good teaching for all students."

—Cheryl M. Jorgensen, Ph.D., author of *It's More Than "Just Being In"*

As schools reopen their doors and students return to the classroom, what will the new normal of special education look like? The pandemic exposed educational inequities and areas of urgent need—and now, schools have a unique opportunity to press pause and reimagine their practices. This book helps K–12 school leaders and educators closely examine what worked during distance learning, let go of practices that keep some students struggling, and plan new routines and environments that meet the needs of every learner.

A visionary call to action from inclusion experts Jenna Mancini Rufo and Julie Causton, *Reimagining Special Education* guides readers in creating more equitable schools and services, through practical strategies and thought-provoking, big-picture questions. Readers will discover how to:

- RE-STORY students by focusing on their gifts and strengths rather than their deficits
- REDESIGN instruction and assessment to be more flexible and better meet students' unique needs
- RESTRUCTURE intervention frameworks to move away from sorting and labeling students and toward a flexible model that provides access to all
- REVITALIZE co-teaching with tools and strategies for serving students with and without disabilities
- REALIGN service delivery through inclusion facilitation and consultative supports
- RETHINK equity by creating a culture of belonging, dismantling exclusionary programs, and tackling individual and institutional biases

Essential reading for administrators, classroom teachers, and other education professionals, this is the forward-thinking guide every school needs to reimagine the possibilities for special education, support authentic inclusion, and help learners with and without disabilities thrive in a changing world.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: **Jenna Mancini Rufo, Ed.D.,** is an experienced public school leader turned inclusive education consultant for empowerED School Solutions. Having served as an assistant superintendent, director of special education, state policy specialist, special education teacher, and inclusion facilitator, Jenna has practical experience in leading systems change for inclusion. **Julie Causton, Ph.D.,** is founder and CEO of Inclusive Schooling and a highly sought-after speaker, educator, author, and inclusive school reform expert. She is a former professor in the Inclusive and Special Education program in the department of Teaching and Leadership at Syracuse University.

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