School Empowerment Network
LEAD THE CHANGE

ALL EMPOWERED

Special Education Instructional Improvement

Stronger programs. Better instruction. Meaningful outcomes.



WHO WE ARE

About SEN

Founded in 2015, SEN partners with districts, networks, and state agencies to build the conditions where rigorous instruction, strong leadership, and clear strategy meet. Strong leaders. Aligned systems. Lasting change.

100K+
students impacted

500+
leaders developed

200+
schools strengthened

40+
districts across 8 states

FOUR WAYS WE PARTNER *woven together by a focus on leadership*

Develop Leaders

Building the leadership pipeline that drives better instruction and stronger schools.

Teach to Lead
Aspiring Leaders
Leader-Driven School Improvement

Design Schools

Helping leaders create new, better school models and strong early-childhood programs.

School Design and Redesign
Early Childhood

THIS SERVICE

Strengthen Teaching

Coaching teachers directly to lift the quality of daily instruction.

ENACT HQIM
Responsible AI
Special Education Coaching

THIS SERVICE

Evaluate & Plan

Diagnosing where a school or system stands, then setting the priorities and strategy to move it forward.

School Quality Reviews
Executive Coaching
Special Education Audit

OVERVIEW

SEN's Special Education Instructional Improvement offerings provide powerful services designed to drive transformational change for students with disabilities. SEN's services spark lasting impact: we build programs from the ground up, evaluate what's working in existing programs, deliver powerful professional learning across all roles, and provide high-impact, targeted coaching to accelerate progress. SEN equips school systems with the tools and insights needed to build strong, compliant, and sustainable programs that support students in reaching their full potential.

Our offerings are divided into two interlocking strands:

SUBSTRAND 1

Instructional Program Design & Evaluation



SUBSTRAND 2

Capacity Building & Instructional Coaching

Each strand can be implemented independently, but together they provide a full-service model for transformative improvement in special education.

SUBSTRAND 1: INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM EVALUATION

Strengths-Based Evaluation of Existing Programs

SEN conducts a multi-phase, evidence-based review that goes beyond traditional compliance audits. This strand provides a clear, comprehensive picture of instructional quality, intervention impact, and program design across schools or districts. Key priorities include:

- Examining fidelity and effectiveness of Tier 1 and supplemental instruction
- Analyzing IEP quality, implementation, and alignment to grade-level standards
- Understanding teacher capacity and identifying professional learning needs
- Elevating stakeholder voice through structured interviews and school-based reviews
- Assessing program coherence and compliance with IDEA, ADA, and Section 504

DELIVERABLES

- A written report with data visualizations and strategic recommendations
- Rubric-scored evaluations of instructional and program quality
- Aggregate and disaggregated classroom observation summaries
- Communication collateral (e.g., slide decks) to support district transparency
- Stakeholder debriefs and live presentations to support shared understanding

REVIEW PROCESS INCLUDES

PHASE 0

Preparation & Communication Planning

Lays the foundation for a transparent, strengths-based process

PHASE 1

Data Analysis & Document Review

Uses longitudinal, disaggregated, and correlational data techniques alongside rubric-based evaluations

PHASE 2

Stakeholder Interviews

Gathers qualitative insights across diverse staff roles to assess implementation gaps and opportunities

PHASE 3

School Reviews

Observes instruction and IEP delivery using calibrated tools and special education rubrics

PHASE 4

Synthesis & Recommendations

Produces a comprehensive report with findings, replicable strengths, and improvement strategies

SUBSTRAND 1: INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM EVALUATION

The Review Process, Phase by Phase

PHASE 0
Conditions for Success

School Empowerment Network, in collaboration with the district or school, engages in the development and implementation of a communication plan to support the launch of the instructional review in a manner that promotes confidence, transparency, and a supportive relationship.

PHASE 1
Extant Data Analysis

Upon provision of extant student-outcome data, documents, and other materials, we conduct a robust analysis of student performance and in-district conditions linked to areas of strength and growth and achievement gaps that can be improved. SEN leverages preliminary findings to develop targeted research questions for investigation in subsequent stages of the review.

PHASE 2
Virtual Stakeholder Interviews

SEN engages key stakeholder groups in interviews and conducts qualitative analysis to inform findings and recommendations aligned to the district and/or school's specific goals, objectives, and needs.

PHASE 3
School Reviews

Our expert special education reviewers conduct site visits of selected schools to support evaluation of the quality and fidelity of Tier 1 instruction, supplemental services, and IEP implementation. Site visits include classroom observations and focused conversations with students and stakeholders.

PHASE 4
Final Report & Reccs

School Empowerment Network delivers a comprehensive report of all findings, including areas of strengths and opportunities for improvement. SEN recommends actions for districts and schools with a proposed timeline for improvement. SEN presents its findings to key stakeholders and, as needed, provides communication collateral for dissemination to the community.

SUBSTRAND 1: INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM EVALUATION

PHASE 0 Conditions for Success

Purpose: To build the trust and transparency necessary for a successful audit process.

ACTIVITIES

- SEN partners with the school and/or organization to align on goals and messaging for the audit.
- Introductory communication materials are prepared to explain the audit scope and timeline.

DELIVERABLES

- Overview of the review process and expectations by stakeholder group.
- Optional customized communication templates for stakeholder outreach.

SUBSTRAND 1: INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM EVALUATION

PHASE 1 Extant Data Analysis

Purpose: To analyze existing academic performance data and documentation to establish a fact-based understanding of the current state of special education.

ACTIVITIES

- Analyze achievement and growth trends using standardized test scores and national benchmarks (e.g., NAEP, NWEA).
- Disaggregate data by student subgroup (e.g., disability category, race/ethnicity, grade, economic status).
- Conduct correlational analysis to explore factors influencing performance (e.g., instructional setting, program, teacher experience).
- Review special education documentation for coherence and alignment to evidence-based practices.

DELIVERABLES

- Data files with visualizations and narrative summaries.
- Initial findings based on academic data and documentation.
- List of schools selected for site visits (Phase 3), if applicable.
- Refined research questions to guide subsequent phases.

SUBSTRAND 1: INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM EVALUATION

PHASE 2[1] Virtual Stakeholder Interviews

Purpose: To gather qualitative insights about special education experiences from a range of stakeholders.

ACTIVITIES

- Conduct virtual interviews with special education staff, general educators, administrators, and district leaders.
- Use stratified random sampling to ensure balanced representation.
- Analyze responses using qualitative coding and theme frequency analysis.

DELIVERABLES

- Aggregated and disaggregated interview findings.
- Thematic summaries with anonymized quotes.
- Updated research questions based on emerging themes.

(1) For single sites and/or smaller organizations, stakeholder interviews will be conducted during school reviews, so this will not be a separate phase.

SUBSTRAND 1: INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM EVALUATION

PHASE 3[1] School Reviews

Purpose: To evaluate the quality and fidelity of special education instruction and IEP implementation at the school level.

ACTIVITIES

- Conduct site visits using trained reviewers and standardized rubrics.
- Observe classroom instruction and service delivery aligned to IEPs.
- Conduct interviews with school-based personnel.
- Select schools based on achievement/growth data and other key strata (e.g., grade level, % SpEd students, economic status).

DELIVERABLES

- Aggregate, anonymized report of instructional quality and IEP fidelity.
- Identification of replicable strengths and areas for improvement.

(1) Depending on the size of the organization and the scope of work, smaller organizations might skip this phase and move directly to Phase 4: Final Report and Recommendations

SUBSTRAND 1: INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM EVALUATION

PHASE 4 Final Report & Reccs

Purpose: To synthesize all findings into a comprehensive set of insights and recommendations.

ACTIVITIES

- Analyze and integrate qualitative and quantitative data from all phases.
- Identify strengths, gaps, and areas for targeted improvement.
- Develop guidance aligned to evidence-based practices and district goals.

DELIVERABLES

- Full written report with findings, visualizations, and prioritized recommendations.
- Suggested strategies related to Tier 1 instruction, curricula, professional development, and IEP implementation.
- Slide deck or summary materials for stakeholder communication and broader dissemination.

PHASE 0 Conditions for Success > PHASE 1 Extant Data Analysis > PHASE 2 Virtual Stakeholder Interviews > PHASE 3 School Reviews > PHASE 4 Final Report & Reccs

SUBSTRAND 2: CAPACITY BUILDING & INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

Our Focus

SEN helps districts build strong internal capacity by strengthening four key levers:

Educator Knowledge

Tailored PD grounded in evidence-based practices and aligned to school/district instructional model and curricula

Practitioner Skill

Direct instructional coaching for special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and school leaders

Collective Ownership

Consultation to help teams build shared responsibility, role clarity, and effective collaboration

Programmatic Efficacy

Strategic support for program design, staffing structures, and alignment to instructional goals

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

SEN offers professional learning series grounded in cognitive science and evidence-based practices. In addition to sessions outlined in our toolkits, SEN offers customized learning opportunities focused on the following and beyond:

- Reducing Cognitive Load for Students with High-Incidence Disabilities
- Creating Access Through Lesson Adaptation
- The Art of Pre-Teaching
- Aligning IEPs to High-Impact Goals
- Supporting Instructional Teams in Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

All sessions include practical exemplars tied to the district's curricula and follow-up tools for leaders to observe and support implementation. SEN also provides transformational coaching for school and district leaders to sustain improvements and build coaching systems from within.

Substrand 2 can be offered alone but often builds on Substrand 1, using its findings to guide targeted coaching. This ensures support is aligned to district needs and drives measurable improvements in special education.

SUBSTRAND 2: CAPACITY BUILDING & INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

CAPACITY LEVER 1 Knowledge Building

Purpose: *Strengthen educator expertise in evidence-based practices that support diverse learners, especially those with disabilities.*

ACTIVITIES

- Deliver customized professional learning based on district needs and audit findings.
- Focus on cognitive science, instructional strategies, and inclusive design.
- Emphasize application and practice using district materials, with real-time feedback and post-session implementation tools.

DELIVERABLES

- Tailored PD sessions with contextual exemplars
- Leader “look-for” tools to support coaching and implementation tracking

EXAMPLE TOPICS

- Reducing cognitive load for high-incidence disabilities
- Developing aligned, high-impact IEPs
- Explicit instruction and Universal Design for Learning
- Lesson adaptation and pre-teaching strategies
- Custom support for low-incidence disabilities

SUBSTRAND 2: CAPACITY BUILDING & INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

CAPACITY LEVER 2 Skill Building

Purpose: Provide direct, job-embedded coaching to strengthen the instructional skill of educators and teams.

ACTIVITIES

- One-on-one and team-based coaching for teachers, paraprofessionals, and service providers.
- Focus on real-time application of evidence-based instruction.
- Coach-the-coach model to build local leadership and internal coaching capacity

DELIVERABLES

- On-site coaching cycles customized by role and district needs
- Leader supports to extend coaching impact

SUBSTRAND 2: CAPACITY BUILDING & INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

CAPACITY LEVER 3 Collective Building

Purpose: Strengthen collaboration and shared accountability across roles in special education.

ACTIVITIES

- Support schools and districts in building high-functioning special education teams.
- Provide consulting on team structure, communication systems, and collaboration protocols.
- Facilitate stronger professional learning communities and interdepartmental coordination.

DELIVERABLES

- Role clarity tools and collaboration frameworks
- Guidance for establishing shared ownership of outcomes for students in special education
- Models for data use and compliance best practices

SUBSTRAND 2: CAPACITY BUILDING & INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

CAPACITY LEVER 4 Program Building

Purpose: Ensure schools and districts have strong, sustainable, and inclusive special education programs.

ACTIVITIES

- Design or enhance special education programs tailored to student needs and district capacity.
- Provide expert consultation on service models, eligibility criteria, staffing, and resource allocation.
- Align programming with compliance, instructional rigor, and least-restrictive environment goals.

DELIVERABLES

- Strategic program design and planning support
- Guidance on curriculum selection and program outcomes
- Resource allocation models for specialized services

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

The 1 in 5 Toolkit

SEN's "The 1 in 5 Toolkit" is the first of two complementary professional development series. It's specifically designed to equip general-education and special-education teachers, as well as paraprofessionals, with high-impact, evidence-based instructional practices. These practices are crucial for effectively supporting students with mild and moderate disabilities within inclusive general-education settings.

Audience: General-education teachers, special-education teachers, paraprofessionals

Session Format: Flexible learning options include 90-minute virtual workshops providing a focused introduction and modeling of techniques, or 3-hour onsite sessions for customized practice using existing school curriculum, real-time coaching, and immediate feedback.

Purpose: The core purpose is to build educator skill in high-leverage instructional techniques that reduce cognitive load for students, increase their access to grade-level content, and ultimately strengthen mastery for students with mild and moderate disabilities.

KEY LEARNING AREAS

Tight Talk

Develop concise, intentional teacher language that strategically directs student attention to essential content, maximizing instructional clarity.

Short Cycling

Implement repeated mini-cycles of modeling, guided practice, and independent application to reinforce learning effectively.

Perfect Practice

Facilitate accurate, scaffolded practice aligned to teacher models, utilizing errorless teaching methods to build confidence and competence.

Embedding & Monitoring

Gain practical strategies for seamlessly embedding these techniques into daily lessons and using formative assessment to continuously monitor their impact on student learning.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

The Inclusive Leaders' Toolkit

As the second of SEN's two complementary professional development series, this offering focuses on building the systems, structures, and leadership practices that enable strong, compliant, and instructionally effective special education programs.

Audience: School leaders (principals/APs), district-level special education and academic leaders

Session Format: 90-minute virtual sessions: Content-rich, research-based guidance OR 3-hour onsite sessions: Deeper engagement through case studies, collaborative problem-solving, and structured action planning.

Purpose: Equip leaders with the knowledge and tools to strengthen special education programming, align services to legal requirements, and create conditions for improved instructional quality and student outcomes.

KEY LEARNING AREAS

Inclusive Improvement

Diagnose system gaps, prioritize needs, and lead coherent, inclusive improvement efforts across the district.

Data-Driven Monitoring

Monitor instructional quality and IEP implementation using relevant data and evidence-based tools to ensure fidelity.

Collaborative Ownership

Strengthen collaboration and foster shared responsibility among general education, special education, and student support teams.

Responsive Structures

Design effective structures, schedules, and service models that align with IEP needs and promote student success.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

SEN offers two professional development series designed to strengthen instruction and leadership for students with disabilities. Each session is available as a 90-minute virtual workshop or a 3-hour onsite session.

The 1 in 5 Toolkit

Audience: General & Special Educators, Paraprofessionals

Focus: High-impact instructional techniques for mild–moderate disabilities in general education settings.

Builds teacher expertise through evidence-based strategies like Short Cycling, Perfect Practice, and Tight Talk for immediate integration into daily instruction.

The Inclusive Leaders' Toolkit

Audience: School and District Leaders

Focus: Strengthening systems, structures, and compliance to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

Provides research-based guidance, leadership strategies, case-based discussions, and action planning to design effective special education programs and implement inclusive, legally sound practices.

90 min virtual sessions *or* 3 hour onsite session

WHY PARTNER WITH SEN?

- Since 2017, SEN has conducted over 500 School Quality Reviews across more than 25 districts nationwide.
- Coaches and consultants include former district leaders, school founders, and special education experts
- Frameworks align with the National Center for Intensive Intervention and the What Works Clearinghouse
- SEN's approach is customized, strengths-based, and grounded in instructional equity

Whether you need a focused program audit, targeted PD, or systemwide transformation — SEN meets you where you are and builds from your strengths.

GET IN TOUCH

www.schoolempowermentnetwork.org

