What is PERSONALIZED LEARNING?

When schools and teachers personalize learning, students— including those with disabilities— 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.

Other terms you may hear include:
- Competency-based education
- Project-based learning
- Flexible learning environments
- Learner profile
- Personal learning path
- Digital learning
- Blended or online learning

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

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

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.
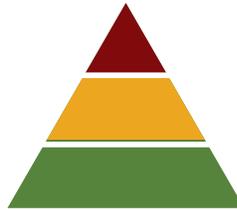
Tier III - Intensive

Tier II - Targeted

Tier I - Core

2 **All educators will need stronger supports and improved training and professional development, especially in these areas:**

- Effective instructional practices for students with disabilities
- Executive functioning skills and challenges
- Using data to inform instructional strategies and choices
- Explicit instruction of self-advocacy skills

3 **Personalized learning offers students with disabilities an opportunity to develop self-advocacy skills with guidance from educators.**

Personalized learning systems require students to engage with and take ownership of their learning. This helps them develop self-advocacy skills.

4 **It is important to plan to include students with disabilities in personalized learning from the beginning.**

Building something right from the start works better! Clumsy "retrofitting" frustrates students, educators and parents, and can suppress achievement.

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.