

**MO-CASE Reinvent Special Education Initiative**  
**By**  
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**History of MO-CASE Reinvent Special Education Initiative**

MO-CASE has a rich history behind the Reinvent Special Education initiative. In the winter of 2013, MO-CASE introduced our Re-inventing Special Education project to our membership. At that time, MO-CASE described an urgent need for Missouri educators to look deeply at the nature of special education and its relevance and effectiveness in helping schools meet current educational challenges. Clearly, even then, public schools in Missouri were very different from the schools that first struggled to understand and implement the requirement of P.L. 94-142 when it was signed into law in 1975. Students with disabilities were no longer routinely excluded from schools or relegated to separate segregated classrooms or buildings. Schools had accepted, and in most cases, embraced students with disabilities as valued members of the school community. Schools accepted responsibility for educating students with even the most challenging disabilities and understood that educating means more than just access to the school building. MO-CASE strongly believed all students really meant all for Missouri.

In 2013, the MO-CASE Board of Directors made the following determination:

“Our most urgent leadership priority is to ensure that special education is relevant, responsive, and effective in working with our colleagues in meeting the multitude of challenges Missouri schools face today. Achieving this priority requires a new vision for who we are as a profession and how we do our work as special educators.”

The 2013 BOD also developed the following Reinvent Special Education vision:

“Transformation of our current dual systems of general and special education into a single, unified and coordinated educational system with the capacity and competency to appropriately educate all students, including those with disabilities and other special needs within a community of professional support.”

At that time, the focus of the Reinvent Special Education initiative became Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). A [position paper](#) was developed as well as a mission and vision. Much work was done across the state to aid districts in the development and implementation of an operational framework used to identify and provide proactive, early intervention for students who needed intensified academic or social-emotional-behavioral instruction.

**Reinvent 2022-2023**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, our Reinvent initiative took a “backseat” to other issues our membership was experiencing across our state. So, let’s fast forward to June, 2022. At this Board of Directors meeting, Reinvent Special Education was again revisited. During a brainstorming activity at the meeting, four big rocks were identified: MTSS, Recruit/Retain, Quality Evaluations, and Specially Designed Instruction, with all relating to each other. Specially

Designed Instruction was identified as our number one focus at this time. However, it was noted we would continue our work on the other three big rocks.

### **MO-CASE Reinvent Special Education Council**

The Reinvent Special Education Council was reinstated with our first meeting held on October 21, 2022. Two other meetings followed: one in January, and our final meeting of this school year held in April. The overarching purpose of this Council is to establish collaborative partnerships with professional organizations and leaders in order to change teacher practice across our state by shifting the focus of special education from regulatory compliance to results driven accountability. In addition, we value supporting our professional partners on initiatives they are already working towards.

At our first meeting, we laid the groundwork for the work ahead of us by reviewing the history of our Reinvent Special Education initiative as well as our newly determined four big rocks. We also discussed current initiatives with our partners on the Council and were not surprised to find much crossover with our initiatives and those of others. The focus of our second meeting was a deep discussion of an initiative shared by all - current teacher shortages. Finally, our third meeting consisted of taking a deeper dive into Specially Designed Instruction. We had a robust discussion on conferences hosted by our partners, at which we can present on SDI. Finally, we explored future outcomes of our Reinvent initiative.

### **SDI Webinar Series**

One of our Reinvent outcomes for this school year has been our Specially Designed Webinar Series. Three webinars were presented by Dr. Margaret Weiss, Associate Professor at George Mason University. The comments we received on this series were phenomenal, so look for our second SDI Webinar Series to be held next school year.