empowerED

Education Consulting to
Empower ○ *Include* ○ *Achieve*
www.jennarufo.com

Catalog of Offerings

About empowerED School Solutions

empowerED School Solutions is an educational consulting firm with expertise in special education, inclusion, and systems change. We support systems in transforming a vision of inclusion and equity into reality. The mission of empowerED is to create more inclusive, engaging schools where high expectations are held for all. We accomplish this through...

- Interactive and relevant professional development that models the practices we want to see in our classrooms;
- Leadership training in systems change for inclusion from individuals who have real-world experience in implementation;
- Instructional coaching from educational experts with years of experience as practitioners;
- Consultative support to IEP teams seeking creative solutions to more effectively include students with disabilities;
- Comprehensive program reviews of special education, intervention frameworks, and multi-tiered systems of support with a goal of providing actionable recommendations for improvement; and
- Meeting facilitation to support teams in arriving at consensus to best meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Founder and CEO

Dr. Jenna Mancini Rufo is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of empowerED School Solutions. Dr. Rufo's experience as a former Assistant Superintendent, Special Education Director, policy specialist, teacher, and inclusion facilitator have provided her with a wealth of practical experience and knowledge in leading systems change for more inclusive and equitable outcomes. She is an engaging speaker and author who is currently working with dozens of school systems and organizations across the country.

Dr. Rufo was inspired to enter the field of education by her sister, Nina, who has significant disabilities. She strives to create opportunities for today's students that her sister never had.

Dr. Jenna Mancini Rufo
Founder and CEO

Keynote and Kick-Off Addresses

Dr. Rufo conducts inspiring and uplifting keynote addresses to energize staff. Her keynote addresses, *Rethinking School: Inclusive Education To Move Us Forward* and *Fall In Love With Teaching Again*, inspire staff to use this point in time as a lever for positive change. Dr. Rufo models the strategies we strive to implement in our classrooms through active engagement and audience participation.

Rethinking School: Inclusive Education to Move Us Forward

This thought-provoking and inspiring keynote address uses the lessons learned from teaching during a pandemic as levers for positive change. 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 session encourages educators to reimagine challenges in special education and the system at large by restorying students to focus on their strengths, redesigning instruction to better meet the needs of all learners, and reconceptualizing equity so that disability is viewed as simply another form of diversity.

Fall In Love With Teaching Again

A global pandemic, the politicization of schools, and the everyday challenges associated with teaching are causing strain on an already tenuous system. Is it any wonder that teachers are leaving the profession at high rates? This keynote address reconnects teachers with their "why" for teaching. It emphasizes student engagement strategies which are modeled through the keynote for active audience participation. Finally, an inclusive framework for teaching and learning is offered as a way to bring joy back into teaching and learning in recognition of the unique gifts of all students.

"Jenna, just finished your presentation on inclusion and equity and I wanted to thank you for a worthwhile three hours of my time. I think my wife was growing tired of my week-long lamenting about having to spend valuable time getting beat over the head with inclusion and equity messages. Your presentation, however, was informative, interesting, and useful."

- *General Education Teacher*

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Professional Development Series

empowerED offers several professional development series to provide ongoing training and support to educators.

Administrative Training Series: Leading Inclusive Education

This four-part administrative series engages leaders in understanding the rationale for inclusive education, effective structures that support implementation, and strategies leading the change process. It is recommended that systems begin their professional development with this series so that leaders have a firm grasp of inclusion prior to rolling out to staff.

"Wow! What a powerful and impactful presentation! Thank you for all that you do and for helping us move forward to make positive changes for ALL students!"

- *Special Education Teacher*

Disproportionality Series

This five-part series is based upon the work of disproportionality expert, Dr. Eddie Fergus. Session one introduces participants to the concept of disproportionality. Data specific to the system is also reviewed. The next three sessions are each devoted to one of the bias-based beliefs that contributes to disproportionate outcomes: deficit thinking, colorblindess, and poverty disciplining. The final session is dedicated to root cause analysis and the initial stages of action planning.

Co-Teaching Series: What Can Two Do Better Than One?

The foundational concepts of co-teaching, including instructional models, planning, and parity, are reviewed in an initial half-day kick-off session. Ongoing coaching, a follow-up workshop, and professional development for administrators on supervising co-teachers is also included as part of this series.

School Psychologist Series

This three-part series begins by sharing how intervention and inclusion need not be mutually exclusive of one another, and how inclusive supports can assist in skill development. Sessions two and three focus on culturally-responsive identification and assessment practices, and disproportionality in special education.

Asynchronous Mini-Courses

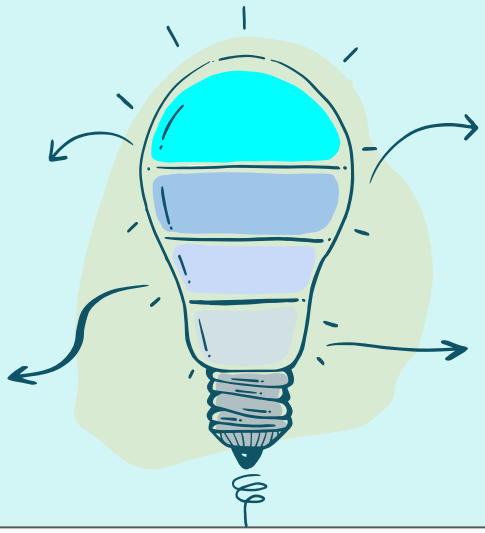
The asynchronous online mini-courses offer you the flexibility of professional development when you want it!

The mini-courses are each anchored by several "big ideas" central to learning. Big ideas are reviewed through videos and articles. Participants engage in checkpoint quizzes and questionnaires to gauge their understanding.

Mini-courses are dynamic in that they can range anywhere from 90 minutes of required material to a supplemental two hours and 30 minutes where additional resources are explored. Flexibility is built into the course to allow for varying time needs or for participants who want to explore the topic more deeply.

> *"The curriculum adaptations course was excellent. The content was very relevant to my job. It was presented in a way that was easy to learn with lots of resources and examples."*
>
> - *Paraprofessional, Washington*

Mini-Course Bundle



Course 1:
Principles of Inclusive Education and Universal Design for Learning

Course 2:
Curricular Adaptations

Course 3:
Reducing and Preventing Challenging Behaviors

Course 4:
Facilitating Student Independence

District mini-course licenses are good for one year. View our online page for more details!

Additional Professional Development Offerings

empowerED offers a wide range of professional development offerings for a variety of groups including administrators, teachers, psychologists, paraprofessionals, parents, and more. Sessions focus on developing skills and knowledge as well as tackling belief systems that may contribute to inequitable practices. Offerings below can be customized to meet your needs.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) - This workshop provides an introduction to the UDL framework. Strategies for "designing from the start" are reviewed and educators learn how to offer students multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement.

Curricular Adaptations - Modifications and Accommodations - This professional development session reviews the difference between accommodations and modifications, and the appropriate use of each. Practical strategies for implementation, including how to adapt and modify instruction and content, are provided.

Essentialization of Content for Students with Complex Needs - Essentialization is the practice of identifying the most essential components of the curriculum and developing access points for students with significant disabilities. This workshop stresses the importance of meaningful and authentic inclusion for students with complex needs and provides practical strategies.

Preventing and Reducing Challenging Behaviors - This session highlights how to implement effective whole group routines, procedures, and classroom management techniques to reduce and prevent instances of challenging behaviors. This is a powerful workshop for new teachers and any educator who is struggling with behavior challenges in the classroom.

Tier One Behavior Professional Learning Community - Small group Professional Learning Communities, or PLCs, are held to identify a problem of practice related to student behavior., develop potential solutions, implement an agreed-upon solution, and debrief on the solution's effectiveness. This PLC series is highly individualized, relevant, and based upon the needs of educators.

Reimagining Special Education Book Study - A book study on Dr. Rufo's co-authored book, *Reimagining Special Education: Using Inclusion As a Framework to Build Equity and Support All Students*, examines strategies to rethink schools to better support the needs of all learners over four one-hour sessions.

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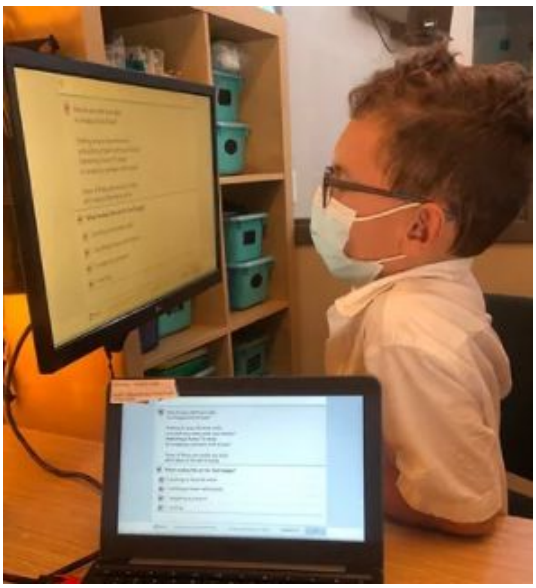
Special Education & Intervention Comprehensive System Review

The Special Education & Intervention Comprehension System Review is a detailed analysis of a system's special education and intervention service delivery. Through detailed data examination, onsite observations, document review, and focus groups and interviews, empowerED develops a comprehensive written report that will....

- Serve as as the foundation to guide future decisions and action steps around special education;
- Provide recommendations based upon triangulated data and sound research techniques;
- Develop a rationale for the desired change grounded in quantitative and qualitative data;
- Uncover barriers to the successful implementation of inclusion due to structures, systems, and beliefs; and
- Deliver a suggested timeline for implementation and recommended professional development



Data analysis may include:

- LRE metrics
- Achievement data
- Disproportionality data
- Out of district programming trends
- Staffing and resources allocation,
- Legal and due process review.
- Stakeholder focus groups
- Onsite information gathering conversations
- Review of documents, procedures, and other qualitative information

"I want to thank you for the comprehensive report you prepared on our special education and intervention services. I think you did a phenomenal job of capturing our glows and grows!"

- *Director of Special Education*

Literacy Support Service for Students with Complex Needs

What Is It?

The **Literacy Support Service for Students with Complex Needs** consists of the following components:

- Half-day on-site visit from an empowerED consultant that consists of:
  - Observation of student's current reading instruction
  - Interview with members of the student's team to determine current strengths and needs
  - Review of curricula currently in place
- One to two hour assessment of the student using modified materials to determine baseline literacy skills
  - Prior to the assessment, the consultant will discuss the student with the special education teacher and work collaboratively to develop appropriate assessment materials (may include addition of responses to a communication device, manipulatives, etc.)
- Written report that includes:
  - Results of the assessment
  - Recommendations for structured literacy program
  - Recommendations for modifications to student's participation in general education
- Two-hour training on adapting supports to structured literacy programs
- Monthly coaching support - two hours per month of remote consultation with individual implementing the literacy program to discuss successes and develop solutions to challenges
- Monthly remote observation - monthly remote observation of the teacher implementing literacy instruction to support fidelity of implementation (in-person can be arranged depending on distance)
- Participation at student IEP meetings or team meetings can also be arranged

Inclusion and Educational Environment Assessment & Training Package

What Is It?

The **Inclusion and Educational Environment Assessment** consists of the following components:

- One-day on-site visit from an empowerED consultant that consists of:
  - Observation of student in current placement
  - Observation of general education classroom of the student's current grade level
  - Interview with members of the student's team to determine current strengths and needs
  - Review of curricula currently in place
- Written report that includes:
  - Strengths and barriers from observation
  - Recommendations for programming
  - Recommendations for modifications to student's participation in general education
- One-hour debrief session with student team to review findings
- Customized training plan with recommendations for professional development
- Monthly coaching support - two hours per month of remote consultation to discuss successes and develop solutions to challenges

"Thank you for your support! I'm learning a lot and I feel good about the level of resources we have been able to provide to the staff. We are excited that the team is all in too- they have really welcomed and appreciated your support. They keep asking for more planning meetings! It can definitely take a village sometimes."

- *Elementary Principal*

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Essentialization of Standards and Curriculum

What Is It?

Essentialization is a process of curriculum prioritization that reduces the depth, breadth, and complexity of grade-level content to support the meaningful access of students with significant cognitive disabilities in general education. empowerED will conduct an initial consultation to determine needs and will develop essentialized pacing guides to serve as a roadmap for students with complex challenges. These pacing guides can be developed generally, through analyzing state standards in conjunction with Dynamic Learning Maps Essential Elements, or specific to individual students through the incorporation of Specially Designed Instruction.

The **general** package includes:

- Consultation with teachers to review grade level standards and key focuses for student learning
- Review of current general education curricula, standards, and materials
- Creation of an essentialized guide to direct student programming. The guide includes:
  - Description of instructional resources and lesson format
  - Side-by-side of general education standards and essentialized standards
  - Pacing guide with estimated targets
  - Direct correlation to resources currently utilized in general education
- Coaching support around the development of modified resources aligned to learning outcomes identified within the essentialized pacing guide.

"Since collaborating to develop this essentialized pacing guide, all members of the IEP team are on the same page about the ways in which we provide presentation, process and product modifications to remove barriers in general education."

- Special Education Teacher

The **student specific** package includes:

- Consultation with teachers to review grade level standards, key focuses for student learning and specially designed instruction
- Check-in meetings throughout the development of the pacing guide to ensure suitability for the learner
- Review of current general education curricula, standards and materials
- Creation of an essentialized guide to direct student programming. The guide includes:
  - Description of instructional resources and lesson format
  - Side-by-side of general education standards and essentialized standards
  - Pacing guide with estimated targets
  - Direct correlation to resources currently utilized in general education
  - Analysis of specially designed instruction with guidance on instructional presentation, engaging practice and progress monitoring of essentialized skills.
- Coaching support around the development of modified resources OR the creation of both digital and paper adapted materials aligned to learning outcomes identified within the essentialized pacing guide.

Literacy Block Development

What Is It?

Consultants from empowerED work with your school or district to develop recommendations for your literacy block. We collaborate with you to develop a schedule where instructional minutes are allocated based upon research-based best reading practices so that appropriate time is dedicated to the many facets necessary for teaching reading and writing.

Why?

Schools invest significant hours each day in the teaching of English/Language Arts. However, numerous districts are not seeing the gains they hope to achieve, even with so much dedicated time available. The Literacy Block Development service supports districts in ensuring that time is allocated appropriately according to the skills we know students must acquire in order to read. Structures and schedules that support the inclusion of students with diverse learning needs are prioritized through scheduling.

Then What?

Once instructional minutes have been allocated for the literacy block, we will work with your staff to ensure they understand...

- The research behind the new schedule and why it will more effectively meet the needs of students;
- How to use data to drive small group instruction within the literacy block; &
- How to effectively utilize support personnel such as special education teachers, paraprofessionals, reading specialists, and other providers pushing into class to maximize student growth.

Consultative Supports

Coaching

empowerED works with administrators, educators, teacher leaders, and service providers to support them one-on-one. This could involve navigating a challenging situation, implementing strategies, or other topics of your choosing. We will match a consultant with you who has expertise tailored to your needs.

IEP Team Supports

Sometimes IEP teams need a fresh perspective. empowerED consults with school districts on cases where an outside view or area of expertise is needed. We will work with the team to observe the student, speak with team members (including parents), and offer strategies.

Implementation Planning

Many districts are eager to provide more equitable and inclusive programming but aren't quite sure where to start or how to begin implementation. We work with leadership teams on how to create structures that support your goals. This might involve strategic planning, resource mapping, revamping the RTI, MTSS, or PBIS framework, developing a structured literacy block, or committee development.

"Jenna, I want to thank you for all your input so far with our student. You've really validated so much of how I've felt... I've always struggled with finding the perfect balance of being passionate and advocating the right way - maybe there's not a perfect balance - but I really would like to emulate the way you go about things. Just know I sincerely appreciate meeting you."

- *Related Service Provider*

Scheduling for Inclusion

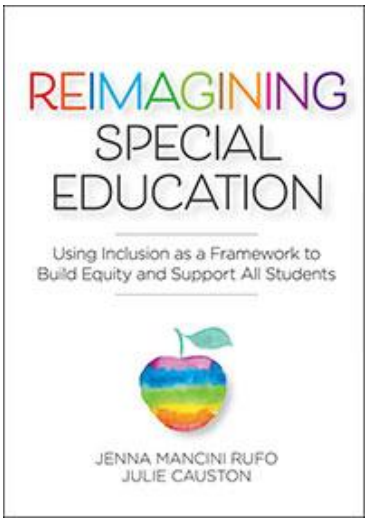
The success of inclusion can rise or fall based upon the schedule. We support administrators with tools for inclusive scheduling to prioritize opportunities for inclusion, intervention, and enrichment, and resources are allocated appropriately.

The empowerED School Solutions Difference

At empowerED, our consultants possess practical, real-world experience in implementing inclusive change in schools. We are more than just theory, ideas, or ivory tower research. We understand that the HOW behind implementation is just as important as the WHY.

When you choose to work with empowerED, you are selecting a consulting firm that understands the challenges schools face today, but also their enormous potential. Our consultants are expert practitioners with experience as administrators, special educators, general education teachers, inclusion facilitators, reading specialists, Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs), and school psychologists.

We will work with you to offer creative and practical solutions tailored to your system that are grounded in best, research-based strategies.



Dr. Rufo's book, co-authored with Dr. Julie Causton, supports districts in reimagining special education for more equitable outcomes for all. The pandemic exposed educational inequities and areas of urgent need—and now, schools have a unique opportunity to press pause and reimagine their practices. Each chapter shares strategies on how to use the lessons from the pandemic as levers for positive change to better support all learners.

A book study is offered to support district learning. Reimagining Special Education may be purchased at bit.ly/rufo1. Bulk discounts can be arranged through Brookes Publishing.

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Contact Us!

empowerED would love to support you on your journey to create more inclusive, equitable, and engaging schools!

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