



Program Reviews in the District



Where We Were, Where We Are, Where We Are Going

- Where we were: We initiated a program review at Swallow Union and the review has happened and we will present on this review this evening.
- Where we are: We are beginning initial action steps based on the review at Swallow Union and have initiated the process at Boutwell.
- Where we are going: We will create a more formalized action plan at the district level and at the building level based on findings and recommendations. We also have a schedule for the remaining school buildings.



Swallow Union

Priority planning based on a variety of data sources



Data Sources for Developing Priorities

- SU Program Review
- Observations from principal and coordinators
- Feedback at the District Behavior Task Force
- Feedback from the professional development district day



Program Review

The planning for a special education program review began in the summer of 2021. The ACCEPT Collaborative was invited in November of 2021 after having reviewed several options. The review was scheduled for winter 2022. Our reviewer was Karen Jewett, Senior Educational Consultant.

The review consisted of:

- Observations
- Interviews
- Surveys
- Document Reviews

Tools used were:

- Benchmark of Quality (Revised)
- Self Assessment in Program Review for Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports
- Casel Indicators of School Wide Walkthrough Protocols
- UDL Classroom Walkthrough Tool
- DESE Educator Guidebook for Inclusive Practices

What Did We Ask?

1. How is the school performing with regards to implementing a cohesive multi-tiered system of support for all students, and how does the school's SST process ensure that students are appropriately identified for increased support when needed?
2. How is data collected and used to inform the SST process as well as referral process for special education eligibility?
3. Does the special education eligibility process reflect best practices related to student referrals, evaluation data, eligibility determinations, and development of reasonably calculated service deliveries to ensure FAPE?
4. Is the organization of staff resources efficient and effective with regards to implementing robust tiered supports across all tiers within the general education setting?



Overarching Finding #1 Fractured Relationships

- There is a confusion around the communication of what it means under the DESE regulations when students are removed from their classroom setting, as this is defined as a “Time Out” or exclusion per DESE.
- Noted that the decisions align special education practices to the DESE guidelines was triggering for the staff because they felt like they lost their program.
- Permeating feelings of distrust, frustration and confusion exist because educators felt like they lost a structure that they felt was meeting students’ needs.



Overarching Finding #2: Expansion of MTSS Across All Inclusive Practices

- According to DESE, there are three tenets of inclusive practices. They are social emotional learning (SEL), positive behavior intervention systems, and universal design for learning (UDL).
- Universal design for learning was a relative strength for Swallow Union.
- Social emotional learning and positive behavioral intervention systems were limited in scope.



Overarching Finding #3: Enhancement of Student Support Teams

- SST at Swallow Union is heavily focused on academic success and primarily in the areas of reading and math intervention.
- A lack of movement within the process, such as when to enter and when to exit, was found.
- A lack of data and measurable goals for implementation during intervention.
- There is limited understanding of what Tier I and Tier II interventions for behavioral needs and social-emotional support would look like in a classroom.



Overarching Finding #4: Special Education Referrals and Services

- Underdeveloped target areas around social emotional needs and behavioral supports impact how to plan for service delivery were reported.
- Confusion about the special education eligibility process, from referral to direct services.
- Paraprofessional roles and responsibilities align with Tier III only.
- The school based methodology and the district's vision need additional alignment.



POSITIVE PRACTICES

- Strong positive relationships between staff and students.
- Professional staff and administration leaders show strong and compassionate commitment to strengthen inclusive practices and are invested in the well being of all students.
- There is a collective focus on continuous improvement.



Recommendation #1

Expansion of Roles and Responsibilities.

- Define support roles and responsibilities across special education staff and paraprofessionals. A few questions were suggested to guide that process:
 - What type of support will the district want paraprofessionals assigned to vs. licensed educators?
 - How will leadership modify the current SST process to include behavioral and social emotional support that special educators will be expected to support?
 - How will leadership modify the current SST process to include more active use of the DCAP and what role can paraprofessionals play in Tier I?



Recommendation #2 De-Escalation Training

- Review of our CALM procedures and consider offering the de-escalation portion to all staff.



Recommendation #3: Reorganizing What I Need (WIN Block)

- Enhanced development of more effective guidelines for how to use WIN time as an intervention block would be recommended specifically for:
 - Types of data to gather and review
 - How to structure data to guide WIN blocks
 - What are expected and allowable activities during WIN block



Recommendation #4: Monitor Paraprofessional Use

- The sustainable approach when thinking about the use of paraprofessionals relies on a strong foundation of education, training and implementation of Tiered systems with data driven programming. The following training can help with this work:
 - Prompt dependency levels of independence
 - How to use prompts and procedures
 - How to use physical proximity
 - When and how to use fading procedures



Recommendation #5: Strengthen Tenets of Inclusive Practices

Based on the findings, it is recommended that the district consider the following implementation changes to enhance and/or establish stronger inclusive practices at Swallow Union.

- SEL Screenings, Curriculum, Implementation Plan
- Behavior Screenings, Curriculum and Implementation Plan
- Universal Design for Learning Practices in the areas of DCAP implementation



Recommendation #6

Personalized Professional Development

- All staff should be well-versed in inclusive practices and how that relates to MTSS. The district should offer professional development to that end.



Additional Sources

- Observations from new leadership
- Observations from SEL, DEI and Mental and Behavioral Health and Special Education Coordinators
- District Behavioral Task Force including educators, administrators and school committee
- Intervention Data in Math and Reading
- Staff Surveys Following Understanding and Responding to Behavior District PD/PL Day

Where We Are

- Consultant (from May 2022) - Carin Rodgers providing administrative support, student support, and assisting in assessing and developing programming
- Implementing Call for Support Protocol, Call for Support data reviewed for building based decisioning making
- Contract with Shapiro Associates for long term special education teacher substitute and special education paraprofessionals
- Collectively maintaining school-wide behavioral expectations for all students
- Increasing communication protocols with families
- Increased lunch/recess paraprofessionals to support students and staff
- Expanding general education and special education resources and materials

Where We Are

- BCBA's model BIP implementation and language
- Training time for all paraprofessionals and teachers on BIPs, data collection and protocols
- Weekly meetings with special education teachers and regular meetings with paraprofessionals, as needed to ensure high level of communication
- SST: discussing data to drive decisions, consistent meeting schedule, team made up of general educators and special educators, school counselor and interventionists.
- Started the PreK to K Transition Planning
- Supporting K and 1 classrooms with adjusting the physical learning spaces to best meet student needs
- District wide PD/PL focusing Understanding and Responding to Behavior in all Tiers



Where we are going

Identify priorities

- Building Relationships among all stakeholders, staff, students, leadership & families
- Defining Each area with Common Understandings with Time to Make Meaning
- Communicating Expectations in each Area
- Examining Practices for Inclusivity in each Tier
- Scheduling
- Professional Development and Learning

Develop and share action plan

- Developing action steps across tiers and special education in each of the priority areas above

Action Items in Process



- Professional Development and Learning Day addressing Understanding Behavior and Responding to Behavior.
- Offerings in Seasons of PD/PL that promote understanding of instructional strategies across tiers and in specialized instruction.
- Discussion and the leadership level of use of core values in our learning environments that promote SEL skill building.
- Communicating what our expectations are in our building spaces.
- Emphasizing relationship building and shared responsibility during the first six weeks of school.
- Examining the SST process and attending professional development and learning throughout the spring as a leadership team.