

Special Education Review

City School District of New Rochelle

June 2023 – Final Report



PUBLIC
CONSULTING GROUP

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I. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

In October 2022, the City School District of New Rochelle (CSDNR) engaged with Public Consulting Group LLC (PCG) to conduct an independent review of its special education services. This report describes the current state of the special education program in CSDNR and is designed to guide the District toward continuous improvement.

The study examined the following guiding questions:

1. How and to what extent does the design, structure and established processes of CSDNR's educational services meet the needs of students with disabilities? To what degree are special education services at schools implemented with fidelity? To what degree is the effectiveness of the processes continuously monitored?
2. How and to what extent are the human capital resources assigned to special education students, the qualifications of the staff, and the level of professional learning received by them adequate?
3. To what extent does the implementation of special education services at schools align with evidence-based practices?
4. How and to what extent are CSDNR's communication strategies to keep stakeholders informed about services for students with disabilities effective?

The recommendations in this report focus on priority areas that emerged from the data collection and include action steps to support overall planning in support of increased access for students with disabilities to high-quality instructional programming.

Methodology

Over the course of the 2022-23 school year, PCG conducted a mixed-methods study of the special education program in CSDNR. The findings and recommendations related to programs, policies, and practices resulted from a comprehensive analysis of several data sources. Sources included **1) Data and Document Analysis, 2) Organizational Focus Groups and Interviews, 3) Hybrid IEP Analysis, 4) a Staff Survey, Parent Survey, and Student Survey, 5) School Visits, and 6) Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) and Committee on Special Education Meeting (CSE) Observations.** These components drew from **Research and Practice Literature** to inform the findings and recommendations. PCG used publicly available achievement and financial information to compare key CSDNR statistics against local district, state, and national data. The method and sources of data are triangulated to increase the validity of the conclusions, in this case, regarding program implementation, identification of gaps, and recommendations for the continued improvement of CSDNR's special education programs and services.

Details of each data source are included below.

Data and Document Analysis

Population Trends, Programs, and Achievement and Outcomes Analysis

As part of this review, PCG analyzed special education population trends, programs, and achievement outcomes. Through analysis of assessment data, educational setting data, and other indicators, the team compared student identification rates and outcomes by disability, ethnicity, gender, and other demographic variables. The data included in the report also compare students with IEPs to their general education peers.

Staffing Analysis

In partnership with the Council of the Great City Schools, PCG has compiled special education staffing ratios from approximately 90 school districts (very large to very small) nationwide. The District's staffing ratios were incorporated into these data to consider CSDNR staffing information in a broader context. Staffing comparison data have been used to evaluate the extent to which staff roles, responsibilities, and training are aligned to CSDNR's expectations.

Document Review

PCG analyzed dozens of documents for information related to District and school structures, programs, policies, and practices. The documents were coded for themes that aligned to the focus group and interview findings. Documents reviewed were in the following general categories:

- Organizational structure, staffing, and resource allocation
- Description of academic programs, services, interventions, and activities
- Documents regarding instruction and professional learning
- District procedures and guides, including improvement plan
- Compliance and due process complaints
- Fiscal information

Focus Groups

From November 2022 through February 2023, PCG conducted organizational focus groups and interviews. Narrative data from these sessions were analyzed using qualitative data analysis strategies. Specifically, a two-cycle coding methodology was implemented to identify "themes" and "sub-themes" from the data. Within this report, no focus group or interview participants are personally referred to or quoted directly, although position titles are referenced in some cases, when necessary, for contextual reasons. These data were coded for themes.

To gain an understanding of how special education programs operate broadly within the District, organizational focus groups and interviews were designed to include a range of stakeholders. These focus groups included a variety of central office staff, school-based staff, and family participants. PCG worked closely with CSDNR to determine the best outreach and communication methods for focus group and interview participation.

Focus groups generally consisted of 10-12 participants, while interviews ranged from 1-3 participants. Except in rare circumstances, supervisors did not participate in the same focus group or interview sessions with their staff members to give all staff an opportunity to speak candidly and honestly. PCG provided a sample schedule and a list of positions required to participate. In total, PCG held 42 focus groups and interviews, with over 125 stakeholders participating.

Hybrid IEP Analysis

PCG held student file review focus groups about the IEP process and conducted an independent, remote analysis of IEPs. Student records were selected at random by PCG and included a wide cross-section of schools, ages, gender, and disability categories. CSDNR staff provided access to the relevant documents associated with the selected students, including the most recent evaluation, IEP, and progress report.

Student File Review Focus Groups

PCG led four, one-hour student-centered file review focus groups to better understand evaluation and IEP development practices. The sessions focused on several topics related to special education management, student identification, programs and services, curriculum and instruction and staffing, and parent engagement, while addressing specific process questions about the development of IEPs, their

implementation, and documentation. Participants included Committee on Special Education (CSE) and Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) staff who did not know each student. Each group consisted of approximately four to six participants. To ensure adequate participation in each group, the Chief Academic Office worked in conjunction with the special education department and school-based leadership to select special education staff for participation. The file review focus group narrative was analyzed to identify strengths and areas of improvement within CSDNR's current practices for IEP development and implementation.

Remote IEP Review

PCG also reviewed files independently using the Quality Indicator Protocol, which aligns to PCG's Golden Thread Framework. Details of the protocol and framework are included in the appendix.

Staff, Parent, and Student Surveys

An online survey process was implemented to collect data on stakeholder perceptions of the quality and effectiveness of CSDNR's special education services. PCG collaborated with the special education department to vet survey items and disseminate two surveys: one to CSDNR staff, one to CSDNR parents of students with IEPs, and one for middle school and high school CSDNR students with IEPs.

Survey Items

Survey items were drawn from the research and practice literature in special education and clustered to acquire data from each stakeholder group regarding the extent to which these groups perceived that policies and practices shown in the literature to support effective programming, parent involvement, and positive results for students with disabilities were evident in CSDNR.

Leadership from the special education department reviewed the survey items to verify their relevance and to add items where appropriate. The survey incorporated five-point rating scales, yes/no questions, and included open-ended text areas. For reporting purposes, the five-point rating scale was consolidated into three categories: agree (which includes strongly agree and agree), disagree (which includes strongly disagree and disagree), and don't know or not applicable (where this option was provided to respondents).

Survey Process

PCG worked collaboratively with the special education department to facilitate a survey process that would result in the highest possible rate of return. To encourage participation, all parents of students with an IEP were informed of the purpose of the survey and provided with instructions for accessing the survey via email. The parent survey was available in English and Spanish and was announced through school messenger. The staff survey was shared with building principals to disseminate to staff. The student survey was available to students in middle school through high school and announced by case managers.

Participation rates were as follows:

- A total of 109 parents who received the survey completed it online, representing a response rate of 7%.
- A total of 440 staff responded to the online staff survey, representing a response rate of 41%.
- A total of 100 middle school and high school students with disabilities responded to the survey, representing a response rate of 10%.

Survey Analysis

Selected survey responses appear within the main body of the report to support findings from specific topics.

Classroom Visits

PCG conducted a series of classroom visits in CSDNR in January 2023. The purpose of these visits was to document a variety of classroom physical attributes as well as the presence of common research-based activities, strategies, and evidence-based practices. Visits were inclusive of grades PK through 12.

PCG's classroom visits were 20-25 minutes in length. PCG noted observable practices that are recognized as critical to the education of students with disabilities. These classroom visits sought evidence of the presence and implementation of (1) Visible elements of Universal Design for Learning / Differentiation of Content, Process and Product; (2) Presence of Specially Designed Instruction (SDI); (3) Features of Inclusive Instructional Special Education Practices; (4) Approaches to Co-Teaching; and (5) Approaches to Consultant Teaching.

A list of classrooms in which there were students with IEPs; the level, subject area and placement designation was requested from the District administration and provided to PCG. The intent was to ensure that all placement settings were represented and could be categorized in generic terms. Working with the District, PCG used a combination of random and purposeful sampling to assure that there was an overall representation of classrooms across the district. As a result, 70 classrooms across eleven schools were identified which reflects a representative sample of types and levels of classrooms within the district.

Apart from seven classrooms that could not be visited due to scheduling conflicts, testing, or other matters outside the control of PCG visitors, classroom visits occurred as expected. The results derived a set of data that was sufficient to yield themes that informed recommendations.

Committee on Special Education (CSE) Observations

PCG attended a series of CSE Meetings in CSDNR. The purpose of these observations was to document the meeting practices in accordance with procedures outlined in IDEA and aligned with guidance from the New York State Department of Education (NYSED).

A schedule of CSE Meetings was requested from the district administration. The intent was to ensure that a variety of Committees on Special Education were represented. Working with the District, PCG used a combination of random and purposeful sampling to assure that there was an overall representation of CSE meetings across the district. In total, PCG observed eight CSE meetings.

PCG sought evidence of the presence and implementation of (1) CSE Team Collaboration and Consensus; (2) Features of a Structured, Sequential CSE Meeting; (3) Presence of Data to Inform IEP development; (4) Evidence of Consideration of Interrelationship of Student's Disability with Student Strengths and Needs; (5) Apparent Goal Setting and Progress Monitoring Procedures; and (6) Prioritization of LRE when Considering Student Placement, Services, and Program. Themes were identified from the aggregated observation notes to yield key insights and patterns regarding the presence and use of the noted meeting structures and practices.

PCG did not observe any CPSE meetings.

Study Limitations

The study has the following limitations:

1. Data collection for this report was conducted during the 2022-23 school year, with data collection occurring from October 2022 to February 2023. Analysis and report writing occurred from March 2023 to May 2023. This report represents a specific point in time.
2. The response rates for the survey participation were below industry standard. Therefore, trends identified through the survey data should only be analyzed in conjunction with the other data points presented in this report.

3. PCG originally proposed to observe additional CSE meetings; however, several of the selected meetings could not be attended due to scheduling conflicts, lack of parental consent, or a last-minute change from a remote to an in-person meeting. Therefore, the sample size of CSE meetings observed was limited. Themes identified through CSE meeting observation data should be considered in conjunction with other data points included in this report.

PCG Foundational Approach

PCG's approach to its work with state, county, and district organizations is as a thought partner. That is, we act as an outside agent, with an objective perspective, who works alongside educational entities to identify challenges and provide recommendations for improvement.¹ We follow a mixed method Collaborative Program Evaluation model that is systematic, based upon qualitative and quantitative research methods, and produces credible and valid data that proactively informs program implementation, determines gaps, and offers recommendations for the continued improvement of the program. We value the importance of developing trust, open communication, and fostering collaboration between the review team and program staff.

Our philosophy for improving student outcomes in schools and districts is driven by the U.S. Department of Education's Results Driven Accountability (RDA) structure and rooted in our Special Education Effectiveness Domains framework.

Results Driven Accountability

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) is a federal law that makes available a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures special education and related services to those children. The IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and requires that each public school provide services to eligible students in the least restrictive environment (LRE) and in accordance with each student's IEP.

In the law, Congress states:

*Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities.*²

One purpose of IDEA is to assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities. This is done through accountability measures established by both the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and state special education agencies and, at times, special education case law.

While compliance indicators remain important, under the RDA framework, OSEP has sharpened its focus on what happens in the classroom to promote educational benefits and improve outcomes and results for students with disabilities. This change was based on data showing that the educational outcomes of America's children and youth with disabilities have not improved as expected, despite significant federal efforts to close achievement gaps. The accountability system that existed prior to the new one placed substantial emphasis on procedural compliance, but it often did not consider how requirements affected the learning outcomes of students.³ This shift is having a great impact in guiding the priorities of special

¹ https://www.publicconsultinggroup.com/media/1272/pcg_collaborative_evaluation.pdf

² <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/about-idea/>

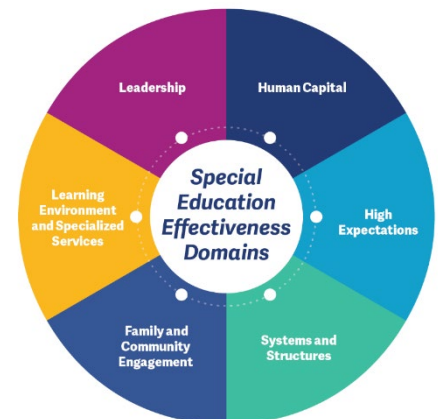
³ April 5, 2012, RDA Summary, U.S. Department of Education. www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/rdasummary.doc

education departments nationwide, including in CSDNR. Districts nationwide need to raise the level of and access to rigor in the classroom and generate a culture of academic optimism.⁴

These issues became even more significant with the March 22, 2017, U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District*.⁵ In this decision, the Court updated its prior standard for determining a school district's provision of an appropriate education for students with disabilities. This case centered on the importance of establishing ambitious and challenging goals that enable each student to make academic progress and functional advancement and advance from grade to grade. Progress for a student with a disability, including those receiving instruction based on alternate academic achievement standards, must be appropriate in light of his/her circumstances. Furthermore, yearly progress must be more demanding than the "merely more than de minimis" standards that had been used by some lower courts. The Court made it clear that IDEA demands more. In *Endrew*, the Supreme Court reached a balance between the standard established by the 10th Circuit and other circuits (more than de minimis) and the higher standard promoted by Endrew's parents (goal of providing students with disabilities opportunities to achieve academic success, attain self-sufficiency, and contribute to society that are substantially equal to the opportunities afforded children without disabilities). The *Endrew* decision's most significant impact in the classroom can be seen in: (1) the design and development of rigorous Individualized Education Programs (IEPs); (2) the implementation of students' IEPs with fidelity; and (3) increased progress monitoring of IEP goals.

Special Education Effectiveness Domains

Building on extensive research and our collective experience and expertise serving school districts and state departments of education nationwide, PCG has developed this Special Education Effectiveness Framework to assist school districts in catalyzing conversations about, and reviewing and improving the quality of, their special education programs.⁶ It is designed to provide school district leaders with a set of practices to strengthen special education services and supports, to highlight the multidisciplinary, integrated nature of systemic improvement, and to clearly establish a pathway for districts to move toward realizing both compliance and results. An intentional focus on improving outcomes for students with disabilities leads to improved outcomes for ALL students.



When implemented with a systems-thinking approach, the six domains of our Special Education Effectiveness Framework help superintendents and district leaders improve educational and functional outcomes for students with disabilities.

The recommendations provided in this report are organized around these domains and are oriented toward extending CSDNR's focus on outcomes for students with disabilities.

Terminology

There are several terms used throughout this report that require definition and clarification within the CSDNR context.

Committee on Special Education (CSE). The CSE is a multidisciplinary team appointed by the Board of Education. The CSE is authorized to identify students in need of services by determining eligibility,

⁴ Hoy, W. K., Tarter, C. J., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2006). Academic optimism of schools: A force for student achievement. Working Paper. The Ohio State University. <http://www.waynehoy.com/school-academic-optimism/>

⁵ Supreme Court of the United States. Retrieved from https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/16pdf/15-827_0pm1.pdf

⁶ https://publicconsultinggroup.com/media/3347/special-education-effectiveness-framework_policy-paper.pdf

developing an Individualized Education Program (IEP), placing the student in the least restrictive environment in which they can succeed and provide appropriate services to meet the child's educational needs. The team meets at least annually to review a child's IEP and determine programming from that point forward.

Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE). The CPSE is a multidisciplinary team appointed by the school board to determine eligibility and the appropriate level of services for preschool children ages 3-5 years old. The CPSE conducts meetings to develop, review, or revise the Individualized Education Program (IEP) of a preschool student with a disability.

Gender Data. Current data collection at the CSDNR and at the federal level is binary, with comparative data available for males and females only. As such, these categories are used throughout this report.

Low Incidence Disabilities. Low incidence disabilities refer to a category of disabilities that affect a relatively small percentage of the population. These disabilities are characterized by their infrequent occurrence or low prevalence rates. As a result, individuals with low incidence disabilities may be relatively rare within a given population or community. Examples of low incidence disabilities include certain developmental disorders, rare genetic conditions, and severe physical or sensory impairments. Although the prevalence of autism has significantly increased, it is still often referred to as a low incidence disability.

Nondisabled Peers. This term is generally used in data tables where the original data source uses this nomenclature. At times, the terms “students without disabilities” or “typically developing peers” are also used.

Parents. In the context of this report, a parent is defined as natural or adoptive parents of a child, a guardian, a parent acting in the place of a parent (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the child’s welfare) or a surrogate parent. The term “parent” is inclusive of families as well.

Students Receiving Special Education Services. References are made to students receiving special education services. They will also be referred to as students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or students with disabilities (SWDs). The terms are intended to be interchangeable. This categorization does not include students with disabilities who exclusively have 504 Plans.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background on the City School District of New Rochelle

CSDNR is situated in Westchester County, New York, approximately 20 miles northeast of Manhattan. It serves the residents of New Rochelle, a vibrant suburban city with a population of around 80,000 residents.

New Rochelle exhibits a diverse range of neighborhoods. The city boasts a mix of residential areas, including single-family homes, townhouses, and apartment complexes. Based on US Census data from 2020, the median household income in New Rochelle is \$106,386, reflecting the presence of a sizable middle-class and upper-middle-class population. Furthermore, 56% of residents hold a Bachelor's degree or higher.⁷

In terms of language diversity, approximately 60% of New Rochelle's residents primarily speak English at home, 25% primarily speak Spanish, 10% speak other Indo-European languages, and 3.4% speak Asian and Pacific Islander languages. This linguistic variety contributes to the rich cultural fabric of the community. Additionally, per Census data, the city maintains a relatively low poverty rate of 8.7%.⁸

However, it is worth noting that within CSDNR, some 52% of all students are recipients of free and reduced lunch. This statistic underscores the presence of economic disparities among students within the district, necessitating additional support and resources to ensure equitable opportunities for all learners.⁹

CSDNR consists of ten schools catering to under 10,000 students from pre-kindergarten through 18-21 programming. It boasts a team of 725 teachers, 27 social workers, and 44 special education aides.¹⁰ The District's schools include the following:

- New Rochelle High School (and its satellite programming, such as Huguenot Academy, Project Search, and the Culinary Program)
- Albert Leonard Middle School
- Isaac E. Young Middle School
- Henry Barnard Early Childhood Center
- Columbus Elementary School
- Daniel Webster Elementary School
- George M. Davis Elementary School
- Trinity Elementary School
- Jefferson Elementary School
- William B. Ward Elementary School

Over the years, the classification rate of students with disabilities in CSDNR has increased from 11.5% in 2019 to 17.2% in 2022.¹¹

Accolades and Accomplishments in CSDNR

In recent years, students from CSDNR have achieved notable accomplishments, including:

- In 2022, 20 New Rochelle High School Science Research Students received 24 awards in the prestigious 2022 Regeneron Westchester Science & Engineering Fair.

⁷ https://data.census.gov/profile/New_Rochelle_city:_New_York?q=160XX00US3650617

⁸ id.

⁹ <https://data.nysed.gov/studenteducator.php?year=2021&instid=800000035159>

¹⁰ id

¹¹ <https://data.nysed.gov/enrollment.php?year=2021&instid=800000035159>

- In 2023, seven high school sophomores and juniors from New Rochelle participated in the Junior State of America (JSA) Northeast Spring State convention in Hartford, CT. They were honored with five Best Speaker awards. The two-day event brought together students from schools across New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts and featured debates and activism blocks.

Through information gathered from interviews, focus groups, and surveys for this report, it has become evident that the district's teachers deserve praise for their outstanding contributions to education. Their commitment to communication and collaboration with both students and parents stands out as a strength. Teachers actively strive to create supportive learning environments where students feel valued. Moreover, they display an eagerness to engage in continuous professional learning, seeking opportunities to enhance their teaching practices and refine their craft. This dedication to ongoing growth and improvement underscores the teachers' commitment.

In addition to its other achievements, CSDNR has established itself as a pioneer in providing unique transition opportunities for the ages 18 to 21 population. Notably, CSDNR is the sole district in Westchester County that operates a Project Search site catering to students aged 18 to 21 who are not on a traditional diploma track. A significant aspect of CSDNR's Project Search initiative is its partnership with Montefiore Hospital. This collaboration allows students to engage in hands-on vocational training within a healthcare setting, equipping them with valuable skills and experiences that can contribute to their future success.

Furthermore, CSDNR offers community-based instruction as part of its Culinary Program for students aged 18 to 21. Led by CSDNR teachers and a professional chef, this program provides students with practical training in the culinary arts while fostering essential skills for employment in the food industry. The district has established partnerships with various business sites across the city, allowing students to gain real-world experience in a professional setting.

Challenges Facing CSDNR

This report will address several pressing concerns within CSDNR that directly and indirectly impact special education. Some of the key issues include the following.

Leadership Turnover

One of the primary concerns is the high turnover rate in leadership positions, including the superintendent role. With nine superintendents in the past eight years, the district has suffered from a lack of stability and continuity, which has negatively impacted the organization as a whole. With competing priorities and abrupt departures, this leadership instability has trickled down to staff members, creating an undercurrent of distrust, insecurity, and apathy. The new leadership for special education is eager to begin providing stability and to improving upon past practices.

Accountability

In 2021, the District underwent significant changes in the OSE. The position of a single Director of Special Education was divided into two roles: a Director of Special Education for Elementary Schools and a Director of Special Education for Secondary Schools. Additionally, the department was relocated within the organizational structure and now operates under the Office of Curriculum and Instruction, with the Directors of Special Education reporting to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.

The District also has five Assistant Directors of Special Education assigned to different buildings. Among them, one oversees high school programming, two handle middle school programming, and two are responsible for elementary school programming. These Assistant Directors also oversee special education services for students receiving them outside the district. The Office of Special Education further includes 14 Facilitators or Committee on Special Education (CSE) and Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) Chairpersons.

The multiple layers of leadership have resulted in accountability issues. Concerns have been raised through various channels, including focus groups, interviews, and surveys, particularly regarding the quality of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), CSE and CPSE meetings, special education programming, and service delivery. This has led to confusion at the school level, with individuals questioning who ultimately holds authority.

Eligibility and Identification

The district faces concerns related to the disproportionate representation of students with disabilities, risk ratios, and eligibility criteria. There is a growing worry that the district's current practices may not effectively identify and serve students who require special education services, potentially leaving some without the necessary support.

Learning Environment

While the expansion of IEPs with integrated co-teaching (ICT) is a positive step, there have been challenges. The current implementation in many settings only allows for a half-day (minimum of 2.5 hours) of ICT, which may not adequately address the needs of students requiring additional support in a co-taught environment.

Another significant issue is the lack of robust systems and limited utilization of data within the district. Relying on entrenched institutional practices hinders the implementation of evidence-based approaches and data-driven decision-making. Insufficient training and support further impede the district's ability to improve its special education programs and services.

Lastly, the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the district's challenges within the learning environment. Transitioning between virtual and in-person instruction has disrupted student behavior and placed additional strain on available resources.

Addressing these multifaceted challenges requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach. Stakeholders at all levels must be involved in efforts to improve structural stability, enhance training and data utilization, rebuild trust within the community, and ensure equitable and effective support for students with special needs. This report aims to provide a detailed analysis of these issues and offer actionable recommendations to address them.

III. SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS, ACHIEVEMENT, AND PLACEMENT

This chapter provides an analysis on demographic, achievement, and placement data for students receiving special education services in CSDNR. Data analyzed provides a perspective on the profile of students who receive special education services, how they are doing academically, and how they are supported in the district. PCG utilized publicly available data to analyze and compare trends in student identification for special education services, outcomes on standardized tests, graduation and dropout rates, and placement. Additionally, CSDNR provided multiple data files that reflected current school year trends for identification and placement. Unless otherwise noted, PCG utilized data submitted by CSDNR in 2023 to conduct analyses for the current school year. For prior years data, PCG utilized data available through the state of New York, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), and the National Center for Education Statistics Digest of Education Statistics.

State Performance Plan Indicators

IDEA Part B Indicators

- **Indicator 1:** Graduation Rate
- **Indicator 2:** Dropout Rate
- **Indicator 3:** Assessment (Participation and Performance)
- **Indicator 4:** Rates of Suspension
- **Indicator 5:** Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), Age 6-21
- **Indicator 6:** Preschool LRE, Age 3-5
- **Indicator 7:** Preschool Outcomes
- **Indicator 8:** Parent Involvement
- **Indicators 9, 10:** Disproportionate Representation Due to Inappropriate Identification
- **Indicator 11:** Timely Initial Evaluations
- **Indicator 12:** Early Childhood Transition
- **Indicator 13:** Secondary Transition
- **Indicator 14:** Post-School Outcomes
- **Indicators 15, 16:** Dispute Resolution
- **Indicator 17:** State Systemic Improvement Plan

To meet the general supervision requirements under the IDEA, OSEP has established State Performance Plan (SPP) requirements and 17 indicators to monitor each state. While compliance indicators must have a federally required target of 100%, states develop annual targets for each performance indicator and monitor outcomes for each Local Education Agency (LEA).¹² Each year, states must publicly report state and LEA outcomes for each SPP indicator and associated targets. Analysis on SPP indicator data for CSDNR is embedded throughout this chapter.

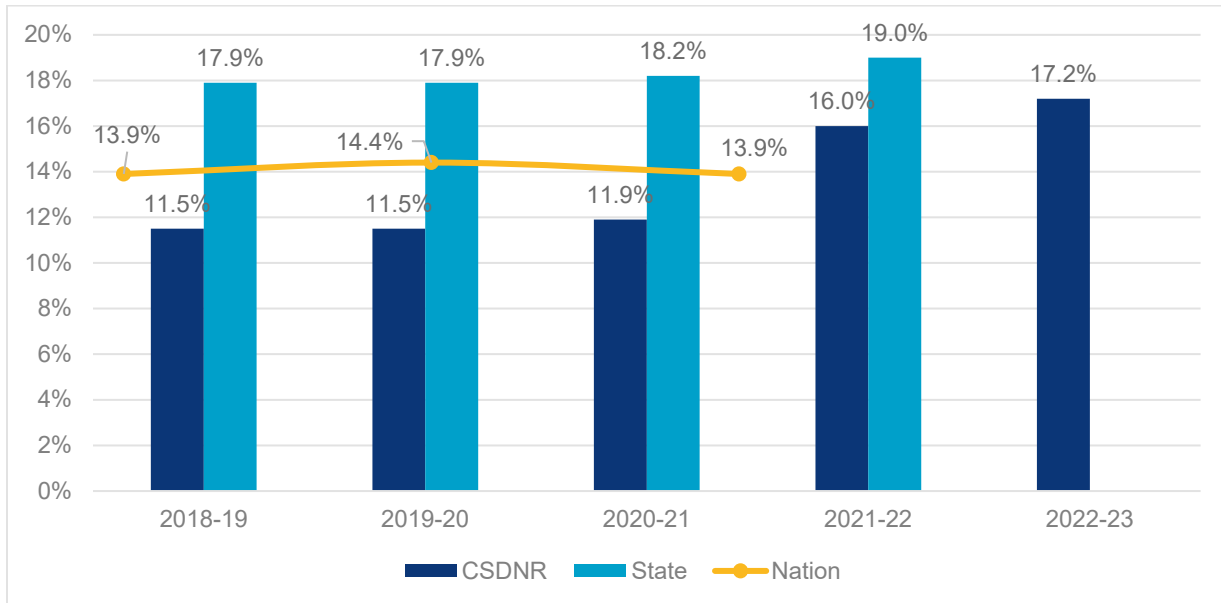
Special Education Student Demographics

The following section includes an analysis of CSDNR special education demographic data disaggregated by relevant student population groups. Where appropriate, a comparison analysis of state and national data is included.

Between 2018 to 2021, 11.5 and 11.9% of CSDNR school-aged students had an IEP. This was substantially lower than the state average which ranged between 17.9 and 18.2%. The national average during this same period ranged between 13.9 and 14.4%. Between 2021-2023, the percentage of CSDNR students who had an IEP increased 5.3 percentage points to 17.2%.

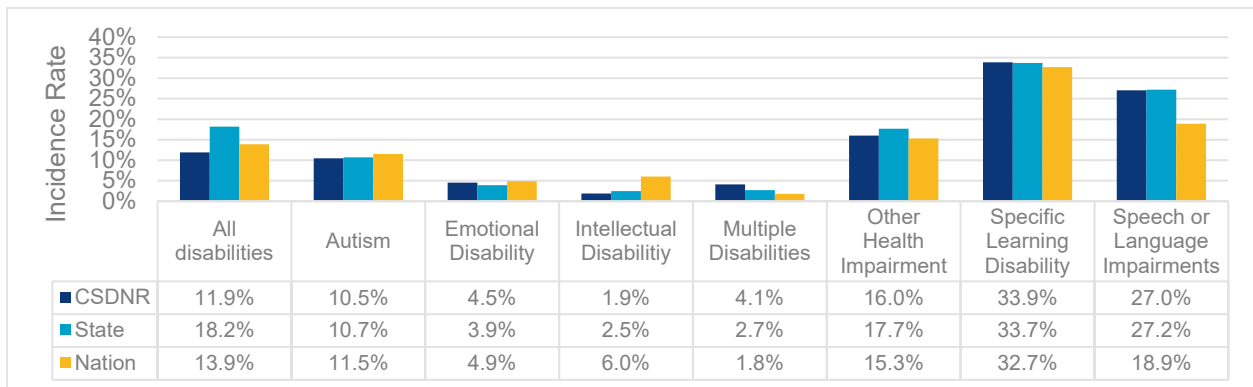
¹² In New York, LEAs are responsible for 14 of the 17 indicators.

Exhibit 1. Percentage of CSDNR Students (grades K-12) with IEPs Compared to State and National Incidence Rates (Ages 6-21), 2018-19 to 2020-21¹³



Of the CSDNR students identified with a disability in 2021, 33.9% had a learning disability, 27.0% had a speech or language impairment, 16.0% had an other health impairment, and 10.5% had autism. These percentages aligned with state and nation averages across most disability classifications.

Exhibit 2. Percentage of CSDNR SwD by Disability Area Compared to State and Nation (ages 6-21), 2020-21

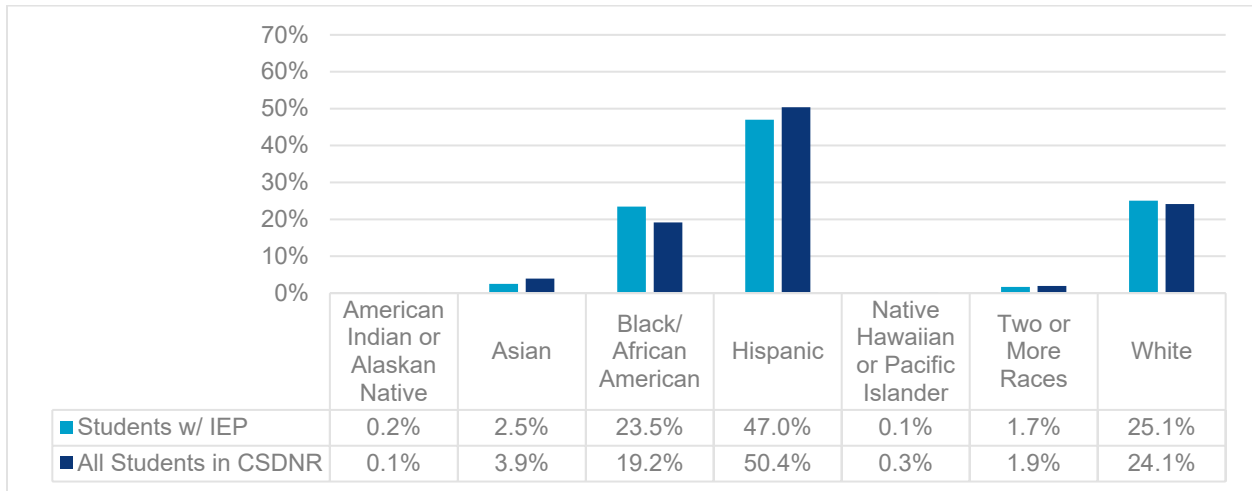


Incidence Rate by Race Ethnicity

In 2023, 47.0% of students with an IEP were Hispanic, 25.1% were white, and 23.5% were Black/ African American. In comparison to all students enrolled in the district, 50.4% were Hispanic, 24.1% were white, and 19.2% were Black/ African American.

¹³ District and State data obtained from NY State Data Portal: <https://data.nysed.gov/>. National data obtained from National Center for Education Statistics Digest of Education Statistics: <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/>. National data not available for school years 2021-22 and 2022-23. State data unavailable for 2022-23. District data for 2022-23 was provided by CSDNR in 2023.

Exhibit 3. Percentage of CSDNR Students with IEPs (Age 6-21) by Race/Ethnicity Compared to All Students in CSDNR, 2022-23¹⁴

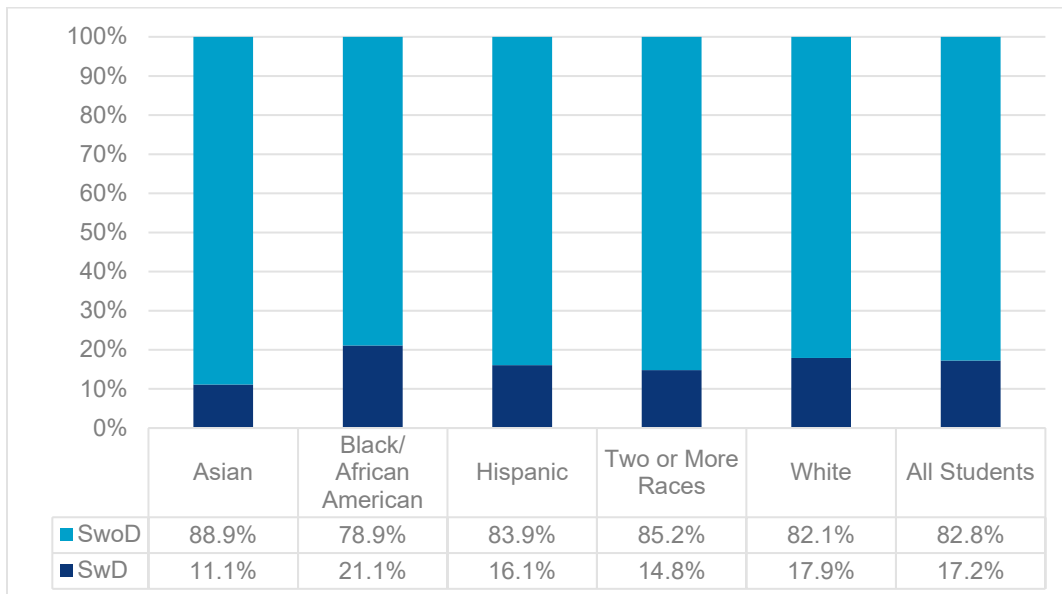


Of students enrolled in the district:

- 21.1% of Black/ African American students had an IEP,
- 17.9% of white students had an IEP,
- 16.1% of Hispanic students had an IEP, and
- 14.8% of students who had Two or More races had an IEP.

The percent of Black/ African American students with an IEP (21.1%) was higher than the overall district identification rate of 17.2%.

Exhibit 4. Percentage of CSDNR Students with IEPs (Age 6-21) by Race/Ethnicity, 2022-23

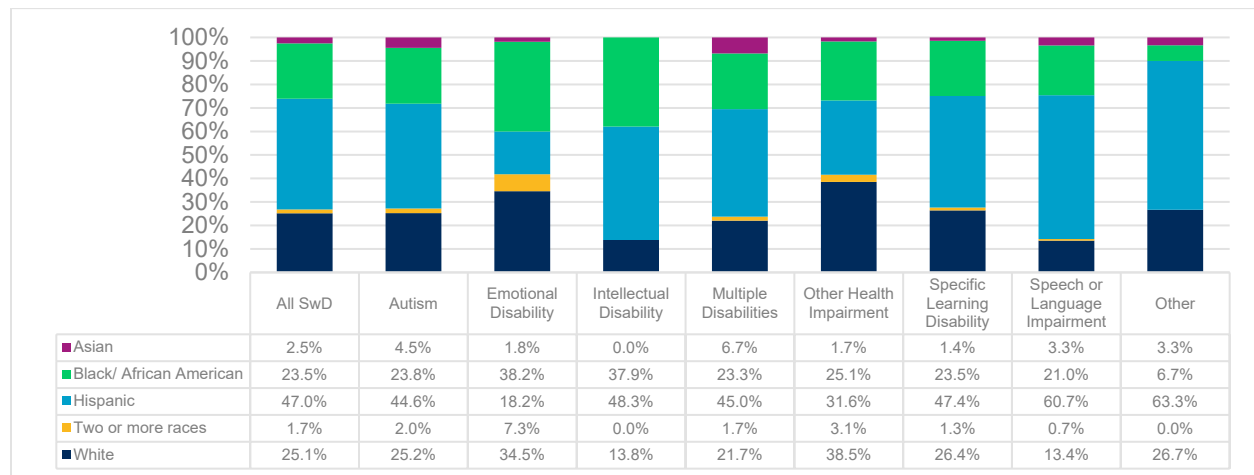


¹⁴ Data for the following Race/Ethnicity categories was suppressed due to population sizes fewer than 10 students: American Indian or Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

Data indicated the prevalence of certain race/ethnicities identified with specific disability types at a higher rate when compared to all students with disabilities. Key differences, displayed in the graph below, include:

- Black students account for 23.5% of students with an IEP but accounted for 38.2% of students identified with an emotional disability, 37.9% of students with an intellectual disability, and 25.1% of students with an other health impairment.
- While Hispanic students accounted for 47.0% of students with an IEP but accounted for 60.7% of students with a speech or language impairment, and 48.3% of students with an intellectual disability.
- White students account for 25.1% of students with an IEP but accounted for 38.5% of students with an other health impairment, 34.5% of students with an emotional disability, 13.8% of students with an intellectual disability, and 13.4% of students with a speech or language impairment.

Exhibit 5. Percentage of CSDNR Students (Age 6-21) by Disability Area and Race/Ethnicity, 2022-23¹⁵



Risk Ratio

One of the most useful, informative, and proactive methods used to calculate disproportionality "is the risk ratio, which compares one racial/ethnic group's risk of receiving special education and related services to that of all other students."¹⁶ The risk ratio can be used to calculate disproportionality at both the state and district levels. The analysis below is intended to provide CSDNR with a tool to calculate risk ratios in order to monitor trends and identify areas of concern.

The risk ratio tool tells school personnel how the risk for one racial/ethnic group compares to the risk for a comparison group.¹⁷ It can be used to assess:

- How much more likely is it for students from one race or ethnicity group to be classified with a disability compared to all other students;
- How much more likely is it for students with disabilities from one race or ethnicity group to be suspended for more than 10 days compared to all other students;

¹⁵ Other includes the following disability classifications: Deafness, Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment, Orthopedic Impairment, Deaf-Blindness, and Traumatic Brain Injury.

¹⁶ Bollmer, J. Bethel, et al. (2007). Using the Risk Ratio to Assess Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality in Special Education at the School-District Level. The Journal of Special Education, Vol 41, Issue 3, pp. 186 – 198.

¹⁷ Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Special Education: A Multi-Year Disproportionality Analysis by State, Analysis Category, and Race/Ethnicity, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education, February 2016.

- What the likelihood is that a student from a particular racial or ethnic group will be classified with a disability, be given a specific disability classification, or placed in a most restrictive environment;
- What the likelihood is that a student with a disability from a particular racial or ethnic group will be suspended for more than 10 days.

As a concept, "risk" looks at the general enrollment data for each racial group along with the number of students from that group who were identified for a specified category and calculates the likelihood that a student from that racial group would be found in that particular category. The general risk equation is as follows:¹⁸

$$\text{Risk} = \frac{\text{Number of children from racial/ethnic group in disability category}}{\text{Number of enrolled children from racial/ethnic group}} \times 100$$

As shown below, a risk ratio greater than 2.0 or a racial/ethnic group indicates a higher risk of over-representation, while a risk ratio of less than 1.0 indicates a higher risk of under-representation. For the state of New York, the threshold for identification of significant disproportionality for students based on race/ethnicity and disability classification is 4.0.¹⁹

PCG conducted a risk ratio analysis of CSDNR data to identify areas where over-identification of students with disabilities based on disability, race, educational setting, and discipline may be occurring. The risk ratio calculated is not designed to replicate New York's significant disproportionality reporting process. The intent of this calculation is to provide a formative data point to assess the extent to which identification rate and educational placement and behavior decisions are impacted by students' race/ethnicity. This tool can be used to inform ongoing analysis and monitoring.

As displayed in the exhibit below, Black/ African American students were over two and a half times as likely to be identified with an emotional disability and intellectual disability when compared to other race/ethnicity groups. Hispanic students were over one and a half times more likely to be identified with a speech or language impairment. White students were nearly twice as likely to be identified with an other health impairment and one and a half times more likely to be identified with an emotional disability. White students were less likely to be identified with a speech or language impairment and intellectual disability. No student race/ethnicity group approached the NY state threshold for significant disproportionality for the disability classifications analyzed.

¹⁸ PCG analyzed student populations with at least 10 students in a particular race/ethnicity group with an IEP and at least 5 students with a specific disability classification.

¹⁹ 2020-21 Criteria for Notification of Disproportionality:
https://www.p12.nysed.gov/sedcar/forms/instructions/spp_criteria/sigdispro2021.html

Exhibit 6. Risk Ratios by Race/Ethnicity and Disability, 2022-23²⁰



Disproportionality Targeted Support Group

For the 2021-22 school year, it should be noted that the District voluntarily engaged in a disproportionality workgroup to address Black students as being overidentified with an emotional disability.

Following a root cause data analysis, the District established the following findings:

- Finding 1: Black Students are disproportionately classified as having emotional disabilities.
- Finding 2: Black students referrals came disproportionately from school.
- Finding 3: Black students were disproportionately referred in early elementary school.
- Finding 4: There was insufficient evidence of pre-referral intervention.
- Finding 5: Pre-referral interventions were disproportionately undocumented for Black students.

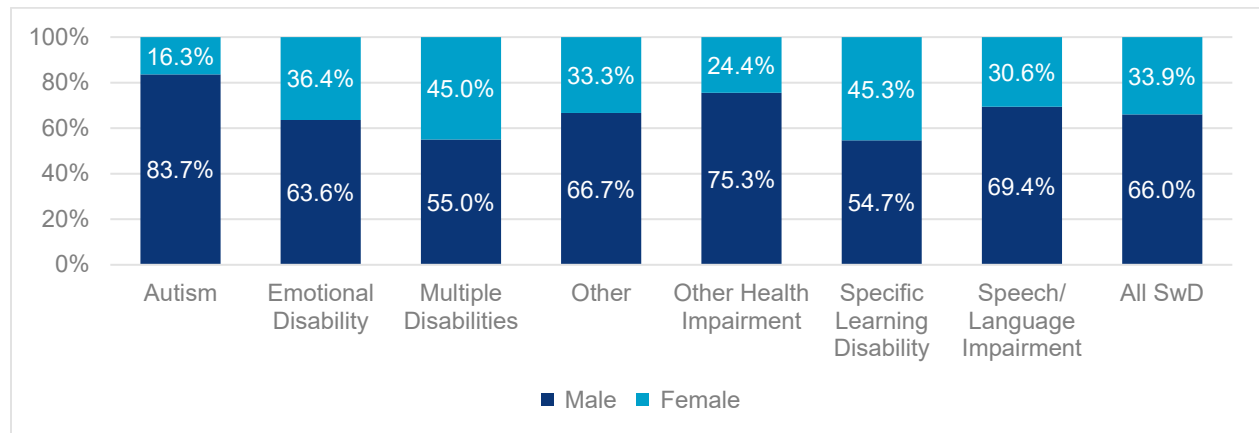
In summary, the District determined that “Black students are disproportionately classified as having Emotional Disturbance (ED) through school based referrals in early elementary school without adequate documentation of pre-referral intervention.” The work of the Disproportionality Targeted Support Group is still underway and is beginning to develop an action plan to address the findings.

²⁰ Data for the following Race/Ethnicity categories was suppressed due to populations sizes fewer than 10 students: American Indian or Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Analysis for Asian students with the following disabilities was not completed due to student population sizes fewer than 5: emotional disability, intellectual disability, and multiple disabilities. Analysis for students with Two or More Races with the following disabilities was not completed due to student population sizes fewer than 5: autism, emotional disability, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, and speech/language impairment. Analysis for white students with an intellectual disability was not completed due to a student population size of fewer than 5 students.

Eligibility by Gender

In CSDNR, 52.0% of students are male, and 48.0% of students are female. Male students accounted for 66% of students with IEPs while female students accounted for 33.9% of students with IEPs. Male students were identified in the following disability categories at a higher rate than the overall percentage of male students with an IEP (66.0%): autism (83.7%), other health impairment (75.3%) and speech language impairment (69.4%). Female students with an IEP accounted for 45.3% of students with a specific learning disability, 45.0% of students with multiple disabilities, and 36.4% of students with an emotional disability. These percentages were higher than the overall percentage of female students with an IEP (33.9%).

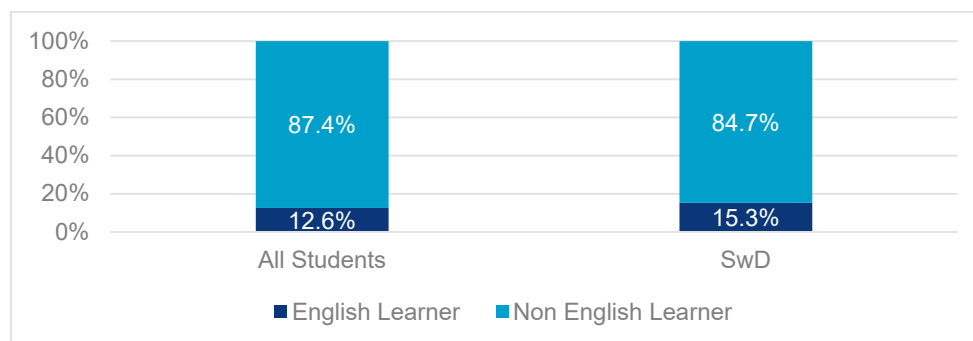
Exhibit 7. Percentage of CSDNR Students with IEPs by Gender, 2022-23



Eligibility by English Language Learner Status

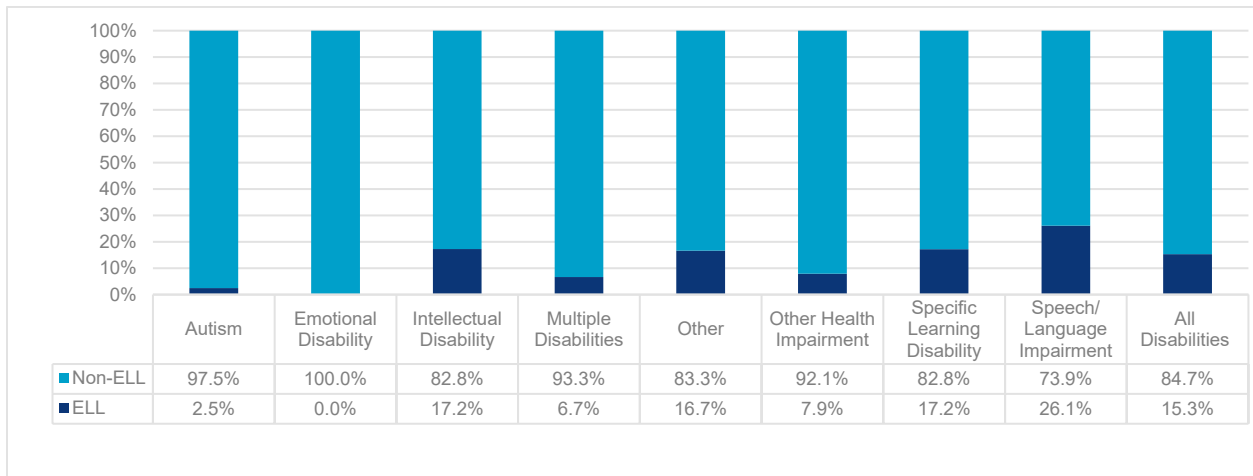
In CSDNR, 12.6% of students are English language learners (ELLs). Of students with IEPs, 15.3% are ELLs.

Exhibit 8. Percentage of CSDNR Students by ELL Status and Disability Eligibility, 2022-23



Of students with IEPs, 26.1% of students with a speech language impairment are ELLs, 17.2% of students with a specific learning disability are ELLs, and 17.2% of students with an intellectual disability. These categories were higher than the overall percentage of students with an IEP who are also ELLs (15.3%).

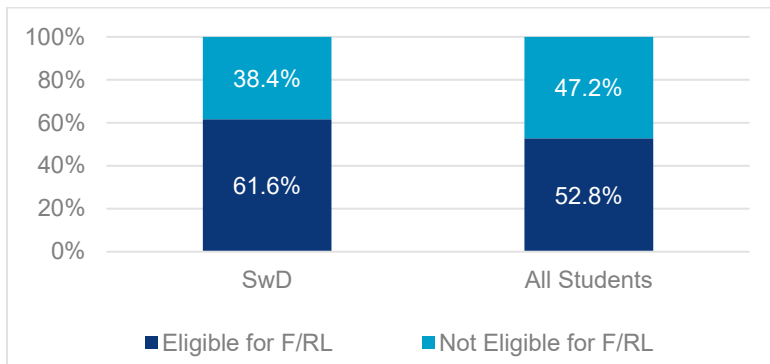
Exhibit 9. Percentage of CSDNR SwD by Disability Area ELL Status, 2022-23



Eligibility by Free and Reduced Price Lunch Status

In CSDNR, 52.8% of students are eligible for free or reduced priced lunch. Of students with IEPs, 61.6% are eligible for free or reduced priced lunch.

Exhibit 10. Percentage of CSDNR Students Eligible for Free/ Reduced Lunch by Disability Eligibility (ages 6-21), 2022-23



Achievement: School-Aged Students

This section provides a longitudinal analysis of outcomes for school-aged students and those receiving special education based on the following: New York State Testing Program (NYSTP), graduation rates, and dropout rates.²¹

New York State Testing Program

English language arts (ELA) and mathematics assessment results from 2016-17 to 2021-22 for students with and without disabilities were analyzed to understand the extent to which achievement gaps exist.²²

²¹ Data analyzed in this section was obtained from NY State Data Portal: <https://data.nysed.gov/>.

²² Due to COVID-19, testing was not conducted in 2020. For 2020-21, an estimated 40% of students participated in state assessments. In CSDNR, only 48% of third graders participated in the English language arts assessment. The smaller sample size may not be representative of CSDNR's student population. As a result, data from 2020-21 are not included in the longitudinal analysis.

The percentage of students who scored proficient for the following three grade levels were analyzed: four, eight, and high school regents (ELA and Algebra I).

English Language Arts

CSDNR students without disabilities performed at, or slightly below, state averages for students across all grade levels analyzed. CSDNR students with disabilities performed lower than the state average for all students with disabilities. The achievement gap between students with disabilities and those without, at both the state and district level was substantial. Across the three grade levels analyzed, the average achievement gap for students with disabilities was 42 percentage points for grade 4, 41 percentage points for grade 8, and 42 percentage points for HS regents. This gap mirrored the state achievement gap between students with disabilities and those without.

Exhibit 11. Grade 4 ELA, 2016-17 to 2021-22

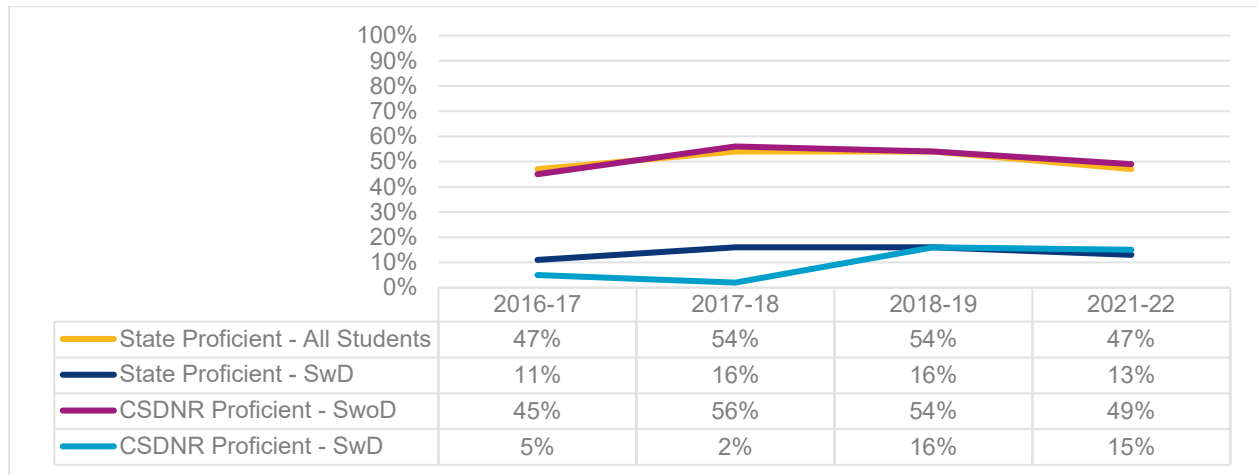


Exhibit 12. Grade 8 ELA, 2016-17 to 2021-22

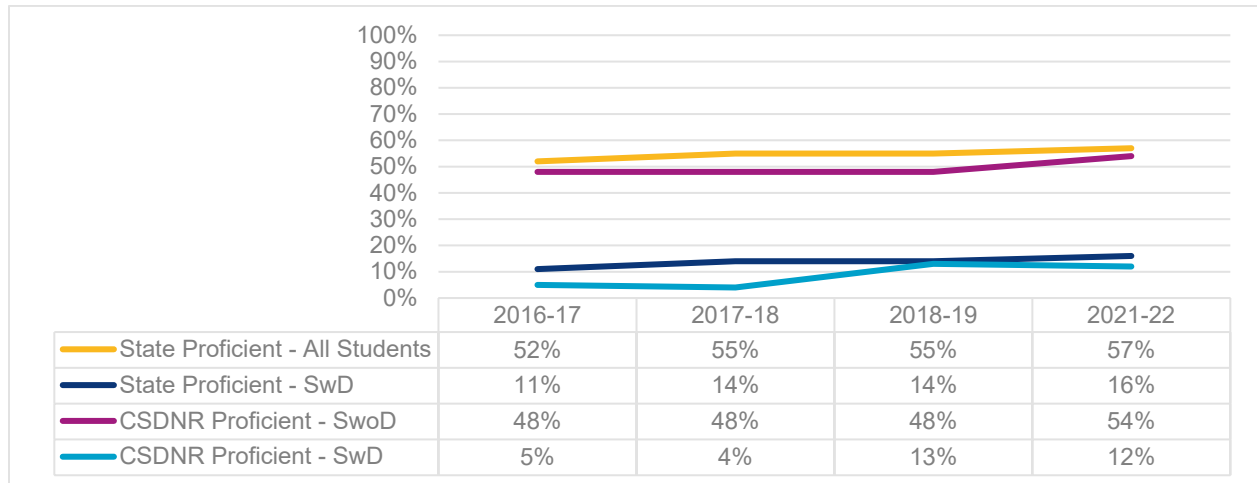
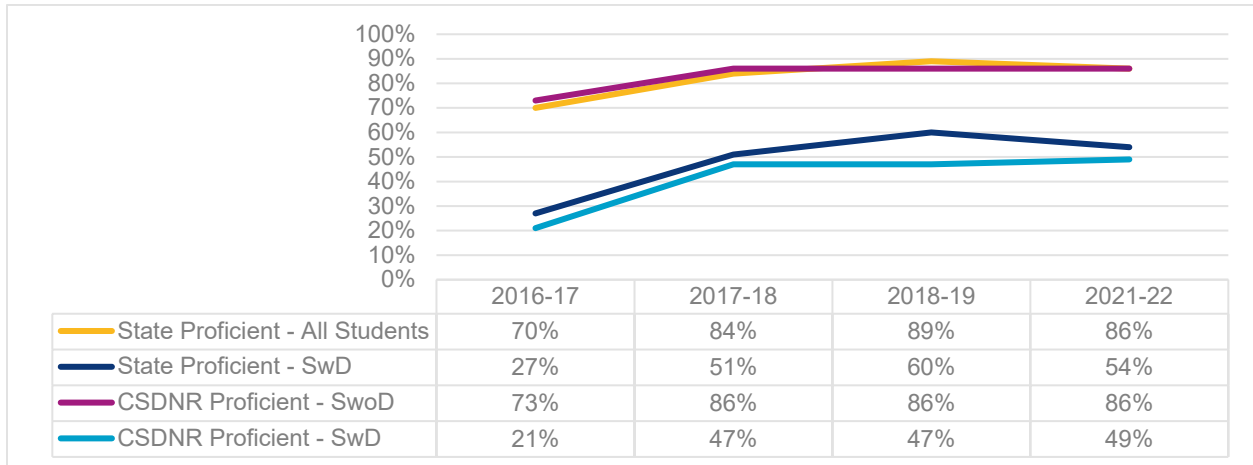


Exhibit 13. HS ELA Regents, 2016-17 to 2021-22



Mathematics

CSDNR students without disabilities performed at, or slightly below, state averages for students in grade 4 and Algebra I regents. CSDNR students without disabilities performed significantly below the state average in grade 8. Similar with ELA, CSDNR students with disabilities performed lower than the state average for all students with disabilities. The achievement gap between students with disabilities and those without, at both the state and district level was substantial across all grades. The achievement gap between CSDNR students without disabilities and those with disabilities was greatest in grade 4 and Algebra I regents (42 percentage points). The achievement gap between students without disabilities and those with disabilities was smaller in grade 8 (7 percentage points). However, CSDNR students without disabilities performed significantly below the state average for all years analyzed.

Exhibit 14. Grade 4 Math, 2016-17 to 2021-22

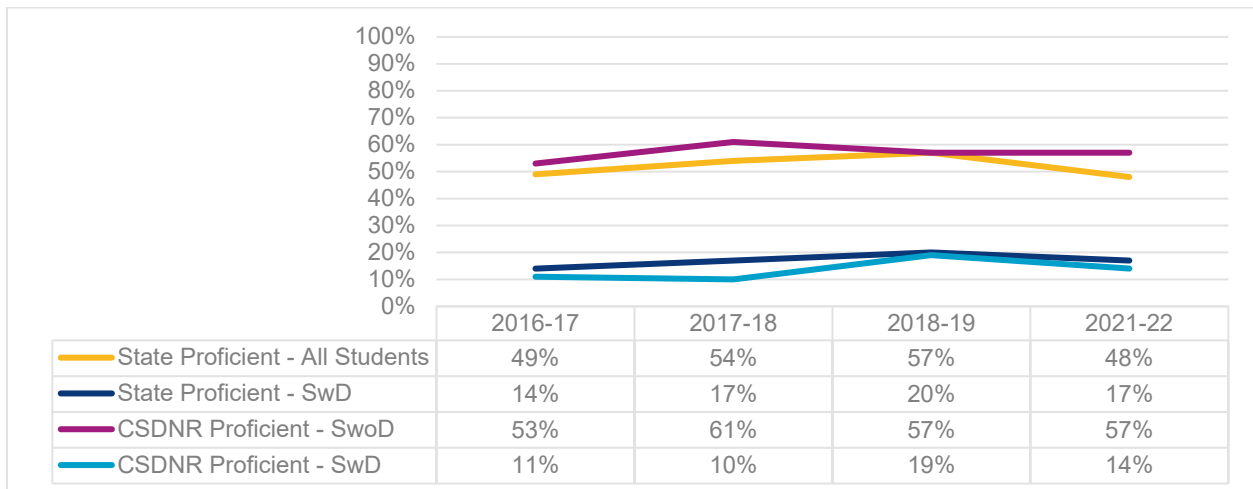


Exhibit 15. Grade 8 Math, 2016-17 to 2021-22

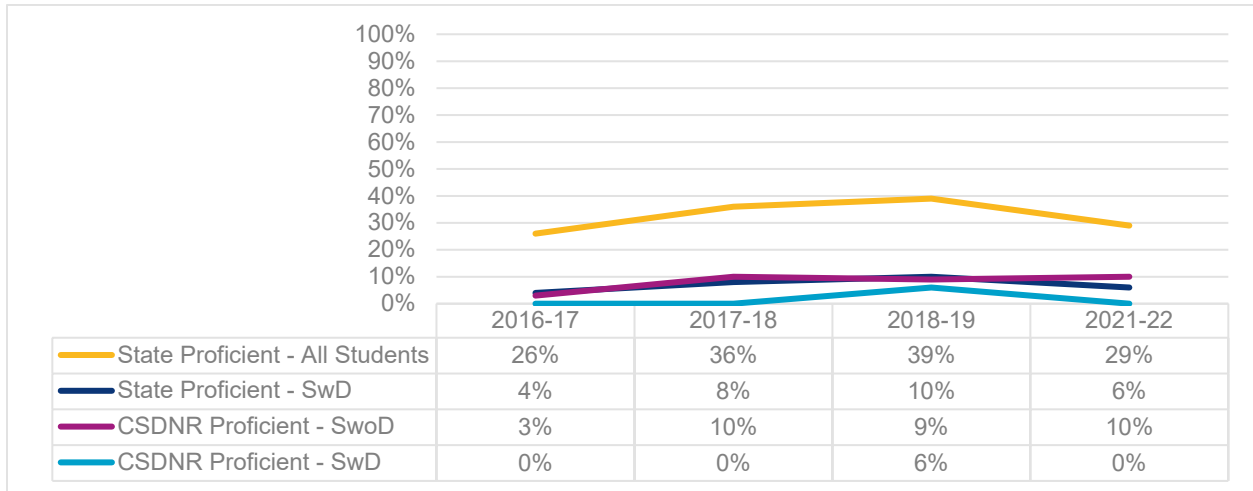
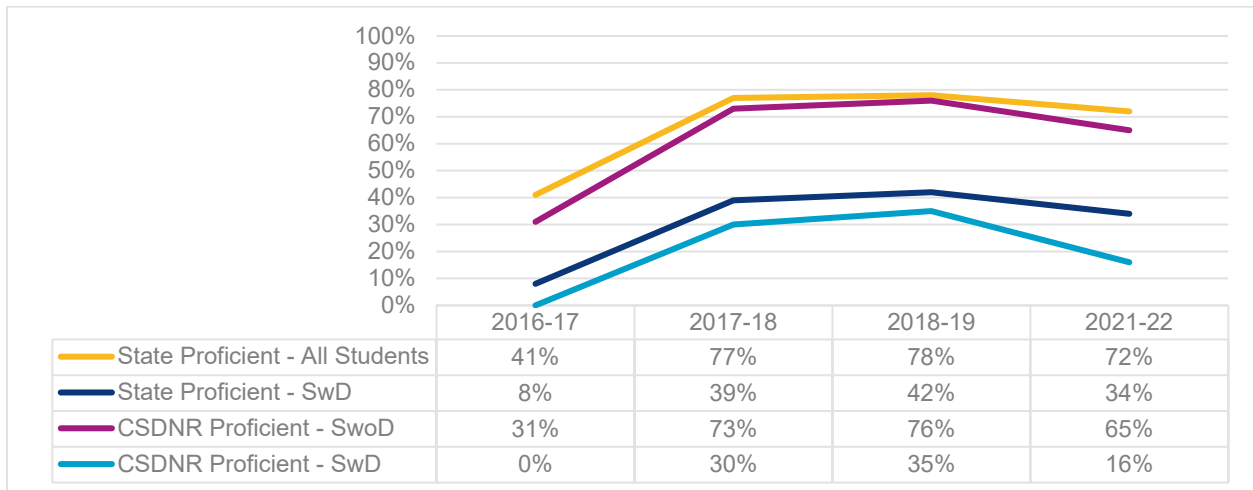


Exhibit 16. Algebra I Regents, 2016-17 to 2021-22



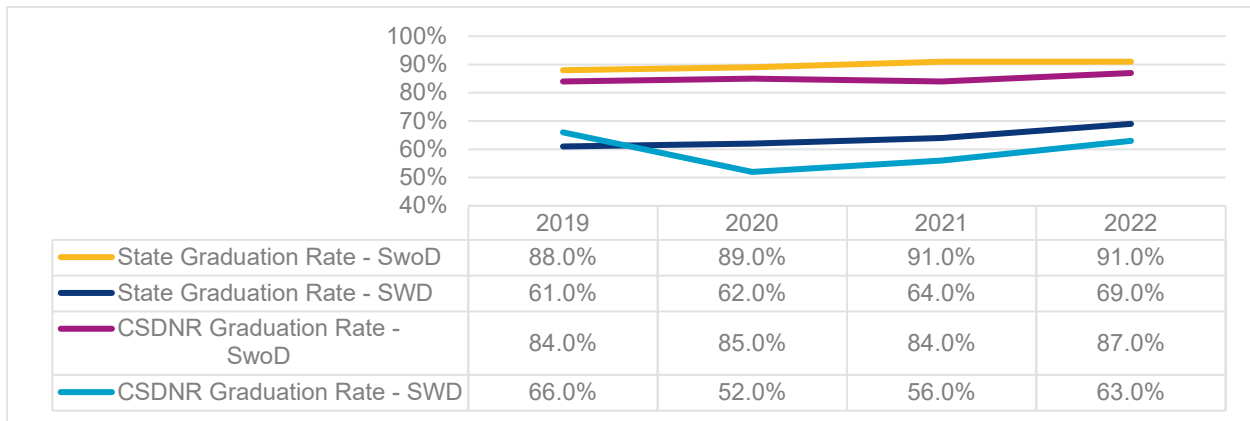
Graduation and Dropout

Graduation and drop out data between 2019-2022 were analyzed for students with disabilities and those without, both within CSDNR and across the state.

Graduation Rates

When compared to the state graduation rate for students without disabilities, a slightly lower percentage of CSDNR students graduated within four years. Similarly, when compared with the state average for students with disabilities, a lower percentage of CSDNR students graduated within four years. Across the years analyzed, the difference between the percentage of CSDNR students with disabilities who graduated was 25 percentage points less than students without disabilities. This difference was similar when compared to the state graduation rate for students without disabilities and those with disabilities.

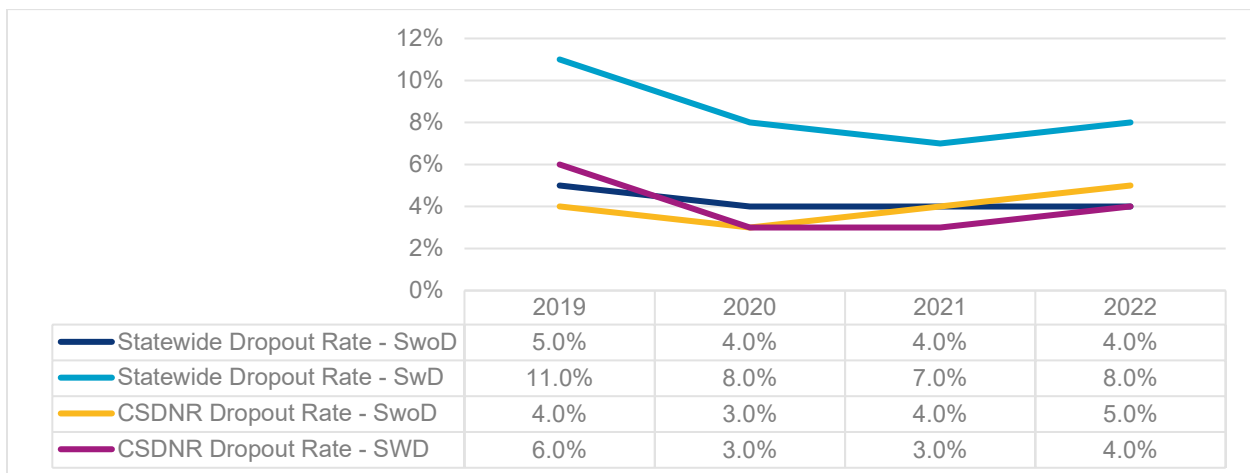
Exhibit 17. Percentage of CSDNR Students with IEPs Graduating Compared to State Averages, 2019-22



Dropout Rates

Between 2019-2022 the percentage of CSDNR students without disabilities who dropped out of high school was 4%. This was aligned with the percentage of students in the state who dropped out (4.3%). Similarly, the percentage of CSDNR students with disabilities who dropped out was 4%. This rate was about half of the state average for students with disabilities (8.5%).

Exhibit 18. Dropout Rate of Students with IEPs Compared to State Averages, 2019-22



Educational Environment for Learning: School-Aged Students

The data in this section reflect educational setting rates of all CSDNR school-aged students identified for special education. Figures are also shown by disability areas, and by race/ethnicity.²³ In addition, CSDNR data are compared to state and national data, and State Performance Plan (SPP) targets for the three educational setting categories monitored by the federal Education Department’s Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and NYSDE for students age 6-21.²⁴ OSEP requires each state to monitor and set targets in their SPP for educational settings in which identified students are educated.

²³ NYSDE State Performance Plan follows this federal guidance on how to report students by education environment: Percentage of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21 served: A. Inside the regular class 80% or more of the day; B. Inside the regular class less than 40% of the day; and C. In separate schools, residential facilities, or homebound/hospital placements. (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(A))

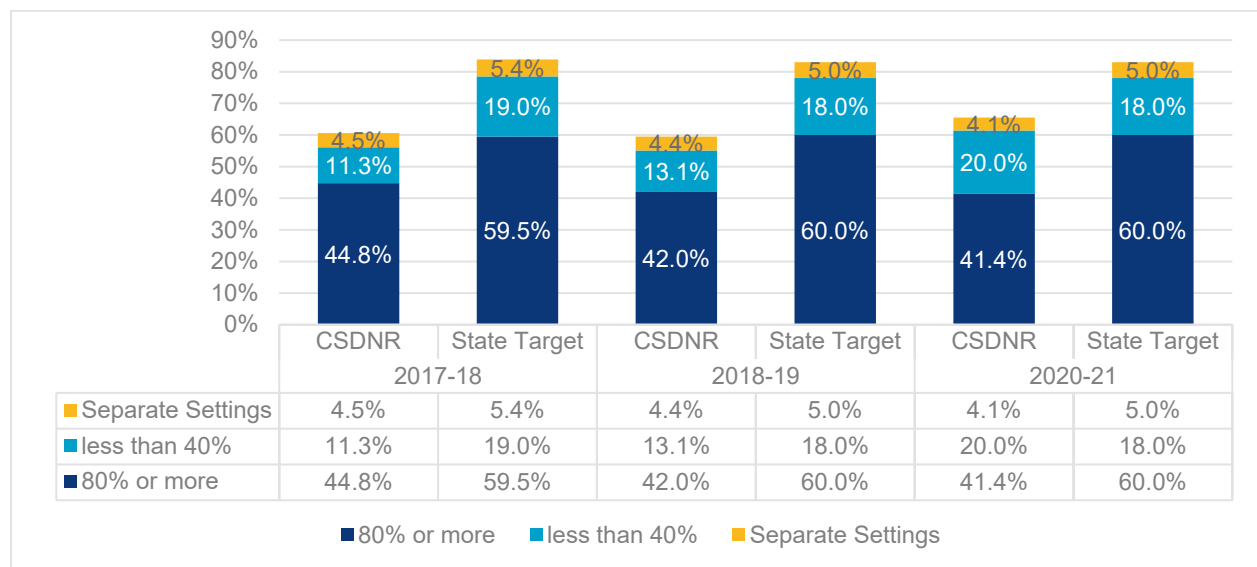
²⁴ National data obtained from National Center for Education Statistics Digest of Education Statistics: <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/>

Educational Settings for CSDNR, New York, and SPP Targets

Longitudinal data from 2017-18 and 2020-21 indicated CSDNR students with disabilities were educated less frequently in an inclusive general education setting.²⁵ Between 2017-18 and 2020-21, CSDNR did not meet state targets for students who spent 80% or more of their school day in general education. For the past three years of data analyzed, CSDNR met the state target for educating students less than 40% of the time in the general education setting and in separate settings.

- **General Education Setting more than 80% of the time.** Since 2017-18, the percentage of students in this setting decreased by 3.4 percentage points.
- **General Education Setting less than 40% of the time.** Between 2017-18 and 2018-19, CSDNR met the state target for this setting, but did not meet the state target for 2020-21. The percentage of students in this setting increased 8.7 percentage points from 2017-18 to 2020-21.
- **Separate Setting.** CSDNR met the state target for this setting for the past three years of data analyzed.

Exhibit 19. Percentage of Students (Age 6-21) by Educational Setting for CSDNR & State SPP Targets, 2017-18 to 2020-21



Educational Setting by Primary Disability Area

The chart below provides data on CSDNR students by primary disability area and education setting. In 2022-23, 44.1% of students with IEPs spent 80% or more of their day in the general education setting, 26.1% of students spent between 79-40% of their day in general education, and 20.5% of students spent less than 40% of their school day in general education.

General Education Setting 80% or more of the time. Students identified in the following disability categories were included in the general education setting at a higher rate than the district average of 44.1%: speech/ language impairment (58.6%), other health impairment (52.0%), and specific learning disability (45.6%).

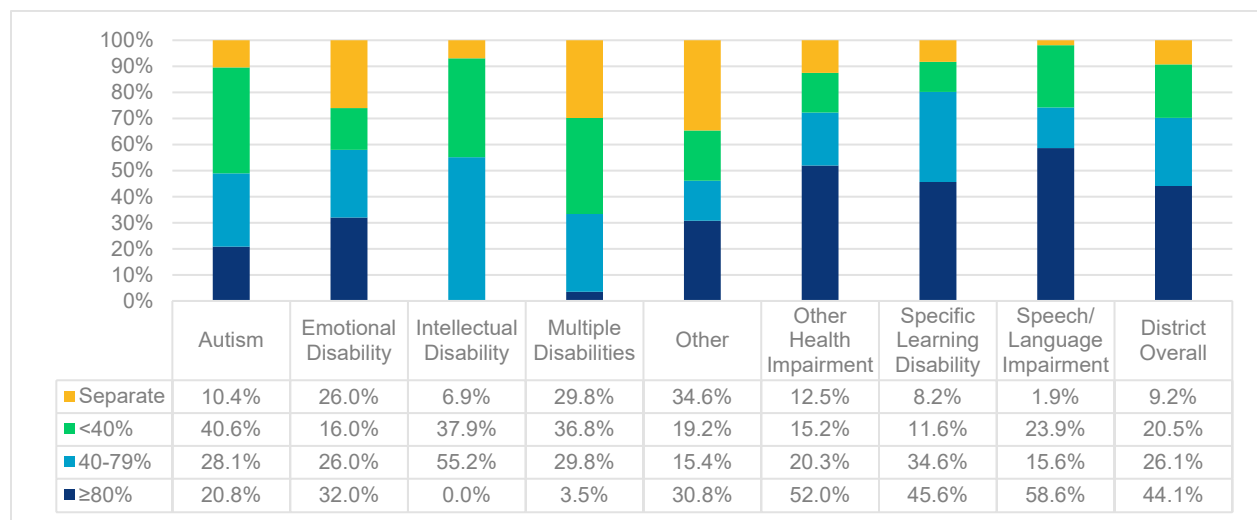
²⁵ State and District data obtained from Special Education School District Data Profile available at: <http://data.nysed.gov/lists.php?type=district>. LRE data unavailable for 2019-20.

General Education Setting between 79-40% of the time. Students identified in the following disability categories were in this setting at a higher rate than the district average of 26.1%: intellectual disability (55.2%), specific learning disability (34.6%), multiple disabilities (29.8%), and autism (28.1%).

General Education Setting less than 40% of the time. Overall, 20.5% of students with an IEP in CSDNR were educated in the general education setting less than 40% of the time. Students with autism (40.6%), intellectual disability (37.9%), multiple disabilities (36.8%), and speech/language impairment (23.9%) were served in this setting at a rate higher than the district average.

Separate Setting. Overall, 9.2% of students with IEPs in the district were served in this setting. The following disability categories had higher percentages of students in this setting than the district average: multiple disabilities (29.8%), emotional disability (26.0%), other health impairment (12.5%), and autism (10.4%).

Exhibit 20. Percentage of CSDNR Students (Age 6-21) by Disability Area and Educational Setting, 2022-23



The following comparative analysis was completed for the two most inclusive educational settings: ≥80% and 40-79% by disability category for CSDNR, the state, and nation.²⁶

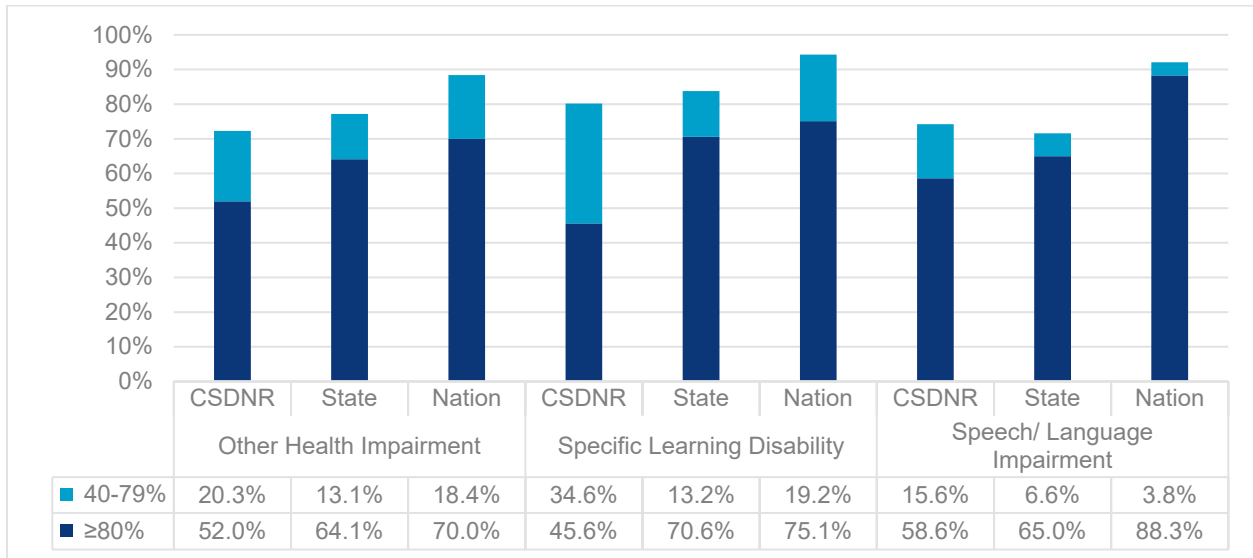
Other Health Impairments. CSDNR students with other health impairments were educated at a lower rate in general education for more than 80% of the time (52.0%) compared to the state and nation (64.1% and 70.0% respectively).

Specific Learning Disability. Of students with a specific learning disability, 45.6% of CSDNR students spent 80% or more of their day in the general education setting compared to 70.6% of students in the state and 75.1% of students in the nation.

Speech Language Impairment. In 2022-23, 58.6% of CSDNR students who were identified with a speech language impairment spent 80% or more of their day in the general education setting. This was lower than the state (65.0%) and nation (88.3%).

²⁶ State data obtained from New York's 2019 Part B Profile from Grads 360 available at: <https://osep.communities.ed.gov/#p=19>. Nation data obtained from National Center for Education Statistics Digest of Education Statistics: <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/> for school year 2020-21. CSDNR data submitted by the district to PCG in 2023 and represents the current school year.

Exhibit 21. Percentage of CSDNR Students (Age 5-21) with Specific Learning Disability, Speech Language Impairment, and Other Health Impairment by Educational Setting Compared to State and Nation

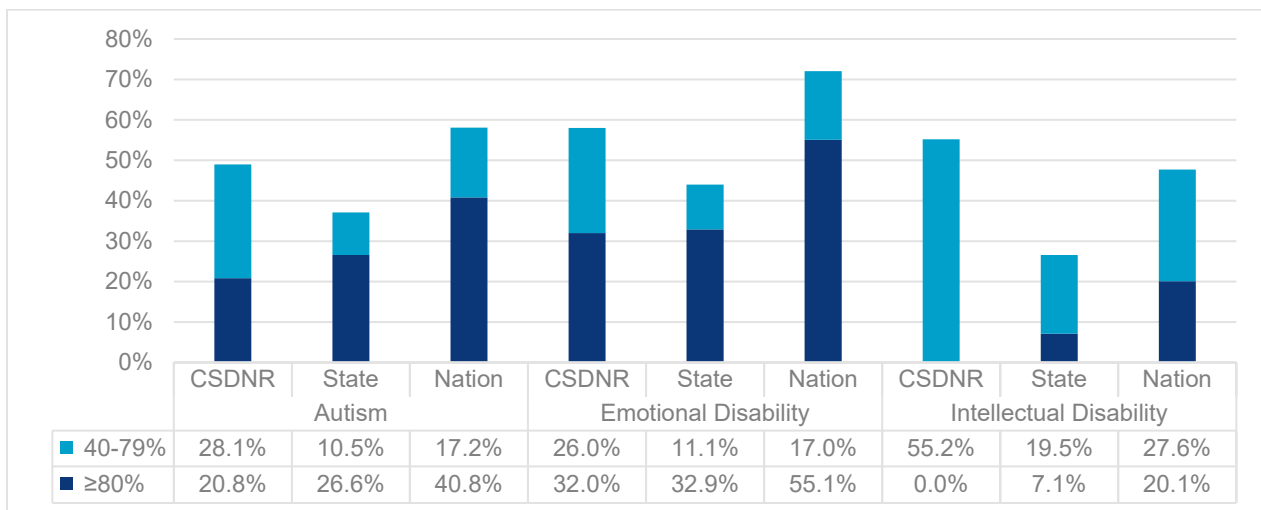


Autism. CSDNR students with autism were educated at a lower rate in general education for more than 80% of the time (20.8%) compared to the state and nation (26.6% and 40.8% respectively).

Emotional Disability. Of students with an emotional disability, 32.0% of CSDNR students spent 80% or more of their day in the general education setting compared to 32.9% of students in the state, and 55.1% of students in the nation.

Intellectual Disability. In 2022-23, 0% of CSDNR students who were identified with an intellectual disability spent 80% or more of their day in the general education setting. This was lower than the state (7.1%) and nation (20.1%). The majority of CSDNR students with an intellectual disability (55.2%) spent between 40 to 79% of their day in the general education setting.

Exhibit 22. Percentage of CSDNR Students (Age 5-21) with Autism, Emotional Disability, and Intellectual Disability by Educational Setting Compared to State and Nation

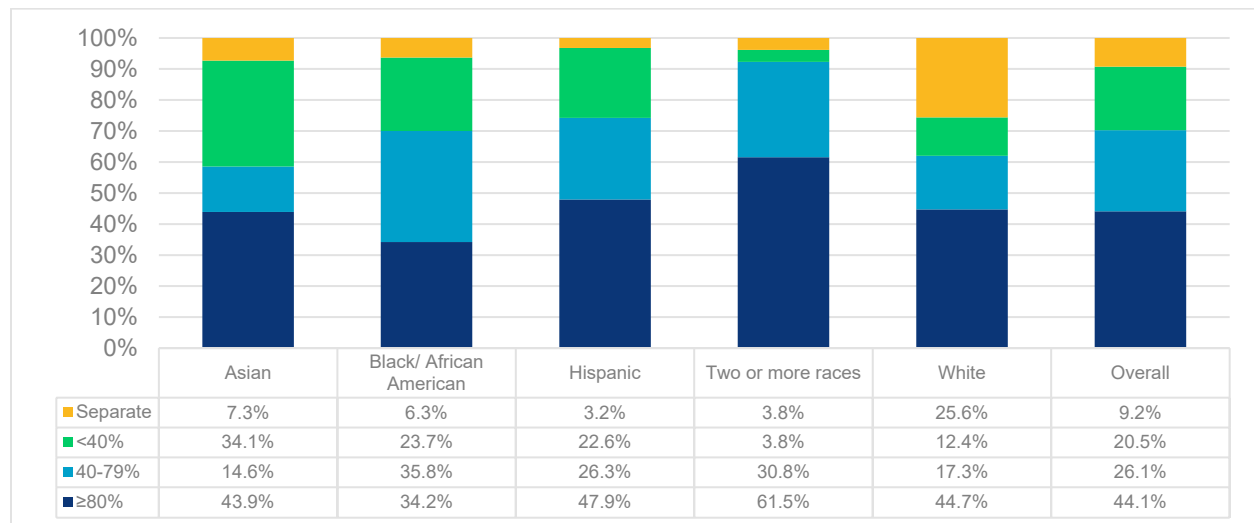


Educational Setting by Race/ Ethnicity

The district wide average of CSDNR students with IEPs who spent 80% or more of their day in the general education setting was 44.1%. Notable differences in inclusion in the general education setting by race/ethnicity are noted below.

- **Asian Students.** The percentage of Asian students who spent 80% or more of their school day in general education was within a fraction of a percentage point (.2) of the district average. A larger percentage of Asian students spent less than 40% of their school day in the general education setting.
- **Black/ African American Students.** When compared to the district average, a smaller percentage of Black/ African American students spent 80% or more of their school day in the general education setting. A larger percentage of this student population spent between 40 to 79% of their school day in the general education setting.
- **Hispanic Students.** A slightly higher percentage of Hispanic students spent more than 80% of their school day in the general education setting when compared to the district average.
- **Two or More Races.** A larger percentage of this student population spent more than 80% of their school day in the general education setting compared to other student populations and the overall district average.
- **White Students.** While white students spent an equivalent amount of time in the general education setting when compared to the district average, a substantially higher percentage of this student population was educated in a separate setting.

Exhibit 23. Percentage of CSDNR Students with Disabilities (age 5-21) by Race and Educational Setting, 2023

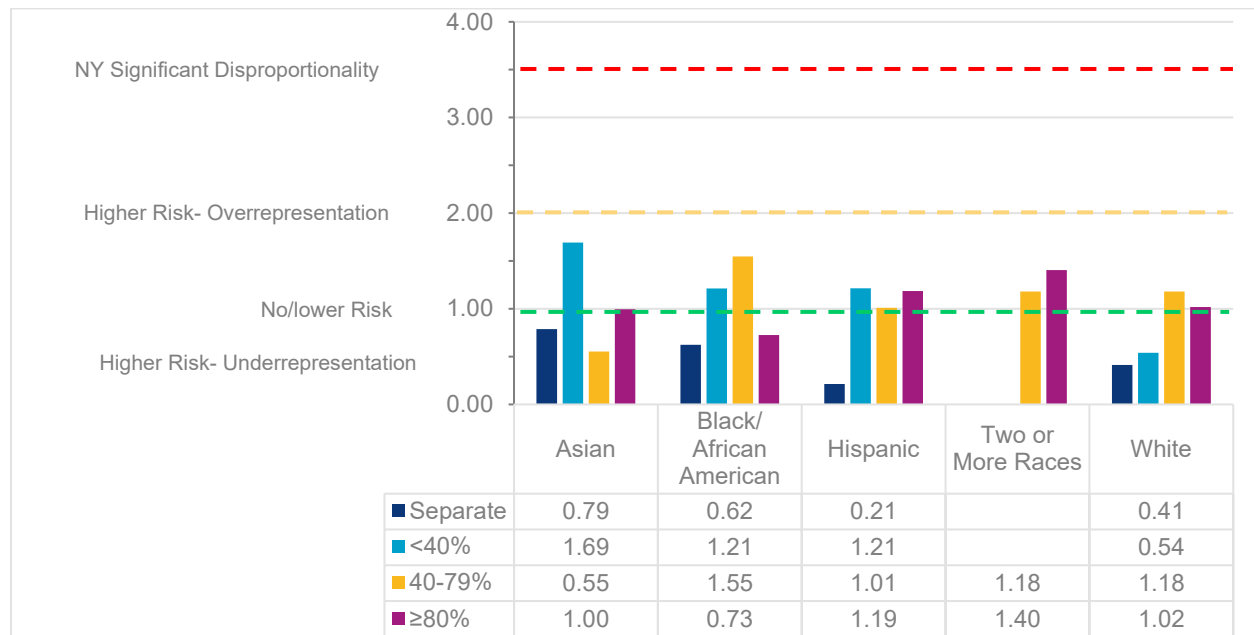


As displayed in the exhibit below, Black/ African American students were one and a half times more likely to spend between 40 to 79% of their school day in the general education setting than other student populations. Asian students were more than one and half times more likely to spend less than 40% of their school day in the general education setting.²⁷ The threshold for significant disproportionality for

²⁷ Data for the following Race/Ethnicity categories was suppressed due to populations sizes fewer than 10 students: American Indian or Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Analysis for student with Two or More Races in the following LRE setting was not completed due to student population sizes fewer than 5: <40 percent in general education setting and separate setting.

students of a particular race and ethnicity by educational environment in New York is 2.5 or higher.²⁸ No student race/ethnicity group approached the state threshold for all education settings analyzed.

Exhibit 24. Risk Ratio for Students with IEPs by Race and LRE Setting, 2022-23



Out of School Suspensions

PCG analyzed out of school suspension data for all students in CSDNR suspended for ten days or less for SY 2021-22. As displayed in the exhibit below, Black/ African American students with IEPs were over four times more likely to be suspended compared to other race/ethnicity groups. In New York, the criteria for notification for being at risk for significant disproportionality for suspension is 3.0 or higher.

²⁸ New York only monitors the following education settings for significant disproportionality: <40 percent inside the general education classroom and separate settings.

Exhibit 25. Risk Ratio - Out of School Suspension 10 Days or Less for Students with IEPs, 2021-22



The District was recently notified by NYSED that for the 2021-22 school year data, CSDNR was found to be At Risk for significant disproportionality by race and ethnicity in the incidence and duration of in-school and out-of-school suspensions and expulsions of students with disabilities.

Districts with disproportionality for the same race and suspension category for three consecutive years are considered significantly disproportionate and are required to reserve 15% of IDEA funds to provide Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CCEIS). While CSDNR is not yet considered significantly disproportionate in this area, this indicator is one that the District will need to take proactive steps to address.

IV. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND SPECIALIZED SERVICES

Strengths

- **MTSS Handbook and Forms.** District has MTSS Handbook and Forms, which include templates for data collection.
- **Interest in Differentiation.** Parents, administrators, and teachers are eager to see more differentiation in classrooms.
- **Multiple Means of Engagement.** During classroom visits, PCG saw attempts at multiple means of engagement with students during instruction.
- **Eager for Professional Learning.** Teaching staff has interest in infusing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in instruction and skills to co-teach.
- **Elementary Schools Evidence Based and Promising Practices.** Frequent evidence-based and promising practices seen, such as clear lesson goals, provision of student feedback, questioning to check for understanding, getting students to work together, and teaching strategies at elementary schools.
- **Integrated Co-Teaching.** Teachers engage in co-teaching strategies during scheduled ICT blocks.
- **Diverse 18-21 Program Options.** Only district in Westchester County with Project Search and well-developed culinary program.
- **Student-centered CSE Meetings.** Student progress reported in a clear, objective manner and chairpersons made concerted effort to keep conversations productive and child centered.
- **Interpreter Access.** Consistently provided for non-native English-speaking parents during CSE Meetings.
- **Parent Input.** There was evidence that parents provided input about their child in IEP development.
- **IEP Goals.** Typically written with state standards in mind and are age and grade level appropriate.

Opportunities for Improvement

- **MTSS Familiarity and Consistency.** Many staff are not familiar with MTSS Handbook and Forms, lack of clarity and consistency on overall MTSS implementation, data collection and process; and limited adherence at high school.
- **Interventions and Referral Data.** Reading instructions and interventions inconsistent, particularly at Tiers 2 and 3; perceived insufficient intervention progress data collected.
- **Universal Design for Learning (UDL).** Limited adoption of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
- **Special Education Continuum.** Perceived limitations of continuum of supports and service options; current guide is outdated.
- **IEP Data Collection.** Limited data collection, and systems for collection for students with IEPs – data connected to IEP goals as well as behavioral data.
- **Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA).** Inconsistent use of protocols in ABA learning environments.
- **English Language Learners (ELL).** Inconsistent support for students with disabilities, especially low incidence disabilities, who receive ELL support.
- **Specialized Programming and Opportunities.** Limited programmatic support for students with autism and other low incidence disabilities; separate lunch settings for elementary students with low incidence disabilities.
- **Evidence-based Reading Programs.** Inconsistent use; decisions made at building and teacher level with some reading teachers using dated materials and methodologies.

- **Integrated Co-Teaching.** Limitations on dosage of co-teaching (2.5 hours) in elementary schools and overall exposure for all students with IEPs.
- **Consultant Teachers.** Inconsistent and limited use of consultant teachers to support students in general education classroom.
- **CSE Chairperson.** Inconsistency with who fills the role at each school; lack of clarity of roles and responsibility of meeting facilitators.
- **CPSE/CSE Meeting Expectations.** Lack of documented policies and procedures for meeting preparation and execution. Limited resources available regarding meeting structure, compliance and state guidance, and best practices
- **Professional Learning.** Need for regular and differentiated professional learning for new and veteran CPSE/CSE chairpersons.
- **CPSE/CSE Communication.** Insufficient communication and planning time for teams to ensure progress monitoring, data, tracking and knowledge of student progress in advance of a meeting.
- **Student Voice.** Lack of consistent student input and inclusion in CSE meetings and process.
- **IEP Writing Guidance.** Need for documented resources and guides for writing high quality IEPs, covering topics including writing present levels of performance statements (PLOPs), writing goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART), and Progress monitoring and data use/ tracking procedures.

This chapter of the report summarizes findings from CSDNR specific to the learning environment and specialized services for students with disabilities.

Creating an environment in which every student can learn and succeed individually and the way in which a school community supports all students, is at the core of inclusion.²⁹ Research has consistently shown a positive relationship between effective and inclusive instruction and better outcomes for students with disabilities, including higher academic performance, higher likelihood of employment, higher participation rates in postsecondary education, and greater integration into the community. The 10-year National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS 2) described the characteristics, experiences, and outcomes of a nationally representative sample of more than 11,000 youth ages 13 through 16 who were receiving special education services in grade 7 or above when the study began in 2001. The study found that, while more time spent in general education classrooms was associated with lower grades for students with disabilities compared to their nondisabled peers, students who spent more time in general settings were closer to grade level on standardized math and language tests than were students with disabilities who spent more time in separate settings.³⁰

Additional studies have confirmed this finding, in that students with disabilities who are in general education classrooms more than 80% of the school day and have increased exposure to the core Curriculum have improved academically on state mandated tests.³¹ Research also shows that including students with a range of disabilities in general education classes does not affect the achievement of their nondisabled peers.³²

Effective core instruction provided in the general education setting is instrumental when closing the achievement gaps that exist between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers. National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data gathered in 2019 reported that 90% of students with

²⁹ <http://inclusiveschools.org/together-we-learn-better-inclusive-schools-benefit-all-children/>

³⁰ Review of Special Education in the Houston Independent School District, Thomas Hehir & Associates Boston, Massachusetts, page 25, retrieved at http://www.houstonisd.org/cms/lib2/TX01001591/Centricity/Domain/7946/HISD_Special_Education_Report_2011_Final.pdf.

³¹ Roden, L., Borgemenke, A, & Holt, W. (2013). Improving the Academic Achievement of Students with Disabilities. National Forum of Special Education Journal, Vol. 24, No. 1.

³² id.

disabilities perform below the proficient level of 4th grade reading compared to 62% of students without disabilities.^{33, 34} It is common practice to supplant core instruction for students with disabilities with specially designed instruction or intervention supports delivered by special educators or aides during core instructional time with the intent of closing a skills gap. However, the inherent nature of this approach shifts the expectation away from general educators responsible for the academic growth of all students in their respective classes.³⁵ Districts should prioritize ensuring students with disabilities receive supplemental intervention support and/or specially designed instruction while remaining a part of rigorous core instruction, when appropriate, both delivered by highly qualified staff.³⁶

Students with disabilities in inclusive environments also gain additional benefits that extend beyond academics. They develop friendships with nondisabled peers, learning appropriate behaviors and communication skills from them and understanding how to navigate social situations.³⁷ And when in classes with nondisabled students, those with disabilities benefit from the enriched educational experience and are often held to a higher academic expectation both from their peers and their teachers. Inclusive schools with school-wide behavioral supports help to establish high expectations throughout the community. This consistency and structure are critical for students with disabilities but is also important for all students.

Despite the clear benefits of inclusion, implementation in districts across the country, and in CSDNR schools, varies. Below we describe the current state of inclusive practices within CSDNR, starting with an analysis of how students with disabilities are supported in the general education classroom.

Access to the General Education Curriculum

The following section of this report provides an overview of the supports and services offered by CSDNR to facilitate access to the general education curriculum **for students with disabilities. Within this section, we will identify the strengths and areas for improvement based on a comprehensive analysis of the data collected during this review.**

Multi-Tiered System of Supports

A Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is an educational framework that provides a comprehensive system of academic and behavioral support to students in schools. MTSS is designed to ensure that all students receive the appropriate level of assistance they need to succeed academically and behaviorally. Within CSDNR, some staff refer to MTSS as Response to Intervention or RTI and use the two synonymously.

The core principle of MTSS is to provide a multi-tiered approach that includes three levels of support:

- **Tier 1 - Universal Support:** This level includes high-quality instruction and interventions that are provided to all students within the general education setting. It focuses on preventing academic and behavioral difficulties by implementing evidence-based practices and curriculum.
- **Tier 2 - Targeted Support:** Students who require additional support beyond the universal level are provided with targeted interventions. These interventions are more specific and intensive, targeting the particular needs of the students. The progress of students in Tier 2 is closely monitored to ensure that they are making adequate progress.

³³ U.S. Department of Education, "Reading, Grade 4, Disability status of student, excluding those with 504 plan – Average scale scores," National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

³⁴ id.

³⁵ Wiernusz, M., & Cleveland, C. (2020). Blurring the Divide: Improving Special Education by Strengthening Core Instruction. *District Management Journal*, 27.

³⁶ id.

³⁷ id.

- **Tier 3 - Intensive Support:** Students who require more intensive interventions and individualized support are placed in Tier 3. These interventions are highly individualized and may involve specialized assessments and support services. The progress of students in Tier 3 is closely monitored, and if needed, more specialized services or referrals for evaluation to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) are provided.

MTSS aims to proactively identify and support students who may be facing academic or behavioral challenges. It emphasizes a data-driven approach, where student progress is regularly monitored and interventions are adjusted accordingly. The goal is to provide all students with the necessary supports to succeed.

In the case of CSDNR, it has developed a 14-page MTSS Handbook. This handbook includes forms and protocols that specifically document the implementation of Tier 1 strategies and serve as referral tools for Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. These forms also allow for data collection. However, it is worth noting that the current form is only available in a PDF format, which requires teachers to print it out and manually complete it. Additionally, there is no electronic version of the form, and the data collected cannot be easily organized or analyzed electronically. It was also reported many staff are not familiar with it.

Feedback gathered from interviews and focus groups regarding the MTSS implementation in schools throughout the district yielded mixed perspectives on data collection, implementation, and consistency. Some synthesized themes from data gathered during interviews and focus groups with staff and parents include the following beliefs and perceptions:

1. **Lack of Clarity and Consistency:** Participants shared there is a lack of clarity on what data should be collected and what tiered interventions should be implemented. Additionally, although there is a District handbook, many staff believe there are no clear guidelines on the RTI process. MTSS/RTI implementation and consistency vary. There is a need for instructional consistency and early interventions across all grade levels. Currently, interventions and diagnostic assessments are lacking, leading to delayed services for students in need.
2. **Challenges in High School:** Participants shared MTSS implementation in high schools is challenging and not always available. This results in some high school students possibly getting classified without prior MTSS involvement. Differentiation is limited at the high school level.
3. **Lengthy Process and Lack of Supports:** Participants shared process to provide help through MTSS is lengthy, involving extended periods of data collection, presenting findings, and scheduling meetings. There is a need for more research-based programs, effective professional learning, and intervention support for all grades and subjects.
4. **Need for Consistent Intensive Reading Instruction and Interventions as Part of MTSS:** Participants shared some elementary schools provide intensive reading instruction using programs such as Wilson or Orton Gillingham. Several participants shared their belief the District should train all reading teachers in these programs to support students in need.

- 68.2% of special education teachers
- 77.4% of general education teachers
- 79.4% of student support personnel
- 87.5% school administrators

Believe every attempt is made to meet student's needs through general education interventions before a referral is made.

Staff Survey

Overall, the focus groups highlighted the need for clear guidelines, streamlined processes, early interventions, and sufficient support to address academic and behavioral concerns through MTSS.

In the staff survey, some 79.3% of special education teachers and 66.7% of special education teachers indicated they would like to receive additional professional learning on MTSS. Of all staff who participated in the staff survey, 74% indicated they would like professional learning on MTSS.

Referral and Eligibility

In New York State, per the New York State Education Law and the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, Parts 200, 200.1, 200.2, and 200.4, the special education eligibility and referral process involves several steps to determine if a student qualifies for special education services. Here is a general overview of the process:

1. **Referral:** The process begins with a referral. A referral can be made by various individuals, including parents, designee of school district, commissioner of public agency or designee of education program affiliated with childcare institution.
2. **Interventions:** Before initiating a formal evaluation for special education services, the school must implement interventions. These interventions are designed to provide support and assistance to the student within the general education setting.
3. **Evaluations:** If the pre-referral interventions do not sufficiently address the student's needs, the school will conduct comprehensive evaluations. These evaluations assess the student's strengths, weaknesses, and educational needs. It include assessments, observations, and input from parents and teachers.
4. **Determination of Eligibility:** Based on the evaluations and the CPSE/CSE team's input, a determination of eligibility for special education services is made. To qualify, the student must have a disability that adversely affects their educational performance and requires specially designed instruction.
5. **Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE)/Committee on Special Education (CSE) Meeting:** Following the evaluation, a CPSE/CSE meeting is scheduled. The team, which includes parents, teachers, school administrators, and other professionals, reviews the evaluation results and develops an appropriate IEP for the student. The IEP outlines the student's specific educational goals, accommodations, and services.
6. **Placement:** If the student is determined eligible for special education, the CPSE/CSE team determines the most appropriate placement. The goal is to provide the necessary services and supports while promoting inclusion in the least restrictive environment (LRE) to the maximum extent appropriate.
7. **Annual Review and Reevaluation:** The IEP is reviewed and updated annually. Additionally, a reevaluation is conducted every three years or as needed to assess the student's progress and continue determining continued eligibility.

Based on information gathered during interviews and focus groups, the following themes emerged from participants:

1. **Insufficient Referral Data:** Participants expressed concerns that MTSS intervention data may not be thorough enough to identify all the concerns about a student's progress and needs. They felt that there is a lack of data presented during the CSE meetings, and decisions about services and programs are made without sufficient time spent with the student.
2. **Over-Representation and Under-Representation of Placements:** There were concerns about the over-representation of certain groups, such as students with autism, boys, minority students, and English Language Learners (ELL), in special education. Conversely, there were also concerns about the under-classification of ELL students and the assumption that their challenges are solely due to language issues.

3. Slow and Inconsistent Processes to Determine Eligibility: Participants expressed frustration with the perceived slow pace of the referral, eligibility, IEP development, and intervention/service provision process. They highlighted delays, rescheduled meetings, inconsistent scheduling of assessments, and the need for improvements in the evaluation and MTSS processes.
4. Lack of Resources and Staffing for Evaluations: Participants mentioned insufficient staffing, limited space for testing and service delivery, and inconsistent availability of bilingual assessors and speech and language therapists. They also highlighted the need for early screeners, more reading interventions, and increased support for teachers in collecting data.
5. Streamlining and Improving the Evaluation Process: Participants called for a streamlined referral and reevaluation process, improved timelines, easier access to special education evaluations, and a more diagnostic approach that considers speech, fine motor skills, and behavioral challenges. They emphasized the importance of putting the needs of the child first and honoring parent requests for CSE evaluations.

Visible Elements of Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an educational framework that aims to create inclusive and accessible learning environments for all students. It is a fundamental component of MTSS. UDL provides a blueprint for designing instructional materials, methods, and assessments that accommodate the diverse learning needs of students.

The key principles of Universal Design for Learning are:

1. Multiple Means of Representation: Providing information in various formats (e.g., text, audio, visual) to address different learning styles and preferences. This ensures that students have access to content through multiple modalities.
2. Multiple Means of Action and Expression: Allowing students to demonstrate their understanding and knowledge in different ways. This includes providing options for communication, expression, and engagement. Students can choose the tools and methods that best suit their abilities and strengths.
3. Multiple Means of Engagement: Fostering learner motivation and engagement by offering diverse and meaningful learning experiences. This can involve providing options for student autonomy, relevance, and interest. Students are more likely to be engaged when the learning activities align with their interests and goals.

By implementing UDL, educators can address the variability of students' needs and create a learning environment that promotes equity, flexibility, and accessibility. UDL recognizes that learners have unique backgrounds, abilities, and learning styles, and seeks to eliminate barriers to learning by proactively designing instructional materials and environments that cater to this diversity. UDL can be applied across grade levels, subject areas, and educational settings, making it a flexible and adaptable framework for designing inclusive learning experiences.

UDL and Differentiated Instruction (DI) are approaches to meeting the needs of varied learners and represent an evidence-based practice in general education. Therefore, they are not considered a special education or specially-design instructional practice. However, the approach of designing instruction and the instructional environment to meet the needs of a majority of students in a class, enables students with IEPs to more easily progress in a general educational setting. In addition, the deliberate use of differentiating what is taught, how it is taught and how learning is assessed according to students'

readiness, learning profile, interests, creates a more personalized or tailored approach to learning and yields progress.³⁸ UDL and DI are considered critical to apply in the inclusive classroom setting.

In DI, teachers adjust their instruction to accommodate the variability in students' readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles. They provide different learning experiences, strategies, and resources to support individual student needs within a classroom setting. Some key elements of differentiated instruction include:

1. **Content:** Teachers modify the content or learning materials to match students' readiness levels and interests. This may involve providing different texts, reading materials, or instructional resources based on students' individual needs.
2. **Process:** Teachers offer various instructional strategies, approaches, and activities to accommodate different learning styles and preferences. They may use small-group instruction, hands-on activities, technology tools, or collaborative learning to engage students and enhance understanding.
3. **Product:** Students are given options for demonstrating their learning and understanding. They may have choices in how they showcase their knowledge, such as through presentations, projects, written assignments, or multimedia creations.
4. **Assessment:** Assessment methods are adjusted to align with differentiated instruction. Teachers may use a variety of formative and summative assessments to gather data on student progress and adjust instruction accordingly. This helps teachers gauge students' understanding and provide targeted feedback.

Focus groups and interviews showed there were inconsistent beliefs around what differentiated instruction is and/or what it should look like. This was especially apparent among general education teachers and seen during PCG classroom visits. Parents, administrators, and teachers alike indicated a desire to see more differentiation in classrooms.

Particularly at the elementary level, PCG saw attempts at multiple means of engagement with students during instruction. The majority of instruction provided was auditory with some visual supports, such as anchor charts or written directions posted at the front of the classroom. Some lessons designed for kinesthetic learning were seen. Additionally, in several elementary level ICT and general education classrooms and some middle school ICT and general education classrooms, cooperative learning and peer teaching methods were employed.³⁹ These more collaborative styles of instruction helped to foster engagement for all learners in these settings.⁴⁰

Although the data suggests that there were elements of UDL throughout instruction, there was little evidence through classroom visitations that instruction was intentionally planned with multiple means of engagement or individual student assessment. Several teachers used interactive white boards; however, the instruction of classrooms visited, particularly in the middle school and high school, was traditional "sit and get."

This is corroborated by survey data, in which 55% of staff in CSDNR that completed the PCG survey believed that they would benefit from further professional learning and training in UDL instruction.

There was little data gathered through classroom visits that substantially indicated the appropriate use of differentiation. There were examples of students that were provided support, but visible examples of DI

³⁸ Tomlinson, C.A. (2017). How to Differentiate Instruction in Academically Diverse Classrooms, 3rd Edition

³⁹ Teed, Rebecca, McDaris, John, Roseth, Cary. (2023) Pedagogy in Action: the SERC Portal for Educators. "Cooperative Learning". <https://serc.carleton.edu/sp/library/cooperative/index.html>

⁴⁰Center for Teaching Innovation (2023). Collaborative Learning. <https://teaching.cornell.edu/teaching-resources/active-collaborative-learning/collaborative-learning>

were nearly absent across visited classrooms. In some of the more restrictive classrooms there were examples of personalized instruction rather than differentiation.

Continuum of Special Education Supports and Services

The special education continuum of supports and services refers to the range of supports, programs, and placements available to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities. It encompasses a continuum of options that can be provided to students, depending on their individual needs and the goals outlined in their IEP.

The continuum of services recognizes that students with disabilities have varying levels of needs and abilities, and it aims to provide appropriate educational opportunities in the least restrictive environment (LRE) possible. The LRE principle emphasizes that students with disabilities should be educated with their typically developing peers to the greatest extent possible, while still receiving the necessary supports and accommodations.

The continuum typically includes a variety of options, ranging from inclusive settings within general education classrooms to more specialized environments, such as separate classrooms or specialized schools. The specific placement and services within the continuum are determined through the CPSE/CSE process to ensure that each student's unique needs are addressed effectively.

In CSDNR, there is currently no recent public-facing document that outlines the continuum of services provided. In preparing this report, PCG relied on three sources of information to define the District's continuum: (1) the special education services list provided by CSDNR for this review in November 2022, (2) the 2013 District Plan for Special Education, which is a publicly available document, and (3) insights gathered from interviews and focus groups.

During our classroom visits and discussions with staff members, we found that some of the class and program names used did not always align with the special education services list from November 2022. Therefore, to provide a comprehensive overview, we have incorporated the continuum of services as indicated by the aforementioned three sources of information.

General Education with Supports: Students with disabilities receive instruction in the general education classroom alongside their typically developing peers. They may receive accommodations, modifications, or supplementary aids and services based on their IEPs to help them access the curriculum.

Resource Room: Students spend a portion of their day in a separate classroom where they receive specialized instruction in small groups. This setting allows for more individualized attention and support. The resource room setting does not exceed five students who are grouped based on needs. Students shall spend a minimum of three hours per week, except that a CSE may recommend that for a student with a disability who also needs Consultant Teacher Services in addition to Resource Room Services, may receive a combination of such services consistent with the student's IEP for not less than three hours per week. The student will not spend more than 50% of the day in the resource room program.

Special Class Integrated Setting (Preschool): This program is for students with disabilities and is staffed by at least one special education teacher and one assistant/aide. A special class in an integrated setting is provided in the same preschool class with non-disabled students and additional preschool staff. In this program each preschool student with a disability received services for a minimum of two and 1/2 hours per day

Special Class 1/2 Day Preschool: A 1/2 day special preschool class consisting of students with moderate to severe speech language delays or hearing impairments and mild to moderate developmental delays in at least one other domain.

Special Class ABA Preschool: This class uses principles of applied behavior analysis across all domains including academic communication social and behavioral to make data driven decisions and recommendations for instruction and services.

Part Time Special Class Transition Programming, Elementary Schools: This is a part time special class program consisting of students with disabilities who have been grouped together for a part of the school day because of similar individual needs. The special education teacher provides co-teaching support for part of the school day in other areas of the core curriculum.

Part Time Special Class with Co-Teaching Transition Programming, Middle Schools: A part time special education class in English and/or math consisting of students with disabilities who have been grouped together for all or part of their school day because of similar individual needs for the purpose of being provided a special education program.

Special Core Class, High School: A class consisting of students with disabilities have been grouped together in specific academic classes because of similar individual needs for the purpose of being provided specialized instruction. Special classes may be offered in English 1, English 2, English 3, English 4, Reading in the content areas, Global Studies one, global studies 2, United States history and government, contemporary America, Algebra 1A, Algebra 1B, Math Applications, Math Lab, Living Environment 1, Living Environment 2, Science Seminar and study skills seminar.

Special Class Reading, Middle School: offered at the Albert Leonard middle school, the Isaac young middle school, and New Rochelle high school, this class offers direct explicit instruction using research-based methodology and Orton Gillingham based strategies.

Special Class Achieving Classroom Excellence (ACE), High School: This class consists of students with disabilities who have been grouped together for all or part of their day because of similar individual needs for the purpose of being provided a special education. The chronological age range of students who are less than 16 years. Classes include English, reading, functional math and pre-algebra, global studies, united states history and government, general science, health, and skills support.

Special Class, Therapeutic Intervention Program (TIP): This program provides individual and group counseling and in class skills training using research-based techniques including dialectical behavior therapy. Development of pragmatic social and language skills via daily language intervention strategies are embedded in the curriculum.

Special Class, ABA: This class uses principles of applied behavior analysis across all domains including academic communication social and behavioral to make data driven decisions and recommendations for instruction and services.

Special Class, Foundations: A high school program designed for students to acquire functional literacy and reading and math, career readiness skills, and self-determination skills. This class provides direct explicit special education instruction providing academic intervention and skill development for independent living and self-management.

Special Class, Positive Alternative Techniques (PAT) Class: A class that employs ABA techniques.

Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) or Co-Teaching: Students participate in the general education classroom but receive additional support from a special education teacher or other specialists who collaborate with the general education teacher to address the students' individual needs. In ICT settings, the number of students with IEPs does not exceed 14. The amount of time ICT may occur depends on the building and classroom, with some receiving full day ICT support and other settings where the special education co-teacher may be present for no more than 2.5 hours in the day.

Consultant Teacher: In CSDNR, the consultant teacher model is for the purpose of providing direct and or indirect services to students with disabilities who attend general education classes including students who

attend career and technical classes by working with students general education teachers. This can include academic support time management organization and study skills.

Specialized Schools or Programs: In some cases, students with complex or severe disabilities may attend specialized schools or programs that are out-of-district that provide intensive services, therapies, and supports tailored to their specific needs.

Support from Aides: In some cases, students and/or classrooms have aides which may or may not be included in a student's IEP. Aides may work closely with students, both individually and in small groups, to provide additional support and guidance. They may reinforce lessons, assist with assignments, provide tutoring, and offer individualized instruction based on students' needs. They may help manage and support students' behavior by implementing behavior plans or strategies designed by the teacher or other professionals. They can provide positive reinforcement, help redirect students, and assist in implementing strategies to promote appropriate behavior and social skills. In some cases, they may assist students with personal care needs, such as toileting, feeding, or mobility support. In many cases, especially in CSDNR's ABA programming, they may be responsible for collecting data on student progress, behavior, or other specific areas as required. CSDNR differentiates its aides into two categories: (1) Teaching Assistant which provides instructional support to students under the supervision of the special education teacher and (2) Instructional Aide which may be a 1:1 arrangement with a student or shared and engages in the provision of behavior management, medical issues, or independent living skills.

Community Based Instruction (CBI): A teaching approach that takes place outside of the traditional classroom setting and focuses on providing real-world learning experiences within the community. It involves taking students into the community to engage in activities and experiences that are relevant to their educational goals and life skills development. In CSDNR, CBI occurs in various settings such as Project Search at Montefiore Hospital, at a culinary program at a local catering business, businesses throughout the community as well as within the school building.

Related Services: Students may receive related services as part of their IEP. These may include the following:

- Speech and Language Therapy: This service is provided by speech-language pathologists to support students with speech and language disorders. They help improve communication skills, articulation, fluency, and language comprehension.
- Occupational Therapy: Occupational therapists work with students to enhance their fine motor skills, sensory processing, self-care abilities, and overall independence. They may address difficulties with handwriting, sensory integration, motor planning, and daily living skills.
- Physical Therapy: Physical therapists assist students in improving their gross motor skills, coordination, balance, and mobility. They may provide exercises, adaptive equipment, and strategies to address physical challenges or disabilities.
- Counseling: School counselors or psychologists offer individual or group counseling sessions to support students' social-emotional well-being as per students' IEP mandates. They address issues such as behavior management, social skills development, coping strategies, and emotional regulation.
- Behavioral Services: Behavioral services support children who are in need of a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA); a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP); and continued supports to manage behaviors (e.g. creating token boards, positive reinforcement). They may be in Applied Behavior Analysis programming.
- Assistive Technology Services: Assistive technology specialists assess students' needs and provide technology tools and devices that facilitate their access to the curriculum. This may include speech-to-text software, alternative communication devices, or specialized computer programs.

- **Orientation and Mobility Training:** This service is designed for students with visual impairments and focuses on developing skills related to independent travel, spatial awareness, and orientation within their environment.
- **Adaptive Physical Education:** Adaptive physical education teachers modify physical education programs to accommodate students with disabilities, ensuring their participation and engagement in physical activities.
- **Transportation:** In some cases, transportation services may be considered a related service if a student's disability necessitates specialized transportation arrangements to ensure safe and accessible travel to and from school.

As of November 2022, CSDNR also provided the following detailed list of special programs and the number of classrooms for each program districtwide. This table is broken down by grade level and school. It provides detailed information on the student to teacher ratios, per New York State Commissioner's Regulations, Part 200, as well as the number of classrooms within each grade range.⁴¹

Classroom Setting	Grade Level																						
	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	K-1	K-2	2-3	3-4	3-5	4-5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	UG	MIX	
Resource Room (ES)																							23
Resource Room (MS)														2	2	2							
Resource Room (HS)																							10
Integrated Co-Teaching	1	7	6	8	5	5	5							15	12	13	17	15	11	5			
15:1 Special Class						3	2						4	12	7	10	15	15	16	8			
12:1:1 Special Class								3	1	4						2							
12:1:2 PAT Special Class									1		1												
12:1:2 ABA Special Class											1												
12:1:2 TIP Special Class (HS)																	2	2	2	2		2	
12:1:2 Alternatively Assessed Special Class (HS)																					4		
8:1 Special Class (MS)																					2		
8:1:2 Special Class	1								5			3											
8:1:2 Special Class ABA (HS)																					2		

Based on focus groups, interviews with staff and parents, as well as qualitative data from surveys, several key themes emerged regarding the continuum of services and perceived access barriers. These themes include the following:

- **Placement and Programming:**
 - Students being placed out of district instead of being served within the District.
 - Lack of timely addressing of student-specific issues before CSE referral.
 - Inconsistent placement processes and decision-making.
 - Limited variety and availability of programs, especially for students with low incidence disabilities.
 - Limited options for co-teaching at middle and high school, causing concern for LRE
 - Frequent changes in district and programs cause challenges and social adjustment issues for students.
 - Inadequate resources to provide recommended services.
- **Inclusive Practices and Equity:**
 - Concerns about overidentification of black and brown children for special education services.
 - Perceived lack of equity in access to programming across schools.
 - Perceived lack of understanding of available services/programs by parents.
 - Perceived lack of individualized planning for students and fitting them into existing programs instead of designing programs around student needs.

⁴¹ Note: PreS stands for Preschool; UG stands for Ungraded Age 18-21 programming; and MIX stands for mixed grades.

- Perception of LRE options being motivated by money rather than the appropriate environment for the student.
- Transition and Continuity:
 - Perceived lack of continuity in program offerings across grade levels and schools.
 - Challenges in transitioning students from self-contained to inclusive settings.
 - Perceived lack of proper programs for students with autism and executive functioning difficulties.

At the same time, parents and staff raised positive aspects about the continuum of services. This was most notable at the elementary school level in the areas of inclusive practices and beliefs. In addition, there was also notably positive feedback about the District's programming for students ages 18-21.

Specially Designed Instruction

Inherent within a district's continuum of services is Specially Designed Instruction (SDI). IDEA regulations define "specially designed instruction" as "adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under this part, the content, methodology or delivery of instruction (i) to address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability; and (ii) ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children."⁴² By definition, these are approaches to the unique needs of the eligible students with disabilities that are adaptations to content, methodology or delivery of instruction and accommodations or modifications to instruction.

In CSDNR, specific to SDI, the following themes emerged during focus groups and interviews with staff, administrators, and parents:

1. Access to Services and Resources: Participants shared there are perceived challenges in accessing testing materials, specialized services, and resources such as smaller class sizes and sensory rooms. Scheduling issues for related service providers lead to mixed levels of student skills and needs in small groups, limiting differentiation.
2. Individualized Education Plans (IEPs): Participants shared here are concerns about IEPs not being followed as it relates to SDI, students being told to ask for items on their IEPs, and a lack of appropriate staff-level instruction in reading interventions such as Wilson or Orton Gillingham. The responsibility for ensuring IEP implementation is not always clear, leading to inconsistencies.
3. Communication and Collaboration: Participants shared there is a need for improved communication among different stakeholders, including nurses, special education staff, and related service providers. Additionally, better coordination and collaboration are required for scheduling and planning related services.
4. Differentiation and Individualized Support: Participants shared the need for differentiated instruction, individualized planning, and programming is highlighted, along with concerns about rigid instructional approaches and a lack of accommodations for special education students in general education classrooms.
5. Training and Professional Learning: Participants shared there is a call for increased training and professional learning for staff, including specialized reading interventions, assistive technology, and understanding the needs of students with disabilities.
6. 18-21 Programming: Participants shared students in programming for students ages 18-21 have access to an array of community-based instruction opportunities. However, participants shared a lack of consistent information shared on these positively perceived programs.

⁴² 34 CFR Sec. 300.39(b)(3)

During PCG classroom visits, it was clear that SDI was occurring. However, across all grade levels, there was limited visible evidence of data collection – may that be through the general education teacher, the special education teacher, or the assistant/aide. This observation is consistent with information shared during file review focus groups, in which some participants shared a lack of training and consistent data collection protocols related to specific IEP goals of students on their respective caseloads.

Based on information gathered from classroom visits, as well as information gathered from interviews and focus groups, CSDNR's most significant area for improvement of SDI is for its students with low incidence disabilities and students with behavioral challenges. During PCG's school visits, PCG visitors saw students with low incidence disabilities and students with behavioral challenges in a variety of settings – general education classrooms; resource rooms; related services; ABA classroom supports; life skills, and community-based instruction to name some.

PCG saw many students with low incidence disabilities receive the support of aides – either as a dedicated 1:1 aide or one who supported a group of students within the classroom or school environment. PCG saw consistent use of the Unique Learning Systems tool – a cloud-based technology that supports differentiated, standards-aligned content, assessments, data collection.

Yet, PCG saw many inconsistencies across settings where low incidence students learn. Some examples include:

Adherence to Applied Behavior Analysis Protocols. In classrooms labeled as ABA Classrooms across different grade levels, there were instances where adherence to fundamental Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) protocols was not consistently followed. Several observations revealed staff members engaging in practices that negatively reinforced maladaptive behaviors. Additionally, there was inconsistency in the implementation of token economies, if they were present, and staff members occasionally added extra verbal cues to instructions, potentially compromising the integrity of data collection. It was observed that aides appeared to demonstrate less adherence to ABA principles in many of these instances.

Adherence to Behavioral Intervention Protocols (BIPs). In several instances, PCG visitors observed situations where students engaged in behaviors that required de-escalation. In many of those instances, PCG saw antecedent behaviors occurring before the escalation; yet, staff were unprepared to de-escalate, leading to unnecessarily distracting scenarios that impacted the entire classroom and were detrimental to the affected student. There were instances that called into question whether or not BIPs were being adhered to. Building administrators shared their staff had increased but very limited access to behaviorists and the support of the behaviorist for students needing or having BIPs was inconsistent. During PCG visits, the visitors noted student behaviors that ranged from inappropriate statements to tantrums and self-injurious behavior (e.g., head banging, hitting, scratching) and in none of these instances was visible data collection occurring. During focus groups, staff expressed a need for increased support around de-escalation. They also expressed their school's inconsistent data collection practices.

English Language Support. For some students with significant communication challenges whose native language was not English, there were visible communication barriers between the general education teacher, the special education teacher, and the student. In many of these cases, the assistant/aide was playing the role of ad-hoc translator; sometimes this occurred intermittently during discussions or lessons. These situations were inconsistent and ineffective during times when the student had urgent communication needs. This was most visible during directions for lessons, de-escalation, and requests to use the bathroom. In none of these situations were there visible alternative communication protocols for these students.

Separate Lunch Settings in Elementary Schools. Lunchtime provides an opportunity for functional instruction to take place for students with disabilities. However, during our observations, we noted instances, particularly at the elementary school level, where students with low incidence disabilities

and/or behavioral challenges were eating lunch in classrooms under the supervision of aides, while their typically developing peers were eating lunch in the school cafeteria.

Limited Specialized Supports for Students with Autism. During visits and through interviews and focus groups, there appeared an overall lack of specialized supports for students with autism. This sentiment was shared by teachers, parents, and administrators alike and was most notable at the middle school level.

Information gathered from parents during interviews and focus groups notably confirmed a perception that students with significant and/or low incidence disabilities were receiving their SDI in a manner that was not meeting their child’s specific learning needs. This was especially notable among middle school parents and examples included both instruction as well as access to equipment (sensory, PT). This specific issue was mentioned by both parents as well as administrators.

- Assistive Technology Supports. Assistive technology (AT) refers to any device, equipment, software, or system that helps individuals with disabilities to perform tasks, improve their functional abilities, and enhance their overall independence and quality of life. AT can be used to support individuals with physical, sensory, cognitive, or communication impairments in various aspects of their daily activities, education, employment, and social participation.

In classroom visits, PCG visitors specifically saw students with speech generating devices. PCG saw inconsistent adherence to using these devices. In addition, based on information gathered from focus groups, expertise in maintaining the devices varies and is often the responsibility of the student’s Speech and Language Pathologist. It is important to note, the district does have documentation for CSEs to complete when an AT request is made.

Features of Evidence Based Inclusive Instructional Special Education Practices

An evidence-based teaching strategy is any approach to teaching that is supported by research.⁴³ In the field, there has been significant attention and efforts to assure that teachers of students with disabilities are using special education practices that are well-documented within the research literature as being effective. These practices can be described within in the following categories:⁴⁴

Type of Practice	Description
Emerging Practice (Demonstrates a Rationale)	Anecdotal Evidence of Effectiveness but research has not been conducted.
Research-based Practice (Weak)	Evidence of Effectiveness has been demonstrated in some research, but the practice does not clearly demonstrate improved student outcomes.
Promising Practice (Moderate)	Evidence of positive effects on student outcome may be documented; however, there is an insufficient number of studies to demonstrate a clear correlation.
Evidence-Based Practice (Strong)	Evidence is based on multiple high-quality research studies, that show consistent and positive effects on student outcomes.

Through IDEA, schools are mandated to use special education practices with strong evidence of effectiveness as possible and the systems that sustain them (e.g., monitoring; on-going professional

⁴³ Burns MK, Ysseldyke JE. (2009). Reported Prevalence of Evidence-Based Instructional Practices in Special Education. The Journal of Special Education.43(1):3-11. doi:10.1177/0022466908315563

⁴⁴ Cook, B. G., Smith, G. J., & Tankersley, M. (2011). Evidence-based practices in education.

In K. R. Harris, S. Graham, & T. Urdan (Eds.), APA educational psychology handbook (Volume 1) (pp. 495-528). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association

learning). A key aspect of the delivery of evidence based inclusive instructional practices is data collection to determine the efficacy of the instruction.

Interviews and focus groups yielded information on this in the following areas:

1. Reading Instruction: Participants shared reading difficulties and dyslexia screening are major concerns, with a perceived need for evidence-based reading programs and interventions. There is a lack of appropriate reading support, staff training, and specialized reading instruction at the elementary level, resulting in students struggling with reading skills. This issue was particularly notable as CSDNR's reading programming is highly inconsistent and left to building leaders and/or the reading teachers to decide. In many cases, as discussed by staff during focus groups, staff choose their own programming that may be evidence based or, alternatively, may be considered obsolete.
2. Training and Professional Learning: Participants, specifically staff, shared a desire to have professional learning opportunities on evidence-based practices.

PCG attempted to document the Evidence-Based and Promising Practices in Special Education observed during the classroom visits. The aggregated results indicated that there were a variety of general instructional practices and approaches that are rooted in research and which occurred frequently across the general education classrooms. Some of these included, especially at the elementary schools:

- Clear Lesson Goals
- Provision of student feedback
- Questioning to check for understanding
- Getting students to work together collaboratively
- Teaching strategies and not merely content

Regarding specific practices that have been known to assist students with special education needs, it was less evident and were not frequently observed during the classroom visits. These special education practices included:

- Co-teaching, specifically team-teaching
- Use of instructional one-to-one assistance
- Application of elements of applied behavioral analysis
- Use of visual supports

Evidence based instruction for reading at the elementary schools varied widely – in some cases, decisions on this matter were left to the discretion of the building principal and/or the reading teacher. During PCG's visits to elementary schools, several different reading interventions were being used. Some evidence-based programs with rigorous data collection requirements were current. Others, however, were dated programs and, at best, considered emerging practices in reading instruction.

Specific to reading, there was significant feedback gathered from interviews and focus groups from staff and parents, which include the following:

- Students in lower grades not following the curriculum, resulting in falling behind in reading skills.
- Lack of consistency in the curriculum for reading.
- Lack of clarity and guidelines for the MTSS processes specific to reading challenges.
- Need for district-wide research-based programs and professional learning to support reading interventions in Tiers 2 and 3.
- Need for more direct instruction and interventions in reading, especially in decoding skills.
- Calls for earlier interventions and more consistent support across grade levels.
- Desire for district-wide programs and interventions to improve reading skills, including specialized training for reading teachers.

- Lack of instructional consistency and domain-specific considerations in reading instruction for students with disabilities.
- Need for clear expectations, guidance, and support in data collection, progress monitoring, and intervention selection.
- Insufficient training and collaboration between English as a New Language teachers and special education teams in CSE meetings.
- Inconsistent compliance and understanding of IEP goals and progress monitoring specific to reading.

Information gathered from teachers in the form of interviews, focus groups, and surveys showed teachers have a desire for additional professional learning on instruction. For many instructors, evidence-based instruction was within their repertoire of tools from previous districts; however, it was not something they gained from their experience at CSDNR. As a result adherence to programs with strict protocols (e.g., specific evidence-based reading instruction) was not consistent.

Approaches to Co-Teaching

The use of a co-teaching model that includes a general and special education teacher is a strategy to provide inclusive education. Co-taught classrooms are one method through which the expectations of inclusive education can be met for both students with and without disabilities.⁴⁵ Several models of co-teaching that are most often implemented within classrooms are reflected within the professional literature^{46 47}. These models or approaches vary in their collaborative nature, ranging from methods in which one teacher plays a more primary role in planning and instruction than the other, to more collaborative, team-based approaches in which there is shared responsibility for planning and instruction. Friend and Cook describe six approaches to co-teaching that represent the essence of what occurs in co-taught classes. These approaches include one teach-one assist, one teach-one observe, station teaching, parallel teaching, alternative teaching, and team teaching. These models of co-teaching are hierarchical and represent the least to most collaborative approaches.^{48 49}

PCG saw co-teaching occur in elementary schools and in some of the middle schools in classrooms visited.

A strength for CSDNR was attempts in CSDNR elementary and middle school classrooms at various co-teaching strategies. The co-teaching approach most commonly observed was the one teach, one assist. However, in some co-taught classrooms, PCG saw parallel teaching, station teaching, and alternative teaching. This was particularly apparent at elementary schools. The one teach, one observe method was not evident.

Additionally, parent survey data reflected this trend, when asked if general education and special education teachers work together to assure that their child's IEP is being implemented, seventy-five percent of parents of pre-school age students who responded to the survey agreed with this statement, while just 48% of parents of high-school students who responded to the survey agreed.

In many of the classrooms visited, special education teachers played a secondary role in the room, spending large amounts of time with the students on their caseload, providing supplementary support to

⁴⁵ Friend, M., L. Cook, D. Hurley-Chamberlain, and C. Shamberger. 2010. "Co-teaching: An illustration of the complexity of collaboration in special education." *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation* 20: 9-27.

⁴⁶ Friend, M., and L. Cook. 2012. *Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals* (7th edition). New York, NY: Pearson Publishers.

⁴⁷ Villa, R. A., J. S. Thousand, and A. I. Nevin. 2013. *A guide to co-teaching: New lessons and strategies to facilitate student learning*. (3rd ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

⁴⁸ Friend, M., and L. Cook. 2012. *Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals* (7th edition). New York, NY: Pearson Publishers.

⁴⁹ Friend, M., L. Cook, D. Hurley-Chamberlain, and C. Shamberger. 2010. "Co-teaching: An illustration of the complexity of collaboration in special education." *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation* 20: 9-27.

the general education teacher, but not providing shared instruction with the general education teacher. When co-teaching is happening at its strongest, it should be a team-teaching approach where, to the observer, it is almost impossible to determine which teacher is the special education teacher and which is the general education teacher. Examples of team teaching in CSDNR were scant and, when they were apparent, were at the elementary schools. This is problematic because co-teaching, especially through team teaching, is an effective teaching model in the elementary, middle, and high schools.

During PCG's classroom visits and consistent with information shared at focus groups, there were many instances where the limits of co-teaching in elementary schools were set by the number of hours special the education co-teachers could be in any given room. Co-teaching pairs were repeatedly ended because of time constraints placed by the District on the special education teacher to be supporting other classrooms. This meant the co-teaching in these settings occurred in limited doses, 2.5 hours a day by design in some instances, and broke apart during times when they were needed the most. Increased co-taught classes allow for greater opportunities for students with IEPs to be in less restrictive settings.

Information gathered from interviews and focus groups indicated that teachers have inconsistent or no guidance on how to be effective co-teachers. The training provided by the District on co-teaching has been limited. Many of the teachers who participated in focus groups were most familiar with a model whereby the general education teacher is the leader.

Specific to co-teaching, the following themes, perceptions, and data were collected during interviews and focus groups by staff and parents:

- Inclusion and Co-teaching Implementation Perceptions:
 - Some students included in general education classes are overwhelmed and not receiving adequate support.
 - Specials classes (music, art, PE, etc.) can be overwhelming for some students without additional supports or differentiated content and these generally are not co-taught settings.
 - Co-teaching is inconsistently implemented across schools, with inconsistent knowledge about the models of co-teaching, and with limited planning time as a challenge.
 - Full-day co-teaching is desired by many participants for better support and continuity.
- Staffing and Training:
 - Veteran staff members express concern about declining conditions and limited resources.
 - Principals and staff lacking special education training, leading to decisions based on logistics rather than student needs.
 - Limited planning and meeting time for general and special education staff, hindering collaboration and meeting students' needs effectively.
 - Inconsistency in co-teaching partners and co-teaching groupings year after year.
- Communication and Advocacy:
 - Lack of clear vision and information about co-teaching
 - Concerns about the district prioritizing funding and logistics over the correct environment for students.

Overwhelmingly, special education teachers from all grade levels indicated a desire to team-teach in a co-teaching learning environment. In addition, teachers indicated they want common planning time to effectively co-teach. Furthermore, teachers indicated a desire to see increased co-teaching at the middle and high schools. At the elementary schools, teachers expressed concerns about time limitations for co-teaching, specifically only having 2.5 hours in a room to co-teach. These teachers expressed a need for consistent co-teaching throughout the day.

Consultant Teaching Model

CSDNR offers a consultant teaching model within its continuum of services. According to the District Plan for Special Education, the Consultant Teacher Model is the following:

Direct or indirect consultant teacher services for the purpose of providing direct or indirect services to students with disabilities who attend general education classes including students who attend career and technical classes by working with such students general education teachers.

Unlike the more static model of a full-time resource room or self-contained classroom, in the Consultant Teaching Model, the special educator, in collaboration with their general educator, determines the levels of support of the student in response to the changing demands of the curriculum and instruction.⁵⁰ In this model, the special educator utilizes a range of special education services available in a flexible schedule. This schedule encompasses small group instruction within the general education classroom. The special educator may also engage in monitoring students' progress within the general education classroom, employ traditional co-teaching models such as in-class support, make modifications and adaptations to the general education curriculum and instruction, provide teacher consultation, and offer technical assistance as needed. The goal is to tailor the support and services to meet the unique needs of each student while promoting inclusive education practices.

During classroom visits, PCG saw consultant teaching on a limited basis and most typically at the high school. When it does occur, there was inconsistent guidance on how it should be implemented, specifically around the time and manner by which the consultant teacher and general education teacher exchange information. It also occurred in various settings – in the form of reading replacement, other replacement courses – and the degree to which special education teachers consulted with general education teachers varied widely.

During interviews and focus groups, many participants shared that they did not have an understanding of how the consultant teaching model could be utilized to create less restrictive settings for students with IEPs, allowing them to benefit from enrichment opportunities specific to their general education classes.

Behavior Services

A Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) is a professional who has obtained certification from the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB). BCBA certification requires completing specific coursework, supervised practical experience, and passing an examination. In CSDNR, there are three BCBA's for the entire district who play the role of district behaviorists.

In CSDNR, BCBA professionals play a role in supporting students with special needs, particularly those with autism or other behavioral challenges. Their focus is to apply the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) to improve the educational experience and outcomes for students and assist in the development of Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs).

The role of a BCBA in schools can include:

1. **Conducting assessments:** BCBA professionals conduct functional behavior assessments (FBAs) to determine the underlying causes of challenging behaviors. They use various assessment tools, observations, and interviews to develop a comprehensive understanding of a student's behavior.
2. **Developing behavior intervention plans:** Based on the assessment results, BCBA professionals design and implement individualized behavior intervention plans (BIPs). These plans outline

⁵⁰ Eisenman, L.T., Pleet, A.M., Wandry, D., McGinley, V., (2011). Voices of special education teachers in an inclusive high school: Redefining responsibilities. 32(2) 91-104. Sage Publishing.

specific strategies and interventions to address challenging behaviors, promote skill development, and enhance overall functioning.

3. Providing direct instruction: BCBA professionals may provide direct instruction to students, implementing evidence-based strategies and techniques. They work closely with teachers and other staff members to ensure consistency and effective implementation of behavior management strategies and teaching methodologies.
4. Collaboration and consultation: BCBA professionals collaborate with teachers, administrators, parents, and other professionals involved in a student's education. They participate in Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, provide input on appropriate goals and accommodations, and offer guidance on creating supportive environments for students.
5. Data collection and analysis: BCBA professionals collect and analyze data to monitor the progress of students' behavior and skill development. They use this data to make informed decisions, modify intervention strategies, and track the effectiveness of interventions over time.
6. Program evaluation and staff training: BCBA professionals may be involved in evaluating the effectiveness of school-wide behavior support programs. They provide staff training on positive behavior support strategies, classroom management techniques, and the implementation of evidence-based practices.

In CSDNR, because there are three BCBA's, many teachers indicated that the district's behaviorists are spread thin. Several teachers indicated increased needs for BCBA's to support BIPS, provide additional training and coaching, strategies on data collection, and appraisal of overall program effectiveness, especially in settings where ABA is the mode of instruction. Many principals indicated that the BCBA's are more present in their buildings now than in the past; however, they need additional support.

Additional themes gathered from interviews and focus groups with staff captured the following themes:

- Safety Concerns and Behavioral Challenges: Participants expressed concerns about the increasing frequency and intensity of physically aggressive behaviors exhibited by students with disabilities. Lack of consistency in behavioral interventions and placement decisions, as well as the need for additional behavioral supports, were also highlighted. Safety of students and staff members was a significant concern, with reports of teachers being injured and the absence of a designated crisis team.
- Need for Clarity and Support: There was a recurring theme of a lack of clarity and support in addressing challenging behaviors and providing appropriate placements for students with behavioral concerns. Participants emphasized the need for clear protocols, designated personnel for assistance, and improved coordination among staff members to effectively respond to and manage challenging behaviors.
- Inclusion and Supportive Environments: The importance of creating inclusive and therapeutic environments was highlighted. Participants expressed a desire for more specialized classrooms, equity in ensuring certified professionals handle physically aggressive behaviors, and better support for students with emotional regulation difficulties. The need for better plans, interventions, and behavioral support, such as Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs), was also emphasized.
- Data Collection and Analysis: Participants called for improved data collection and analysis, particularly regarding incidents of challenging behaviors and staff injuries. They sought comprehensive reporting systems and requested data on suspension rates, classroom removals, and the impact of challenging behaviors on students and staff.
- Professional Learning and Collaboration: Participants expressed a need for ongoing professional learning and collaboration among staff members, including behavior specialists, psychologists, social workers, and school counselors. They emphasized the importance of training on behavior strategies, positive behavior reinforcement, restorative justice practices, and effective management of bullying incidents.

In some districts, in addition to BCBA's, Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) are leveraged to support BCBA's. Typically, an RBT is an aide who has obtained certification through the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) to provide behavior analysis services under the supervision of a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) or a Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA). The District has RBTs on staff.

Coordinated Early Childhood and Postsecondary Transition

In this section, the focus will be on studying and exploring coordinated approaches to early childhood, school-age, and 18-21 transition services for students with disabilities. The aim is to examine the progression of support and services across these different stages of education, ensuring a cohesive and effective transition for students with disabilities as they progress from early childhood through school-age years and into post-secondary life.

Early Childhood Services and Transition to Kindergarten

CSDNR, like other school districts in New York State, operates a Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE). The CPSE has a crucial role in overseeing the evaluation, identification, and provision of special education services for preschool-aged children with disabilities within the state. It specifically focuses on children aged 3 to 5 years old who may require additional support due to developmental delays or disabilities. In CSDNR, the CPSE manages a caseload of students attending private preschools, Westchester County-based preschools, and preschools within the district.

CSDNR offers preschool programs within its own schools that are specifically designed for students with disabilities and also utilizes countywide and private programs for preschool services. Additionally, it provides integrated programs that allow students with disabilities to be included alongside their typically developing peers.

These preschool programs include the following:

- Special Class Integrated Setting (Preschool): This program is for students with disabilities and is staffed by at least one special education teacher and one assistant/aide. A special class in an integrated setting is provided in the same preschool class with non-disabled students and additional preschool staff. In this program each preschool student with a disability received services for a minimum of two and 1/2 hours per day
- Special Class 1/2 Day Preschool: A 1/2 day special preschool class consisting of students with moderate to severe speech language delays or hearing impairments and mild to moderate developmental delays in at least one other domain.
- Special Class ABA Preschool: This class uses principles of applied behavior analysis across all domains including academic communication social and behavioral to make data driven decisions and recommendations for instruction and services.

During interviews and focus groups with staff and parents, the following themes emerged by both parents and teachers:

- Recommendations for a greater emphasis on early intervention to address students' needs at an earlier stage.
- Concerns about the assessment process and perceived potential removal of services or declassification by the CPSE.
- Existing transition supports for students transitioning from preschool (PK) to kindergarten (K), but a lack of transition supports for students switching between schools or grade levels.
- Need for better transition services and communication for declassified students entering kindergarten.

- Need for improved communication and information sharing between CPSE and kindergarten teachers regarding declassified students.

School-Age Transition

Transitions are significant milestones in a child's educational journey, including transitions from preschool to kindergarten, elementary to middle school, and middle school to high school. These transitions can be both exciting and anxiety-inducing for all children, but they hold particular importance for students with IEPs in ensuring continuity of service delivery. In the context of CSDNR, where students move from smaller elementary schools to larger middle schools, it becomes crucial to address these transition points effectively.

During interviews and focus groups, parents and teachers expressed feedback about continuity in the following areas:

- Existing transition supports for students transitioning from preschool (PK) to kindergarten (K), but a lack of transition supports for students switching between schools or grade levels.
- Disconnection and lack of continuity between elementary, middle, and high schools regarding programs and services.
- Insufficient communication and representation between schools when students transition from one building to another.
- Parents and students experience a lack of continuity and feel like they are starting from scratch when transitioning to a new building or grade level.
- Inconsistent programming and perceived discrepancies as students transition from elementary to middle to high school levels.
- Need for better transition services and communication for declassified students entering kindergarten.

Post-Secondary Transition

In New York State, the following requirements are within the Commissioner's Regulations:

- Individualized Education Program (IEP): The student must have an active IEP that includes transition planning, starting no later than the age of 15. The IEP should address the student's post-secondary goals, including education, employment, and independent living skills.
- Transition Assessment: The CSE team must conduct ongoing transition assessments to identify the student's strengths, interests, preferences, and needs related to their post-secondary goals. These assessments inform the development of appropriate transition services and goals.
- Transition Services: The IEP must include a coordinated set of transition services designed to support the student in achieving their post-secondary goals. These services may include instruction, related services, community-based experiences, employment exploration, vocational training, independent living skills instruction, and more.
- Post-Secondary Goals: The IEP should establish post-school outcome goals that reflect the student's preferences and abilities in education, employment, and independent living. These goals guide the development of transition services and support the student's successful transition to adulthood.
- Collaboration with Community Agencies: The school district must collaborate with relevant community agencies, such as vocational rehabilitation services, adult service providers, and other community resources, to facilitate a smooth transition for the student into adult life.

At New Rochelle High School, there is a counselor dedicated to supporting students with IEPs. Aside from responsibilities as a member of the Guidance Counseling Department, the counselor supports transition assessments, works with the CSE on transition services, engages in the development of post-school outcome goals, and when necessary, coordinates with ACCESS-VR through NYSED, support

benefits through the New York State Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPWDD), and any other external agency supports.

In New York State, there are specific requirements for programming for students between the ages of 18 and 21 who have completed their high school education but continue to require additional support and services. These programs are commonly referred to as Transition Services.

PCG saw the following programs for students ages 18-21 during its classroom visits:

1. Project Search: CSDNR has had a partnership with Project Search for many years. Project Search is a unique, national, business-led, one-year employment preparation program that takes place entirely at the workplace, often times in hospitals or other workplaces that require technical expertise. Total workplace immersion facilitates a combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and hands-on training through worksite rotations. The program culminates in individualized job development. It is the only school district in Westchester County, New York that has a Project Search Affiliation. As part of this program, students who are not bound for a traditional diploma participate in a rigorous community-based instruction program at Montefiore Hospital. It is reported by the district's Project Success leader, who is also the on-site certified special education teacher, that many of the students who participate in this program find successful employment after participating.
2. Culinary Program: CSDNR has a contractual arrangement with a company that specializes in providing culinary vocational skills to students with disabilities. In this program, which takes place in a restaurant when it is closed, students work in groups and participate in culinary classes led by a master chef, supported by a certified CNRSD special education teacher, and CNRSD assistant/aide. Students often work in groups using heavy machinery and kitchen implements to complete their assignments. Students often cater events for the district. It was reported that a large number of students find employment after participating in this program.
3. Community Based Instruction: Students have individual workplace assignments in business across New Rochelle. Many of these students get to worksites by public transportation. These arrangements are coordinated by the Life Skills teacher at New Rochelle High School. These students also receive high school counseling specific to their needs by a dedicated counselor at the high school who supports students ages 18-21. CSDNR has CBI job coaches who support students; these coaches are typically aides who receive support from a lead teacher in the school based life skills program.
4. School Based Life Skills: New Rochelle High School has a life skills program for students ages 18-21 whose CSEs determine they are best served in the high school. Their life skills programming is tailored to individual student needs. The program has aides who serve as job coaches, and students serve in jobs throughout the school that include food services, janitorial, and office-based skills. The classroom for this program has a kitchen with appliances that students use for an in-house food service offering.

During interviews and focus groups with parents and staff, the following themes emerged about transition:

- Positive feedback on transition planning at the high school level, with the Project Search program being highly regarded.
- There is not enough information about 18-21 programming for parents and students; transitioning from high school to adult/postsecondary life requires more attention and clearer information for parents about the process and available resources.

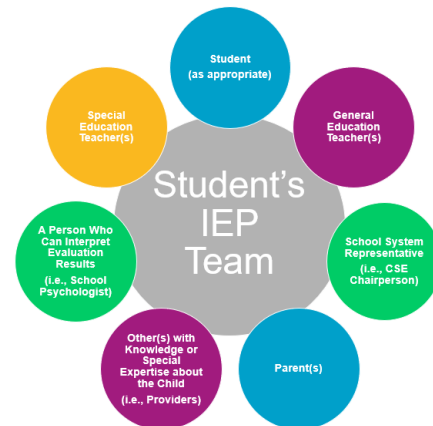
Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) and Committee on Special Education (CSE) Meetings

In this section of the report, we transition from discussing the learning environment and services to articulating how these, and other details, are documented by the CPSE/CSE within the IEP. As referenced earlier, the purpose of a CPSE/CSE meeting is to discuss, develop, and review a student's IEP. There are several different types of CPSE/CSE Meetings, each serving different functions. The types of CPSE/CSE meetings are: Initial, Annual, and Reevaluation.

- **Initial CPSE/CSE Meeting:** After the student is evaluated, if the student has been determined to be eligible for special education services, the committee then develops an IEP for that student based on student evaluations.
- **Annual CPSE/CSE Meeting:** After the initial IEP is developed, schools are required to hold an annual CSE meeting each year to review a student's progress and, if necessary, revise the student's IEP as needed.
- **Requested Review:** In addition to the required annual review, a review of the current IEP can be requested by the parent, CPSE, or CSE.
- **Reevaluation CPSE/CSE Meeting:** At minimum, a reevaluation must be completed once every three years, unless the parent/guardian and the school agree in writing that it is not necessary. Updated evaluations may be conducted to determine student eligibility and need. Parents and guardians can request updated evaluations or a CPSE/CSE meeting at any time.⁵¹

As required under IDEA, a district's board of education or board of trustees appoints a CPSE for pre-school age children, or a CSE for school age children, to ensure the timely evaluation and placement of students.⁵² A full CPSE/CSE must include the following members:

- The parent or guardian of the student
- One or more of the student's general education teachers
- One or more of the student's special education teachers
- CPSE/CSE Chairperson; this is a school district representative who has knowledge of district services and resources. The Chairperson presides over the meeting.
- An expert who can interpret the student's evaluation results (This can be an aforementioned committee member, or anyone determined by the district to have knowledge and expertise to fulfill this role on the committee)
- The student if they are age 15+, once the CSE team begins to develop a post-high school transition plan (Student can be invited to attend CSE meetings at ages younger than 15 if deemed appropriate)



⁵¹ May 2022, A Parent's Guide to Special Education, NY State Department of Education.

<https://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/parentguide.htm>; s

[Questions and Answers on Special Education Meeting Notice and Related Requirements: Special Education : EMSC : NYSED](#)

⁵² Official Compilation of Codes, Rules, and Regulations of the State of New York. Title 8. Education Department. Chapter II. Regulations of the Commissioner. Subchapter P. Handicapped Children. Part 200. Children with Handicapping Conditions. (2015-2023).

[https://govt.westlaw.com/nycrr/Document/I09ae5707c22211dda1bb852bdc84e3be?viewType=FullText&originationContext=document&transitionType=CategoryPageItem&contextData=\(sc.Default\)&bhcp=1](https://govt.westlaw.com/nycrr/Document/I09ae5707c22211dda1bb852bdc84e3be?viewType=FullText&originationContext=document&transitionType=CategoryPageItem&contextData=(sc.Default)&bhcp=1)

Additional team members can be invited to the CPSE/CSE Meeting, such as other persons having knowledge or special expertise regarding the student, including related services personnel as appropriate. Additionally, a parent or guardian can request the presence of additional members during the CPSE/CSE meeting, such as a health care provider or an advocate.⁵³ Finally, it is the district's responsibility to ensure that the parent or guardian understands the proceedings of the meeting. Therefore, they must arrange for the presence of an interpreter if needed.⁵⁴

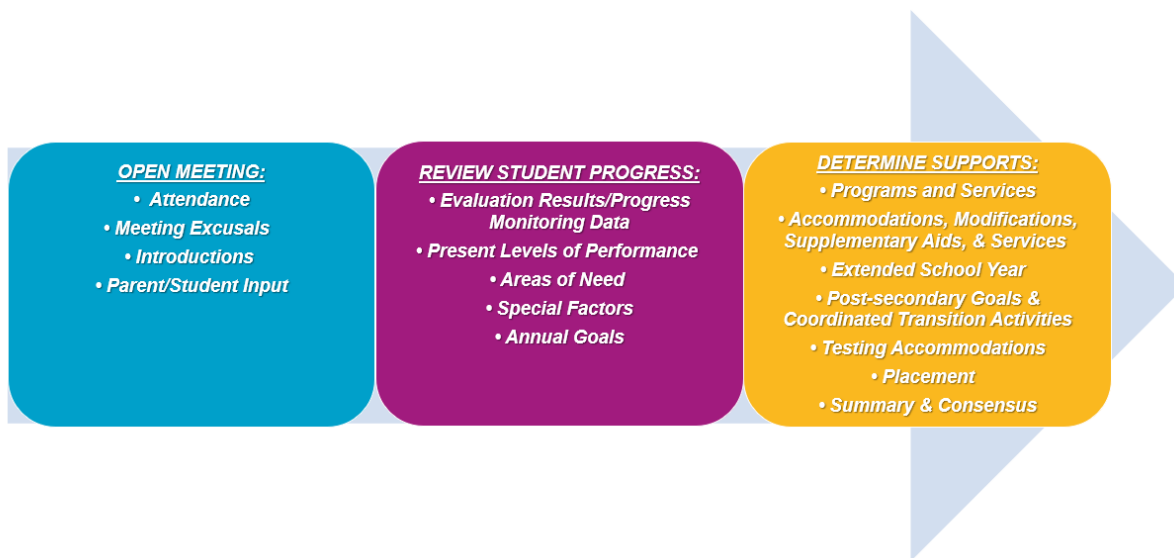
If the parent or guardian and the school agree, a team member can be excused from attending the CPSE/CSE meeting. This excusal must be made in writing, no less than 5 days prior to the meeting date.⁵⁵ However, full CPSE/CSE's are required for initial referral meetings, a meeting that is considering a special class program or out of district placement for the first time, and/or if requested by the parent or team. Additionally, school psychologists are required at meetings when reviewing evaluations and/or considering a more restrictive program with a smaller student/teacher ratio.

For meetings not requiring a full CPSE/CSE, such as an annual meeting where no services are being amended, a sub- CPSE/CSE may conduct the meeting. A sub- CPSE/CSE consists of the following members:

- The parent or guardian of the student
- One or more of the student's general education teachers
- One or more of the student's special education teachers
- The CPSE/CSE Chairperson; this is a school district representative who has knowledge of services and resources. The Chairperson presides over the meeting.

Components of a CPSE/CSE Meeting

The flow of a CPSE/CSE meeting is as follows:⁵⁶



Typically, a CPSE/CSE meeting will begin with each team member signing an attendance sheet and introducing themselves and their connection to the student. Any members who were excused in advance of the meeting will be indicated as such. It is then best practice to open the meeting to ask the

⁵³ id.

⁵⁴ id.

⁵⁵ id.

⁵⁶ August 30, 2019. A Guide to the Individualized Education Program. U.S. Department of Education.
<https://www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html#closer>

parent/guardian how they believe their student is performing and to name any concerns they're feeling regarding the child's progress. If the child is present, it is appropriate to ask for their input as well.

Then, the IEP should review the child's evaluation results and/or progress monitoring data. This includes evaluation results, such as individual evaluations as well as classroom tests, and observations by teachers, parents, and other school staff. In reviewing the student's present levels of performance, the CPSE/CSE team must discuss the student's strengths and areas of interest as well as areas of growth. The discussion should be framed on how to support the student in advancing toward their annual goals, be involved in and progress in the general curriculum, participate in extracurricular activities, and be educated with and participate with other children with disabilities and nondisabled peers.

Additionally, the CPSE/CSE team should consider special factors, (e.g., if the child has limited proficiency in English, if the student is blind or visually impaired, if the child is deaf or hard of hearing) and discuss any applicable use of assistive technology for the child.⁵⁷

Once these topics are covered, it is then appropriate to then discuss recommended services for the student as well as how that service will be implemented as mandated on the child's IEP. Beginning when a student with an IEP is 12 years old, students must receive an assessment that includes a review of school records and teacher assessments, and parent and student interviews to determine vocational skills, aptitudes, and interests. The IEP must address courses need to reach post-secondary goals as well as services for post-high school plans. Most states and districts give achievement tests to children in certain grades or age groups. The IEP must state what modifications in the administration of these tests the child will need. If a test is not appropriate for the child, the IEP must state why the test is not appropriate and how the child will be tested instead.

Next, the child's recommended placement will be discussed and agreed upon by all committee members. Placement decisions must be made according to IDEA's least restrictive environment requirements—commonly known as LRE. These requirements state that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities must be educated with children who do not have disabilities.

Finally, all items discussed are summarized and consensus is agreed in terms of all aspects of the student's IEP, goals, and placement decisions.⁵⁸

Quality Indicators of a CPSE/CSE Meeting

PCG used overarching quality indicators to assess CSE meetings. The rubric included specific "look-fors," or classifications of evidence, under each indicator. These indicators were synthesized into the following high-level categories (1) CPSE/CSE Team Collaboration and Consensus; (2) Features of a Structured, Sequential CPSE/CSE Meeting; (3) Presence of Data to Inform IEP development; (4) Evidence of Consideration of Interrelationship of Student's Disability with Student Strengths and Needs; (5) Apparent Goal Setting and Progress Monitoring Procedures; and (6) Prioritization of LRE when Considering Student Placement, Services, and Program.

As previously stated, due to scheduling challenges, PCG was only able to observe eight CSE meetings. Meetings were randomly selected. In describing characteristics of observed CSE meetings and IEPs, we also provide additional data from surveys, focus groups, and interviews in conjunction with observation notes. No CPSE meetings were observed. As such, the terminology below references CSE meetings only.

1. CSE Team Collaboration and Consensus

⁵⁷ id.

⁵⁸ August 30, 2019. A Guide to the Individualized Education Program. U.S. Department of Education. <https://www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html#closer>

During PCG’s CSE meeting observations, CSE team collaboration was evident. When observed making determinations on student classification or decisions on a student’s placement, program, or service, all CSE teams were able to typically reach consensus. Each team member’s input was consistently sought by the Chairperson.

These observations are consistent with staff survey data. The surveys indicated that 70% of staff that completed the survey indicated that they feel comfortable asking questions during CSE meetings. While 68% of staff that completed the survey believe that all team member concerns are addressed at CSE meetings. Most notably, 78% of respondents believe that IEP development involves collaboration between general education teachers, special educators, related service providers, clinicians, and parents.

At the meetings PCG observed, parents were consistently treated as equal partners in the CSE team. For instance, a translator was provided in all meetings where this service was needed by the family. This is in alignment with survey data in which 100% of respondents indicated that they were provided with a translator for their student’s CSE meeting if they needed one. It is important to note, however, that during focus groups, there were conflicting beliefs about the consistent provision of translators at meetings.

Each meeting opened with the parent sharing their concerns and perspectives on their child’s progress. Survey data corroborated these findings, with 79% of families who completed the survey in agreement that their input is considered during CSE meetings and 75% of families who completed the survey agreeing that they feel comfortable asking questions during CSE meetings.

Data regarding CSE meetings illuminated some inconsistencies in the parent experience. Despite survey data reflecting otherwise, in focus group interviews, parent participants often expressed frustration with the CSE meeting process, reporting that they felt unheard and that their concerns and input was often dismissed by school leadership and other CSE team members. Parents said that when they make recommendations or requests for their child’s services, they are noted but not enacted. Additionally, in focus group interviews, parents were concerned that CSE Chairpersons frequently had no direct contact with their child and felt those staff should not be making recommendations about their student since they did not know them.

- 85.7% - Felt comfortable during the meeting
- 95.2% - Allowed to talk about things they enjoyed doing
- 85.7% - Able to talk about what schoolwork was easy or hard for them

Student Survey

Student Participation

In observed meetings, just one meeting included a student as a participant and member of the CSE team. According to student survey data, 75% of students who responded reported never having been invited to their CSE meetings. Of the students who did attend their CSE meetings, their survey results suggest that the meeting was a positive experience that was helpful for them.

Furthermore, in focus group interviews, participants mentioned that in the past, the District employed student-led CSE meetings and noted their efficacy. While this method of meeting facilitation is no longer practiced, the data suggest that it might be beneficial to reinstate this meeting structure.

2. Features of a Structured, Sequential CSE Meeting

During observed meetings, CSE Chairpersons led with the clear intention of following a sequential structure. Chairpersons organized the flow of the meeting in a routinized manner, beginning with attendance and moving through the components of a CSE meeting. Notably, the meeting structure consistently lacked discussion of student’s annual goals and their progress monitoring of those goals. This is discussed further in a later section of this report.

Regarding meeting preparation, in all but one meeting, CSE members confirmed receipt of all documentation prior to the meeting. This aligns with survey responses indicating that roughly 93% of families that completed the survey received notice of a CSE meeting at least once a year. However, a lack of coordination between CSE team members prior to the meeting was evident. Often, it was apparent that CSE Chairpersons were learning about a student's academic, social emotional, or attendance data for the first time during that meeting as the student's progress was reviewed. As a result, on several instances, program reviews needed to be scheduled for a later date when a full CSE team was present to make amendments to the student's placement or services. This lack of preparation caused delays in providing additional support for these students.

This finding is consistent with focus group interview data in which participants stated that CSE Chairpersons are often not in direct contact with the student. Therefore, information sharing prior to CSE meetings is critical in preparing the CSE Chairperson and the rest of the CSE team for the meeting. Focus groups reported limited information sharing prior to CSE meetings. This lack of collaborative time impacted several observed meetings.

3. Presence of Data to Inform IEP Development

During meeting observations, it was clear that some amount of data was collected and referenced. Consistently, when reviewing student present levels of performance, PCG noted that student progress was reported in a clear, objective manner. Across all Annual meetings though, there was minimal data discussed in the presence of the meeting observer.

There was an awareness on the part of the CSE team members of appropriate grade level benchmarks, this was made clear to PCG as they were often cited when discussing student data. For instance, when sharing a student's reading level, the corresponding grade level equivalent based on that score was cited. However, the overall data points specified were minimal, typically being limited to one data point on a student's reading level, one data point on a student's most recent math assessment score (i.e., Star Assessment), and occasionally one data point on a student's most recent writing assessment score. Mention of student growth or stagnation over time in reference to multiple data points was not observed. Students' day to day performance in the classroom was discussed anecdotally, without reference to any clear indicators or data points.

An exception to this theme was Initial CSE meetings. In these meetings, evaluation data were presented thoroughly in a clear, succinct, jargon-free fashion consistent with quality indicators. Evaluation data were outlined in full, including percentile rankings of the student's performance as well as raw data.

These observations are aligned with focus group interview findings, in which participants indicated a lack of clarity around progress monitoring procedures that may impact teachers' ability to include substantive data in student present levels.

4. Evidence of Consideration of Interrelationship of Student's Disability with Student Strengths and Needs

In all meetings, CSE teams highlighted student strengths as well as needs. On multiple occasions, CSE team members recommended specific programming for a student based on the student's strengths and interests, in an effort to foster their skills and engagement. As aforementioned, student progress or evaluation results were consistently presented in an objective manner.

The student's disability was typically at the forefront of the discussion during observed meetings. CSE Chairpersons made a concerted effort to keep conversations productive and child centered. PCG noted several instances in which the Chairpersons reminded participants that the students' areas of need were a result of their disability. Focus group interviews support these observations, in which staff report that the CSE equally evaluates all students and considers the needs of the student and the LRE environment for that student to succeed.

5. Apparent Goal Setting and Progress Monitoring Procedures

PCG noted a marked lack of discussions of goals and progress monitoring methods during CSE meetings. It is important to note that PCG did not have access to student IEPs, evaluation reports, or other documentation during these meetings. Therefore, while annual goals may have been outlined in student reports, these were not evident at meetings attended.

On the few occasions when goals were discussed, they were mentioned in broad terms, in relation to the student's area of need. For example, if a student was deemed to be below grade level in math, CSE Team members commented that they would include several math goals on the student's IEP. No discussion of students' progress toward their annual goals or discussion of new goals was observed. PCG, therefore, cannot speak to the quality of the goals outlined on the IEPs discussed.

This is consistent with survey data in which just 58% of staff that completed the survey stated that student progress toward IEP goals is analyzed and discussed regularly by the student's teachers and/or related service provider(s). While 90% of students who completed the survey reported not knowing what goals were listed on their IEP. Additionally, focus group data align with these findings; participants in focus groups stated that goals on student IEPs are often not measurable or can be written in such a way that they're difficult to monitor and gauge student progress. Others explained that they do not receive guidance on how to help students attain their goals.

6. Prioritization of LRE when Considering Student Placement, Services, and Program

In observed meetings, the program offerings available in the district sometimes dictated recommended placement for students. CSE Team members agreed on a placement for a student, choosing from the available options of offerings within the District, rather than selecting programs and services based on student disability and need and then providing that service for the student.

This is corroborated by focus groups in which participants expressed concerns about limited placement options for students, recommending that a continuum of placement options should be available on each school site. Staff indicated that placement for students was limited by where there was availability rather than where was most appropriate for the student.

Additionally, it was observed that students who were struggling to meet grade level benchmarks were frequently moved to a more restrictive environment rather than introducing additional supports or modifications in their current classroom setting. This finding is supported by classroom visit data, in which PCG found that differentiated delivery of instruction and modifications to instructional materials were not apparent in the majority of visited settings.

IEP Development

Once a student within CSDNR is found eligible for special education and related services, a parent must sign consent for the initial provision of services. The IEP is drafted during the CSE meeting. The CSE then makes a recommendation and sends the finalized IEP and Prior Written Notice to the parent after the meeting. The parent(s) must sign consent before services are implemented. For students already deemed eligible, when a student's annual review meeting has been held, a student's updated IEP must be written and finalized. These components include, but are not limited to:⁵⁹

- A student's present levels of performance (PLOP),
- Annual goals,

⁵⁹ "A Guide to the Individualized Education Program", US Department of Education
[https://www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html#:~:text=By percent20law percent20the percent20IEP percent20must present percent20levels percent20of percent20educational percent20performance](https://www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html#:~:text=By%20law%20the%20IEP%20must%20present%20levels%20of%20educational%20performance)).

- A description of the special education, related services and supplementary aids and services that will be provided,
- Information regarding how the student will participate in state and districtwide assessments,
- Transition services, when age-appropriate, and
- Other areas that must be address for children with certain disabilities, needs, or circumstances.

PCG used the Using the Golden Thread framework and Quality Indicator Review protocol in its review of IEPs. These indicators were synthesized into the following high-level categories (1) Present Levels of Performance (PLOP), (2) IEP Goals, (3) Accommodations and Modifications in the IEP, (4) Meaningful IEP Progress Monitoring.

Present Levels of Performance

Within a student's IEP, the Present Levels of Performance (PLOP) serves as the starting point for developing IEP goals. The PLOP is one of the most critical components of the IEP and serves as a snapshot of the student at a specific time and place, providing team members with details on the student's academic achievement and functional performance. A well-crafted PLOP statement incorporates input from a variety of educators and school staff and involves both qualitative and quantitative data, including:

- Performance and mastery of previous year's goals;
- New special education assessment results;
- Performance on district and statewide assessments, including identification of skills and knowledge already attained in relation to grade-level standards;
- Classroom grades and observations, including behavior data;
- Input from the student and parents;
- Interests and strengths, including non-curricular areas; any strategies, accommodations, or assistive technology devices or services that have already shown success;
- Skills in daily living such as social skills, mobility skills, employment skills, and skills that promote student independence.

As appropriate, PLOP statements must include data describing a student's functional skills as well as academic skills. Research has shown that when functional skills are not addressed within the PLOP, students' long-term independent-living outcomes are diminished.⁶⁰ In addition, the PLOP statement should provide information related to all goals that are developed within the IEP. For example, a 14-year-old student's IEP should include transition goals rooted in baseline transition data that is clearly detailed in the PLOP. Members of the CPSE/CSE team must document and update a student's PLOP annually. In doing so, CSE teams must consider relevant data. CSE members must describe the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, including how the student's disability affects his or her involvement and progress in the general education curriculum. From the PLOP, CSE members must create statements of need which ultimately drive IEP goals.

Based on information gathered from file review focus groups, PCG found that input was consistently included in the PLOP. Present levels were also typically written in clear and concise language.

A trend identified in file review focus groups was that there was minimal alignment of the students' current performance and baseline data outlined in the present levels with their goals and objectives. While the present levels often provided some form of baseline data on benchmark assessments and student's current skills, they were often not specific as to where the student currently was performing in regard to progress in meeting their annual goals. Additionally, while PLOPs did typically cite some form of student performance data, the type of data included was inconsistent or limited. For instance, the PLOP might

⁶⁰ In 2011, Auers, Lowrey, Douglas, and Sievers analyzed their findings in a journal article appropriately titled: I Can Identify Saturn, but I Can't Brush My Teeth: What Happens When the Curricular Focus for Students with Severe Disabilities Shifts

include standardized test scores, but no quantitative information about how the student was performing in the classroom. Or, conversely, the PLOP statements provided classroom data, but did not provide any grade-level benchmark data or statewide assessment data.

This is consistent with survey data as well as focus group interviews findings. Overwhelmingly, staff shared they have received little to no training on writing PLOP statements or areas of need. They shared they may receive this information from their mentor; however, it is often varied. Many expressed a desire to receive formalized training in writing present levels.

IEP Goals

Annual IEP goals that are ambitious, relevant, and measurable are a vital part of the IEP process. Considering the previously noted *Andrew* case, when developing IEP goals, teams should ensure the goals are grade- appropriate and ambitious.⁶¹ Repeating the same goals from year to year does not meet this standard. Rather, IEP teams must design goals that are reasonably calculated to enable students to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum (using alternate achievement standards when appropriate), and that also meet other educational needs related to their disability. Although the Supreme Court did not address IEP delineation of special education, related services, and supplementary aids/services, it is important to remember that IDEA requires a statement of these components to be “based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable.”⁶²

It is best practice to write IEP goals as SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relatable, and Time-bound.

During file review focus groups, it was apparent that staff knew the importance of writing SMART goals. However, participants noted that they often select IEP goals directly from the dropdowns in their IEP case management system, rather than developing goals specific to the student. Goals were found to be grade and age level appropriate and aligned with State standards, yet they were often not time bound nor measurable; thus, making it difficult to determine how progress would be monitored.

Focus group participants shared similar feedback, naming that goals often contain vague language or not written in a way that makes tracking progress challenging. Staff expressed that more communication between the staff writing IEP goals and the staff working with the student to meet those goals would help improve the quality of goals written.

When middle school and high school students were asked about their IEPs, 90.2% reported not knowing what their goals were and 75.5% did not know what accommodations or supports are listed. Further, over 85.4% indicate that they have not seen their IEPs.

Accommodations and Modifications in the IEP

IEP accommodations should facilitate access to multiple means of acquiring knowledge and multiple methods of demonstrating skills (aligning to principles of UDL) while also retaining the rigor and high expectations of the New York State Standards.

Providing accommodations to students with disabilities on assignments or assessments maintains the

- 50.0% of parents with pre-school level students
- 67.7% of parents with elementary level students
- 82.4% of parents with middle school level students
- 79.2% of parents with high school level students

Believe that their child's IEP tells how progress toward goals will be measured.

Parent Survey

- 90.2% of students do not know what goals are on their IEPs
- 75.5% of students do not know what accommodations and supports are on their IEPs
- 85.4% of students have not seen their IEPs

Student Survey

⁶¹ https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/16pdf/15-827_0pm1.pdf

⁶² Retrieved from <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/d/300.320/a>

same expectation of mastery as that of nondisabled peers, but with a change in the timing, formatting, setting, scheduling, and/or response or presentation method. Accommodations do not alter in any significant way what a test or assignment measures.⁶³ Different than accommodations in the IEP, modifications are an adjustment to an assignment or a test that changes the standard or what the test or assignment is supposed to measure. A modification changes what a student is taught or expected to learn.

File review focus groups illuminated inconsistencies in developing accommodations and modifications for students in their IEPs. Participants noted that these are often written differently depending on who led the CSE meeting. Furthermore, file reviews highlighted that often students who are on grade-level academically or possess average cognitive abilities for their age are often pulled out of the classroom for instructional supports rather than providing differentiated accommodations within the general education classroom to address the student need.

This is corroborated by classroom visit data, in which PCG found that differentiated delivery of instruction and modifications to instructional materials were not apparent in the majority of visited settings.

Meaningful IEP Progress Reporting

IDEA requires IEP teams to develop annual measurable academic and/or functional IEP goals that are aligned to state standards. Each IEP goal should include benchmarks or short-term objectives as well as criteria to measure goal mastery and must address needs resulting from the student's disability for the student to be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum. As stated earlier, we recommend that IEP goals be written using the SMART format -- Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. The purpose of developing SMART IEP goals is to support the measurement of student progress toward goal mastery. Progress monitoring is a research-based practice used to assess a student's progress toward IEP goals and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and intervention. Progress monitoring informs the teacher, student, and family regarding what a student has learned and what requires additional intervention or still needs to be taught. IDEA requires IEPs to contain a description of how the student's progress will be measured and how often reports on progress will be provided.

During file review focus groups, participants shared that there is a standardized template used for progress reporting in CSE meetings. In PCG's file review, it was apparent that while progress reporting was written in a jargon-free, clear manner, they often lacked any details to support the progress level indicated. Often, no additional information was provided regarding how the student was progressing and there was no data provided that supported the ratings the student was given for their progress in meeting their goals and objectives.

In focus group interviews, staff expressed frustration with the lack of clarity around expectations for data collection and guidance in what is needed to track student progress toward goals. Staff expressed their desire for more accessible data to make informed decisions in supporting children.

- 73.6% of special education teachers
- 54.8% of general education teachers
- 84.6% of related service providers
- 48.4% of student support services staff
- 42.9% of special education facilitators
- 42.9% of school building administrators

Believe that student progress toward IEP goals is analyzed and discussed regularly by the student's teachers and/or related service provider(s).

Staff Survey

⁶³ Retrieved from: [https://www.ctdinstitute.org/sites/default/files/file_attachments/School percent20Accommodation percent20and percent20Modification percent20Ideas percent20for percent20Students percent20who percent20Receive percent20Special percent20Education percent20Services percent20English.pdf](https://www.ctdinstitute.org/sites/default/files/file_attachments/School%20Accommodation%20and%20Modification%20Ideas%20for%20Students%20who%20Receive%20Special%20Education%20Services%20English.pdf)

This is further supported by survey response data which highlighted some marked differences between staff perception around progress monitoring, suggesting that progress monitoring is implemented inconsistently amongst different stakeholder groups.

V. HIGH EXPECTATIONS AND LEADERSHIP

Strengths

- **Caring and Inclusive Staff.** Parents cite teachers as caring and inclusive.
- **Increased Desire for Collaboration and Communication Among General Education and Special Education Teachers.** Desire for increased collaboration and communications between general education and special education teachers, as well as various departments and schools.

Opportunities for Improvement

- **Growth Mindset.** Opportunities to further develop a growth mindset districtwide on leading programs to support students with IEPs.
- **Inclusive Community.** Belief that school activities need to be more inclusive.
- **Strategic Vision.** District central office administration needs to re-think districtwide collaboration; teambuilding and morale; and vision and strategic planning.
- **Operational Efficiencies and Customer Service.** The special education department has operational challenges that limit efficiency and effective customer service to teachers, students, and parents.
- **Roles and Responsibilities.** Lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities with special education department staff.

High Expectations and Inclusivity

Having high expectations for all students, including students with disabilities, sets the tone for academic optimism and growth mindset. Teacher and writer, Kyle Redford, shared:⁶⁴

As teachers we know that our expectations of students are capable of accomplishing, students take their cues from us. It is distressing and humbling to realize we possess this kind of unearned power. Handled well, our expectations can positively influence students as they develop an internalized sense of possibility. However, if this power is mismanaged, we can unintentionally reinforce student fears about their intellectual potential.

Ensuring students with disabilities believe they are capable of tremendous growth stems from the tone set by those responsible for co-leading this change, district-based staff.

In CSDNR, some of the strongest themes on overall expectations and inclusivity came from focus groups and open responses within the surveys administered to parents and staff. Within the data collected, the following themes were notable:

- **Growth Mindset and High Expectations:** While there is a glimpse of a growth mindset in the district, there are concerns about the lack of a growth mindset overall. The focus on compliance is seen as preventing success, and there is a call for equal emphasis on teaching and learning. There is a desire for high expectations for students with IEPs and a lack of understanding of IEPs among leadership.
- **Inclusion:** There is a mixed experience with inclusion. Some schools have club activities that are more accessible, but overall, it is not easy for students with disabilities to gain access to inclusive

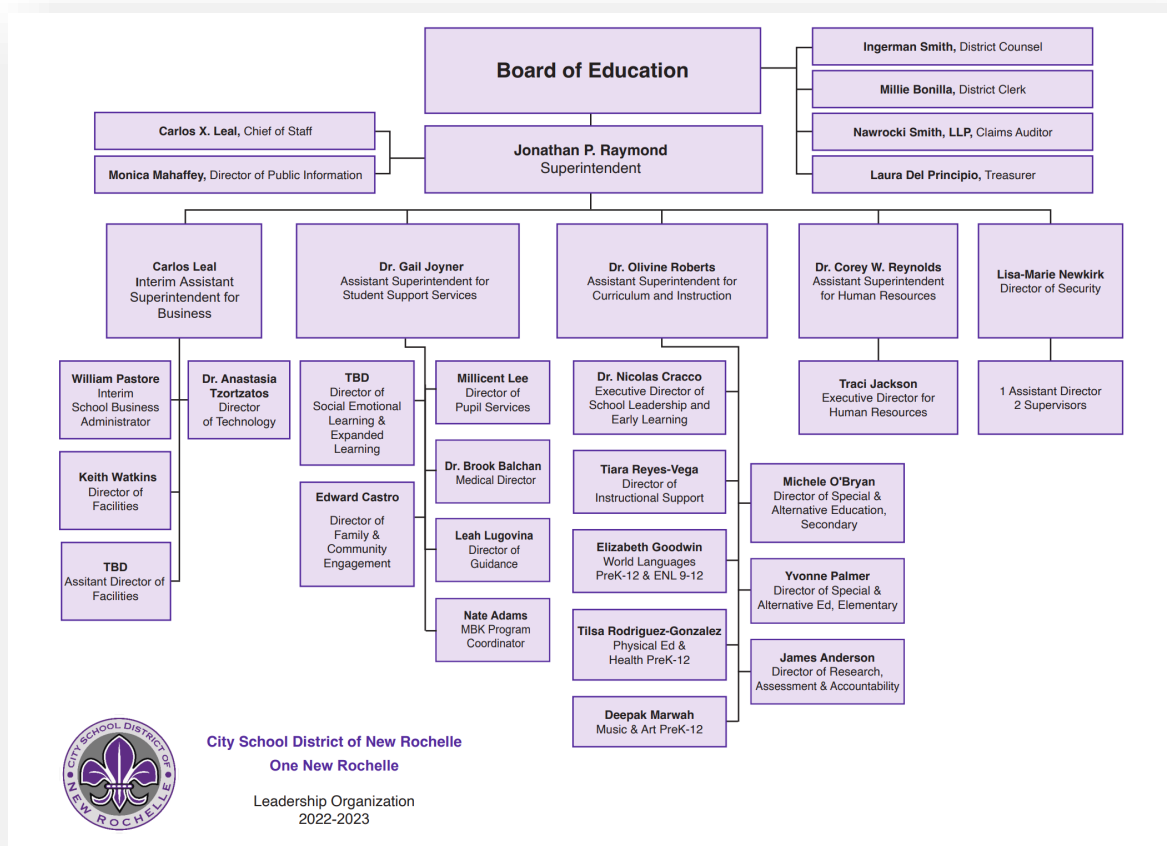
⁶⁴ <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-dyslexia-and-the-power-of-teacher-expectations/2016/05>

extracurricular activities. There is a need for better integration of students with disabilities in extracurricular activities and school-wide events.

- **Barriers and Support:** Various barriers were identified, including paperwork and health forms that make it difficult for some students to participate in sports and other programs. There are also concerns about the treatment of immigrant children, cultural biases, and the reinforcement of racial segregation. Sensitivity training for staff is seen as essential.
- **Teacher Attitudes and Expectations:** There are mixed experiences with general education teachers' attitudes towards students with disabilities. Parents cite many teachers as caring and inclusive. Lower expectations and less rigorous instruction for students with disabilities are also mentioned.
- **Need for Improvement and Clear Expectations:** Areas that need improvement include general education teachers' attitudes toward inclusion, the need for clear and high expectations for IEP students, and better understanding of special education needs among general education teachers.

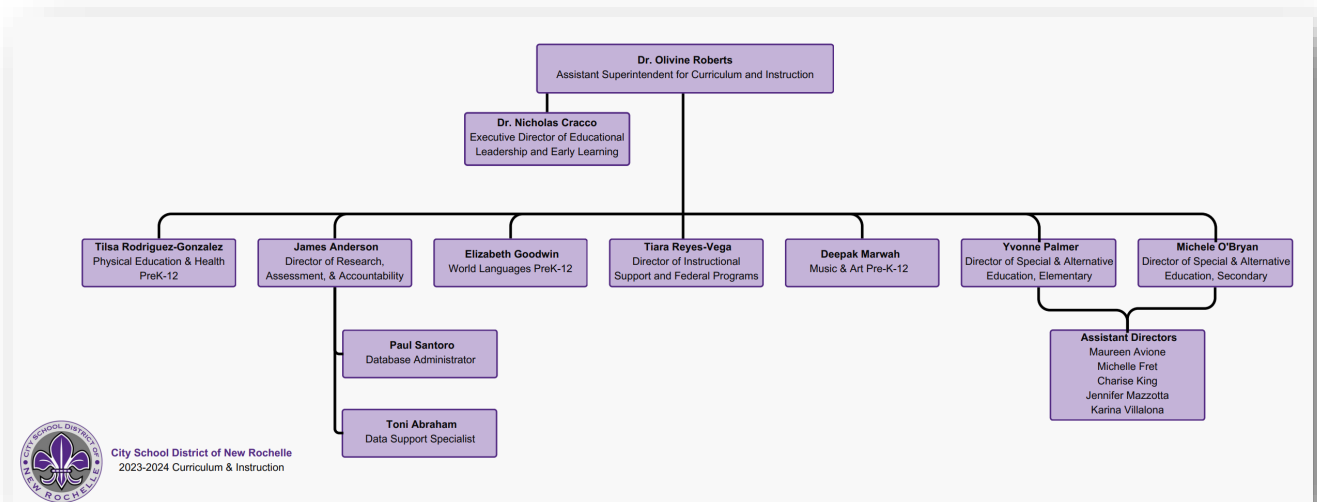
In all of these themes, the growth mindset and district culture, from top to bottom, were identified as both facilitators and obstacles to fostering high expectations and inclusivity. Each of these themes demonstrates a direct connection to the responsibility of district executive leadership in promoting a culture and climate of shared responsibility for students with disabilities.

District Organizational Structure



In CSDNR, the Superintendent of Schools reports to an elected school board of eight members. The Superintendent has eight direct reports, one of whom is the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; the others include the Assistant Superintendent for Business; the Assistant Superintendent for Student Support Services; the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; the Director of Security; the Director of Public Information, the Director of Athletics, and the Chief of Staff.

The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction has eight direct reports: the Executive Director of Educational Leadership and Early Learning; the Director of Physical Education and Health PreK-12; the Director of World Languages PreK-12; the Director of Instructional Support and Federal Programs; the Director of Music and Art PreK-12; the Director of Special Education, Elementary; and the Director of Special Education, Secondary.



The special education department is under the leadership of the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction. Within that office are two Directors of Special Education. One Director supports elementary schools and the other supports the middle schools, the high school, and 18-21 post graduate programming. Under these two Directors are five building-based Assistant Directors of Special Education. One of these Assistant Directors is assigned to high school programming; two Assistant Directors are assigned to middle school programming; and two of these Assistant Directors are assigned to elementary school programming. Each of these Assistant Directors also serves students receiving their special education services out-of-district.

In addition, the OSE also has 14 Facilitators, or CPSE/CSE Chairpersons. They are assigned as follows:

- CPSE Facilitators (2 FTE)
- Elementary Facilitators (3 FTE)
- Middle School Facilitators (2 FTE)
- High School Facilitators (4 FTE)
- District of Location Facilitator (1 FTE)
- District of Residence Facilitator (1 FTE)
- Out of District Facilitator (1 FTE)

They are responsible for managing CPSE/CSE meetings and ensuring that IEPs are created in accordance with IDEA and Commissioners Regulations.

The special education department also has a team of clerical staff, including a senior data manager (1 FTE), principal clerks (3 FTE), an office manager (1 FTE), data entry clerks (9 FTE), and office support (0.5 FTE).

Over the past ten years, CSDNR has seen notable attrition among its Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, and Special Education leadership. In addition, within the several years, the special education department has undergone organizational changes. Previously, the department was not under the Office of Curriculum and Instruction. Furthermore, the department had a Director, an Assistant Director (direct report to the Director), and roles thereafter. It was changed to include two Directors – one for Elementary Schools and one for Secondary Schools. It also shifted the Assistant Director Roles to be more building-based.

Some of the most notable themes raised during interviews and focus groups with staff and families were centered around collaboration; teambuilding and morale; and vision and strategic planning.

1. Collaboration: Focus groups and interviews as well as results from parents and staff survey indicate the distress caused by the frequent changes in leadership. Staff also noted the changes in leadership over the past decade and overall believe that it has created inconsistent districtwide operating procedures on special education matters. Focus groups and interviews among all constituencies – teachers, parents, and administrators – also shared confusion regarding roles and responsibilities. Additionally, among all constituencies there was an overwhelming sentiment that the District has communications and decision-making challenges. Some shared the belief that middle level leadership lacked autonomy and that decision-making often bottlenecked within central office. Others expressed a belief that confusion over roles led to bottlenecks. It was consistent, however, that many believe the present special education department and leadership structure creates inefficiencies that hamper building-level responsiveness.

Teaching staff overwhelmingly indicated a desire for increased collaboration among each other and enhanced two-way communication with administration.

2. Teambuilding and Morale: Focus groups and interviews from staff as well as staff surveys indicate morale challenges among the district's special educators. Special education teachers indicated a desire for more support from building leadership and special education district leadership – many staff indicated feeling as “second class” to their general education peers in relation to communications, professional learning, and the unique aspects of supporting students with disabilities. Several special education teachers indicated a feeling that building and district leadership do not understand their roles – the development of IEPs; communications with families; collaboration in co-teaching; and the need for additional resources. For some positions, such as Facilitators and Assistant Directors, there is perceived overlap in duties and inconsistency on roles across buildings. With this also came a feeling of a lack of teambuilding, specifically among special education and general education staff, and especially among areas connected to the creation and delivery of IEPs.

From the outside looking in, families also identified areas they saw as needing improvement in teambuilding and morale. Specifically, around communications between all the parties during the creation of the IEP.

3. Vision and Strategic Planning: Through focus groups, interviews, and surveys with parents and staff, it became apparent that there is a perceived lack of vision and strategic planning in special education within CSDNR. This deficiency is particularly noticeable in areas that require programmatic coordination and direction, such as co-teaching, coordination between general education and special education instruction, and overall staffing and professional learning needs. Staff members expressed a desire for increased leadership and consistency in sustainable professional learning to effectively address the immediate needs of students.

The leadership hierarchy within CSDNR was a topic of concern among all stakeholders, as there was a lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities. Many individuals indicated a profound misunderstanding about who is accountable for the development and delivery of high-quality special education services among its layered leadership. The turnover of leadership positions and changes in the organizational structure have contributed to this lack of understanding and diminished confidence, specifically regarding the accountability of IEPs, CSE meetings, and individualized services.

Perceived deficiencies in leadership, particularly in terms of vision, were particularly notable in relation to the expectation of maintaining high standards, fostering inclusivity, and embracing shared responsibility for students with disabilities.

During interviews and focus groups, concerns were raised around leadership and compliance. These included the following themes:

- Lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities, leading to confusion and delays.
- Concerns about excessive litigation and spending on outside counsel, with a desire for an in-house lawyer and better compliance training.
- Inconsistent systems and procedures, leading to challenges for teachers and students.
- Challenges with staffing, turnover, and workload for special education teachers, aides, and service providers.
- Need for clear communication, protocols, and guidelines for referral, support, and services.
- Compliance with IEPs and state standards is a priority, but there are gaps in counseling services and coverage for mandates.
- Limited use of data and inefficiencies in technology and systems use, stemming from manual data entry.

From a thorough review of data gathered from interviews, focus groups, surveys, documents, and best practices in the field, the special education department in CSDNR faces several challenges related to leadership and structure. While the administration is generally perceived as supportive, school-based teams feel isolated and struggle with the existing system and structure. There are concerns about the leadership in the special education department, with a perception of overemphasis on compliance rather than a focus on teaching and learning. Lack of teamwork, poor communication, and low morale among staff members further hinder the effectiveness of special education services. The structure of special education in CSDNR is seen as top-heavy and operationally slow, with a high rate of turnover in leadership positions. The lack of consistency, vision, and desire for operational excellence has led to a feeling of instability and a diminished sense of trust among staff members. Additionally, there is a perceived disconnect between special education and general education, hindering collaboration and effective instructional support for students with disabilities.

Across offices and schools, there is a desire for increased collaboration and communication between general education and special education teachers, as well as between various departments and schools. Lack of planning time, inconsistent communication, and a perceived lack of appreciation for the knowledge and certification of special education teachers are among the challenges mentioned. There is also a call for greater visibility, recognition, and support for special education within the District.

VI. FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Strengths

- **Teacher Communication.** There is strong communication between teachers and parents.
- **Special Education Parent Teacher Association (SEPTA).** Organization is supportive to families.
- **Interpreters.** Interpreters provided for non-native English-speaking parents.

Opportunities for Improvement

- **Parent-Friendly Policies and Procedures.** Resources to help parents understand student placement and CSE Meetings.
- **Parent Resources.** Expand parent trainings and website resources.
- **Parents desire increased collaboration and communication.** Many parent stakeholders attributed this desire to what they indicate as a lack of vision and strategic planning specific to special education.

This section of the report summarizes findings from CSDNR specific perceptions of family and community engagement.

Parents are a child's first teacher and are important partners as their children progress through school. Their vital role is acknowledged in IDEA, which requires parental input in writing IEP goals, the provision of related services, and placement. IDEA also requires collaboration with parents and students with disabilities, as appropriate, to design special education along with related and other supplementary services. As part of this review, the parent's role and satisfaction with special education processes and instructional/service delivery within CSDNR were evaluated. The review sought to examine three topics related to parent and family engagement:

- **Communication:** The extent to which parents are provided with useful information and communication throughout the process, can find consistent and reliable information about each process, and the extent to which the resources (literature, documentation, etc.) support the process;
- **Collaboration and Advocacy:** The extent to which stakeholders feel that their input is solicited, heard, and included and how parents are approached to collaborate with school staff in a trusting manner;
- **Resources and Training:** The extent to which parents can access training and/or other resources offered by CSDNR to support their understanding of special education law, IEPs, etc.

The data presented below are drawn from focus groups and surveys conducted with parents across CSDNR. References to parents made in other focus groups are also included here.

Communication

The need for increased and proactive communication was a topic noted during focus groups and interviews. Several parents and other community representatives expressed appreciation for this special education review and the opportunity to share their opinions and experiences. Many parents felt the teachers at their children's schools are committed to supporting their children, helping to build a foundation for a strong partnership between staff and families. However, parents also expressed a desire to increase collaboration and communication. Many stakeholders attributed this desire to what they indicate as a lack of vision and strategic planning specific to special education.

Parents feedback regarding communication illuminated a dichotomy between parent experience with teachers and that with district leadership and administration. Survey results showed that 80% of parents who completed the survey agreed that their child's teacher communicated well with them, and 89% of respondents felt that their student's teachers responded to their concerns within a reasonable amount of time. Notably, 93% of parents who completed the survey reported having a good working relationship with their child's teachers.

However, parents consistently expressed that they struggle with communication with district administration. They pointed to turnover in leadership within the District and stated that this made ongoing communication regarding their child's progress and services challenging. Parents also report that they often struggle to receive information regarding their child's placement when transitioning grade levels (e.g., elementary to middle school, middle school to high school, etc.) or when their program changes on their IEP. This is consistent with interviews with district administrative assistants who pointed to understaffing and lack of systems and procedures, causing delays in student placement and communications to families.

Additionally, the current staffing structure within the special education department causes uncertainty for families around who is accountable for their child's IEP and who to go to if they have a concern. The leadership hierarchy in CSDNR was raised among all constituents as an area needing additional clarity. An overwhelming number of stakeholders indicated a lack of understanding around who was responsible and accountable for the development and delivery of high-quality special education services. Leadership turnover and changes in the organizational structure also seemed to play a role in a lack of understanding and or confidence in the present structure, specifically around accountability of IEPs, CSE meetings, and individualized services.

Accessible Communication

Focus groups highlighted the need to create additional resources and tools to communicate with parents who are non-native English speakers as the student population in CSDNR continues to diversify. It was reported that in recent years that the Hispanic population in the county has grown. District demographic data shows that currently, 50% of CSDNR students are Hispanic and that 13% of students are English Language Learners. This is an increase over the past 5 years; in 2018, 47% of CSDR students were Hispanic and 12% of students were English Language Learners. Additionally, demographic data from the last 10 years shows that in 2013, 43% of CSDR students were Hispanic and 10% of students were English Language Learners.

The District has made a concerted effort to provide necessary translation services for these families. One hundred percent of parents who responded to the survey indicated that they were asked if they wanted an interpreter at their child's CPSE/CSE meeting and 86% reported receiving an interpreter when needed. Resources to support parents who are non-native English speakers, though, are reportedly limited and require more resources and organizational commitment. Staff expressed concern that parents who are non-native English speakers do not always have the means to advocate for their students with disabilities and often do not know what resources are available to their children. The following needs were identified to expand access:

- Create a streamlined process for parents to receive copies of the IEP in their native language. Not all IEPs are translated and that process is time consuming (30+ days to receive the translated version).
- Create a Hispanic community meeting forum to target support to Spanish-speaking parents of students with disabilities and respond to their questions, develop a network of family support, etc.
- Create a SEPTA resource specifically to support families of English language learners with disabilities and non-native English-speaking families.

Collaboration and Advocacy

Parents of students with disabilities in CSDNR have some resources available to help them navigate questions they have or challenges they may experience regarding special education services.

Parent Teacher Associations

Each CSDNR school has its own Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Each PTA has its own elected board members that serve as its leadership. Board member positions consist of a president, president elect, a minimum of two vice presidents, a secretary, and a treasurer. Board members are elected by ballot annually and serve for a term of two years. Board members cannot serve more than one consecutive term in the same office.⁶⁵

Any parent or teacher within CSDNR is welcome to join their school's PTA for a standard membership fee of \$15.00. Community members can also sponsor a CSDNR parent or teacher and cover the cost of their membership in addition to their own for \$30.00.⁶⁶

PTA mission statements ranged from school to school, but a common theme amongst the PTA missions was advocating for students through supporting and empowering CSDNR families.⁶⁷ Many PTAs hold fundraising events for their schools as well as providing workshops and other events to engage and support their school communities.

During parent focus groups, there was little mention of the PTA. This suggests they could have a greater presence within the CSDNR community. When the PTA was mentioned, stakeholders expressed a desire to leverage Spanish-speaking members of the PTA to support the ELL population within CSDNR and would like to collaborate with the PTA regarding ELL training for staff and English language courses for non-native English-speaking families. Waiving membership fees based on family need may also help to engage additional families within the CSDNR community.

Special Education Parent Teacher Association (SEPTA)

Within the PTA structure, CSDNR has a PTA specific to parents of students receiving special education services. The group states that it is, "dedicated to helping all our children reach their fullest potential." CSDNR staff and families can become members of SEPTA by paying a membership fee of \$10.00.

SEPTA meets once a month and describes itself as "providing information and guidance from people experienced in navigating the differently abled community. Discussions include information on school services, afterschool programs, camps, recreation programs, service providers, post-graduation opportunities and many other topics that are important to the Special Ed community."⁶⁸

Parent participants in focus group interviews shared that SEPTA offers trainings on Special Education related topics or connects them with resources provided by BOCES. Some of these resources are linked within the SEPTA website.⁶⁹

In focus group interviews, district leadership and administration expressed a desire to increase their collaboration with SEPTA to improve engagement, enhance support, and better understand the needs of parents whose students receive special education services.

⁶⁵ Unit Bylaws (2022), New York State PTA

⁶⁶ <https://albertleonard.memberhub.com/store?limit=21&live=true&category=Memberships>

⁶⁷ <https://www.nred.org/page/family-and-community-engagement>

⁶⁸ <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1P2nyMSEFjZ-0exvrXlnvIHFdgJzgtcDe>

⁶⁹ <https://newrochellesepta.org/>

Student Support Services and Family and Community Engagement

CSDNR has made an effort to further engage with parents and families. CSDNR recently created and filled the position of Director of Family and Community Engagement. On their website, CSDNR outlines their goals for family and community engagement as follows, “We have two primary goals: First, we intend to strengthen home-school connections by finding ways to engage parents and strengthen our outreach efforts. Second, we will increase our partnerships with community agencies and organizations to strategically support students and families across our district.”⁷⁰ Addressing chronic absenteeism and improving suspension data has been a significant focus this school year.

Resources and Training

Website

CSDNR offers a range of information for parents on the dedicated Family and Community Engagement section of its website.⁷¹ Resources include videos, brochures, and parent guides. One video was also provided in Spanish, but other documents are not available in languages other than English.

The DSE does have a dedicated section, which currently outlines the department's mission and functions. It also connects families to the SEPTA organization and provides a link to several PDF resources in both English and Spanish regarding Special Education (e.g., Procedural Safeguards, Parent’s Bill of Rights, etc.)

An expansion and redesign of the website may prove beneficial in terms of enhancing communication to New Rochelle families. Such improvements can include:

- Make the website more user accessible by reducing the embedded links. Users struggle to find the information they need.
- Review posted documents regularly so that the most current ones are posted on the website.
- Post additional resource guides about special education specialized programs and share with parents how to access them.
- Add additional resources for families in Spanish.

Workshops and Trainings

Parents were asked a series of questions about resources and trainings on the parent survey. An overview of responses is included below.

When asked if:

- CSDNR offers opportunities for parent training or information sessions about special education, parent survey respondents answered as follows: 30.3% - “I don’t know”; 29.4%- “yes”; and 40.4%- “no.”
- They have attended parent trainings or information session about special education offered by CSDNR in the past year, the majority (87%) responded “no.”
- Trainings they attended were helpful, 92.9% responded “yes.” Only 7.1% responded no to this question.

The majority of parents (70.7%) responded that they did not receive communication about trainings or were unaware of the trainings occurring. Of those who did, 21.4% indicated they received information from their child’s teacher, 28.6% from a CSE Meeting, 7.1% from a newsletter, 21.4% from SEPTA, and 7.1% from social media. This data overall suggests that parents are not aware of training opportunities

⁷⁰ <https://www.nred.org/page/family-and-community-engagement>

⁷¹ <https://www.nred.org/page/family-and-community-engagement>

that might be available to them, and that information provided by a child's teacher and via the SEPTA organization are the best ways to share offerings in the future. It also indicates that when parents do attend these trainings, they find them beneficial. This corresponds with focus group interviews in which parents expressed a desire for more trainings and resources regarding Special Education services offerings, CSE meetings, and IEP development.

Parent Perspective

Parents also had the opportunity to share points of pride and areas for improvement in an open-ended question on the survey and during focus groups. The following themes emerged from those responses.

Points of Pride

On the survey, 64 parents responded with comments about what is working well in special education in CSDR. Responses were analyzed and determined to align to the following categories.

Responsiveness of Staff

- *[My child's teacher] is readily available and is always incredibly supportive. The teachers are amazing, they are always willing to work with the parent to support the child even further.*
- *Teachers communicate well with me; we work together to see what's best for my child.*
- *I owe a great deal of gratitude and much of my child's success is because of [their teacher]. She has worked tirelessly to ensure that all of my son's needs are met, and he is successful. She goes above and beyond.*
- *My child's current teachers are very caring and supportive and want to help him. They are responsive to me and kind to him.*
- *The teachers and staff at [my child's school] are wonderfully caring. Everyone knows my child, calls them by name, and treats them with respect and kindness. Accommodations are made when needed and are often anticipated, which is helpful.*
- *[My child's teacher] and her team are absolutely in tune with my child's needs. They are the only reason I am happy with the Special Education program in New Rochelle.*

CSE Meetings

- *CSE reviews are always professional. Review of [my daughter's] IEP and setting is always thoroughly handled.*
- *The annual meetings are professional and take the time to review and make changes to IEP goals.*
- *The CSE meeting is done well. It identifies the issues and lays out a plan of addressing them.*
- *The CSE has been very supportive in working with me to create a program that I feel will be in the best interests of my child.*

Satisfaction with Related Services

- *The OT and PT providers for the last couple of years are excellent, and the consistency of having the same providers year over year has been terrific, as they know my child well enough to help them continuously build their skills.*
- *My child's speech teachers have worked well with them to get them to where they need to be. They also communicate with the general teacher.*
- *The speech teacher provides frequent updates on my child's successes and encourages me to try new things and reinforce what is taught at school.*

Improvement Areas

On the survey, 66 parents responded with comments about what could be improved in special education in CSDNR. Responses were analyzed and determined to align to the following categories. An illustration of responses by major category is included below.

Fidelity of Service Delivery

- *The CSE meeting is done well. It identifies the issues and lays out a plan of addressing them. Sadly, the implementation gets a little lost. Especially the older the child gets. The lack of continuity of staff and the simple lack of staff drastically affects kids with IEP's.*
- *I have been most frustrated by the coteaching model utilized within the district. My son has participated in this structure for the last two years and it is a mess. There is a lack of accountability and coordination.*
- *General education teachers need to partner more with special educators to fulfill IEP goals and improve consistency.*
- *In the past years my child has not received services that were clearly laid out in the IEP - we didn't find this out until many months into the school year.*
- *Co-teach classes should have a special education teacher ALL day not just 2.5 hours. Staffing is severely inadequate and students with disabilities are not being serviced consistently or appropriately in accordance with their IEP.*

More and Better Communication

- *I would like more communication about what my child's school day looks like and what supports she receives, as well as when she is able to work independently.*
- *Lack of communication on progress other than written progress reports. More regular ad-hoc feedback from OT, counselor or Special Ed teacher would be helpful.*
- *Unless a parent requires a meeting, communications between the school and parents are very rare. The trimestral reports are bland and vacuous. Too many times, special teacher consults are skipped.*
- *From the experience of my family - there is not enough done to communicate the programs that are available within the school/district.*
- *Clearer communication, I've received emails w/ different children's names and not in my native language as well as consents stating my child doesn't have certain evals on record when that is untrue.*
- *More communication, I don't think I've had more than 1 conversation about progress within a 6-month period.*
- *More communication between the therapists & parents. Inform parents of things that can be done at home to better help the child in school. There should be more education/training for parents who have special needs children.*

Specialized Reading Instruction and Support

- *Specialized reading instruction in ALL K-5 elementary school classrooms - general and special education...The district should be hiring staff and teachers trained in a proper reading curriculum, give the teachers the resources to follow and take care of reading in K-5.*
- *The special education department is failing children with reading issues. Many special education students, and students in general education cannot read and the district currently does not offer specialized reading instruction with trained staff.*
- *Intensive Reading support is needed in all elementary schools, why are we waiting to provide that in middle school? Reading teachers should be trained in a district so big and with the need for it.*
- *Schools need someone fully trained in Orton Gillingham...you cannot use...[a] one size fits all model, kids with IEPs [are] dumped into a room and their goals and abilities are not taken into consideration.*

More Training and Resources for Staff

- *They are limited in what they can do. Their positive and nurturing attitudes are very important, but we would also like them to have the training and resources available to best support them in their work and the students they are helping.*
- *The teachers are doing a job with little to no resources, so they are as successful as possible.*

- *There is also clearly a lack of training or planning time provided to these teachers to do the [co-teaching] model effectively.*
- *Teacher aides are poorly qualified and trained. Teachers also lack knowledge and training on how to run a successful inclusive classroom.*
- *The district needs to hire someone... who knows what content is required in an IEP and an agent that ensures quality assurance in the process of implementing the law and procedure of IEP. I have seen dangerous and negligent environments due to lack of properly educated and trained staff in special education services, lack of awareness of procedure.*
- *...[G]uidance staff should be trained in special education support. From the perspective of a parent, there are internal problems...Teachers are not given copies of IEPs and normal guidance counselors are not aware of resources or possibilities. Special education teachers are not given copies of records.*

More Staff

- *The special education teachers are overworked and can barely keep up.*
- *Large class size for co-taught room (24 students).*
- *There has been no math teacher all year and no clear information on what's being done to rectify the situation.*
- *The classroom size makes a huge difference in the performance of students with special needs.*

VII. HUMAN CAPITAL

Strengths

- **Low Special Education Teacher to Student Ratio.** Average student to teacher ratio is 9.6 students to each special educator.

Opportunities for Improvement

- **Special Education Teacher Vacancies.** Dually certified special education secondary teaching staff are the biggest challenge to hire.
- **Professional Learning.** All special education staff would like additional professional learning opportunities.

Human capital highlights the processes involved in investing in people from recruitment to retirement. All school districts, CSDNR included, ensure highly qualified and effective staff have the skills/training needed to provide services and support to promote the success of diverse learners. The following section covers key areas in effective human capital planning, including an analysis of the extent to which the review team found evidence of high-quality staff, professional learning, equitable recruitment practices, staff wellness and self-care, and flexible career pathways and staff retention.

Many experts contend that “efforts to address shortages should be less about recruiting teachers generally, and more about recruiting and retaining the right teachers, in the right subjects, for the right schools.”⁷² In no place is this more critical than in special education. When special education teaching staff with the appropriate skillset and passion are aligned to the right school and provided ongoing professional learning opportunities, they can have a significant and meaningful impact on student success.

Recruitment and Retention

The overall staffing profile for the CSDNR is as follows:⁷³

Exhibit 26. District Staffing Profile

Staffing Profile	New Rochelle City SD
Student-to-Teacher Ratio	14:1
Teachers with Fewer than 4 Years of Experience (%)	9%
Teachers with 4-20 Years of Experience (%)	58%
Teachers with 21+ Years of Experience (%)	33%

The District has a tenured workforce, with the majority of the staff (91%) with four years or more of teaching experience. The student-to-teacher ratio overall is 14:1.

⁷² <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED582978.pdf>

⁷³ <https://data.nysed.gov/profile.php?instid=800000035159>

The majority of special education school-based staff are District employees, though contractors for OT and PT positions are used as well. As of February 2023, the District had 17 vacant positions, primarily for special education teachers.

Exhibit 27. Special Education Staff by Employed and Contracted Staff

Position	Number of FTE District Employed Staff	Number of FTE Contracted Staff	Number of Vacant Positions	Total
Special Education Teachers	146	0	12	156
Aides (only for special education)	40	0	4	44
Psychologists	30	0	1	31
Speech/Language Pathologists	22	0	0	22
Social Workers	27	0	0	27
Nurses	35	1	0	36
Occupational Therapists	0	9	0	9
Physical Therapists	0	4	0	4
Total	300	14	17	329

Focus groups, interviews, and survey respondents shared the following overarching themes about recruitment and retention.

- Nationwide special education teacher shortages are impacting CSDNR, especially for secondary schools because of the requirement for teachers to be dually certified in special education and a content area.
- Consistent substitute teachers are not available.
- The District is competitive with teacher salaries. New teachers receive a 1:1 match for every year of public school experience. CSDNR is starting to look at counting charter school experience as well. All districts in the surrounding area are competing for talent.
- Staff turnover rates are forcing the District to be in a mode of constant recruiting. There is a proactive strategy (Indeed and LinkedIn postings, partnerships with higher education, career fairs, etc.) led by Human Resources (HR) to recruit the best talent.
- For open positions, once HR has screened all applicants and narrowed down qualified candidates to five to six candidates, the hiring department then reviews the resumes and conducts interviews. The DSE hires special education teachers for schools in conjunction with building leadership.
- HR tracks employee data, such as longevity, advanced degrees, etc. and which recruitment methods are most successful to yield quality candidates.
- TAs can only be hired if they are residents of New Rochelle. This requirement can limit the candidate pool.

Professional Learning

Effective Learning Design

Quality teaching in all classrooms and skilled leadership in all schools is the product of intentionally focused, appropriately designed, and well-implemented professional learning plans. For teachers and other staff who provide direct services to students, high-quality professional learning must be ongoing, intensive (rather than one-day or short-term workshops or conferences) to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and teacher performance. Research reports that elementary school

teachers who received substantial professional learning—an average of 49 hours—boosted their students’ achievement by about 21 percentile points.⁷⁴

While this level of time commitment to professional learning is ideal, the complexities of scheduling, staffing shortages and turnover, and the need for training on so many topics, as noted by focus group participants, make it a challenge in schools today. Despite some of these challenges, focus group participants across all school groups voiced a strong desire for more formalized, intensive training – not just “one-off” workshops on a variety of special education topics.

A resounding theme across these groups was for more training for TAs. This request came from TAs themselves, as well as from teaching staff and parents. Often TAs are grouped with lunch monitors or other aides for professional learning, yet their job requires a stronger instructional orientation. Many requested more training on teaching strategies, accommodations and modifications, specific disability characteristics and conditions (such as autism), and technology (such as tools that students are using in order to better support them).

Classroom teachers, especially special educators, also highlighted the need for more time for professional learning. There is a perception that District training occurs with limited intentionality of the topics offered and not enough time or support for teachers to truly apply what they learn. It was reported that the DSE created a detailed professional learning plan inclusive of topics such as IEP writing, ICT, and therapeutic supports for the 2022-23 school year, but the plan was not approved to move forward given competing time/topics for professional learning.

The training that focus group participants requested centered on the following topics:

- ICT (ongoing coaching for co-teaching teams)
- Supporting students with significant needs
- Compliance expectations and best practices for IEP goal writing (specifically for new teachers)
- Effective reading strategies
- Differentiated instruction (for all educators)
- Learning disabilities that includes the topic of modifications & accommodations (for all educators)
- Progress monitoring (for all educators)

Staff were asked to respond to the prompt: “I would like to attend professional learning on the following topics” on the survey. The following chart includes the percentage of staff who answered affirmatively for the listed topics. For each role, the top five requests are noted in bold.

⁷⁴ Reviewing the evidence on how teacher professional development affects student achievement. Issues & Answers. REL 2007-No. 033. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Southwest Regional Educational Laboratory, October 2007. Findings based on nine studies that meet What Works Clearinghouse standards.

Exhibit 28. Staff Survey: Top Five Professional Learning Topic Requests by Role

Topics	Special Education Teacher	General Education Teacher ⁷⁵	Specials/ Elective Teacher	Related Service Provider ⁷⁶	Student Support Services ⁷⁷	Teaching Assistant/ Aide	School Administrator	Clerical	Facilitator	Other
Behavior Intervention Plans	75.6%	72.2%	70.6%	90.9%	80.6%	79.2%	66.7%	75.0%	100.0%	77.3%
Collaborating with special education aides	65.9%	63.3%	68.8%	66.7%	73.3%	79.2%	57.1%	37.5%	66.7%	72.7%
Differentiated Instruction	86.7%	82.3%	88.2%	91.7%	83.9%	66.7%	85.7%	25.0%	100.0%	95.5%
Functional Behavior Assessments	73.3%	63.9%	58.8%	63.6%	77.4%	62.5%	66.7%	75.0%	100.0%	81.8%
Inclusion in general education	82.9%	80.1%	64.7%	83.3%	72.4%	66.7%	66.7%	83.5%	50.0%	77.3%
Math Interventions	80.7%	66.1%	47.1%	36.4%	74.2%	58.3%	100.0%	100.0%	50.0%	68.2%
Positive Behavior Supports	87.8%	81.8%	88.2%	91.7%	96.8%	95.8%	85.7%	100.0%	75.0%	86.4%
Reading Interventions	80.5%	77.9%	41.2%	81.8%	77.4%	50.0%	100.0%	100.0%	50.0%	77.3%
RTI/MTSS	79.3%	66.7%	88.2%	91.7%	86.7%	62.5%	85.7%	100.0%	50.0%	86.4%
Special education regulations	70.7%	56.7%	52.9%	27.3%	71.0%	79.2%	83.3%	62.5%	100.0%	63.6%
Specific Disability Information	82.9%	82.8%	93.8%	91.7%	90.0%	87.5%	100.0%	75.0%	83.3%	72.7%

Eight respondent groups ranked Differentiated Instruction and Specific Disability Information as one of their top five topics, while nine of the groups ranked Positive Behavior Supports as one of their top ranking topics. Participants were also asked to rate their interest in these several other topics; however, none were ranked in the top five for any respondent group, and, therefore, not included in the chart above.⁷⁸

Staffing Ratios

Comparative student-to-personnel ratios are useful for school districts to benchmark their staffing levels. The data discussed below were collected by PCG team members through their participation in reviews conducted by PCG, the Council of the Great City Schools, and the Urban Special Education Collaborative.

⁷⁵ Includes Advanced Placement, Honors, Gifted and Talented, etc.

⁷⁶ Includes OT, PT, Speech, etc.

⁷⁷ Includes Psychologist, Nurse, Counselor, Social Worker, Behavior Interventionist

⁷⁸ Topics included: 1) Alternate Assessment; 2) Assistive Technology; 3) Independent Living Skills

The ratios reported below are provided for special educators, aides, speech/ language pathologists, psychologists, social workers, nurses, physical therapist, and occupational therapists. The figures do not reflect actual caseload ratios for each of these personnel areas based on student IEPs. Rather, they are based on full-time equivalent (FTE) staff members. The total FTE count for each area is compared to the total number of students with IEPs in the District. CSDNR ratios are compared to 90 other school districts on which we have data. However, there are some districts who did not report data in each area.

The data do not give precise comparisons due to a variety of factors that impact how districts collect and report data. For example, some districts include contractual personnel and others exclude them, and data are sometimes affected by varying placement types used by school districts. The data may count all students with IEPs, including those placed in charters, agencies, and nonpublic schools, while other districts do not count these. The outcomes of the staffing ratio analysis should be used to investigate, along with other information, the extent to which personnel in areas outside the norm are being used effectively, how they are meeting the needs of students, and whether adjustments are warranted.

Special Educators and Special Education Aides

The exhibit below shows the District’s students with IEPs-to-personnel ratios for the areas of special educators and special education aides.

- **Special Educators.** With 156 full-time-equivalent (FTE) special education teachers, CSDNR has an average of 9.6 students with IEPs for every special educator. CSDNR’s 9.6 ratio is lower than the overall 14.0 students to teacher average, ranking CSDNR as 13th among 91 other reporting districts.
- **Aides.** With 44 FTE positions, CSDNR has an average of 33.9 students with IEPs for every assistant/aide. CSDNR’s ratio is higher than the overall 15.3 students to assistant/aide average, ranking CSDNR as 90th among 91 reporting districts.

Exhibit 29. Average Number Students for Each Special Educator and for Aides

	Special Educators	Aides
Number of CSDNR Staff FTE	156	44
CSDNR Students w/IEP-to-Staff Ratios	9.6:1	33.9:1
All District Average Ratios	14.0:1	15.3:1
Range of All District Ratios	4–36:1	3–56:1
CSDNR Ranking Among Districts ⁷⁹	13 th of 91 districts	90 th of 91 districts

Related Services Personnel

The exhibit below shows the District’s students with IEPs-to-personnel ratios for speech/language pathologists, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and nurses.

- **Speech/Language Pathologist (SLP).** There are 22 FTE speech/language pathologists. There are 67.7 students with IEPs for each SLP, which is lower than the all-district average of 116.6 per SLP. CSDNR ranks 19th of 90 reporting districts.
- **Psychologists.** CSDNR has 31 psychologists. There are 41.8 students with IEPs for each psychologist, which is a lower ratio than the all-district average of 174.3 per psychologist. CSDNR ranks 3rd of 87 reporting districts.
- **Social Workers.** CSDNR has 27 social workers. There are 55.2 students with IEPs for each social worker, which is a lower ratio than the all-district average of 674.2 per social worker. CSDNR ranks 16th of 66 reporting districts.

⁷⁹ Ranking begins with districts having a low average number of students to one staff person.

- **Occupational Therapists.** CSDNR has 9 occupational therapists. There are 165.6 students with IEPs for each occupational therapist, which is a lower ratio than the all-district average of 1,299.1 per occupational therapist. CSDNR ranks 33rd of 85 reporting districts.
- **Physical Therapists.** CSDNR has 4 physical therapists. There are 372.5 students with IEPs for each physical therapist, which is a lower ratio than the all-district average of 2,384 per occupational therapist. CSDNR ranks 27th of 83 reporting districts.
- **Nurses.** CSDNR has 36 nurses. There are 41.4 students with IEPs for each nurse, which is a lower ratio than the all-district average of 731.9 per nurse. CSDNR ranks 19th of 79 reporting districts.

Exhibit 30. Average Number Students for Related Service Personnel Area: Speech/Language Pathologists, Psychologists, and Social Workers

	Speech Language Pathologists	Psychologists	Social Workers
Number of CSDNR Staff FTE	22	31	27
CSDNR Students w/IEP-to-Staff Ratios	67.7:1	41.8:1	55.2:1
All District Average Ratios	116:6:1	174.3:1	624.2: 1
Range of All District Ratios	33-710:1	25-805:1	1-444:1
CSDNR Ranking Among Districts ⁸⁰	19 th of 90 districts	3 rd of 87 districts	16 th of 66 districts

Exhibit 31. Average Number Students for Related Service Personnel Area: Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, and Nurses

	Occupational Therapists	Physical Therapists	Nurses
Number of CSDNR Staff FTE	9	4	36
CSDNR Students w/IEP-to-Staff Ratios	165.6:1	372.5:1	41.4:1
All District Average Ratios	1,299:1	2,384:1	731.9:1
Range of All District Ratios	2-21,275:1	5-49,746:1	1-8,062:1
CSDNR Ranking Among Districts ⁸¹	33 rd of 85 districts	27 th of 83 districts	19 th of 79 districts

⁸⁰ Ranking begins with districts having a low average number of students to one staff person.

⁸¹ id.

VIII. SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

Strengths

- **Data Warehouse.** Data warehouse is under development.
- **Data-Driven Practices.** Promising data-driven practices are evident.

Opportunities for Improvement

- **Data Access.** Data are not easy to obtain and compliance timelines difficult to track.
- **Staffing Allocations.** School-based allocations are unclear and lack transparency.
- **Standard Operating Manual.** Clear and consistent written documentation on policies and procedures.
- **Facilities.** Concerns about adequate and appropriate space to provide special education services.

This section provides information about CSDNR’s systems and structures to support teaching and learning of students with IEPs. It addresses the following areas: School-Based Position Allocations, Data Systems and Use, Compliance and Due Process, Policies and Procedures, and Facilities and Space.

School-Based Position Allocations

Creating a special education staffing formula is a complex and nuanced task, and it is not a “one and done” undertaking. Staffing could change continuously throughout the school year, as students move between schools or in/out of the district and new students are found eligible for services. A formula is also impacted by districts’ varying implementation of inclusive practices and the degree to which they employ more “push-in” type support versus more “pull out” support. According to the Inclusive Schools Network:

The task of determining staffing needs at a school and across a district is challenging because the type and level of support required by each student is determined on an individual basis through the IEP team, yet these student-by-student decisions are significantly impacted by numerous contextual variables. These variables include, but are not limited to, the philosophy of administrators and teachers, school leadership factors, classroom practices that support diverse learners, the degree of collaboration and joint ownership for all learners across the entire faculty, and the ability of the leaders to organize the delivery of services through innovative scheduling and staffing practices.⁸²

As such, special education staffing formulas can differ considerably between states and across districts within the same state. According to a March 2020 study, 20 states have specific policies about caseloads. Each varied widely and used different combinations of factors such as disability category, age range, average caseload, maximum caseload, service provider, amount of time the student is served in special education, type of program, formulas, or some combination of two or more characteristics to determine caseload. New York is among the states that includes caseloads in its regulations.⁸³

The CSDNR allocates special education teacher and related service provider positions according to the continuum of special education services requirements set forth in the New York State regulations. The maximum caseload for a special education teacher depends on the type of services and the grade level.

⁸² <https://inclusiveschools.org/category/resources/staffing-models/>

⁸³ Hogue, L. B., & Taylor, S. S. (2020). A review of special education caseload policies state by state: What impact do they have? *Journal of Special Education Leadership*, 33(1), 1-11.

The continuum of special education services by provider and their caseload requirements are included in the chart below.⁸⁴

Special Education Teacher/Provider	Ratios
Consultant (direct and/or indirect)	20:1
Resource	20:1 Elementary (grades K-6) 25:1 Secondary (grades 7-12)
When Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT)	12:1
Special Class	12:1 (+1 paraprofessional) 8:1 (+1 paraprofessional) 6:1 (+1 paraprofessional)
Related Services	65:1

It should be noted that based on the individual needs of a student with a disability, the CSE could recommend, for example, that a student receive special class for one or more subjects (e.g., math and English), CT for one or more other subjects (e.g., science and social studies), and resource room services.

Additionally, there are age span requirements. The chronological age range within special classes of students with disabilities who are less than 16 years of age cannot exceed 36 months. The chronological age range within special classes of students with disabilities who are 16 years of age and older is not limited. There are no chronological age-range limitations for groups of students placed in special classes for those students with severe multiple disabilities, whose programs consist primarily of habilitation (e.g., daily living skills) and treatment. In situations where the ratio may exceed the requirements in a school, school districts can apply for a variance from the State.

District Practices

These ratios and the range of services along the continuum that can be provided for each student with an IEP make staffing projections a complicated task. Also, given the transient nature of the student population in New Rochelle, projections for schools made in the late winter can look different by the time school starts the following fall. When asked about how special education staffing projections are determined, school and central office leaders expressed that the process is not clear or transparent. Coordination between the DSE and the Budget Office reportedly has begun to occur on an ongoing basis. As of late 2022, the District had not implemented position control, and it was possible for over hiring (exceeding the budgeted amount) to occur. The District is in the process of rectifying this issue. Unlike many of its peer districts, CSDNR does not heavily rely on aides to support students with disabilities in general education settings.

Other topics related to staffing emerged in focus groups and in survey responses are included below.

- Inequities in caseloads. There is a perceived inequitable distribution of caseloads in some schools.

⁸⁴ [Continuum of Special Education Services for School-Age Students with Disabilities | New York State Education Department \(nysed.gov\)](https://nysed.gov). Paraprofessional is the term used in the guidance.

- Oversubscription of ratios. The District applies for variances to ratios in certain circumstances, and there is a perception by some that this is a band-aid fix. Most often this is with special classes; however, examples of more than 12 students with IEPs in an ICT class were referenced.
- Support in Electives. Special education support is not typically provided in elective classes, such as art and music, and there are no limitations on the number of students with IEPs that can be in each elective class. As one elective teacher shared, elective teachers are not able to adequately “assist students that need directions repeated, prompts every two minutes, a hand on the shoulder, or have emotional and/or behavior issues. If we were given a smaller class to meet the IEP needs, or at least an aide it would be tremendously helpful in better following their IEP needs and helping the students be more successful.”
- Collaborative Planning Time. Special education and general education teachers have limited planning time together, even when they are working as an ICT team.
- Administrative Time. Teachers are generally allotted a substitute or coverage for one class period for a CSE meeting. Yet, in many cases, these meetings run longer than a period, which means a continuation meeting must be then scheduled. Staff also expressed that there is not enough time to do IEP writing, progress reporting, assessments, and other administrative tasks during the school day.
- IEP Services. Parents and staff reported that not all services written in an IEP are being delivered because of either coverage by long term substitutes or because service minutes in IEPs exceed the scheduling and staffing allowances in each building.
- Scheduling. Master schedule does not always align with program mandates for student ratios and classes are overenrolled requiring variances.
- Bilingual Special Educators. There should be a priority placed on hiring bilingual special education teachers, psychologists, and speech therapists. Some believe that schools cannot provide the correct IEP services because they do not have bilingual staff.

Data Systems and Data Use

Focus group participants shared a variety of feedback around the systems that exist within the District and how data are used. Student IEPs are managed and monitored through the district’s online IEP case management system Frontline IEP/IEP Direct. At the beginning of the year, all teachers serving students with IEPs are required to log into Frontline to review the IEP. Focus group participants shared that while this is helpful, a meeting with special education teachers to review the IEP document would be more useful in understanding students’ needs.

Frontline/IEP Direct has been in use for many years and reportedly only minor changes are made to it at this point. Staff reported being able to access IEPs easily for the students that they serve. While school-based staff did not share any challenges that they experience with using the system, they did share that routing forms and other word documents, such as the Annual Review Educational Report, are completed manually outside the system.

Further, many noted the limitations that the District has with tracking compliance data points, such as timely completion of evaluations, annual reviews, progress reports, either because the data are not easily retrievable in Frontline/IEP Direct through reports, or some of the data points needed are tracked in ad-hoc ways (i.e., in various excel sheets, shared Google docs, or in individual notebooks). This creates data entry redundancies and data integrity concerns and limits schools’ and offices’ abilities to monitor trends. These limitations have also resulted in additional time and effort spent to “clean the data” and verify it for state reporting purposes.

Focus group participants acknowledged that overall, the District has been restricted in its ability to make data-driven decisions, in part because access to data have been limited and also because it has traditionally lacked a systemic culture that relied on data to guide instructional, programmatic, and resource allocation choices. The Office of Research, Assessment, and Accountability has recently been

spearheading the implementation of a data warehouse to address these issues. This initiative is being rolled out in phases, with the goal being to help provide data in a more accessible way to schools and central offices.

Other data initiatives are also underway. Last year the Office of Research, Assessment, and Accountability created Assessment and Accountability Profiles for the K-5 elementary schools, middle schools, and the district. Profiles provide each school's 2021-2022 enrollment, chronic absenteeism rates, and ELA and mathematics proficiency rates as demonstrated on the Grades 3-8 State assessments and STAR. Each metric is presented in table and chart format and is disaggregated by the following subgroups: gender; race/ethnicity; disability status; English language proficiency; and economic status.⁸⁵ As referenced earlier, a workgroup led by the DSE is reviewing disproportionality data and the Office of Student Support has started actively looking at absenteeism, suspension, and classroom removal rates to create a data-driven, comprehensive approach to better support students.

Compliance and Due Process

Due process is a formal mechanism used at times to resolve disputes between a district and a student's family. Disputes can either be about a "substantive" or a "procedural" issue. Substantive issues address a child's right to a free appropriate public education. For example, the services offered to a child do not help them progress on their IEP goals. Procedural issues involve the technical aspects of the evaluation or IEP process. For example, the CPSE/CSE team met without the parent or the school did not provide a copy of procedural safeguards to the parent. Due process is intended to ensure that children with learning disabilities and other types of disabilities receive a free appropriate public education. Due process requirements were set forth in the IDEA with the intention that, if followed, they would help to facilitate appropriate decision making and services for children with disabilities.

As shared across several focus groups, there is a belief that formal complaints through due process have increased in recent years, resulting in increases in settlement agreements. The District uses an outside counsel to manage special education litigation. While outside counsel may have been the appropriate arrangement in the past, some expressed that it may be more beneficial to have a special education attorney in house who could both resolve disputes as well as to train staff on legal and compliance topics.

For the 2021-22 and the 2022-23 school years (through February 2023), the District had 17 Due Process Complaints. The following chart shows their status.

# of DPCs	Status
6 cases	Withdrawn
4 cases	Settled
2 cases	Settlement in process
1 case	Refiled
1 case	Dismissed
1 case	Pending evaluation results
2 cases	In hearing
17 cases	Total

Managing the settlement agreements, many of which require contracts for tuition to private school placements or other outside services, requires a high level of detail and organization. It also requires ongoing communication between the Budget Office and the DSE to ensure funds are appropriately budgeted. In the past agreements have reportedly not been paid on time, resulting in increased legal fees

⁸⁵ One note, proficiency rates on the State assessments were calculated using schools' "as tested population" and may differ from proficiency rates released publicly by NYSED.

because of missed deadlines. This is an area that will continue to require diligent tracking, collaboration among offices, and execution of agreements according to timelines.

Many examples of concerns raised through litigation over the past few years center on staffing shortages and the inability to provide IEP services. This continues to be an area of vulnerability for CSDNR, as parents shared their current experiences with service fidelity through the survey:

- *In many cases, I do not believe our district follows the spirit or the letter of the law.*
- *My child should have a one-on-one aide for safety but still doesn't. It is February, still waiting...*
- *Once students finally do receive the services, there is not enough staff to provide the services.*
- *SPED needs to honor IEPs. If it says a student gets an aide, they need to hire people to be aides. Students go months and months without a person, which is a violation of their IEP. In past years my child has not received services that were clearly laid out in the IEP – we didn't find this out until many months into the school year. We've been told different things – like the person doing the service quit or the role hadn't been hired.*

Tracking all service delivery minutes will help CSDNR to determine if staffing allocations are appropriate to fulfill the requirements of all IEPs and will minimize further legal risk.

Policies and Procedures

Standard operating procedures provide schools and personnel with the procedural framework necessary to develop supportive, inclusive education programs based on each student's individual needs and to consistently operate in compliance across the District. When asked about standard operating procedures, participants across nearly every focus group cited the “purple book” in CSDNR. The *District Plan for Special Education: District Policies, Practices, and Procedures for Assuring Appropriate Educational Services and Due Process in Evaluation and Placement of Students with Disabilities*, also known as the “purple book,” still in use was last updated in 2013. It is currently posted on the District's website as a resource. While comprehensive, the Guide includes a description of programs or types of support that CSDNR no longer offers and procedures that are not relevant. As one participant explained “I have to call all over to get answers, and it feels like I am spinning my wheels. There is no historical documentation and knowledge, which stems from the high turnover in administrative positions. Practices start all over again with each new person that comes in.” Another said: “I think there should be some uniformity and a set of guidelines/standards/handbook that we can refer to instead of waiting for responses from higher ups.” Many comments centered on the idea that staff want to find out the information themselves and be self-sufficient.

A common theme heard among focus group participants and survey respondents was the desire for clearer and updated written policies and procedures. Staff requested a new policy and procedure manual that includes, at minimum:

- clarity on roles
 - i.e., a flow chart on job responsibilities and functions, who to contact for specific topics, and a concise visual of the role each professional plays in supporting students with varying accommodations
- guidance around ICT classes
 - i.e., consistent and clear procedures around co-teaching partnerships and best practices for inclusive classrooms
- the referral process
 - i.e., clearly communicated criteria for the referral process
- special education continuum descriptions
 - i.e., clear information about what services and supports the District offers

Facilities and Space

Per Section 155.1 of New York State regulations, school districts within the state are required to provide suitable and adequate facilities to accommodate all programs.⁸⁶ This includes current and future special education program and service space needed to serve all students with disabilities.

Focus group participants and survey respondents expressed concerns about CSDNR facilities and the space to provide services to students with IEPs. Regarding facilities and space, the following topics were shared:

- Many special education teachers share classrooms with multiple teachers. They are not given a space to test students where there are limited distractions. They are usually scrambling to find offices that are not being used during certain periods. There is not enough space in the building to provide students' IEP services with fidelity.
- Space for students with disabilities to receive services is not always a priority in some buildings.
- Special education teachers need more time and physical space to test, write reports and complete IEPs. They often have to travel from room to room.
- Therapists are providing services in hallways on the floor. There is no privacy.
- Schools are requesting sensory rooms and calming rooms. Some believe building administrators do not understand why these spaces are critical to supporting the well-being of students with disabilities.

⁸⁶ https://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan/Laws_Regs/8NYCRR155.htm

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

PCG was contracted to provide an objective view of the special education program in CSDNR and has identified in this report both strengths and areas of improvement that require focus in the coming years. CSDNR leadership, the Board of Education, and staff alike have demonstrated a commitment to investing in student-centered initiatives and systems. PCG saw ample evidence that CSDNR has a solid foundation on which to build. CSDNR has many notable strengths, including its commitment to improving outcomes for students with disabilities and its willingness to undertake this review and act on the recommendations as part of a continuous improvement cycle.

The recommendations listed below serve as a roadmap to address areas of improvement, leading to the future growth of the special education program. Each is interrelated and will require a significant investment on the part of CSDNR. Implementation of these recommendations will set the foundation for all other action steps that emerge from this report. The action steps listed under each recommendation below are organized in a manner that provides a comprehensive view of the activities required to initiate change. Although components of the action steps can be implemented within a shorter timeframe, full-scale implementation of the recommendations may take three-to-five years.

Learning Environment and Specialized Services

Multi-Tiered System of Supports

- 1) **Re-familiarize all staff with MTSS Handbook and Forms.** Provide comprehensive training sessions on the MTSS Handbook and Forms to ensure all staff members are familiar with them; create an online resource center with detailed information on the MTSS Handbook and Forms that staff members can access at any time. Ensure linguistically and culturally appropriate supports for ELL students are included in all tiers of MTSS, driven by ELL teachers within the district.
- 2) **Engage in professional learning on MTSS.** Offer professional learning opportunities that specifically focus on MTSS for all school levels, interventions, and its implementation; provide resources and tools for teachers to conduct self-reflection and self-evaluation on their implementation of MTSS.
- 3) **Invest in reading interventions, particularly at Tiers 2 and 3, and consistently implement them.** Implement a comprehensive reading curriculum that is evidence-based and aligns with the District's goals and objectives; establish district-wide guidelines and standards for selecting evidence-based reading programs; provide ongoing professional learning opportunities for teachers to learn about evidence-based reading interventions and strategies; monitor the implementation of reading interventions and provide ongoing feedback and support to teachers.
- 4) **Adhere to Universal Design for Learning (UDL).** Embed the UDL framework into future strategic planning, curriculum mapping, and curriculum development; provide ongoing support and resources to staff members to promote the implementation of UDL in their classrooms.

Special Education Referral, Assessment, and Eligibility Practices

- 5) **Provide sufficient referral data when school referrals are made to the CPSE/CSE.** Develop a clear and consistent referral process that includes all necessary information for the CSE to make informed decisions; provide consistent training and resources to staff members on the importance of collecting and submitting comprehensive referral data; regularly review and analyze the referral data to identify areas for improvement and make necessary changes to the referral process. Before ELL students are referred to the CPSE/CSE, consistently assess the student's level of English language proficiency using valid and reliable assessments to help determine if the student's language difficulties are primarily due to being an ELL or if additional disabilities are impacting their learning. If child is being evaluated by the CPSE/CSE, ensure that a student's special education evaluation is provided and administered in the student's native language or other mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information about what the student knows and can do, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.⁸⁷
- 6) **Ensure prompt and appropriate MTSS interventions and data collection before referral to CPSE/CSE.** Streamline the MTSS process, specifically timelines, to reduce unnecessary delays; adhere to clear guidelines and expectations for MTSS interventions and data collection to ensure consistency across the district; provide ongoing training and support to staff members on the importance of timely and accurate data collection.
- 7) **Further study preschool declassification process to ensure it is conducted in a compliant manner.** Further study this issue; review and update, if needed, district policies and procedures to ensure that the declassification process for preschool students is conducted in compliance with legal requirements; provide professional learning and training for Committee on CPSE members to ensure they have a thorough understanding of the re-evaluation process; enhance communication and collaboration between CPSE and the Committee on Special Education CSE to ensure the smooth transition and appropriate evaluation of students as they move from preschool to elementary school.
- 8) **Continue disproportionality workgroup.** Maintain the focus and structure of the disproportionality workgroup to determine the root causes of overidentification of specific disabilities by race/ethnicity and suspension rates. Develop a systematic data analysis process for analyzing special education referral, assessment, and eligibility practices, as well as in-school and out-of-school suspensions and monitor data trends over time to determine patterns and to inform improvement strategies.

Specialized Services and Inclusive Practices

- 9) **Consistently adhere to Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) protocols in ABA learning environments.** Through a behaviorist, develop and implement clear guidelines and expectations for the implementation of ABA protocols in ABA learning environments; provide ongoing training and support to staff members on the importance of adhering to ABA protocols, particularly aides; through a behaviorist, regularly monitor the implementation of ABA protocols and provide feedback and support to staff members as needed; consider offering Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) training to aides and ensure monitoring through behaviorists.
- 10) **Consistently support ELLs with disabilities.** Leverage best practices (e.g., 2020 WIDA Standards), under the supervision of English as a New Language Teachers with expertise supporting students with disabilities develop and implement a comprehensive plan for supporting

⁸⁷ <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap6.pdf>

ELLs students with disabilities; provide training to all staff who work with ELL students with disabilities, including aides.

- 11) With raised expectations as the focus, provide specialized supports for students with autism and other low incidence disabilities.** Engage specialized staff, such as autism specialists or behavior analysts, who have expertise in working with students with autism and low incidence disabilities to provide ongoing professional learning opportunities for educators to enhance their knowledge and skills in supporting students with autism and low incidence disabilities. Ensure consistent data collection protocols, leveraging the Unique Learning System as appropriate for assessment, instructional support, and data collection. If the District has ABA designated courses, ensure adherence to ABA with fidelity; should the District deviate from ABA, change the names of the courses accordingly. Raised expectations must be the focal point.
- 12) Expand integrated co-teaching (ICT).** Expand the number of ICT pairs districtwide and remove time barriers that limit co-teaching to 2.5 hours a day in elementary schools; ensure ICT pairs have common planning time and professional learning opportunities where team-teaching is emphasized; collaborate with school administrators and District leadership to address any logistical or scheduling challenges that may limit the implementation of co-teaching. Provide guidance on when, where, and a minimum length of time co-teaching teams should collaborate and develop examples of how schools should schedule students to maximize inclusive opportunities.
- 13) Enhance consultant teacher opportunities.** Define what the vision for consultant teaching is within the District's continuum of services; provide professional learning and ongoing training for consultant teachers to enhance their skills in working with diverse student populations and supporting inclusive practices.
- 14) Further study and/or rectify limitations of specially designed instruction.** Further study areas where there may be gaps or limitations in specially designed instruction; collaborate with stakeholders, including educators, parents, and students, to gather input and feedback on the continuum of supports and services.
- 15) Spread the word on transition and 18-21 programming.** Further study ways to enhance collaboration between schools to ensure continuity of services; promote 18-21 post graduate programs to make families aware; consider identifying a lead coordinator for 18-21 programming.

CSE Meetings and IEP Development

- 16) Standardize CPSE/CSE chairperson.** Standardize who fills the chairperson role in each school. Currently, who fills this role varies across the District, ranging from School Psychologists to Special Education teachers. Create a clear job description, with standardized roles and responsibilities, to support staff in this role. Additionally, providing a stipend, or other means of additional compensation, to chairpersons for their added responsibilities could help make this work more tenable for those in the position.
- 17) Create written CPSE/CSE meeting procedures.** Create a documented resource for CPSE/CSE meeting preparation, covering topics including meeting structure, compliance and state guidance, and best practices.
- 18) Provide professional learning for CPSE/CSE chairpersons.** Provide regular and differentiated professional learning for new and veteran CPSE/CSE chairpersons.
- 19) Collaborate in advance of meetings.** Create built-in communication systems and planning time for student CPSE/CSE teams to ensure progress monitoring, data, tracking and knowledge of student progress in advance of a meetings.

- 20) Include students more consistently in the IEP development process.** As appropriate, include students as members of their own CSE team and invite them to attend meetings. Share IEP goals or the supports outlined on their IEPs with students. Engage students as collaborators in developing their IEPs and be active participants in monitoring their progress toward goals and objectives.

High Expectations and Leadership

Inclusive Community

- 21) Enhance growth mindset in leading programs to support students with IEPs.** Provide professional learning opportunities for District leaders and administrators focused on growth mindset, emphasizing the belief that all students with IEPs can make progress and achieve success; encourage leaders to model a growth mindset by embracing challenges, valuing effort, and promoting a culture of continuous improvement within the District; incorporate growth mindset principles into professional learning communities and collaborative team meetings to foster a shared understanding and application of growth mindset practices; recognize and celebrate successes and achievements of students with IEPs and the educators who support them, reinforcing the belief in the potential for growth and development.
- 22) Create schoolwide opportunities for students with disabilities to be a part of their school community.**
- a. **Inclusive education framework.** Develop and use a structured framework/model that will help promote and support the implementation of best practices for inclusive education including the provision of high yield collaborative/co-teaching teaching, specially designed instruction, and related services.
 - b. **Revamp inclusion in all aspects of programming, including extracurricular activities.** Further study all current extracurricular activities and programs to identify areas where inclusion can be improved; involve students, parents, and staff in the process of reviewing and revising extracurricular activities to ensure they are accessible and inclusive for students with disabilities; provide training and resources for extracurricular activity coordinators and staff on inclusive practices and accommodations for students with diverse needs; encourage the formation of student-led clubs or committees that promote inclusivity and advocate for the participation of students with disabilities in extracurricular activities; establish clear policies and guidelines to ensure that all extracurricular activities prioritize and embrace inclusion.
 - c. **Ensure lunch settings and specials classes (art, music, etc.) are inclusive of students with low incidence disabilities, especially at the elementary school level.** Review the current lunch settings and specials classes schedules and assess the reasons behind the separation of students with low incidence disabilities; promote inclusive practices by encouraging students with disabilities to eat in mainstream lunch settings alongside their peers and attend specials classes; provide necessary accommodations and support during lunchtime and in specials classes, such as designated support staff or social skills training, to ensure a positive and inclusive experience for all students.
 - d. **Professional learning.** Provide ongoing professional learning for administrators regarding NYSED special education regulations.

Strategy and Organization

- 23) Set a clear vision and engage in action planning focused on student success, operational excellence, and customer service.** Engage in an action planning process following this review focused on a renewed vision for student success; identify key performance indicators for student success; identify key performance indicators for customer service – students, parents, and staff as consumers – on improving experiences and outcomes for student success; continuously monitor progress towards the vision and goals; ensure action planning reflects a commitment to operational excellence, customer service, and continuous improvement; communicate the vision and strategic goals widely and engage stakeholders in the implementation and evaluation of the plan.
- 24) Rethink districtwide collaboration, teambuilding, and morale on special education.** Create forums or committees where District leaders can collaborate on shared goals and initiatives, fostering a sense of ownership and shared responsibility; recognize and appreciate the contributions of District leaders and administrators, promoting a positive and supportive work environment; provide professional learning opportunities for District leaders on effective leadership, teambuilding, and fostering positive morale.
- 25) Re-align roles, responsibilities, and structure of Office of Special Education (OSE) to enhance responsiveness and efficiency to meet student, teacher, and parent needs.**
- a. **Establish a Clear Reporting Structure.** Designate one Director of Special Education who reports directly to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. This will provide a clear chain of command and ensure that there is a dedicated leader overseeing special education initiatives.
 - b. **Streamline Operational Excellence.** Appoint one Assistant Director of Special Education Operations who will be responsible for overseeing and promoting operational excellence within the DSE. This individual can focus on ensuring efficient processes; effective resource allocation; data management, analysis, and accuracy; and streamlined workflows.
 - c. **Define Roles and Reporting Relationships.** Transform the current Assistant Directors of Special Education into Coordinators. Each Coordinator should have a well-defined job description that outlines their specific responsibilities, reporting structure, and accountability. This will provide clarity and enhance collaboration among the leadership team. Align each coordinator to specific programmatic oversight responsibilities districtwide (e.g., low incidence, inclusive practices, assistive technology, etc.) in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.
 - d. **Maintain the DSE under the Office of Curriculum and Instruction.** Keep the existing reporting organizational structure, as doing so, long-term, will enable a greater focus on needed academic outcomes improvements for students with disabilities. Establish standing meetings, at least biweekly, with the leadership of the Office of Student Support and, wherever appropriate, issue joint communications to school-based staff about the policies and procedures related to serving students with disabilities.
 - e. **Continuous Evaluation and Refinement.** Continuously evaluate and refine the roles and responsibilities based on feedback, observations, and best practices in special education programming. This ongoing evaluation process will ensure that the leadership structure remains effective and responsive to the needs of students with IEPs.

Family and Community Engagement

Enact Report Recommendations

- 26) Implement and publicly report recommendations progress.** In order to build community trust, implement the recommendations in this report and publicly report at least twice per year on progress made or obstacles/delays encountered.

Family Friendly Guides and Training

- 27) Family friendly guides.** Collaborate with school personnel, principals, other school-based groups, and local parent and advocacy groups representatives to develop a parent manual, including information and resource links that would be useful for parents in understanding the IEP process. Supplement it with one-page brochures to further access to this information. Also, ensure the information is accessible to parents with diverse linguistic needs and sensory limitations.
- 28) Family training plan.** In consultation with representatives of parent support groups, develop a training plan for families in the areas of IEP process, role of the child study team, helpful hints for parents at home, and how families can take an active and collaborative role at CPSE/CSE meetings.
- 29) Accessible communication.** Expand support for parents of ELL students with disabilities and those who are not native English speakers.
- 30) Enhance lines of communication between families of children with IEPs and central office.** Identify additional opportunities to build rapport and trust with parents and central office administration. Leverage this as an opportunity to reset trust and rebuild relationships with the DSE and the Office of Curriculum and Instruction.
- 31) Collaborative vision.** With representatives of parent support groups (e.g., SEPTA and school PTAs), special education teachers and leaders, as well as other CSDNR representatives, have discussions about family engagement, specific to special education. Based on these discussions, create a core belief vision statement of agreed-upon ideals. Share it with other stakeholders to build family engagement support across the District.
- 32) Website content.** At least annually, review and update materials posted on the District's website regarding special education instructional models, related services, and supplementary aids and services. Ensure this information is clearly accessible and comprehensive and accessible to parents with diverse linguistic needs and sensory limitations.

Human Capital

- 33) Professional learning plan.** Develop a robust, multi-year professional learning plan based on the needs identified in this report targeted to different audiences, e.g., general educators, special educators, related service personnel, aides, parents, etc., and prioritize its implementation. Ground training in the Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning⁸⁸ and embed the following components:

⁸⁸ Retrieved from <http://www.learningforward.org/standards#.UMvVD7Yt0kU>

- a. **Mandatory annual trainings.** Determine which special education specific trainings principals, teachers, and other school-based staff are required to attend each year and develop a process to ensure this happens.
- b. **Cross-functional teams.** Cross-train individuals from different divisions/departments to maximize their knowledge and skills to leverage their collective resources to provide direct support, mentoring, coaching, and technical assistance to principals and teachers.
- c. **High quality trainers.** Ensure that all trainers are knowledgeable and effective. Identify and use exemplary school-based staff in addition to others.
- d. **Access to differentiated learning and coaching.** Differentiate professional learning according to each audience's skills, experience, and needs. Have professional learning and technical assistance continue for new personnel and those needing additional support.
- e. **Multiple formats.** Use multiple formats (e.g., videos, webinars, and narrative text) and presentation approaches (e.g., school-based, small groups). Continue to build out blended learning opportunities so that all staff can more easily access the content.
- f. **Exemplary implementation models.** Identify and share districtwide best practices that demonstrate high expectations and effective implementation to ensure they include students with IEPs, ELLs, etc. Encourage staff to visit exemplary schools and set aside time for that to happen.

Systems and Structures

Data Reporting

- 34) **Enhance data collection and systems for collection for students with IEPs (data connected to IEP goals as well as behavioral data).** Develop and implement a comprehensive data collection system that includes IEP goal data as well as behavioral data; provide training and resources to staff members on the importance of data collection and how to effectively use the data to inform instructional decisions; through professional coaching from CSE members and Behaviorists, regularly review and analyze the data to identify areas for improvement and make necessary changes to the data collection system.
- 35) **Compliance reports.** Develop efficient compliance reports (to monitor evaluation timelines, IEP timelines, etc.) that can be updated on a routine basis and reviewed with school staff.

Policy and Guidance Documents

- 36) **Create updated and standardized guidance documents.**
 - a. **Special Education Policy and Procedure Manual.** Create an interactive, web based CSDNR special education manual to support user-friendly and transparent access to procedures/practices relevant to the management and operations of special education and to which school staff can be held accountable for implementing. Streamline resources so that school teams can easily access relevant information and use embedded hyperlinks to provide information for staff as needed. Include examples for IEP development processes that are appropriate and expected to be consistent across the District. Guidance should include, but not be limited to, Present Levels of Performance (PLOP) and data use; IEP SMART goals; and progress reporting. Update the manual on a routine basis.

- b. **CPSE/CSE Meeting Procedures.** Standardize policies and procedures for student placement and CSE Meetings. Create a clear division of labor and standardized job descriptions that outline who is responsible for each component of CSE Meetings (IEP development, IEP implementation, and progress monitoring).
- c. **Update internal and public-facing information on District’s continuum of services and supports.** Update and revise the District’s public-facing information on services and supports to ensure accuracy and relevance. Use consistent nomenclature when describing services within the District’s continuum.

Staffing Allocation Model

37) Create a transparent staffing allocation formula. Create a workgroup with representatives from school and central office leadership (including principals, representative special and general educators, related services personnel, and special education and finance personnel) to develop a new, transparent funding model and assess the extent to which current personnel are available to support the intended outcomes of effective service delivery and the continued enhancement of inclusive practices. Make the revised formula transparent and evaluate needed changes for the short and long term. Review on an annual basis.

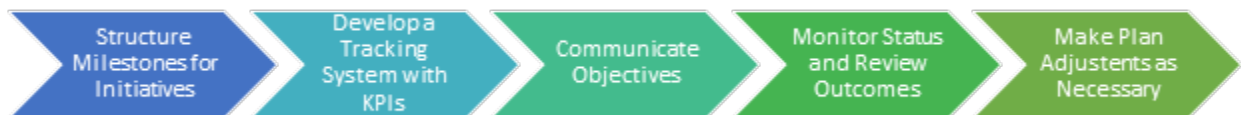
From Strategy to Execution

The secret to successful strategy execution is in translating strategies into actions. Further, tracking progress made on an organization’s strategy execution is integral to understanding whether it will reach its desired future state. From our experience, the most challenging part of a comprehensive program evaluation for a school district is moving from the recommendations to a concrete action plan, then to a change in practice. These steps require significant focus, in addition to organization, communication, and collaboration across departments. Implementing change across often siloed and independent departments, with differing priorities and reporting structures, requires out of the box thinking and a commitment to approaching issues and solutions in a new light.

While there are different approaches that school districts take to managing this process, the most successful ones create a structure that is sustainable, with internal and external accountability measures and strong cross-departmental advocates. PCG recommends a five-step Strategy Execution process, which we have found results in grounded, sustainable change within an organization.

PCG recommends that CSDNR address each component of our Strategy Execution Process in order to position the District to make lasting and impactful changes.

Exhibit 32. PCG’s Strategy Execution Process



Structure Milestones for Initiatives

Action plans must include concrete, measurable milestones that can be assessed on a regular basis. These milestones break down initiatives into manageable steps and timelines. This structure is essential, especially given the school year cycle and the urgency by which CSDNR would like to move these critical initiatives forward. At minimum, given the nature of the initiatives, progress toward milestones should be reviewed monthly through the 2023-24, 2024-25, and 2025-26 school years.

Develop a Tracking System with KPIs

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) must be established for each measurable milestone. Reviewing these KPIs will help CSDNR assess where each initiative stands. By monitoring these KPIs frequently, CSDNR will be able to assess barriers and adjust plans early in the process if needed. It is often the case that defining metrics or KPIs is the step that allows teams to recognize challenges within the theory of action that undergirds their action plan.

Communicate the Objectives

To implement new policies and procedures, organizational changes, or new approaches, stakeholders need a solid grasp of the initiatives, the objectives, and the benefits the plan will bring to bear. Communicating progress made on each key initiative is equally important to ensuring continued support from those impacted by the changes, as well as the associated stakeholders.

Monitor Progress and Review Outcomes

Action plans are more likely to succeed when staff are deeply involved with the implementation process and there are standing monthly status checks on progress made toward established objectives. It is also critical at this point to celebrate real progress and hold individuals who have not “delivered” accountable.

Make Plan Adjustments as Necessary

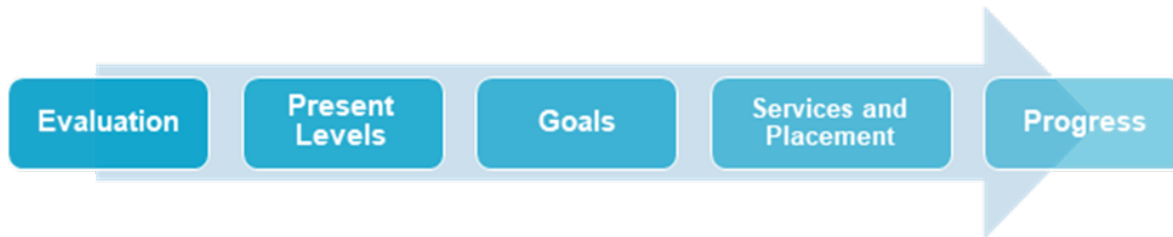
An action plan is not an unchangeable document. It is a fluid plan that should be revised and updated as the CSDNR environment changes and grows. Openness to revising the action plans will enable CSDNR to adjust to shifting fiscal and regulatory realities as well as changing priorities. If CSDNR’s core leadership team sees progress on certain initiatives falling short of expectations, a reevaluation of the original objectives and approach may be needed. However, it is also important to assess the causes of discrepancies between actual and planned results.

X. APPENDIX

Golden Thread Framework

For a student with a disability, the IEP team is charged with ensuring that the evaluation supports the existence of a disability and shows a clear connection to the Present Levels of Performance (PLOP) statement, identified learner characteristics, least restrictive environment considerations, and selected accommodations for instruction and assessment. This logical progression through the body of evidence, known as the **Golden Thread**, should connect the pieces to tell a student's complete educational story.

Exhibit 33. PCG's Golden Thread Framework



Evaluation - What are the student's characteristics as a learner? What is his/her documented disability? How do the evaluation results inform an instructional plan?

Present Levels - What is the student's present level of performance (PLOP)? How can access to grade-level standards be ensured regardless of the disability or language barrier?

Measurable Annual Goals - What can the child reasonably be expected to accomplish within one year? What types of instructional tasks are expected of the student to demonstrate proficiency in grade-level content? Are goals reasonably ambitious and achievable, and do they address all areas of need?

Services and Placement - What services will be provided? By whom and for how frequent? What accommodations are needed for learning in multiple settings? What services and supports are needed for the student to progress in all identified areas? Are accommodations documented and used as a foundation for classroom instruction and assessment? Where and how will the student receive services?

Progress Reports - What data are being collected on the fidelity of IEP implementation as well as on student progress toward meeting IEP goals? Is the student making progress?

Quality Indicator Review

This Quality Indicator Review, based on the tenets of the Golden Thread Framework, focuses on areas essential to the development of quality Evaluation, IEP, and Progress Monitoring documentation. Taken together, these documents for students with disabilities provide a comprehensive view of their access, participation, and progress in the general education curriculum and address other disability needs. PCG also aligned these indicators to New York State's Blueprint for Improved Results for Students with Disabilities.⁸⁹

The quality indicators are based on these foundational assumptions:

- Results of individual evaluations provide the information the IEP team needs to make its recommendations.
- The student's strengths and needs guide IEP development.

⁸⁹ [Blueprint for Improved Results for Students with Disabilities | New York State Education Department \(nysed.gov\)](https://www.nysed.gov/blueprint-for-improved-results-for-students-with-disabilities)

- The IEP team considers the interrelationship of the impact of the student’s disability and the components of the IEP.
- IEP development occurs in a structured, sequential manner.
- IEPs include documentation of recommendations in a clear and specific manner so the IEP can be implemented consistent with the evaluation team’s recommendations.
- Annual goals are identified to enable the student to progress in the general education curriculum and meet other disability-related needs.
- The IEP team determines how student needs will be met in the least restrictive environment.
- The IEP team demonstrates knowledge of grade level general education curricular and behavioral expectations and benchmarks.
- IEPs are implemented with fidelity and adjusted based on student response to instruction.
- Ongoing progress monitoring and formative assessment of student progress, goals and objectives are consistently implemented.
- Revisions to the IEP are made based on data indicating changes in student needs or abilities.
- IEPs for students with disabilities developed by the evaluation team result in student access, participation and progress in the general education curriculum and address a student’s other disability needs.⁹⁰

PCG uses five overarching quality indicators to assess files. The rubric included specific “look-fors,” or classifications of evidence, under each indicator.

Exhibit 34. PCG’s Golden Thread Evidence Rubric

Indicator	Evidence
<p>1. Results of individual evaluations provide the information the Evaluation Team needs to make its recommendations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation results are reported in a manner that provides sufficient basis for: present levels of performance (PLP); comparison to typically developing peers and grade-level expectations; unique learning characteristics and educational needs of the student; development of IEP annual goals and, as appropriate, short-term instructional objectives and benchmarks; and transition activities. • Evaluation results provide sufficient baseline information for future determination of progress in all areas of the suspected disability. • Evaluation reports are written in clear, precise, and easily understood language that is: jargon free, succinct, and provided in a language/mode of communication understood by the parent • Evaluation reports identify the nature and extent to which the student may need environmental modifications or accommodations; human and material resources to support learning in the general education curriculum and environment. • Evaluation reports provide instructionally relevant information that provides insight into the student’s learning characteristics and needs and supports development and provision of instruction likely to result in achievement of the student’s IEP goals. • The Evaluation Team reviews, discusses, analyzes, and evaluates the student’s progress in order to address his/her unique needs related to the disability.
<p>2. The IEP Team considers the interrelationship of the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLOPs establish a measurable baseline of student’s abilities and needs for determining progress. • Parent input is solicited and included in the development of the IEP.

⁹⁰ The Quality Indicators are based on the New York State of Education (NYSED) “Quality Indicator Review and Resource Guide”: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/techassist/CSE-IEP.htm>

<p>impact of the student's disability and present levels in the IEP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, concise PLOP statements are written in user friendly language, and are a thorough description of student strengths and needs.
<p>3. Annual goals are identified to enable the student to progress in the general education curriculum and meet other disability related needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual goals focus on the knowledge, skills, behaviors and strategies to address the student's needs. • Goals are developed in consideration of the student's need to progress toward the State standards by identifying the foundation knowledge (e.g., reading/math) necessary to meet the standards and/or the learning strategies that will help him or her to learn the curriculum content. • Targeted learning outcomes/goals are closely aligned to the general education curriculum and aligned with the age/developmental level of the class or grade level. • Annual goals define the path from the student's present level of performance to a level of performance expected by the end of the year. <p>IEP goals and objectives are: instructionally relevant; measurable, aligned with identified targeted needs; reasonably achieved in the period covered by the IEP; congruent with the student's ability/disability; and designed to support participation and success in the general education curriculum.</p>
<p>4. The IEP Team determines how student needs will be met in the least restrictive environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IEP Team uses knowledge of the continuum of appropriate academic and behavior intervention strategies for subject areas and age/developmental levels. • The IEP includes support for school personnel (professional learning or technical assistance) as needed to implement the IEP. • The IEP Team considers issues of access, participation and progress in relation to each individual student's needs, including, but not limited to, consideration of: curriculum content; modifications to instructional materials; rate of learning; physical environments; demonstration of learning; instructional approaches; instructional supports; and behavioral supports. • Recommended special education program and services, accommodations, and modifications needed for student to achieve goals are discussed. • The IEP Team actively considers and recommends accommodations or modifications to instruction and/or the use of assistive technology as necessary to ensure access to the general education curriculum. • A student's performance on classroom, state, and/or and districtwide assessments is discussed, considered and documented. • Placement is the last recommendation made in consideration of the least restrictive environment in which the student's IEP can be implemented.

Staffing Ratios

Special Educators, Aides (Paraprofessional), Speech/Language Pathologists, and Psychologists

Ratios for Special Educator, Paraeducator, Speech/Lang, and Psychologist	State	Total Enrollment	Incidence		Special Educator			Paraeducator			Speech/Lang			Psychologist	
			% SpEd	SpEd Enr	Number	Ratio To:		Number	Ratio To:		Number	Ratio To:		Number	Ratio To:
						SpEd	All		SpEd	All		SpEd	All		
Jacksonville County	FL	24,247	11.3%	2,740	193	14.2	125.6	89	30.8	272.4	25	109.6	969.9	110	24.9
Pittsburgh Pub Schools	PA	21,638	23.6%	5,096	359	14.2	60.3	554	9.2	39.1	40	127.4	541.0	138	36.9
New Rochelle	NY	9,952	15.0%	1,490	156	9.6	63.8	44	33.9	226.2	22	67.7	452.4	31	48.1
Cambridge Publ Schools	MA	6,818	17.6%	1,200	240.03	5.0	28.4	142.5	8.4	47.8	20	60.0	340.9	22	54.5
N. Chicago (in Dist.)	IL	3,319	12.0%	399	39	10.2	85.1	27	14.8	122.9	8	49.9	414.9	5	79.8
Rochester City	NY	27,360	20.0%	5,472	559.2	9.8	48.9	428	12.8	63.9	148	37.0	184.9	64	85.5
Kent Pub Schools	WA	26,418	11.4%	3,017	148.7	20.3	177.7	318	9.5	83.1	32.3	93.4	817.9	34.5	87.4
Madison Pub Schls	WI	25,952	14.7%	3,808	415.6	9.2	62.4	448	8.5	57.9	76.2	50.0	340.6	42.5	89.6
Denver Public Schools	CO	72,737	12.6%	9,142	592	15.4	122.9	528	17.3	137.8	94	97.3	773.8	98	93.3
Naperville 203	IL	16,995	12.1%	2,064	150	13.8	113.3	237	8.7	71.7	33	62.5	515.0	22	93.8
Alexandria City Public Schools	VA	15,105	12.6%	1,896	189	10.0	79.9	151	12.6	100.0	28	67.7	539.5	20	96.2
Frederick County PS	MD	46,899	11.1%	5,217	428	12.2	109.6	712	7.3	65.9	99	52.7	473.7	54	96.6
Deer Valley Unified SD	AZ	31,944	10.3%	3,289	299	11.0	106.8	312	10.5	102.4	50	65.8	638.9	34	96.7
D.C. Public Schools	D.C.	51,036	15.0%	7,655	669	11.4	76.3	653	11.7	78.2	90	85.1	567.1	78	98.1
Oak Park Sch Dist 97	IL	6,042	13.0%	786	78	10.1	77.5	90	8.7	67.1	14	56.1	431.6	8	98.3
Sun Prairie Area S Dist	WI	7,655	9.1%	697	62	11.2	123.5	93	7.5	82.3	14	49.8	546.8	7	99.6
Lincoln	NE	1,060	18.9%	200	21	9.5	50.5	60.7	3.3	17.5	5	40.0	212.0	2	100.0
Arlington Pub Sch	VA	29,653	12.9%	3,811	415.7	9.2	71.3	270	14.1	109.8	36.6	104.1	810.2	37.9	100.6
Scottsdale	AZ	22,233	13.0%	2,891	349.77	8.3	63.6	230	12.6	96.7	39.4	73.4	564.3	28.4	101.8
Cleveland PS	OH	39,018	21.4%	8,350	855	9.8	45.6	486	17.2	80.3	81	103.1	481.7	82	101.8
Bridgeport	CT	19,330	17.8%	3,449	204	16.9	94.8	254	13.6	76.1	25	138.0	773.2	33	104.5
South Hunterton Regional SD	NJ	872	18.3%	160	31.3	5.1	27.9	25	6.4	34.9	3	53.3	290.7	1.5	106.7
Carpentersville	IL	20,985	15.0%	3,139	220	14.3	95.4	380	8.3	55.2	43	73.0	488.0	28	112.1
Cleve Hts-UnivHtsCty	OH	4,874	18.5%	900	83	10.8	58.7	58	15.5	84.0	7	128.6	696.3	8	112.5
Bellevue SD	WA	19,886	9.8%	1,947	82.7	23.5	240.5	118.6	16.4	167.7	17.4	111.9	1142.9	17.3	112.5
Renton	WA	15,707	13.4%	2,108	170.1	12.4	92.3	294	7.2	53.4	20	105.4	785.4	18.4	114.6
San Diego Unified SD	CA	103,024	14.4%	14,787	1,100	13.4	93.7	1,300	11.4	79.2	196	75.4	525.6	129	114.6
Lake Washington	WA	31,964	9.5%	3,021	161	18.8	198.5	241.5	12.5	132.4	32.6	92.7	980.5	26.2	115.3
Tacoma Pub Schl	WA	28,374	13.7%	3,894	186.1	20.9	152.5	213	18.3	133.2	33.6	115.9	844.5	33.6	115.9
DeKalb 428	IL	6,285	14.0%	879	58	15.2	108.4	205	4.3	30.7	9	97.7	698.3	7.5	117.2
Kyrene School District	AZ	16,342	10.3%	1,686	141	12.0	115.9	124	13.6	131.8	27	62.4	605.3	14	120.4
Milwaukee	WI	71,325	23.0%	16,406	1281	12.8	55.7	988	16.6	72.2	169	97.1	422.0	136	120.6
Seattle	WA	58,248	12.5%	7,281	548.8	13.3	106.1	823.3	8.8	70.7	82.2	88.6	708.6	60.2	120.9
Williamson Cty Schl	TN	40,683	6.9%	2,824	213	13.3	191.0	400	7.1	101.7	34	83.1	1196.6	23	122.8
Stockton	CA	39,607	11.2%	4,436	258	17.2	153.5	344	12.9	115.1	47	94.4	842.7	36	123.2
Oakland Unified SD	CA	35,565	15.1%	5,369	392	13.7	90.7	175	30.7	203.2	47	114.2	756.7	43.5	123.4
LAUSD	CA	464,731	13.7%	63,826	5,331	12.0	87.2	6,466	9.9	71.9	496	128.6	936.1	514	124.3
Columbus City	OH	53,740	18.1%	9,727	650	15.0	82.7	990	9.8	54.3	64	152.0	839.7	78	124.7
Buffalo Public Schools	NY	46,583	16.6%	7,744	696	11.1	66.9	365	21.2	127.6	105	73.8	443.6	62	124.9
Fresno PS	CA	73,848	11.2%	8,271	509.6	16.2	144.9	603.1	13.7	122.4	75.5	109.5	978.1	65.7	125.9
Lakota Local	OH	16,800	13.7%	2,300	126	18.3	133.3	120	19.2	140.0	39	59.0	430.8	18	127.8
Sacramento City	CA	46,899	13.9%	6,519	288.1	22.6	162.8	246.2	26.5	190.5	33	197.5	1421.2	50.8	128.3
Portland Public Schools	OR	46,937	15.4%	7,229	355	20.4	132.2	535	13.5	87.7	92	78.6	510.2	56	129.1
West Aurora SD	IL	12,316	13.7%	1,688	120	14.1	102.6	101	16.7	121.9	21	80.4	586.5	13	129.8
Marlborough Pub Sch	NJ	4,532	11.8%	536	141	3.8	32.1	115	4.7	39.4	7	76.6	647.4	4	134.0
Anchorage School Dist	AK	41,375	15.8%	6,522	794.32	8.2	52.1	706.66	9.2	58.6	65	100.3	636.5	44.7	145.9
Boston Public Schools	MA	54,966	20.6%	11,350	1242.3	9.1	44.2	800	14.2	68.7	147	77.2	373.9	76.8	147.8
Tucson Unified SD	AZ	44,709	18.1%	8,092	409	19.8	109.3	419	19.3	106.7	61	132.7	732.9	54	149.9
Round Rock	TX	48,421	9.1%	4,407	369	11.9	131.2	171	25.8	283.2	41	107.5	1181.0	29	152.0
Cincinnati Pub Schools	OH	51,431	17.4%	8,928	457	19.5	112.5	801	11.1	64.2	62	144.0	829.5	57.7	154.7
Nashville City	TN	82,447	12.3%	10,141	680.5	14.9	121.2	594	17.1	138.8	109	93.0	756.4	65.5	154.8
Providence	RI	21,694	20.6%	4,460	340	13.1	63.8	479.1	9.3	45.3	40	111.5	542.4	28	159.3
Rockford Pub S	IL	28,194	14.0%	3,948	336	11.8	83.9	334	11.8	84.4	49	80.6	575.4	24	164.5
ESD 112	WA	13,764	14.4%	1,987	55	36.1	250.3	158	12.6	87.1	20	99.4	688.2	12	165.6
Northern Valley RHSD	NJ	2,249	22.3%	502	28	17.9	80.3	30	16.7	75.0	1	502.0	2249.0	3	167.3
Montgomery County Schools	MD	160,564	14.2%	22,851	2,086	11.0	77.0	1,751	13.1	91.7	293	78.0	548.0	136.3	167.7
Albuquerque PS	NM	82,049	20.4%	16,738	1217	13.8	67.4	1290	13.0	63.6	161.5	103.6	508.0	98	171.5
Washoe County Dist	NV	61,599	14.3%	8,809	472	18.7	130.5	325	27.1	189.5	77	114.4	800.0	48	183.5
Pinellas County	FL	113,084	13.0%	14,701	881	16.7	128.4	774	19.0	146.1	150	98.0	753.9	79	186.1
Norfolk	VA	32,066	13.5%	4,329	381	11.4	84.2	304	14.2	105.5	35	123.7	916.2	23	188.2
Guilford County	SC	78,609	12.8%	10,062	575	17.5	136.7	448	22.5	175.5	127.7	78.8	615.6	52.33	192.3
Chicago Public Schools	IL	340,658	14.6%	49,736	4,329	11.5	78.7	4,949	10.1	68.8	390	127.5	873.5	258	192.8
Miami-Dade	FL	334,000	12.0%	40,012	2,500	16.0	133.6	1,226	32.6	272.4	209	191.4	1598.1	206	194.2
Prince William County Schools	VA	89,076	12.7%	11,304	774	14.6	115.1	362	31.2	246.1	67	168.7	1329.5	57.6	196.3
Baltimore County P Sch	MD	111,084	15.1%	16,761	1245.8	13.5	89.2	665.5	25.2	166.9	154.7	108.3	718.1	85.3	196.5

Compton Unified SD	CA	26,000	11.5%	2,981	126	23.7	206.3	118	25.3	220.3	5	596.2	5200.0	14	212.
Fort Worth	TX	79,421	8.4%	6,651	520	12.8	152.7	450	14.8	176.5	73	91.1	1088.0	31	214.
Detroit	MI	54,229	16.1%	8,731	535.8	16.3	101.2	458	19.1	118.4	98	89.1	553.4	40	218.
Agawam Public Schools	MA	4,347	15.1%	656	39	16.8	111.5	100	6.6	43.5	15	43.7	289.8	3	218.
Atlanta Public Schools	GA	49,858	9.9%	4,950	431	11.5	115.7	224	22.1	222.6	65	76.2	767.0	22	225.
Sch Dist of Philadelphia	PA	119,492	28.2%	33,686	1,564	21.5	76.4	2585	13.0	46.2	99	340.3	1207.0	149	226.
Clark Cty School Dist	NV	322,901	12.6%	40,777	2,221	18.4	145.4	1,346	30.3	239.9	299	136.4	1079.9	180	226.
Arlington ISD	TX	56,840	8.4%	4,799	422	11.4	134.7	455	10.5	124.9	72	66.7	789.4	21	228.
Saugus	MA	3,012	15.3%	462	32.44	14.2	92.8	74	6.2	40.7	6	77.0	502.0	2	231.
Austin Pub S D	TX	84,676	9.5%	8,062	772.5	10.4	109.6	824	9.8	102.8	70.5	114.4	1201.1	34.6	233.
Orange County	FL	219,684	11.1%	24,385	NA	NA	NA	1165	20.9	188.6	202	120.7	1087.5	99.5	245.
Elgin U-46	IL	37,403	14.2%	5,304	252.8	21.0	148.0	544	9.8	68.8	71.9	73.8	520.2	20	265.
Omaha City	NE	53,191	17.2%	9,149	485	18.9	109.7	470.5	19.4	113.1	85	107.6	625.8	33	277.
Shelby County (Was Memphis City)	TN	109,319	15.2%	16,637	942	17.7	116.0	655	25.4	166.9	53	313.9	2062.6	58	286.
New Bedford	MA	12,880	20.6%	2,655	204	13.0	63.1	205	13.0	62.8	26	102.1	495.4	9	295.
St. Paul	MN	36,004	16.0%	5,761	481.2	12.0	74.8	536	10.7	67.2	97	59.4	371.2	19	303.
Dallas PS	TX	148,021	9.1%	13,470	1078	12.5	137.3	868.5	15.5	170.4	81	166.3	1827.4	37	364.
Greenville County	SC	73,291	13.5%	9,894	463	21.4	158.3	376	26.3	194.9	93	106.4	788.1	25	395.
DesMoines Public Schls	IA	31,621	14.8%	4,680	479	9.8	66.0	600.1	7.8	52.7	118.4	39.5	267.1	11.5	407.
Everett Pub Schools	WA	20,102	14.1%	2,840	356	8.0	56.5	51	55.7	394.2	4	710.0	5025.5	5	568.
Garland ISD	TX	53,930	10.0%	5,393	371	14.5	145.4	338	16.0	159.6	57	94.6	946.1	9	599.
Houston Indepen SD	TX	196,550	8.6%	16,923	1,625	10.4	121.0	1,145	14.8	171.7	158	107.1	1244.0	21.01	805.
Worcester	MA	23,986	5.3%	1,260	254	5.0	94.4	366	3.4	65.5	38	33.2	631.2	NA	NA
Davenport Comm Sch	IA	15,234	12.2%	1,857	221	8.4	68.9	344	5.4	44.3	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Baltimore City Publ Sch	MD	82,824	15.5%	12,866	1,121	11.5	73.9	620	20.8	133.6	92	139.8	900.3	NA	NA
Kalamazoo Pub Schools	MI	13,000	12.8%	1,667	70	23.8	185.7	79	21.1	164.6	15	111.1	866.7	NA	NA
Averages			14.2%			14.0	105.2		15.3	115.5		116.6	852.6		174.

Social Worker, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy

Ratios for Social Workers, Nurses, OTs & PTs	State	Total Student Enrollment	Total Special Ed	Social Worker			Nursing (School/RN, etc.)			Occupational Therapy		Physical Therapy	
				Number	Ratio To:		Number	Ratio To:		Number	Ratio	Number	Ratio
					SpEd	All		SpEd	All				
Lincoln	NE	1,060	200	355.70	0.6	3.0	580.0	0.3	1.8	156.0	1.3	42.0	4.8
South Hunterton Regional SD	NJ	872	160	36.00	4.4	24.2	103.0	1.6	8.5	43.0	3.7	24.0	6.7
ESD 112	WA	13,764	1,987	NA	NA	NA	22.0	90.3	625.6	112.0	17.7	61.0	32.6
Northern Valley RHSD	NJ	2,249	502	140.00	3.6	16.1	101.0	5.0	22.3	30.0	16.7	13.0	38.6
N. Chicago (in Dist.)	IL	3,319	399	NA	NA	NA	112.8	3.5	29.4	21.9	18.2	7.8	51.2
Agawam Public Schools	MA	4,347	656	10.00	65.6	434.7	NA	NA	NA	20.0	32.8	9.0	72.9
DeKalb 428	IL	6,285	879	74.00	11.9	84.9	77.0	11.4	81.6	25.0	35.2	12.0	73.3
Naperville 203	IL	16,995	2,064	48.70	42.4	349.0	222.3	9.3	76.5	65.2	31.7	27.0	76.4
Alexandria City Public Schools	VA	15,105	1,896	95.00	20.0	159.0	153.0	12.4	98.7	69.8	27.2	19.5	97.2
Scottsdale	AZ	22,233	2,891	NA	NA	NA	173.0	16.7	128.5	68.0	42.5	29.0	99.7
Saugus	MA	3,012	462	26.00	17.8	115.8	32.0	14.4	94.1	12.5	37.0	4.5	102.7
Oak Park Sch Dist 97	IL	6,042	786	16.00	49.1	377.6	NA	NA	NA	16.0	49.1	7.0	112.3
Marlborough Pub Sch	NJ	4,532	536	NA	NA	NA	4.0	134.0	1,133.0	23.5	22.8	4.7	114.0
Sun Prairie Area S Dist	WI	7,655	697	36.50	19.1	209.7	27.5	25.3	278.4	22.0	31.7	6.0	116.2
Kyrene School District	AZ	16,342	1,686	76.00	22.2	215.0	38.0	44.4	430.1	31.6	53.4	10.0	168.6
Rockford Pub S	IL	28,194	3,948	NA	NA	NA	206.0	19.2	136.9	65.0	60.7	23.0	171.7
Worcester	MA	23,986	1,260	46.30	27.2	518.1	35.0	36.0	685.3	12.0	105.0	7.0	180.0
Tucson Unified SD	AZ	44,709	8,092	93.99	86.1	475.7	164.4	49.2	271.9	250.2	32.3	44.5	181.7
Cleve Hts-UnivHtsCty	OH	4,874	900	7.00	128.6	696.3	NA	NA	NA	14.5	62.1	4.0	225.0
D.C. Public Schools	D.C.	51,036	7,655	75.43	101.5	676.6	NA	NA	NA	75.0	102.1	29.0	264.0
Lakota Local	OH	16,800	2,300	12.00	191.7	1,400.0	265.9	8.7	63.2	17.0	135.3	8.0	287.5
Fort Worth	TX	79,421	6,651	108.00	61.6	735.4	128.0	52.0	620.5	56.0	118.8	23.0	289.2
Frederick County PS	MD	46,899	5,217	6.80	767.2	6,896.9	100.0	52.2	469.0	67.0	77.9	17.0	306.9
Kalamazoo Pub Schools	MI	13,000	1,667	NA	NA	NA	97.0	17.2	134.0	12.0	138.9	5.0	333.4
West Aurora SD	IL	12,316	1,688	5.00	337.6	2,463.2	24.1	70.0	511.0	33.2	50.8	4.8	351.7
Davenport Comm Sch	IA	15,234	1,857	NA	NA	NA	37.0	50.2	411.7	22.0	84.4	5.0	371.4
New Rochelle	NY	9,952	1,490	27.00	55.2	368.6	36.0	41.4	276.4	9.0	165.6	4.0	372.5
Bridgeport	CT	19,330	3,449	NA	NA	NA	69.0	50.0	280.1	36.0	95.8	9.0	383.2
Cambridge Publ Schools	MA	6,818	1,200	30.00	40.0	227.3	86.7	13.8	78.6	12.0	100.0	3.0	400.0
Rochester City	NY	27,360	5,472	21.00	260.6	1,302.9	68.0	80.5	402.4	19.0	288.0	13.0	420.9
Compton Unified SD	CA	26,000	2,981	67.00	44.5	388.1	108.0	27.6	240.7	10.5	283.9	7.0	425.9
Arlington ISD	TX	56,840	4,799	89.00	53.9	638.7	55.5	86.5	1,024.1	29.2	164.3	11.0	436.3
Renton	WA	15,707	2,108	25.80	81.7	608.8	61.0	34.6	257.5	7.0	301.1	4.8	439.2
Stockton	CA	39,607	4,436	NA	NA	NA	106.0	41.8	373.7	16.0	277.3	10.0	443.6
Providence	RI	21,694	4,460	73.00	61.1	297.2	68.0	65.6	319.0	11.0	405.5	9.0	495.6
St. Paul	MN	36,004	5,761	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	44.0	130.9	11.0	523.7
Elgin U-46	IL	37,403	5,304	NA	NA	NA	129.0	41.1	289.9	40.0	132.6	10.0	530.4
Garland ISD	TX	53,930	5,393	NA	NA	NA	1.2	4,494.2	44,941.7	18.2	296.3	9.9	544.7
Atlanta Public Schools	GA	49,858	4,950	67.60	73.2	737.5	98.0	50.5	508.8	22.0	225.0	9.0	550.0
Madison Pub Schls	WI	25,952	3,808	32.30	117.9	803.5	NA	NA	NA	24.4	156.1	5.8	656.6
Cincinnati Pub Schools	OH	51,431	8,928	51.90	172.0	991.0	32.8	272.2	1,568.0	34.0	262.6	13.0	686.8
New Bedford	MA	12,880	2,655	NA	NA	NA	31.0	85.6	415.5	13.8	192.4	3.8	698.7
Fresno PS	CA	73,848	8,271	75.00	110.3	984.6	39.0	212.1	1,893.5	24.7	334.9	11.0	751.9
Arlington Pub Sch	VA	29,653	3,811	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	19.0	200.6	5.0	762.2
Greenville County	SC	73,291	9,894	89.00	111.2	823.5	33.0	299.8	2,220.9	36.0	274.8	12.0	824.5
Shelby County (Was Memphis City)	TN	109,319	16,637	NA	NA	NA	347.0	47.9	315.0	20.0	831.9	20.0	831.9
Jacksonville County	FL	24,247	2,740	NA	NA	NA	8.0	342.5	3,030.9	3.0	913.3	3.0	913.3
San Diego Unified SD	CA	103,024	14,787	90.00	164.3	1,144.7	127.0	116.4	811.2	48.0	308.1	16.0	924.2
Williamson Cty Schl	TN	40,683	2,824	2.00	1,412.0	20,341.5	11.0	256.7	3,698.5	2.0	1,412.0	3.0	941.3
Tacoma Pub Schl	WA	28,374	3,894	NA	NA	NA	48.0	81.1	591.1	21.3	182.8	4.0	973.5
Arlington ISD	TX	56,840	4,799	16.00	299.9	3,552.5	80.0	60.0	710.5	9.0	533.2	4.0	1,199.8
Everett Pub Schools	WA	20,102	2,840	8.00	355.0	2,512.8	1.0	2,840.0	20,102.0	5.0	568.0	2.0	1,420.0
Bellevue SD	WA	19,886	1,947	8.00	243.4	2,485.8	7.0	278.1	2,840.9	3.4	572.6	1.3	1,497.7
Deer Valley Unified SD	AZ	31,944	3,289	38.00	86.6	840.6	28.0	117.5	1,140.9	7.0	469.9	2.0	1,644.5
Seattle	WA	58,248	7,281	56.00	130.0	1,040.1	59.5	122.4	979.0	25.2	288.9	4.0	1,820.3
Denver Public Schools	CO	72,737	9,142	193.00	47.4	376.9	78.0	117.2	932.5	20.0	457.1	5.0	1,828.4
Baltimore City Publ Sch	MD	82,824	12,866	19.00	677.2	4,359.2	7.0	1,838.0	11,832.0	11.0	1,169.6	7.0	1,838.0
Buffalo Public Schools	NY	46,583	7,744	20.00	387.2	2,329.2	132.0	58.7	352.9	14.0	553.1	4.0	1,936.0
Columbus City	OH	53,740	9,727	NA	NA	NA	89.0	109.3	603.8	12.0	810.6	5.0	1,945.4
Anchorage School Dist	AK	41,375	6,522	NA	NA	NA	23.6	276.4	1,753.2	19.3	337.9	3.3	1,976.4

Sacramento City	CA	46,899	6,519	25.00	260.8	1,876.0	NA	NA	NA	6.0	1,086.5	3.0
Portland Public Schools	OR	46,937	7,229	5.00	1,445.8	9,387.4	2.0	3,614.5	23,468.5	4.0	1,807.3	3.0
Pittsburgh Pub Schools	PA	21,638	5,096	23.00	221.6	940.8	19.5	261.3	1,109.6	4.5	1,132.4	2.0
Austin Pub S D	TX	84,676	8,062	NA	NA	NA	1.0	8,062.0	84,676.0	10.0	806.2	3.0
Albuquerque PS	NM	82,049	16,738	NA	NA	NA	57.0	293.6	1,439.5	29.5	567.4	6.0
DesMoines Public Schls	IA	31,621	4,680	3.00	1,560.0	10,540.3	22.3	209.9	1,418.0	3.0	1,560.0	1.6
Washoe County Dist	NV	61,599	8,809	67.00	131.5	919.4	30.0	293.6	2,053.3	11.0	800.8	3.0
Houston Indepen SD	TX	196,550	16,923	26.00	650.9	7,559.6	53.0	319.3	3,708.5	10.0	1,692.3	4.0
Detroit	MI	54,229	8,731	19.00	459.5	2,854.2	62.0	140.8	874.7	12.0	727.6	2.0
Round Rock	TX	48,421	4,407	5.00	881.4	9,684.2	2.0	2,203.5	24,210.5	2.0	2,203.5	1.0
Nashville City	TN	82,447	10,141	9.00	1,126.8	9,160.8	10.0	1,014.1	8,244.7	4.0	2,535.3	2.0
Milwaukee	WI	71,325	16,406	NA	NA	NA	5.0	3,281.2	14,265.0	6.0	2,734.3	3.0
Prince William County Schools	VA	89,076	11,304	19.00	594.9	4,688.2	30.8	367.0	2,892.1	12.0	942.0	2.0
Boston Public Schools	MA	54,966	11,350	6.00	1,891.7	9,161.0	14.0	810.7	3,926.1	8.0	1,418.8	2.0
Carpentersville	IL	20,985	3,139	1.00	3,139.0	20,985.0	1.0	3,139.0	20,985.0	1.5	2,092.7	0.5
Guilford County	SC	78,609	10,062	10.00	1,006.2	7,860.9	NA	NA	NA	3.6	2,795.0	1.6
Miami-Dade	FL	334,000	40,012	23.00	1,739.7	14,521.7	50.0	800.2	6,680.0	4.0	10,003.0	6.0
Clark Cty School Dist	NV	322,901	40,777	NA	NA	NA	17.0	2,398.6	18,994.2	16.1	2,532.7	6.0
Sch Dist of Philadelphia	PA	119,492	33,686	35.00	962.5	3,414.1	NA	NA	NA	11.5	2,929.2	4.5
Montgomery County Schools	MD	160,564	22,851	27.00	846.3	5,946.8	29.0	788.0	5,536.7	4.0	5,712.8	3.0
Cleveland PS	OH	39,018	8,350	7.00	1,192.9	5,574.0	5.0	1,670.0	7,803.6	2.0	4,175.0	1.0
Omaha City	NE	53,191	9,149	4.00	2,287.3	13,297.8	13.0	703.8	4,091.6	2.0	4,574.5	1.0
Chicago Public Schools	IL	340,658	49,736	12.00	4,144.7	28,388.2	8.0	6,217.0	42,582.3	7.0	7,105.1	1.0
Orange County	FL	219,684	24,385	8.00	3,048.1	27,460.5	5.0	4,877.0	43,936.8	2.0	12,192.5	NA
LAUSD	CA	464,731	63,826	33.50	1,905.3	13,872.6	53.1	1,202.0	8,752.0	3.0	21,275.3	NA
South Hunterdon Regional SD	NJ	872	160	NA	NA	NA	3.0	53.3	290.7	NA	NA	NA
Lake Washington	WA	31,964	3,021	5.00	604.2	6,392.8	21.0	143.9	1,522.1	NA	NA	NA
Baltimore County P Sch	MD	111,084	16,761	56.00	299.3	1,983.6	74.0	226.5	1,501.1	NA	NA	NA
Norfolk	VA	32,066	4,329	3.70	1,170.0	8,666.5	3.0	1,443.0	10,688.7	NA	NA	NA
Frederick County PS	MD	35,565	5,369	2.00	2,684.5	17,782.5	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Averages					624.2	4,635.2		731.9	5,781.6		1,299.9	

Percentage of Students with IEPs of Total Enrollment & Students with IEPs to Staff Ratio in Ascending Order									
Rank	% IEPs	Special Educators	Paraeducators	Speech/Lang Pathologists	Psychologists	Social Workers	Nurses	Occupational Therapists	Physical Therapists
1	5.3%	3.8	3.3	33.2	24.9	0.6	0.3	1.3	4.8
2	6.9%	5.0	3.4	37.0	36.9	3.6	1.6	3.7	6.7
3	8.4%	5.0	4.3	39.5	48.1	4.4	3.5	16.7	32.6
4	8.4%	5.1	4.7	40.0	54.5	11.9	5.0	17.7	38.6
5	8.6%	8.0	5.4	43.7	79.8	17.8	8.7	18.2	51.2
6	9.1%	8.2	6.2	49.8	85.5	19.1	9.3	22.8	72.9
7	9.1%	8.3	6.4	49.9	87.4	20.0	11.4	27.2	73.3
8	9.1%	8.4	6.6	50.0	89.6	22.2	12.4	31.7	76.4
9	9.5%	9.1	7.1	52.7	93.3	27.2	13.8	31.7	97.2
10	9.5%	9.2	7.2	53.3	93.8	40.0	14.4	32.3	99.7
11	9.8%	9.2	7.3	56.1	96.2	42.4	16.7	32.8	102.7
12	9.9%	9.5	7.5	59.0	96.6	44.5	17.2	35.2	112.3
13	10.0%	9.6	7.8	59.4	96.7	47.4	19.2	37.0	114.0
14	10.3%	9.8	8.3	60.0	98.1	49.1	25.3	42.5	116.2
15	10.3%	9.8	8.4	62.4	98.3	53.9	27.6	49.1	168.6
16	11.1%	9.8	8.5	62.5	99.6	55.2	34.6	50.8	171.7
17	11.1%	10.0	8.7	65.8	100.0	61.1	36.0	53.4	180.0
18	11.2%	10.1	8.7	66.7	100.6	61.6	41.1	60.7	181.7
19	11.2%	10.2	8.8	67.7	101.8	65.6	41.4	62.1	225.0
20	11.3%	10.4	9.2	67.7	101.8	73.2	41.8	77.9	264.0
21	11.4%	10.4	9.2	73.0	104.5	81.7	44.4	84.4	287.5
22	11.5%	10.8	9.3	73.4	106.7	86.1	47.9	95.8	289.2
23	11.8%	11.0	9.5	73.8	112.1	86.6	49.2	100.0	306.9
24	12.0%	11.0	9.8	73.8	112.5	101.5	50.0	102.1	333.4
25	12.0%	11.1	9.8	75.4	112.5	110.3	50.2	105.0	351.7
26	12.1%	11.2	9.8	76.2	114.6	111.2	50.5	118.8	371.4
27	12.2%	11.4	9.9	76.6	114.6	117.9	52.0	130.9	372.5
28	12.3%	11.4	10.1	77.0	115.3	128.6	52.2	132.6	383.2
29	12.5%	11.4	10.5	77.2	115.9	130.0	53.3	135.3	400.0
30	12.6%	11.5	10.5	78.0	117.2	131.5	58.7	138.9	420.9
31	12.6%	11.5	10.7	78.6	120.4	164.3	60.0	156.1	425.9
32	12.6%	11.5	11.1	78.8	120.6	172.0	65.6	164.3	436.3
33	12.7%	11.8	11.4	80.4	120.9	191.7	70.0	165.6	439.2
34	12.8%	11.9	11.7	80.6	122.8	221.6	80.5	182.8	443.6
35	12.8%	12.0	11.8	83.1	123.2	243.4	81.1	192.4	495.6
36	12.9%	12.0	12.5	85.1	123.4	260.6	85.6	200.6	523.7
37	13.0%	12.0	12.6	88.6	124.3	260.8	86.5	225.0	530.4
38	13.0%	12.2	12.6	89.1	124.7	299.3	90.3	262.6	544.7
39	13.0%	12.4	12.6	91.1	124.9	299.9	109.3	274.8	550.0
40	13.4%	12.5	12.8	92.7	125.9	337.6	116.4	277.3	656.6
41	13.5%	12.8	12.9	93.0	127.8	355.0	117.2	283.9	686.8
42	13.5%	12.8	13.0	93.4	128.3	387.2	117.5	288.0	698.7
43	13.7%	13.0	13.0	94.4	129.1	459.5	122.4	288.9	751.9
44	13.7%	13.1	13.0	94.6	129.8	594.9	134.0	296.3	762.2
45	13.7%	13.3	13.1	97.1	134.0	604.2	140.8	301.1	824.5
46	13.7%	13.3	13.5	97.3	145.9	650.9	143.9	308.1	831.9
47	13.9%	13.4	13.6	97.7	147.8	677.2	209.9	334.9	913.3
48	14.0%	13.5	13.6	98.0	149.9	767.2	212.1	337.9	924.2
49	14.0%	13.7	13.7	99.4	152.0	846.3	226.5	405.5	941.3
50	14.1%	13.8	14.1	100.3	154.7	881.4	256.7	457.1	973.5
51	14.2%	13.8	14.2	102.1	154.8	962.5	261.3	469.9	1199.8
52	14.2%	14.1	14.2	103.1	159.3	1006.2	272.2	533.2	1420.0
53	14.3%	14.2	14.8	103.6	164.5	1126.8	276.4	553.1	1497.7
54	14.4%	14.2	14.8	104.1	165.6	1170.0	278.1	567.4	1644.5
55	14.4%	14.2	14.8	105.4	167.3	1192.9	293.6	568.0	1820.3
56	14.6%	14.3	15.5	106.4	167.7	1412.0	293.6	572.6	1828.4
57	14.7%	14.5	15.5	107.1	171.5	1445.8	299.8	727.6	1838.0
58	14.8%	14.6	16.0	107.5	183.5	1560.0	319.3	800.8	1936.0
59	15.0%	14.9	16.4	107.6	186.1	1739.7	342.5	806.2	1945.4
60	15.0%	15.0	16.6	108.3	188.2	1891.7	367.0	810.6	1976.4
61	15.0%	15.2	16.7	109.5	192.3	1905.3	703.8	831.9	2173.0
62	15.1%	15.4	16.7	109.6	192.8	2287.3	788.0	913.3	2409.7
63	15.1%	16.0	17.1	111.1	194.2	2684.5	800.2	942.0	2548.0
64	15.1%	16.2	17.2	111.5	196.3	3048.1	810.7	1086.5	2687.3
65	15.2%	16.3	17.3	111.9	196.5	3139.0	1014.1	1132.4	2789.7
66	15.3%	16.7	18.3	114.2	212.9	4144.7	1202.0	1169.6	2925.0
67	15.4%	16.8	19.0	114.4	214.5	NA	1443.0	1412.0	2936.3
68	15.5%	16.9	19.1	114.4	218.3	NA	1670.0	1418.8	4230.8
69	15.8%	17.2	19.2	115.9	218.7	NA	1838.0	1560.0	4365.5
70	16.0%	17.5	19.3	120.7	225.0	NA	2203.5	1692.3	4407.0
71	16.1%	17.7	19.4	123.7	226.1	NA	2398.6	1807.3	5070.5
72	16.6%	17.9	20.8	127.4	226.5	NA	2840.0	2092.7	5468.7
73	17.2%	18.3	20.9	127.5	228.5	NA	3139.0	2203.5	5652.0
74	17.4%	18.4	21.1	128.6	231.0	NA	3281.2	2532.7	5675.0
75	17.6%	18.7	21.2	128.6	233.0	NA	3614.5	2535.3	6278.0
76	17.8%	18.8	22.1	132.7	245.1	NA	4494.2	2734.3	6288.8
77	18.1%	18.9	22.5	136.4	265.2	NA	4877.0	2795.0	6668.7
78	18.1%	19.5	25.2	138.0	277.2	NA	6217.0	2929.2	6796.2
79	18.3%	19.8	25.3	139.8	286.8	NA	8062.0	4175.0	7485.8
80	18.5%	20.3	25.4	144.0	295.0	NA	NA	4574.5	7617.0
81	18.9%	20.4	25.8	152.0	303.2	NA	NA	5712.8	8350.0
82	20.0%	20.9	26.3	166.3	364.1	NA	NA	7105.1	9149.0
83	20.4%	21.0	26.5	168.7	395.8	NA	NA	10003.0	49736.0
84	20.6%	21.4	27.1	191.4	407.0	NA	NA	12192.5	NA
85	20.6%	21.5	30.3	197.5	568.0	NA	NA	21275.3	NA
86	20.6%	22.6	30.7	313.9	599.2	NA	NA	NA	NA
87	21.4%	23.5	30.8	340.3	805.5	NA	NA	NA	NA
88	22.3%	23.7	31.2	502.0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
89	23.0%	24	32.6	596.2	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
90	23.6%	36	33.9	710.0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
91	28.2%	NA	55.7	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Avg.	14.2%	14.0	15.3	116.6	174.3	624.2	731.9	1299.9	2384.0

Staff Survey Results

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	Not applicable	Responses
Before a student is referred for special education, every attempt is made to meet the student's needs through general education interventions. (Interventions include: TIER I, II & III in reading, math and behavior support)	72.3	9.6	15.1	3	437
Prior to a referral for special education, the impact of a child's native language on academic performance or behavior is considered.	72.5	8.9	16.4	2.3	440
Staff in my school(s) fully understand the steps and timelines associated with the referral process.	50.5	30.6	16.7	2.3	438
There is no delay in the process when a student is referred for special education services.	29.6	47.6	21	1.8	439
I have been invited to participate in the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) or the Committee on Special Education (CSE) meeting(s).	71.6	7.3	3.2	17.8	437
I am given adequate time/coverage when participating in CPSE/CSE meeting(s).	61.3	17.4	3.7	17.6	437
I feel comfortable asking questions at CPSE/CSE meetings.	70.3	13.2	2.9	13.6	441
IEP development involves collaboration between general education teachers, special	78.2	14.4	4.6	2.8	436

educators, related service providers, clinicians, and parents.					
All team member concerns are addressed at CSE meetings.	67.6	15.5	12.8	4.1	438
Special education evaluations are sufficiently comprehensive to identify students' specific strengths and needs.	69.8	14.3	12.9	3	434
The CSE team discusses instruction and support in general education classes to the maximum extent possible when making service recommendations for students with disabilities.	69.4	13.1	12.9	4.6	435

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	Not applicable	Responses
CSDNR offers a continuum of services to meet the needs of all students with IEPs.	58.5	26	14.1	1.5	412
Students with IEPs in my school(s) are receiving instruction and services in general education classes to the maximum extent possible.	64	15.3	17.3	3.4	411
My school(s) provide an inclusive environment for students with disabilities.	81.5	11.1	4.7	2.7	405
Student progress toward IEP goals is analyzed and discussed regularly by the student's teachers and/or related service provider(s).	58.2	24.3	13.9	3.7	404
There is an adequate number of staff to implement student IEPs with fidelity.	35.8	44.2	16.8	3.2	405

Staff in my building are provided adequate time/coverage to develop IEPs.	27.1	38.2	29.1	5.7	406
I understand what is documented within students' IEPs.	86.3	8.8	2.5	2.5	408
I am confident in how to implement IEPs as written.	76.7	14.3	3.4	5.7	407
General education teachers are provided adequate training in effectively supporting the needs of students with IEPs.	21.9	54.8	18.7	4.7	407
General education teachers participate in IEP development.	39.9	35.4	21	3.7	404
Teaching aides at my school(s) are used effectively to support the needs of students with IEPs.	42	29.7	24.1	4.2	407
Related Service providers (OT, PT, Speech Therapists) at my school are used effectively to support the needs of students with IEPs.	62.3	11.6	22.7	3.4	406
The special education/related services, accommodations, and/or modifications identified in students' IEPs are provided as written.	68.9	12.8	15.8	2.5	405
School administrators have high expectations for students with disabilities.	62.1	13.3	22.2	2.5	406
The special education teaching staff have high expectations for students with disabilities.	74.4	6.4	16.3	3	406
The general education teaching staff have high expectations for students with disabilities.	66.3	13	18.2	2.5	401

General education teachers are informed when a student with an IEP is in their classroom.	73.3	11.4	12.3	3	405
Related service providers can meet the service times of all students on their caseloads.	32	26.3	38	3.7	403
CSDNR has established standards for delivering co-teaching/collaborative instruction.	37.9	31.8	27.1	3.2	406
Services for English as a New Language (ENL) students, who also have disabilities, at my school(s) are meeting student needs.	33.7	24.5	36.4	5.4	404
Students with IEPs have adequate services in place to manage challenging behavior in the classroom.	34	45.2	18.9	2	403
The special education program/services at my school(s) are of high quality.	60.3	21.3	15.6	2.7	403

Planning effective services and activities for postsecondary transition begins for students at age 12 at my school(s).

	Percent
Agree	24.7%
Disagree	9.6%
Don't Know	65.7%

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	Not applicable	Responses

Staff in my building(s) have an effective process by which they collaborate with each other regarding the needs of students with disabilities.	50.1	34.1	14	1.8	399
There is sufficient communication between general and special educators about the needs and progress of students with IEPs.	44.2	34.1	18.4	3.3	396
There is sufficient communication between special educators and teaching aides about the needs and progress of students with IEPs.	43.2	18.8	31.7	6.3	398
My school(s) effectively responds to the needs and concerns of families of students with IEPs.	61	12.1	24.4	2.5	397
Parents have been provided adequate training to support students with IEPs at home.	18.7	26	51	4.3	396
The Department of Special Education effectively responds to the needs and concerns of families of students with IEPs.	31.1	16.2	49	3.8	396
There is effective and consistent communication between my building(s) and the Department of Special Education.	25.7	22.9	47.9	3.5	397

Professional learning offerings I have attended enable me to better support the teaching/learning of students with IEPs.

	Percent
Agree	42.9%
Disagree	48.5%
Don't Know	8.6%

Staff supporting students with IEPs would benefit from additional professional learning on the following topics:

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Responses
Differentiated Instruction	82.9%	6.6%	10.5%	391
Increasingly intensive reading interventions	75.3%	5.2%	19.6%	388
Increasingly intensive math interventions	68.6%	5.1%	26.2%	389
Positive behavior intervention and supports	86.2%	7.4%	6.4%	390
Response to Intervention (RtI) or Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)	74.0%	11.6%	14.4%	388
Facilitating inclusion in general education	77.8%	8.8%	13.4%	387
Developing functional behavior assessments (FBAs)	68.5%	10.1%	21.4%	387
Developing behavior intervention plans (BIPs)	75.2%	8.8%	16.0%	387
Teaching students with curriculum aligned with alternate assessments	68.6%	9.5%	21.9%	389
Specific disability information (e.g., autism, emotional disturbance, etc.)	83.9%	8.5%	7.5%	386
Independent living skills	44.7%	24.7%	30.6%	385
Assistive technology	68.6%	12.6%	18.8%	389
Collaborating with aides	65.9%	15.0%	19.1%	387
Federal, state, and division special education regulations	62.7%	17.4%	19.9%	386
Postsecondary transition planning	43.0%	23.1%	33.9%	386
Using/analyzing data to inform instruction	66.6%	16.6%	16.8%	386
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	54.7%	14.0%	31.3%	386

Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)	60.5%	9.4%	30.1%	385
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Parent Survey Results

Did City School District of New Rochelle (CSDNR) staff clearly explain to you why your child needed special education services?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	72.2%	78
No	16.7%	18
Not Applicable, my child had an IEP at a prior district	11.1%	12
	Totals	108

Do you receive notice of a CPSE (Committee on Preschool Special Education) or CSE (Committee on Special Education) meeting at least once a year?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	90.7%	98
No	7.4%	8
Unsure	1.9%	2
	Totals	108

My input is considered during CPSE/CSE meetings

Value	Percent
Agree	78.7%
Disagree	17.6%
Not Applicable, I have not attended a CPSE/CSE meeting	3.7%

I feel comfortable asking questions at CPSE/CSE meetings.

Value	Percent
Agree	83.3%
Disagree	13.0%
Not Applicable, I have not attended a CPSE/CSE meeting	3.7%

At your child's most recent CPSE/CSE meeting, did the team discuss receiving special education services in the general education class?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	61.1%	66
No	32.4%	35
Not Applicable, I did not attend the CPSE/CSE meeting	6.5%	7
	Totals	108

Does CSDNR offer opportunities for parent training or information sessions about special education?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	29.4%	32
No	40.4%	44
Don't Know	30.3%	33
	Totals	109

Have you attended parent trainings or information sessions about special education offered by CSDNR in the past year?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	13.0%	14
No	87.0%	94
	Totals	108

Was the parent training you attended helpful?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	92.9%	13
No	7.1%	1
	Totals	14

How did you hear about the training?

Value	Percent	Count
Child's Teacher	21.4%	3
CSE Meeting	28.6%	4
Newsletter	7.1%	1
Special Education Parent Teacher Association	21.4%	3
Social Media	7.1%	1
Other (please indicate how you heard about the training)	14.3%	2
	Totals	14

Was your student invited to participate in the CSE meeting?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	46.3%	19
No	43.9%	18
Don't Know	9.8%	4
	Totals	41

Did your student provide input in the development of their IEP?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	40.5%	17
No	50.0%	21
Don't Know	9.5%	4
	Totals	42

	Agree	Disagree	Responses
The CSE team developed individualized goals related to postsecondary education, employment, independent living, and community participation for my child.	61	39	41
The CSE team identified transition services (for example, community service, independent living skills, etc.) to help my child.	42.5	57.5	40
My child's transition plan is preparing them for life after high school.	46.3	53.7	41

Were you asked if you would like to have an interpreter in CSE meetings?

Value	Percent	Count
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Yes	100.0%	7
	Totals	7

Was an interpreter provided at CSE meetings?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	85.7%	6
No, and I needed an interpreter	14.3%	1
	Totals	7

Did the interpretation provided at the CSE meetings help you understand the information discussed?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	100.0%	6
	Totals	6

Did you receive a translated IEP document?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	28.6%	2
No	71.4%	5
	Totals	7

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	Responses
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My child's IEP tells how progress towards goals will be measured.	71.4	20	8.6	105
I receive reports on my child's progress towards meeting his/her IEP goals.	69.5	22.9	7.6	105
My child is getting the amount and type of services that are listed in his/her IEP.	62.9	28.6	8.6	105
General education and special education teachers work together to assure that my child's IEP is being implemented.	62.9	18.1	19	105
My child's special education teacher(s) has/have high expectations for my child.	67.6	16.2	16.2	105
My child's general education teacher(s) has/have high expectations for my child.	59.6	14.4	26	104

	Agree	Disagree	Responses
Teachers communicate well with me.	80	20	105
Teachers respond to my concerns within a reasonable time.	88.7	11.3	106
I have a good working relationship with my child's teachers.	93.3	6.7	104

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	Responses
My child is a valued member of the school and is generally included in all academic and extracurricular activities.	67.9	19.8	12.3	106
My child feels safe at school.	76.2	17.1	6.7	105
The principal sets a positive and welcoming tone in the school.	73.1	10.6	16.3	104

The principal does everything possible to support appropriate special education services in the school.	55.2	20	24.8	105
There is an adequate number of staff to implement my child's IEP with consistency.	59.4	28.3	12.3	106

I am satisfied with my child's overall special education services.

Value	Percent
Agree	61.3%
Disagree	38.7%

Student Survey Results

Do you know why you are receiving special education services?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	26.0%	26
No	74.0%	74
	Totals	100

How do you know?

Value	Percent	Count
My teacher told me.	15.4%	4
My parent(s) told me.	57.7%	15
I attended a meeting about how I learn best and what help I need.	26.9%	7
	Totals	26

Have you ever been invited to a meeting to talk about how you learn?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	24.8%	25
No	75.2%	76
	Totals	101

Did you attend the meeting?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	87.5%	21

No	12.5%	3
	Totals	24

When you attended that meeting, did you feel comfortable?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	85.7%	18
No	14.3%	3
	Totals	21

When you were at the meeting, were you allowed to talk about things that you enjoy doing?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	95.2%	20
No	4.8%	1
	Totals	21

Were you able to talk about school work that is easy or hard for you?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	85.7%	18
No	14.3%	3
	Totals	21

Do you know what an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is?

Value	Percent	Count
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Yes	23.8%	24
No	76.2%	77
	Totals	101

Have you seen your IEP?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	14.7%	15
No	85.3%	87
	Totals	102

Do you know the goals that are listed in your IEP?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	9.8%	10
No	90.2%	92
	Totals	102

Do you know the accommodations or supports (example: extra time, test questions read to you) listed in your IEP?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	24.5%	25
No	75.5%	77
	Totals	102

Do you receive the services (example: speech therapy, physical therapy, reading support, vision services) listed in your IEP?

Value	Percent	Count
Always	6.9%	7
Most of the time	7.9%	8
Sometimes	9.9%	10
Rarely	5.9%	6
Not at all	69.3%	70
	Totals	101

If you feel you are not receiving an accommodation or service listed in your IEP, do you ask someone for help?

Value	Percent	Count
Yes	9.4%	8
No	31.8%	27
Don't know	58.8%	50
	Totals	85

What happens if you miss a therapy session?

Value	Percent	Count
The teacher or therapist schedules another time with me	17.8%	18
The teacher or therapist doesn't schedule another time with me	1.0%	1
Don't know	19.8%	20
This does not apply to me	61.4%	62

	Totals	101
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Think back on the past year and let us know how often the following statements are true.

	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Not at all	Responses
My teachers talk to me about what I want to do after I graduate from high school.	14.3%	11.4%	48.6%	14.3%	11.4%	35
My teachers talk to me about my career interests.	11.4%	11.4%	42.9%	22.9%	11.4%	35
What I am learning in high school will help me with what I want to do after I graduate.	27.0%	21.6%	24.3%	16.2%	10.8%	37

Think back on the past year and let us know how often the following statements are true.

	Always	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Not at all	Responses
I feel OK about asking my teacher questions about my IEP	18.1%	11.1%	20.8%	9.7%	40.3%	72
School staff (for example, teachers, transition coordinators, and counselors) talk with me about my IEP.	5.6%	5.6%	18.3%	11.3%	59.2%	71
My teachers have high expectations for me.	20.8%	29.2%	29.2%	8.3%	12.5%	72
My teachers talk with me about my progress in school.	15.3%	22.2%	38.9%	12.5%	11.1%	72
My IEP goals support my learning needs.	12.7%	11.3%	22.5%	11.3%	42.3%	71

My teachers are giving me the help I need.	42.5%	27.4%	21.9%	4.1%	4.1%	73
My teachers understand me and support me.	35.1%	31.1%	13.5%	9.5%	10.8%	74
I receive the help I need to do well in school.	40.8%	25.4%	21.1%	7.0%	5.6%	71
If I want, I can be in afterschool activities like clubs, sports, etc.	56.9%	22.2%	6.9%	4.2%	9.7%	72
Other students treat me fairly.	33.8%	39.4%	21.1%	4.2%	1.4%	71
I am welcomed, valued, and respected in school.	43.7%	32.4%	15.5%	7.0%	1.4%	71
I like school.	8.3%	20.8%	47.2%	13.9%	9.7%	72

I am getting skills that will help me be as independent as possible after high school.

Value	Percent	Count
Strongly agree	16.2%	12
Somewhat agree	59.5%	44
Somewhat disagree	6.8%	5
Strongly disagree	1.4%	1
Don't know	16.2%	12
	Totals	74



Solutions that Matter