West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District

Comprehensive Special Education Review

May 28, 2021

FINAL REPORT

PUBLIC CONSULTING GROUP

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Public Consulting Group (PCG) thanks the many individuals who contributed to this special education review, including its Superintendent, Dr. David Aderhold; its Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services, Mr. James Earle, its Director of Special Services, Ms. Karen Slagle; its special education supervisors; its building leaders; and its teachers. PCG also thanks the West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District Board of Education; its Special Education Parent Teacher Student Association (SEPTSA); its Special Education Parent Advisory Group (SEPAG); and the many parents and students who participated in interviews, focus groups and surveys.

INTRODUCTION

West Windsor Plainsboro Regional School District (WW-P) is a public-school district located in central New Jersey. It serves approximately 9,588 students ages 3-21 from two municipalities: West Windsor, NJ (Mercer County, NJ) and Plainsboro, NJ (Middlesex County, NJ). These communities, combined, have approximately 50,000 residents.[1] According to the district, its mission statement is:

> *Building upon our tradition of excellence, the mission of the West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District is to empower all learners to thoughtfully contribute to a diverse and changing world with confidence, strength of character, and love of learning.*

With an emphasis on social emotional wellbeing and cultural awareness, in 2017-18 the district adopted the slogan:

> *Whole Child, Every Child, Global Child.*

WW-P has ten schools within its district, including four elementary schools (PreK-3); two upper elementary schools (grades 4-5); two middle schools (grades 6-8) and two high schools (grades 9-12 and grades 9 to post-graduate).

EXHIBIT 1: SCHOOLS IN WW-P AND GRADES SERVED

School Name	Grades
West Windsor-Plainsboro High School South	9-12
West Windsor-Plainsboro High School North	9-PG
Thomas R Grover Middle School	6-8
Community Middle School	6-8
Dutch Neck Elementary School	K-3

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[1] West Windsor-Plainsboro High School North and South 2020 Profile, http://www.west-windsor-plainsboro.k12.nj.us/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=70173743

JVB Wicoff Elementary School	K-3
Maurice Hawk Elementary School	PK-3
Millstone River School	K-5
Town Center Elementary School at Plainsboro	PK-2
Village Elementary School	PK-5

Changing Student Body

In WW-P approximately 931 students ages 5-21 and 56 students ages 3-5 are classified as having a disability and subsequently have an IEP.[2] Its classification rate is approximately 9.3%, well below the state's rate of 17.4%. Excluding charter schools and including vocational-technical schools, WW-P has the 14th lowest special education classification rate in New Jersey.[3]

One unique attribute of WW-P is that the majority of students within the district, 71.4%, identify as Asian; whereas 17.6% identify as White; 4.8% identify as Black or African American; and 4.4% identify as Hispanic. The racial composition of WW-P's students has changed over the past ten years, most significantly among its Asian population, which only comprised of 44% of the student population in 2007. This shift is presently even more evident at the elementary school level. For example, in the 2019-20 school year, 82% of the student population at JVB Wicoff Elementary School identifies itself as Asian.

This shift is also reflected in the languages spoken at home of students in WW-P. It is reported that during the 2019-20 school year, 51.2% of students home language was English; 19.3% reported as Other Languages; 9% reported as Telugu; 8.7% reported as Hindi; 6.3% reported as Chinese; and 5.5% reported as Tamil.[4]

These population changes bring a great richness to the community. It also brings an enhanced need for overall cultural awareness, also known as cultural competence: the ability to understand, appreciate and interact with people from cultures or belief systems different from one's own.[5] This is especially true as it relates to the multi-cultural families of children receiving special education services.

Community that Prides Itself in Learning

The townships within WW-P are considered upper middle class communities with a median household income of $130,938, where 4.8% of WW-P students are categorized as Economically Disadvantaged.[6] "The townships are located at the midpoint between the metropolitan areas of New York City and Philadelphia, and contain one of America's leading research centers, serving as home to such technological leaders as the David Sarnoff Research Center, Merrill Lynch, and FMC Corporation."[7] The area has been recognized in several publications as one of the top suburban communities in the area. Influenced by the high number of well-educated professionals residing in the area, WW-P "…is a community that prides in its continuing tradition of academic and cultural achievement."[8] Furthermore, the residents of the community are noted for being well educated. In 2019, Plainsboro ranked as being the 15th "most educated" community in New Jersey.[9]

WW-P is widely known throughout New Jersey for its academic excellence. The US News and World Report publication consistently gives WW-P's high schools high marks. WW-P High School North is

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[2] October 15, 2019 Student Count, New Jersey Department of Education
[3] https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/data/2019/Lea_classification_Pub.xlsx
[4] NJ School Performance Report, 2018-19:
https://rc.doe.state.nj.us/report.aspx?type=district&lang=english&county=21&district=5715&schoolyear=2018-2019
[5] https://www.apa.org/monitor/2015/03/cultural-competence
[6] NJ School Performance Report, 2018-19:
https://rc.doe.state.nj.us/report.aspx?type=district&lang=english&county=21&district=5715&schoolyear=2018-2019
[7] http://www.west-windsor-plainsboro.k12.nj.us/about_us
[8] Id.
[9] https://www.nj.com/news/g66l-2019/01/359de4a7307592/the-25-most-educated-towns-in-nj-ranked.html

ranked 27th in the United States for its STEM initiatives and as the 14th best high school in New Jersey.[10] WW-P High School South is ranked 85th for its STEM initiatives and as the 20th best high school in New Jersey.[11] In 2019, WW-P South's participation in the Science Olympiad National Tournament led to its winning the highly coveted Corteva Enterprise Award (formerly known as the duPont Team Enterprise Award).[12] Approximately 21 percent of the 729-member senior class earned National Merit finalist, semifinalist or commended scholar status, while approximately 94 percent of the graduates continue their education with 90 percent going on to four-year colleges.[13]

District Culture of Self-Reflection

According to district administration, it is a common practice for departments within the district to undergo program reviews such as this one. For example, during 2011-12, the district conducted a program review of its English Language Arts program. During 2003 and 2019-20, the district conducted program reviews of its Physical Education program and during 2015, the district conducted a program review of its Gifted and Talented program. WW-P's Special Education Department is no exception to this. The district engaged a consultant to conduct a special education program review in 2009 and again in 2011.   The district's practice of engaging in ongoing self-reflection and programmatic improvement is commendable.

Opportunities and Challenges in Special Education

According to district administration, WW-P has worked to increase and enhance its continuum of services for students with disabilities over the last ten years. Such investments include:
- an increase in the number of In Class Resource Support (ICR) classrooms with co-taught instruction for all grades;
- an investment in supporting language based learning disabilities through the certification of staff through the Orton Gillingam Program;
- the addition of two teacher resource specialists for reading intervention, one of which is an Orton Gillingham Fellow; and
- an increase in the supports for Autism programming

According to the administration, these measures have improved student outcomes of students with disabilities and has allowed more students to receive their Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) by attending schools within their home district versus being served out-of-district. And these financial and human resource investments, especially in supporting language based learning differences through comprehensive staff training and student programming are commendable.

Parent Satisfaction

PCG administered a parent survey with a response rate of over 23% (277) of families whose children have IEPs. The responses to the survey are generally positive toward the special education services received, the student progress being shared, and the overall student and parent experience of special education programming in WW-P. However, among the parent focus groups there were parents who shared negative experiences.

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[10] West Windsor-Plainsboro High School North in Plainsboro, NJ - US News Best High Schools, https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/new-jersey/districts/west-windsor-plainsboro-regional-school-district/west-windsor-plainsboro-high-school-north-12815

[11] West Windsor-Plainsboro High School South in West Windsor, NJ - US News Best High Schools, https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/new-jersey/districts/west-windsor-plainsboro-regional-school-district/west-windsor-plainsboro-high-school-south-12816

[12] Id.

[13] West Windsor-Plainsboro High School North and South 2020 Profile, http://www.west-windsor-plainsboro.k12.nj.us/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=70173743

Multi-cultural Awareness: Supporting Families of Children with IEPs

Another area this report will explore is the district's cultural awareness around supporting the needs of families with IEPs. As stated earlier, the district has seen a change in its population, with a notable increase of children whose families identify as Asian. A body of scholarly research has emerged over the past two decades on this topic, primarily focused on cultural responsiveness respective to (1) special education referral; (2) classification; and (3) academic expectations of first-generation Asian families of children with IEPs.[14]

Changing Leadership

The district's Director of Special Education will be retiring effective November 2021.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

In October 2019, through a competitive bidding process, Public Consulting Group (PCG) of Princeton, NJ was awarded a contract to conduct a review of WW-P's special education program.

This report describes the current state of the special education program in WW-P and is designed to: (1) inform program implementation; (2) determine gaps; and (3) offer recommendations for the continued improvement of the WW-P's special education programs and services.   Through specifications outlined within WW-P's RFP, PCG created and aligned a series of guiding research questions.

EXHIBIT 2: PCG GUIDING QUESTIONS AND WW-P RFP SPECIFICATIONS

PCG Guiding Questions	WW-P RFP Specifications
• **How is the District's continuum of services organized to support a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE)?**	• *Program Offerings / Continuum of Services* • *Special Education Code NJAC 6A;14 (Monitoring and Compliance)* • *Professional Development*
• **To what degree do students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum?**	• *Program Offerings / Continuum of Services* • *Special Education Code NJAC 6A;14 (Monitoring and Compliance)*
• **How are inclusive practices employed?**	• *Consistency in Procedure* • *Program Offerings / Continuum of Services* • *Special Education Code NJAC 6A;14 (Monitoring and Compliance)*
• **To what extent does WW-P organize and utilize its human capital resources to provide adequate services for students with disabilities to support student learning outcomes?**	• *Consistency in Procedure* • *Process & Programming, and Articulation Between Schools* • *Resources*
• **How has WW-P's school and district leadership fostered a culture that is focused on improving outcomes and post-**	• *Consistency in Procedure* • *Process & Programming and Articulation Between Schools* • *Parent Relations Professional*

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[14] Nguyen, Quynh and Hughes, Margaret (2013) "Perspectives of Asian American Parents towards Children with Disabilities and Their Educational Programs," The Journal of Special Education Apprenticeship: Vol. 2 : No. 2 , Article 4.; Cho, J. (2009). Cultural patterns of parental beliefs and involvement of mothers of children with autism spectrum disorders. Pro Quest Information & Learning. Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences, 69(10); Chan, S., & Lee, E. (2004). Families with Asian roots. In E. W. Lynch, & M. J. Hansen (Eds.). Developing cross-cultural competency: A guide for working with children and their families (pp. 219-298).Baltimore, ML: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

secondary preparation?	Development
• **To what extent does WW-P meet the needs of students with disabilities and their families in the area of compliance with state and federal regulations?**	• *Special Education Code NJAC 6A:14 (Monitoring and Compliance)* • *Professional Development*

METHODOLOGY

The WW-P special education program review was designed before the COVID-19 Global Pandemic impacted the operations of school districts. It was originally expected that PCG would complete this special education program review by the end of the 2019-20 school year. However, due to the complications caused by the pandemic, adjustments to the review methodology were required.

The pandemic limited traditional physical access to school buildings, staff, and parents. In addition, the circumstances involving health and safety changed daily. The WW-P administration should be recognized for their response to this crisis, as well as maintaining on-going collaborative engagement with PCG for the purposes of continuing this review. Because of their ongoing focus and participation, most evaluation activities (e.g., interviews, focus groups and classroom visits) were implemented as planned, but via a virtual platform. With the collaboration of the WW-P administration, dedicated staff, and families, the shift from an on-site to virtual context was nearly seamless and did not affect the ability or quality of this program review.

Central to this program review was the recognition that special education is infused within the overall provisions of general education and must be compatible with district systems of accountability. From December 2019 through May 2021, PCG conducted this study with revisions in timelines, a shift from in-person to virtual meetings, and a change in classroom visit protocols.

Mixed-Method Approach to Evaluation Data

The overall research design used in this program and system evaluation may be characterized as a collaborative non-experimental, or even naturalistic, program study within which a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis was implemented, often referred to as mixed methods. This methodological diversity allowed for a variety of data collection initiatives, both qualitative and quantitative, to be identified using the parameters of the stated research questions. This enabled PCG to assure the rigor of the review included impact, process, and outcomes.

Qualitative Methods

This review of special education services within WW-P used a robust qualitative approach with an emphasis on formative program evaluation. The evaluation data has four sources: *semi-structured interviews* (including focus groups), *classroom visits*, *surveys* (including parents and staff), and *document review* (i.e. policies and procedural manuals). These qualitative sources of data are the most frequently used within program evaluations. In particular, interviews are used to identify information that cannot be directly observed.[15] 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 WW-P's special education programs and services.

Subjects who were selected to be interviewed or participate in small focus groups (3-6 participants) were identified using recognized sampling procedures. *Information-rich cases* and *homogenous samples* were used as the primary approach to choosing those to be included in the interviews/focus groups. In addition, under certain circumstances or discovery, *extreme case* sampling was used to

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[15] Patton, Michael Quinn. 2002. Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods. 3rd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

yield information regarding any stark contrast between constituent groups and to develop a theory or explanation of potentially different impressions.

Data Analysis

Data was collected from a variety of sources using different methods, thereby, strengthening the conclusions by comparing the range of information obtained from independent sources and exploring any inconsistencies via triangulation. Therefore, the findings, commendations, and recommendations related to programs, policies, and practices resulted from a comprehensive analysis of a variety of data sources. In addition, the overall analysis drew from the most current research and practice literature, as well as up to date interpretations of state and federal laws/regulations to inform the findings and recommendations.

Data and Document 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. Data included in the report also compare students with IEPs to their general education peers.

In addition, PCG reviewed nearly 150 district-provided documents for information related to district and school structures, programs, policies, and practices. Documents reviewed were in the following general categories:

- Quantitative Data
    - Student Level data
    - Graduation rate, dropout rate, and exit rate
    - Achievement
    - Personnel
- Qualitative Data
    - Organization
    - Instruction
    - Improvement planning
    - Multi Tiered systems of support (MTSS)
    - Referrals
    - Setting
    - Interventions
    - Configuration of programs
    - Instructional supports
    - Professional development
    - Staffing Allocations
    - Related Services
    - Paraprofessionals
    - Standard Operating Procedures
    - Due Process
    - Parent Engagement
    - Accountability
    - Collective Bargaining Agreements

Focus Groups and Interviews

On February 6, 2020, PCG met in-person and convened a kick-off with key stakeholders including principals, assistant principals, cabinet members, and union leaders to discuss the program review and to articulate the manner by which focus groups, interviews, file reviews, and classroom visits would occur.

Between April 15, 2020 to May 6, 2020, PCG conducted 25 interviews and focus groups which included two board members; 10 building administrators; over 65 registered parents; 16 content supervisors; and five cabinet members. Three additional parent focus groups occurred remotely on April 23, 2020; January 19, 2021; and January 20, 2021 with over 50 parents registered. On March 10, 2021, 9 students registered in a remote student focus group.

PCG worked closely with WW-P to determine the best outreach and communication methods for focus group and interview participation. This was especially important when adjustments to the schedule were made as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. PCG provided a sample schedule and list of positions required to participate. Student file review focus groups for special education teachers and related service providers were scheduled during the school day. The district also sent an announcement to parents/families inviting them to participate in focus group sessions.

Within this report, no focus group or interview participants are personally referred to, although position titles may be referenced in some cases when necessary for contextual reasons.

In order 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. Supervisors did not participate in the same focus group or interview sessions with their subordinates in order to give all staff an opportunity to speak candidly.

Student File Review Focus Groups

On January 26 and 27, 2021, PCG conducted five file review focus groups. Each group included approximately five WW-P Child Study Team (CST) members. PCG conducted a series of student-centered file review focus groups that allowed for conversation about school-based practices and a review of multiple IEPs and IEP progress reports. Through this records review, PCG addressed several themes related to special education management, student identification, programs and services, instruction and staffing, while addressing specific process questions about the development of IEPs, their implementation, and documentation. Participants included special education teachers and related service providers and individuals who both knew, and did not know, the student.

Student records were selected at random by PCG and included a wide cross-section of schools, ages, gender, and disability categories. It also included a combination of students with disabilities who were English Learners and those who were not. Approximately 3-4 student records were discussed during each focus group session.

Classroom Visits

For all students, including those with IEPs, to meet high academic standards and fully demonstrate their knowledge and skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening and mathematics, their instruction must be flexible, yet challenging, and incorporate scaffolds and accommodations to overcome potential learning barriers. It is essential that the curriculum be designed to enable all students to successfully access and engage in learning without changing or reducing instructional goals.

In order to meet the needs of all diverse learners in the classroom, it is important to implement Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in the general education classroom as solid core instruction, Differentiated Instruction, Accommodations and Modifications, and Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) to support the access and success of the learners. Implementing such a balanced mix of appropriate supports while maintaining the integrity of the curriculum can be challenging but needed to support diverse learners. It is for these reasons that classroom visits are such an important part of the PCG special education review process.

On October 19-21 and December 7-16, 2020, PCG engaged in 35 remote classroom visits. PCG worked with WW-P administration to assure that it was visiting a representative sample of the learning environments of students with IEPs. Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic and its impact on

instructional environment, PCG visited all classrooms remotely in classroom settings that included both hybrid, virtual, and in-person instruction.

PCG's observation process narrows the targets of the observation to include practices considered essential to the effective instruction of students with IEPs; are easily observable; and includes a pre/post teacher discussion to support the accuracy of PCG visitor impressions. PCG's classroom visits sought evidence of the presence and implementation of:

> (1) Elements of Universal Design for Learning / Differentiation of Content, Process and Product;
>
> (2) Use / Evidence of a System of Tiered Support;
>
> (3) Implementation of Accommodations;
>
> (4) Specially-Designed Instruction;
>
> (5) Inclusive Instructional Special Education Practices; and
>
> (6) Co-Teaching Practices.

PCG's process is designed in a similar manner to the Harvard University Clinical Supervision Model that assures that the teacher is included in the observation process and remains fully aware of what the observers are looking to validate. However, in no way were PCG's observations designed for supervision purposes, they were not evaluative in nature, and classroom visit notes were not viewed by WW-P staff either during or after classroom visits occurred.

Targeted Parent and Staff Surveys

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 IEPs were evident in WW-P.

The district reviewed the survey items to verify their relevance and to add items where appropriate.

The parent and staff surveys 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).

The district worked collaboratively with the PCG team to facilitate a survey process that would result in the highest possible rate of return. In order to encourage participation, all potential participants were informed of the purpose of the survey and provided with instructions for accessing the survey online. An invitation letter was drafted, and two reminder emails were sent to parents as well as a reminder directly from the district.

The parent survey was administered on June 15, 2020 and was open for two weeks. The following outreach methods were used for the parent survey:

- Emails went out to 1,178 emails in a first attempt.
- Two reminders were sent to parents
- The district sent a message to each recipient reminding them of the survey and encouraging them to look in spam/junk folders.

- A total of 277 surveys were completed which was an approximate response rate of 23.5%[16]. Characteristics of survey respondents are included in the Appendix.

Parents and staff who chose not to participate in the surveys were also invited to anonymously submit feedback via email to programreviewfeedback@pcgus.com. PCG received a total of 12 emails regarding WW-P special education programming; all emails were from parents. This email account was open from May 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021.

The staff survey was administered on March 1, 2021 and was open for two weeks. All educators, including general education teachers, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, related service providers, and building administrators, received a link to the survey. Two reminder emails were sent to all WW-P educators.

Four hundred forty-three educators participated in the staff survey. Of those, 107 were special education teachers; 102 were general education teachers; 98 were paraprofessionals; and 17 were related service providers. Approximately 88% of all special education teachers participated in the survey and approximately 15% of all general education teachers participated in the survey.[17] The special education teacher participation rate is especially commendable given this survey was administered during building closures coupled with hybrid and virtual instruction caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

REPORT STRUCTURE

The following chart maps the research questions to the most pertinent sections of the report. The report begins with a review of the student-centered focus of teaching/learning and progresses to examine the ways in which WW-P operates to support this essential function. It is intentionally structured in this manner in order to group interrelated topics together. As such, some answers to research questions are covered across several sections, as noted below.

EXHIBIT 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND REPORT STRUCTURE

Research Questions	Report Chapter					
	II. Pre-Referral, Referral, Eligibility and Child Find	III. Teaching, Learning, and Special Education Support	IV. Social Emotional Support for Students with Disabilities	V. Special Education Department Organization and Personnel	VI. Parent Engagement	VII. Special Education Compliance and Due Process
How is the District's continuum of services organized to support a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE)?	X				X	
To what degree do students with disabilities have		X			X	

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access to the general education curriculum?						
How are inclusive practices employed?	X	X		X		
To what extent does WW-P organize and utilize its human capital resources to provide adequate services for students with disabilities to support student learning outcomes?				X	X	
How has WW-P's school and district leadership fostered a culture that is focused on improving outcomes and post-secondary preparation?				X	X	
To what extent does WW-P meet the needs of students with disabilities and their families in the area of compliance with state and federal regulations?						X

Each chapter of the report includes highlighted commendations and opportunities. The final chapter of this report offers actionable recommendations.

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. We follow a mixed methods Collaborative Program Evaluation model that is systematic, based upon both qualitative and quantitative data, and produces credible and valid data that proactively informs program implementation, determines gaps, and offers recommendations for the continued improvement of the program.[18] We value the importance of developing trust, open communication, and fostering collaboration between the review team and program staff.

Our philosophy for guiding the transformation of special education in schools and districts is driven by the U.S. Department of Education's Results Driven Accountability (RDA) framework and rooted in key tenets of the Schoolwide Integrated Framework Transformation (SWIFT) model.

Results Driven Accountability

In 2013, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) recognized that the educational outcomes of children and youth with disabilities have not improved as much as expected even with intensive federal regulatory oversight and funding provided to address closing achievement gaps. The Department subsequently announced movement toward prioritizing improvement of outcomes for students with disabilities, from a one-size-fits-all, compliance-focused approach to general supervision to a more balanced system that looks at results and outcomes.[19] This approach, known as Results Driven Accountability (RDA), is consistent with the IDEA, which requires the primary focus of monitoring to be on improving educational results and functional outcomes for students with disabilities, and ensuring that states meet IDEA program requirements. RDA fulfills these requirements by bringing into focus the educational results and functional outcomes for students with disabilities while balancing those results with the compliance requirements of

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[18] Donis-Keller, C., Meltzer, J., and Chmielewski, E. (2013). The Power of Collaborative Program Evaluation, A PCG Education White Paper. Available from http://www.publicconsultinggroup.com/media/1272/pcg_collaborative_evaluation.pdf
[19] April 5, 2012, RDA Summary, U.S. Department of Education. https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/rda-summary.doc

IDEA.[20] When providing guidance to school districts, PCG offers recommendations that strike this balance as well.

Schoolwide Integrated Framework Transformation (SWIFT) Model

Based on research related to the improvement of achievement and social/emotional outcomes for students with disabilities, the SWIFT model has received recognition by and support from OSEP. SWIFT refocuses existing traditional educational approaches to general and special education and expands inclusiveness for students covered by Title 1, those from low-income backgrounds and English Learners (ELs).

According to researchers and practitioners at the University of Kansas, and as validated by members of the PCG review team's experience working with districts nationally, there are six critical issues facing public schools, especially chronically low-performing schools, which have suppressed academic and social/emotional outcomes for students and must be addressed to reverse this trend: 1) fragmented support "silos" and lack of family partnership with schools; 2) achievement gaps between subgroups of students based on social, language and/or disability characteristics; 3) lack of student engagement and behavior that impedes learning; 4) lack of implementation of both systems level and student-level evidence-based interventions with fidelity; 5) lack of knowledge sharing and resource availability; and 6) lack of sustainability and replication of successful schoolwide models of inclusive education.

SWIFT's five core domains for school and district improvement are backed by research and growing evidence that addressing the above six issues is critical for improving outcomes for SWDs. The domains include a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), which provides interventions and support for students at varied levels of intensity and focuses on the importance of good first teaching, and a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) curriculum and instruction. It aims to build school capacity to provide academic and behavioral support to improve outcomes for all students through equity-based inclusion. The domains, in detail, are:

> **Administrative Leadership**. A deeply engaged administrative leadership that is committed to transformative inclusive education.
> **Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)**. Use of a MTSS where all academic and behavioral instruction is delivered through a schoolwide data-driven system utilizing universal design at all grade levels.
> **Integrated Educational Framework**. A strong and positive school culture creates an atmosphere in which everyone feels like they belong. To the extent possible, all students participate in the general education curriculum instruction and activities of their grade level peers. Schools embrace ways to redefine roles of paraeducators and teaching assistants to support all students.
> **Family/Community Partnerships**. Family and community partnerships are formed, and families are actively engaged in both the organizational makeup of the school as well as their child's education.
> **Inclusive Policy Structure & Practice**. District-level support and integrated policy structure are fully aligned and remove barriers and misconceptions surrounding implementation.

In addition, PCG emphasizes the need for intentional support that takes into consideration students' linguistic and cultural diversity. Districtwide and schoolwide practices based on these components provide a practitioner-focused, research-based, and federally recognized approach to improving academic/social emotional outcomes for all students, including students with disabilities and other students who have not achieved at or above expected levels of proficiency.

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[20] *Id.*

II. PRE-REFERRAL, REFERRAL, ELIGIBILITY, AND CHILD FIND

Strengths	Opportunities
• As reported by the district, WW-P is currently in the initial planning stages for a multi-tiered system of behavior support with the goal of establishing a collaborative team approach that allows all students to be successful academically, socially, and emotionally in the least restrictive environment by making meaningful progress as determined by multiple assessments, data analysis, and researched based interventions. • The district has three Board Certified Behavior Analysts dedicated to supporting the needs of students with disabilities and two for typically developing students. • WW-P offers a wide array of programs to meet the needs of students with IEPs, including students with low incidence disabilities • According to survey data, parents are generally satisfied with programs. • District is 100% in compliance with NJDOE regarding disproportionality.	• Continued expansion of tiered system of support across the district. • Continued internal monitoring and application of risk ratio to ensure the district is taking steps to avoid future disproportionality citation. As noted in this section, Black or African American students were close to five times more likely to be identified with a Learning Disability, over four times more likely to be identified with an Emotional Regulation Impairment, and three times more likely to be identified with a Speech/Language impairment. Hispanic students were four and a half times more likely to be identified with a learning disability. White students were four and a half times more likely to be identified with an Emotional Regulation Impairment and four times as likely to be identified with Other Health Impairment. • Further study of if/how elective course scheduling interruptions occur for students with IEPs due to special education services occurring at the same time. • Further attention to including both parental concerns and parental feedback in PLAAFP when determined appropriate by the IEP team.

PRE-REFERRAL

In New Jersey, when a child is identified as possibly having a disability, their matter is referred to the district's special education administration who then subsequently refer it to the district's Child Study Team (CST). Referrals may be submitted by instructional, administrative and other professional staff of the local school district, or parents and state agencies, including the New Jersey Department of Education.[21] However, prior to referral, should a child be struggling in school, the district may engage in an intervention process whereby data is collected to determine if additional supports and/or a referral is warranted.

Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS)

As stated in code, interventions in the general education setting are to be provided to students exhibiting academic difficulties and are to be utilized, as appropriate, prior to referring a student for an evaluation of eligibility for special education and related services.[22] When it is determined through

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[21] N.J.A.C. 6A:10A-3.3(a)3ii
[22] N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.3

analysis of relevant documentation and data concerning each intervention utilized that interventions in the general education program have not adequately addressed the educational difficulties and it is believed that the student may have a disability, the student shall be referred for an evaluation to determine eligibility for special education programs and services.[23] In New Jersey, the staff of the general education program are required to maintain written documentation, including data setting forth the type of interventions utilized, the frequency and duration of each intervention, and the effectiveness of each intervention.[24]

The New Jersey State Board of Education adopted rules in April 2001 to provide district boards of education with standards for the delivery of Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS).[25] The requirements set forth in these regulations are intended to provide schools with direction in formulating coordinated services and team delivery systems to address the full range of student learning, behavior, and health problems in the general education program. I&RS is designed to be a student support service approach that helps school-based staff and parents address "early identification and intervention of problems at the elementary, middle and high school levels."[26] Under these regulations, New Jersey schools have the flexibility to choose the most appropriate team configuration to perform I&RS services for their buildings. In addition, they have the flexibility to choose appropriate interventions.

I&RS regulations in New Jersey pre-date the national movement toward a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework.[27] However, the intent of the work is aligned: to provide a "coordinated, formal, and well-articulated system of supportive activities and services for staff who have identified student difficulties and those who will be involved in the amelioration of the identified educational concerns."[28]

Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) in WW-P

According to data gathered from interviews and focus groups with special education administration as well as IEP file review focus groups, I&RS teams are operating in all the district's schools. However, based on interviews with the leadership from each building, the teams are inconsistent in the manner they operate across schools. In particular, the interviewees noted inconsistencies with written documentation, including data setting forth the type of interventions utilized, the frequency and duration of each intervention, and the effectiveness of each intervention.

During focus groups, all WW-P principals indicated that I&RS is typically the first step in the pre-referral process for a student who is academically struggling and who may eventually be referred to the Child Study Team. However, principals indicated that in the upper grades, school counselors are more involved in this process. In addition, every principal noted that parents will often directly refer their children for IEP services instead of requesting I&RS interventions; they shared this is especially true when parents have had private evaluations conducted before seeking the referral for special education services. One principal referenced the addition of an *I&RS Point of Contact* as a significant

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[23] Id.

[24] Id.

[25] The regulations state that Districts must "… establish and implement a coordinated system in each school building for the planning and delivery of intervention and referral services that are designed to assist students who are experiencing learning, behavior, or health difficulties…" [N.J.A.C. 6A: 16-7.1(a)]; and which are designed to: "…assist staff who have difficulties in addressing students' learning, behavior, or health needs." [N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1(a)].

[26] I&RS Resource Manual. In February 2014, the New Jersey State Board of Education re-adopted *N.J.A.C.* 6A:16, with amendment to the regulations at *N.J.A.C.* 6A:16-8 that establish intervention and referral services (I&RS). The 2008 I&RS manual is being updated to reflect these changes and will be posted to the state's website upon completion.

[27] RTI is a systemic, multi-tier approach to help support students with learning and behavior needs and seeks to prevent academic failure through early identification, frequent progress monitoring, and increasingly intensive research-based instructional interventions for children who continue to struggle. The RTI method was developed as an alternative to the discrepancy-model, which requires children to exhibit a discrepancy between their ability (as measured by their IQ) and their demonstrated academic achievement (http://www.rtinetwork.org/).

[28] I&RS Resource Manual.

improvement to the system. However, the principals indicated this does not occur in all the schools within the district.

The elementary schools each seem to have their own process of monitoring student developmental and academic progress. The elementary principals referred to the New Jersey Early Childhood Grant that supports identifying struggling students. In addition, the middle and high school principals referred to the I&RS system as the formal child find vehicle.

Principals shared the following statements about I&RS and prereferral:

- "School counselors have weekly meetings with the teams; and concerns are discussed, if these concerns persist the child is referred to I&RS."
- "It generates through the counselors to the CST and then parents are informed as well as the I&RS process is initiated."
- "It spans across a variety of ways; we often get the parent referrals, then the next is the I&RS process, which occurs after the teacher has tried interventions without success."
- "Our I&RS team always has a CST member present and there is a "Point of contact" assigned from the I&RS team who helps the teacher."

According to district administration, CST staff members are formally added to all I&RS teams. In addition, the district administration shared there is continual training of CST staff by administrators in CST, district-wide, and grade level department meetings and on maintaining and implementing consistent criteria for determining classification eligibility. Furthermore, the district shared there is annual I&RS training for all staff.

According to teacher survey data:

- Over 91% of special education teachers and over 92% of general education teachers reported they strongly agree or agree with the statement that they are aware of available interventions that should be implemented prior to a CST referral.
- In addition, over 80% of special education teachers and over 88% of general education teachers reported they strongly agree or agree with the statement they feel confident that multiple general education interventions are trialed with data taken and analyzed over a significant length of time prior to referring a student for a special education evaluation.
- Over 73% of general education teachers agreed or strongly agreed they fully understand the steps and timelines associated with the referral process; however, over 20% disagreed.

A parent shared the following about the district's pre-referral protocols within the open response of the survey:

- "My son's…teacher recognized his disabilities and called for an IR&S team to have him evaluated. We are grateful that he was evaluated when he was and steps were taken to help him. His Child Study Team…were very thorough, informative, kind and supportive. They all did an amazing job."

However, during parent focus groups, many parents cited a lack of transparency around access to intervention data prior to referral for special education services. It is important to note, however, that many of the parents who raised concerns about a lack of prereferral data collection also indicated they referred their child directly for a special education evaluation.

Multi Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

The provision of instruction/interventions and support to students within a framework of Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) improves educational outcomes for all students.[29] The framework focuses on prevention and the early identification of students who may benefit from instructional and behavioral interventions, as well as acceleration that remove barriers to learning.[30] When implemented as intended, MTSS leads to increased academic achievement by supporting rigorous core instruction and strategic/targeted interventions, and improved student behavior. Furthermore, the framework has been successfully used to support a reduction in disproportionate special education referrals of students based on race, gender, or EL subgroups. MTSS will have increased relevance in the 2021-22 school year when students are returning to school following the global COVID-19 pandemic and may be struggling from learning loss. MTSS will serve as a valuable tool to support the overidentification of disabilities among struggling learners whose issues were exacerbated by COVID-related learning loss.

Reflecting on the growing recognition of MTSS as a system wide framework for supporting student achievement and positive behavior, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) includes MTSS as a permissible usage of Title I funds. The Act defines MTSS as "a comprehensive continuum of evidence- based, systemic practices to support a rapid response to students' needs, with regular observation to facilitate data-based instructional decision-making."[31] MTSS provides an overall framework for structuring and coordinating the provision of core instruction along with the additional behavioral supports, such as behavior modifications or mental health supports. MTSS is centered on a tiered system of support, where every student receives high quality core instruction, known as Tier 1. Some students need supplemental instruction, which is referred to as Tier 2, and a small cohort of students receive the most intensive intervention and supports, known as Tier 3. Movement among these tiers should be fluid. A student with acute needs does not need to progress through the tiers to get individualized support, and a student who needs extra support should not miss general instruction that is provided in Tier 1.

Under the MTSS framework, core instruction is evidence-based, rigorous and of high quality. By utilizing a universal design for learning system, learning differences are considered proactively rather than reactively. The instruction is culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate and is implemented with integrity for all students. The framework is based on a presumption that some students require additional instruction in order to achieve grade level standards. Increasingly intensive tiers of academic and social/emotional support are targeted to meet student needs based on data-based problem-solving and decision-making; instruction is adjusted to continually improve both student performance and the rate at which it progresses. Furthermore, the process is used to assess (using student responses to the instruction) the effectiveness of the tiered instruction/interventions being implemented. Many states have established intervention systems that align to the core tenets of the MTSS process and branded them accordingly. In New Jersey, MTSS has been adopted as the New Jersey Tiered System of Support (NJTSS).

MTSS in New Jersey

NJTSS is a framework of academic and behavioral supports and interventions to improve student achievement based on the core components of multi tiered systems of support (MTSS) and the three tier prevention logic of Response to Intervention (RtI). It builds upon the Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) model and gives schools a structure to meet the academic, health, enrichment, and social emotional needs of all students. The tiered system involves the systematic development of

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[29] See the Council of the Great City School's document, Common Core State Standards and Diverse Students: Using Multi-Tiered Systems of Support that outlines the key components of an integrated, multi-tiered system of instruction, interventions, and academic and behavioral supports needed by school districts in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The document is applicable also to school districts in states that have not adopted these standards.
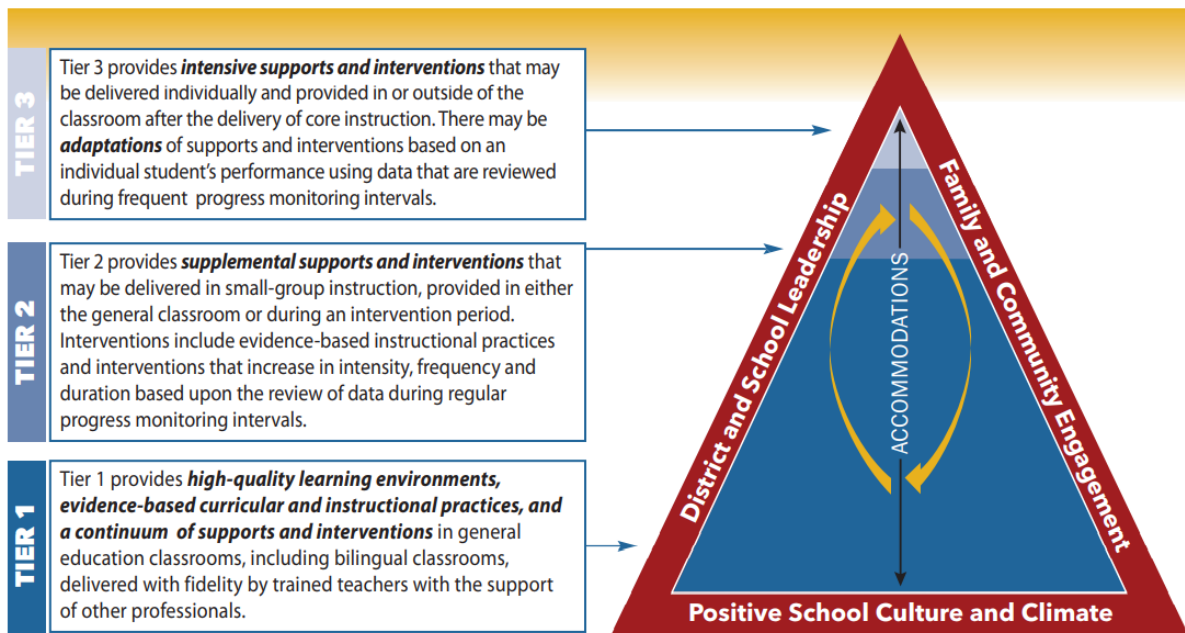
[30] MTSS reflects the merger of response to instruction/intervention (RTI2), which typically focuses on academic achievement, and a system used to focus on improving positive behavior support.

[31] Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as reauthorized in 2015.

nine essential components in schools for the effective implementation of the framework with fidelity and sustainability. Those components include:

- Effective district and school leadership;
- Family and community engagement;
- Positive school culture and climate;
- High-quality learning environments, curricula, and instructional practices;
- Universal screening;
- Data-based decision making;
- Collaborative problem solving teams
- Progress monitoring; and
- Staff professional development.[32]

EXHIBIT 4: NEW JERSEY TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT MODEL

Tier 3 provides *intensive supports and interventions* that may be delivered individually and provided in or outside of the classroom after the delivery of core instruction. There may be *adaptations* of supports and interventions based on an individual student's performance using data that are reviewed during frequent progress monitoring intervals.

Tier 2 provides *supplemental supports and interventions* that may be delivered in small-group instruction, provided in either the general classroom or during an intervention period. Interventions include evidence-based instructional practices and interventions that increase in intensity, frequency and duration based upon the review of data during regular progress monitoring intervals.

Tier 1 provides *high-quality learning environments, evidence-based curricular and instructional practices, and a continuum of supports and interventions* in general education classrooms, including bilingual classrooms, delivered with fidelity by trained teachers with the support of other professionals.

The three tiers of supports and interventions are bolstered by effective school and district leadership committed to the implementation of the system, a positive school culture and climate that is conducive for learning, and family and community engagement in the development and implementation of the framework. Across all tiers, some students may require accommodations that provide access to instruction. These supports are not contingent upon a student's level of instructional support but are necessary to access content and achieve meaningful participation in the instruction.

Tiered System of Support in WW-P

WW-P's tiered system of support falls under the Office of Counseling, Health, and Wellness. According to WW-P administration, during the 2019-2020 school year, WW-P added two general education Board Certified Behavioral Analysts (BCBA), also known as Teacher Resource Specialists, to support general education staff in managing student behaviors.   According to district administration, as part of a district wide needs assessment, administrators, counselors/CST (including special services BCBA's), and teachers were consulted to provide feedback regarding behavioral supports, needs, and challenges. Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) data was also analyzed to gain further insight regarding interventions and accommodations provided within the general education setting. According to district administration, this feedback was critical in shaping the role of the BCBA / TRS which is to build staff capacity through individual consultations, professional

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[32] New Jersey Tiered Systems of Support, https://www.state.nj.us/education/njtss/brief.pdf

development, and I&RS articulation. According to administration, WW-P is currently in the initial planning stage for a multi-tiered system of behavior support with the goal of establishing a collaborative team approach that allows all students to be successful academically, socially, and emotionally in the least restrictive environment by making meaningful progress as determined by multiple assessments, data analysis, and researched based interventions.

According to teacher survey data:

- Over 73% of special education teachers reported they agree or strongly agree that their school provides enough Tier 1 general education reading intervention support. (Tier 1 means all students receive high-quality, scientifically based instruction provided by qualified General Education personnel in general education). However, over 20% responded they did not know. For general education teachers, over 85% agreed or strongly agreed that their school provides enough Tier 1 general education reading intervention support, but over 20% did not know.
- Over 66% of special educators and over 55% of general education teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their school provides enough Tier 1 math intervention support; however, over 20% of special education teachers did not know and over 24% of general education teachers did not know.

REFERRAL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Following a referral for special education services, the parent or guardian is provided notice to a meeting to determine the need for an evaluation. By law, this meeting occurs within twenty calendar days of receipt of the written request by the district to determine if an evaluation is warranted. During this meeting, existing evaluation data on the student are reviewed. In addition, current classroom-based assessments and observations are shared. Per code, if the CST determines an evaluation is not warranted, within fifteen days the parent is provided written notice. If the CST determines that an evaluation is warranted, the student is considered identified as potentially being a student with a disability and a case manager is assigned.

The following referral data was provided by WW-P. The numbers of referrals have declined from the 2017-18 school year to the 2019-20 school year.

EXHIBIT 5: 2019-20, 2018-19, 2017-18 STUDENTS REFERRED FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

	Number of Students Referred for Special Education Services
2019-20	**179**
2018-19	**217**
2017-18	**214**

EVALUATION AND DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY

When a CST determines that a child may have a disability, within fifteen days following their meeting with the child's parent, the district seeks a written request for consent from the parent (or adult student when they are age 18 or older). When the assessments are completed, a written report of the results of each assessment is prepared. A copy of the evaluation report(s) and documentation and information that will be used for a determination of eligibility shall be given to the parent not less than 10 calendar days prior to the meeting. After consent for initial evaluation has been received, the evaluation, determination of eligibility of services, and, if eligible, the development and implementation of the IEP are to be completed within ninety calendar days. A student is determined eligible and classified "eligible for special education and related services when: (1) the student has

one or more of the disabilities defined in; (2) the disability adversely affects the student's educational performance; and (3) the student is in need of special education and related services.[33]

The following evaluation data was provided by WW-P. The number of students evaluated from 2017-19 to 2019-20 has declined.

EXHIBIT 6: 2019-20, 2018-19, 2017-18 STUDENTS EVALUATED FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

	Number of Students Evaluated for Special Education Services
2019-20	**135**
2018-19	**142**
2017-18	**160**

According to teacher survey data, regarding special education evaluations:

- Over 91% of special education teachers agreed or strongly agreed that results of special education evaluations are shared in ways that provide meaningful insights into students' educational needs.

According to parent survey data:

- Over 93% of parents who responded to the survey agreed that the district explained why their child needed special education services in a way they understood.
- In addition, some of the parents who participated in the survey shared the following:
- "They thoroughly evaluate my child's progress and make adjustments as necessary. They also communicate effectively and work with me as a parent to help support at home what is being taught in the classroom."
- "I feel that the evaluation process is thorough and communication between school/parents is great."

In contrast to these points, raised during parent focus groups, several parents voiced a lack of trust with evaluations conducted by the district. In many cases, this distrust was based on the belief that evaluations conducted by district personnel would lead to recommendations tailored to the programs within the district. Some parents shared they engaged outside evaluators to ensure impartiality.

Some comments include the following:

- "I do not trust the district to conduct evaluations."
- "The district is not transparent with evaluation data."

English Learners and Recently Arrived Immigrant English Learners

English Learners (ELs) and Recently Arrived Immigrant English Learners (RAIELs) are a highly diverse group, encompassing important subgroups such as students born in the United States whose home language is one other than English or with refugee status, unaccompanied minors, and students with limited or interrupted formal education. ELs and RAIELs enter schools at all grade levels, with varied initial English proficiency levels, educational backgrounds, and home language literacy levels. These students bring unique and valued strengths to the classrooms, but also frequently face shared challenges. While RAIELs share with other ELs a common need to acquire English proficiency, they also often have needs that non-recently arrived ELs do not typically have. These include mental, physical, and social needs that are shaped by dislocation and trauma exposure; academic needs that pertain to limited or interrupted prior formal schooling; and adjustment to the norms and characteristics of a new country, community, and school setting. Given this wide

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[33] N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.5(c)1-14

range of challenges, it is no surprise that education agencies struggle to develop policies and practices that adequately address both the ELs' and RAIELs' needs.

*English Learners and RAIELs in WW-P*

According to information gathered from interviews and focus groups, the district should provide more support to struggling learners who are, or may be, RAIELs as well as students with IEPs who are also RAIELs.

In WW-P, 3.8% of its students are identified as EL. Of its EL population, in the 2019-20 school year 51 students are identified as both EL and have an IEP, approximately 5% of its total population of students with IEPs. These numbers, however, do not accurately capture the significantly larger RAIEL numbers in WW-P.

According to administration, CSTs sometimes struggle with the differentiation between disability and EL and with which data to use.

In 2019-20, 3.3% of students in WW-P were English learners. The percentage of students with IEPs who were also English learners was 5.7%.[34]

EXHIBIT 7: PERCENT OF STUDENTS WITH IEP (AGES 6-21) BY EL STATUS, 2019

English Learner
5.7%

Non English Learner
94.3%
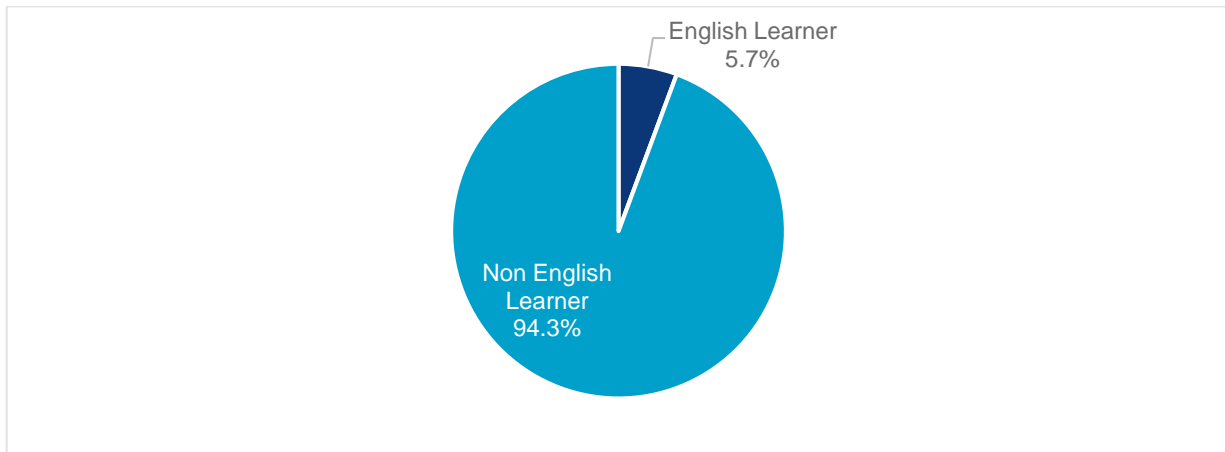
According to teacher survey:

- Over 46% of special education teachers agreed or strongly agreed that dually-identified (English Language Learner students with disabilities) students at my school(s) are meeting student needs. However, 35% indicated they did not know.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ELIGIBILITY AND CLASSIFICATION RATES

The data in this section reflect the educational settings of WW-P school-aged students overall, by disability areas, and race/ethnicity.[35]

The following eligibility data was provided by WW-P. The number of students found eligible for special education services has slightly declined between the 2017-18 to 2019-20 school years.

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[34] Data provided by WW-P in 2020. Data for the following disability categories were suppressed due to n<10: Deaf, Developmental Delay, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Orthopedic Impairment, and Traumatic Brain Injury
[35] District data provided by WW-P in 2020. State data obtained from NJ Special Education Data Reports available at: https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/data/

EXHIBIT 8: NUMBER OF STUDENTS FOUND ELIGIBLE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

	Number of Students Found Eligible for Special Education Services
2019-20	**126**
2018-19	**111**
2017-18	**134**

Overall Educational Setting Data for WW-P and State

In 2019-20, of all students with IEPs, 39.9% spent more than 80% or more in the general education classroom, 38.6% spent between 40-79% of their day in the general education classroom, 12.2% of students spent less than 40% of their day in the general education setting, and 9.3% of students were in a separate placement. Compared to state data, a smaller percentage of WW-P students spent 80% or more of their school day in the general education setting (39.9%) compared to the state (47.2%).

EXHIBIT 9: PERCENTAGE OF WW-P STUDENTS (AGE 5-21) BY EDUCATIONAL SETTING COMPARED TO STATE, 2019-20

	≥80%	40-79%	<40%	Separate
WWP	39.9%	38.6%	12.2%	9.3%
State	47.2%	29.8%	15.8%	7.2%
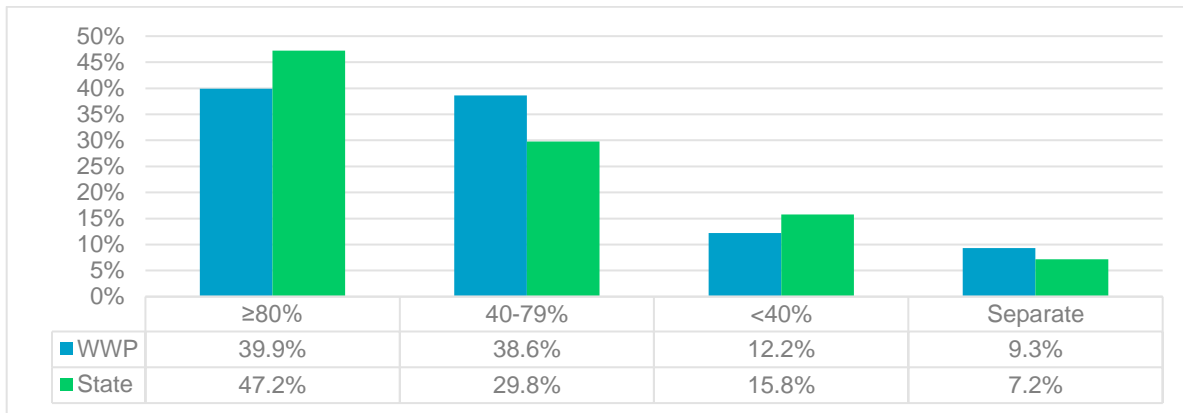
Classification by Gender

Overall, 67.9% of WW-P students with IEPs were male, and 32.1% were female.[36] These percentages are aligned with the national data, wherein roughly two-thirds of students receiving special education services were male (66%), and one-third (34%) were female.[37]

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[36] Data provided by WW-P in 2020
[37] Data Source - National Center for Education Statistics:
https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d19/tables/dt19_204.50.asp?current=yes
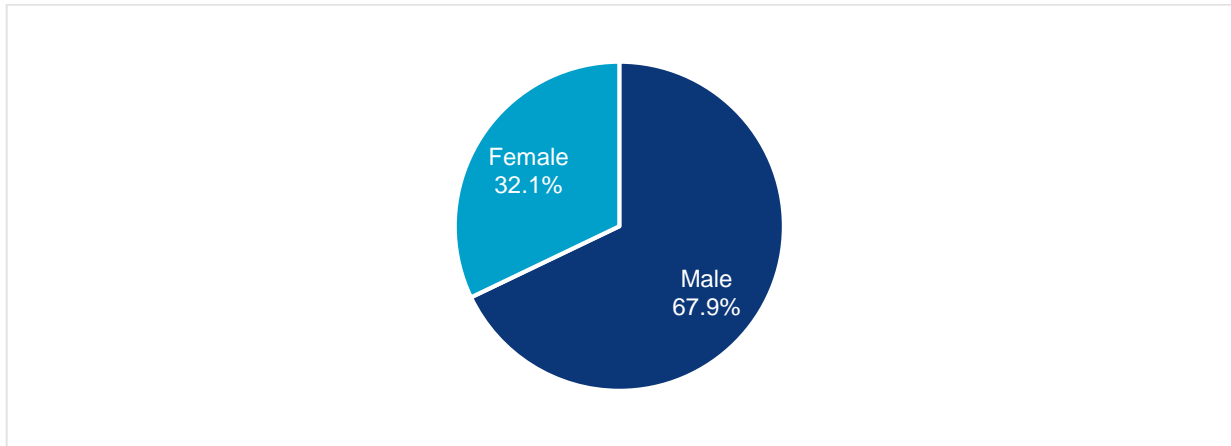
Male students comprised the majority of students identified in all disability categories. The percentage of males identified in the following disability categories was higher than the overall IEP average for males (67.9%): Autism (79.8%), Other Health Impairments (73.1%), Multiple Disabilities (69.6%), and Speech/Language Impairments (68.2%). Female students with IEPs accounted for 41.4% of students with an Emotional Regulation Impairment and 40.7% of students with learning disabilities.

EXHIBIT 11: PERCENT OF WW-P MALE VS. FEMALE STUDENTS WITH IEPS (AGE 5-21) BY DISABILITY, 2019-20
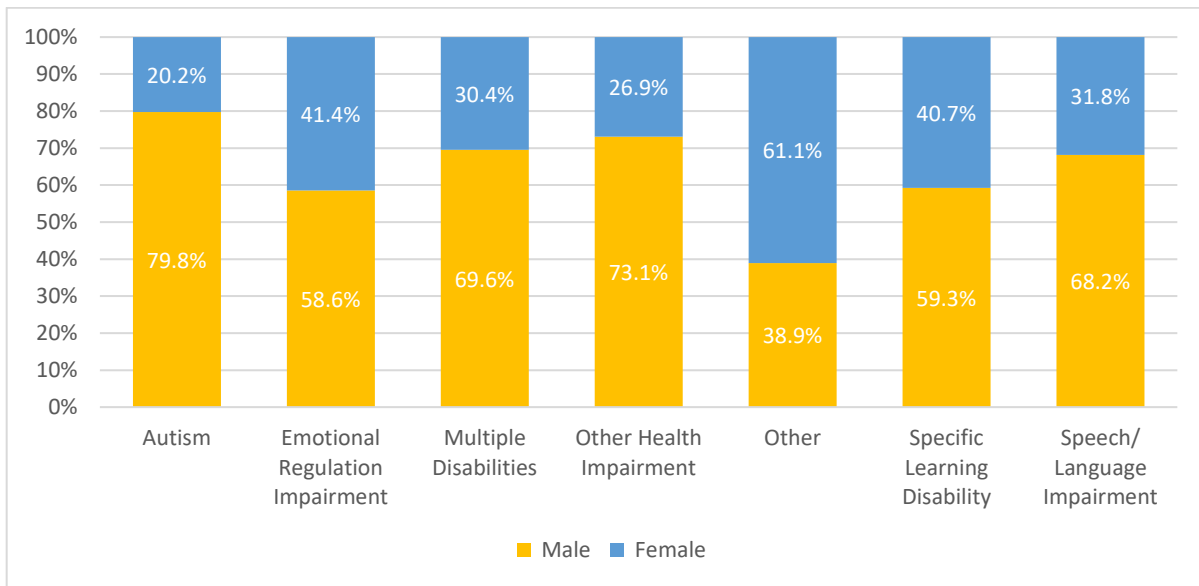
Educational Setting by Primary Disability Area

The charts below provide analysis on WW-P students by primary disability area and education setting.[38] Comparison with state data is also included.

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 39.9%: Other Health Impairments (59.7%), speech or language impairment (50.3%) and learning disability (45.9%). Primary disabilities of multiple disabilities (2.3%), autism (12.2%), and Emotional

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[38] District data provided by WW-P in 2020. Data for the following disability categories were suppressed due to n<10: Deaf, Developmental Delay, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Orthopedic Impairment, and Traumatic Brain Injury

Regulation Impairment (35.3%) were included in this setting at a lower rate than the all disability average.

General Education Setting less than 40% of the time. Overall, 12.2% of students with an IEP in WW-P were educated in the general education setting less than 40% of the time. Students with multiple disabilities (37.2%) and autism (36.0%) had the highest percentage of students in this setting.

Separate Setting. Disability types with the percentage of students served in a separate setting above the district average of 9.3% included multiple disabilities (34.9%), Emotional Regulation Impairment (27.9%) and autism (23.3%).

EXHIBIT 12: PERCENTAGE OF WW-P STUDENTS (AGE 6-21) BY DISABILITY AREA AND EDUCATIONAL SETTING, 2019-20
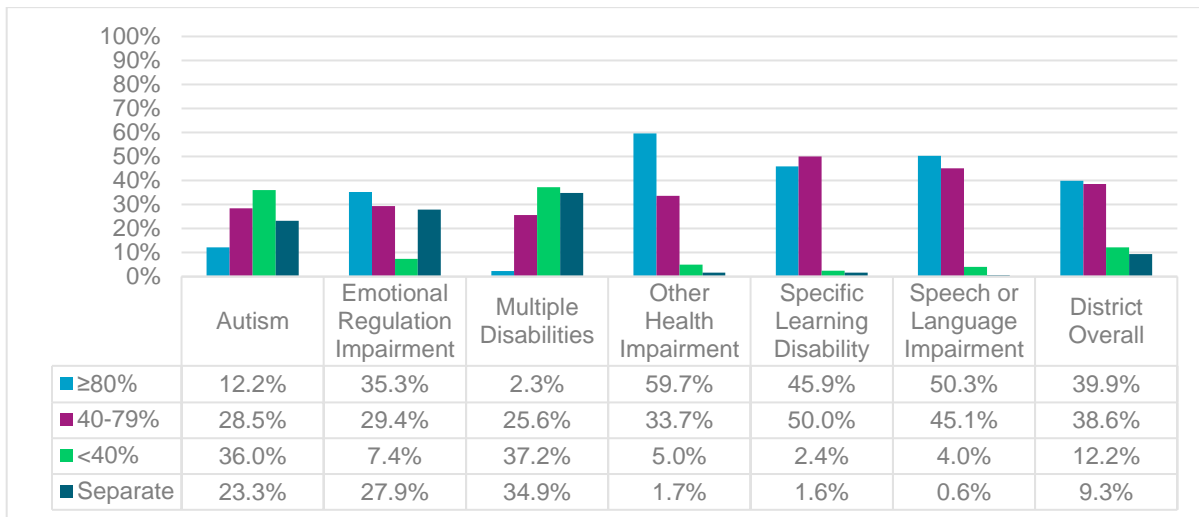
	Autism	Emotional Regulation Impairment	Multiple Disabilities	Other Health Impairment	Specific Learning Disability	Speech or Language Impairment	District Overall
≥80%	12.2%	35.3%	2.3%	59.7%	45.9%	50.3%	39.9%
40-79%	28.5%	29.4%	25.6%	33.7%	50.0%	45.1%	38.6%
<40%	36.0%	7.4%	37.2%	5.0%	2.4%	4.0%	12.2%
Separate	23.3%	27.9%	34.9%	1.7%	1.6%	0.6%	9.3%

Emotional Regulation Impairment, Other Health Impairments, Specific Learning Disability

The following comparative analysis was completed on the two most inclusive educational settings: ≥80% and 40-79% by disability category for WW-P and the state.[39]

Emotional Regulation Impairment. Compared to the state, WW-P educated a slightly higher percentage of students with an Emotional Regulation Impairment in the general education setting for more than 80% of the time. Of the students identified with an Emotional Regulation Impairment, 35.3% spent 80% or more of their school day in general education compared to 32.6% of students in the state. A larger percentage of WW-P students with an Emotional Regulation Impairment (29.4%) spent 40-79% of their day in general education compared to the state (23.7%).

Other Health Impairments. WW-P students with Other Health Impairments were educated at a higher rate in general education for more than 80% of the time (59.7%), compared to the state (52.2%).

Specific Learning Disability. Of WW-P students with a learning disability, 45.9% spent 80% or more of their day in the general education setting compared to 52.2% of students in the state. A significantly larger percentage of WW-P students with a Specific Learning Disability spent 40-79% of their day in general education (50.0%) compared to the state (37.7%).

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[39] District data provided by WW-P in 2020. State data obtained from NJ Special Education Data Reports available at: https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/data/

	State	WWP	State	WWP	State	WWP
	Emotional Reg. Impairment		Other Health Impairment		Specific Learning Disability	
40-79%	23.7%	29.4%	32.1%	33.7%	37.7%	50.0%
≥80%	32.6%	35.3%	52.2%	59.7%	52.2%	45.9%
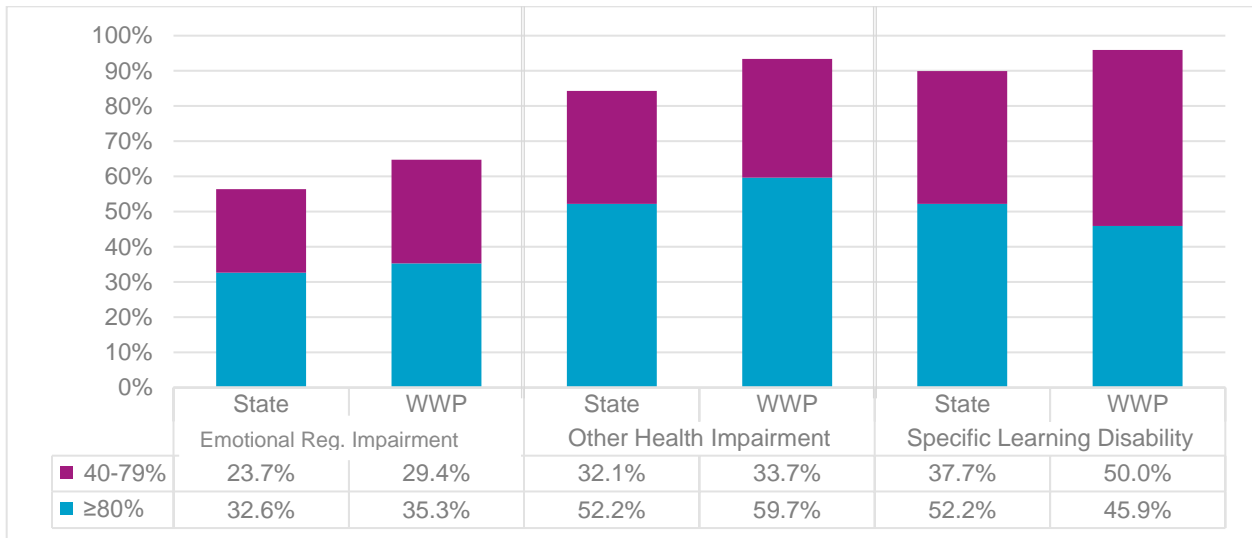
Autism. Compared to the state (22.1%), WW-P educated fewer students identified with autism in the general education classroom for 80% or more of their school day (12.2%). However, WPP had slightly more students educated in the 40-79% setting (28.5%) compared to the state (21.2%).

Multiple Disabilities. WW-P students with multiple disabilities spent 80% or more of their school day in the general education setting (2.3%) at a lower rate when compared to the state (13.6%). A slightly larger percentage of this population of students were educated in the 40-79% setting (25.6%) than the state (23.2%).

EXHIBIT 14: PERCENTAGE OF WW-P STUDENTS (AGE 6-21) WITH AUTISM AND MULTIPLE DISABILITIES BY EDUCATIONAL SETTING COMPARED TO STATE, 2019-20

	State	WWP	State	WWP
	Autism		Multiple Disabilities	
40-79%	21.2%	28.5%	23.2%	25.6%
≥80%	22.1%	12.2%	13.6%	2.3%
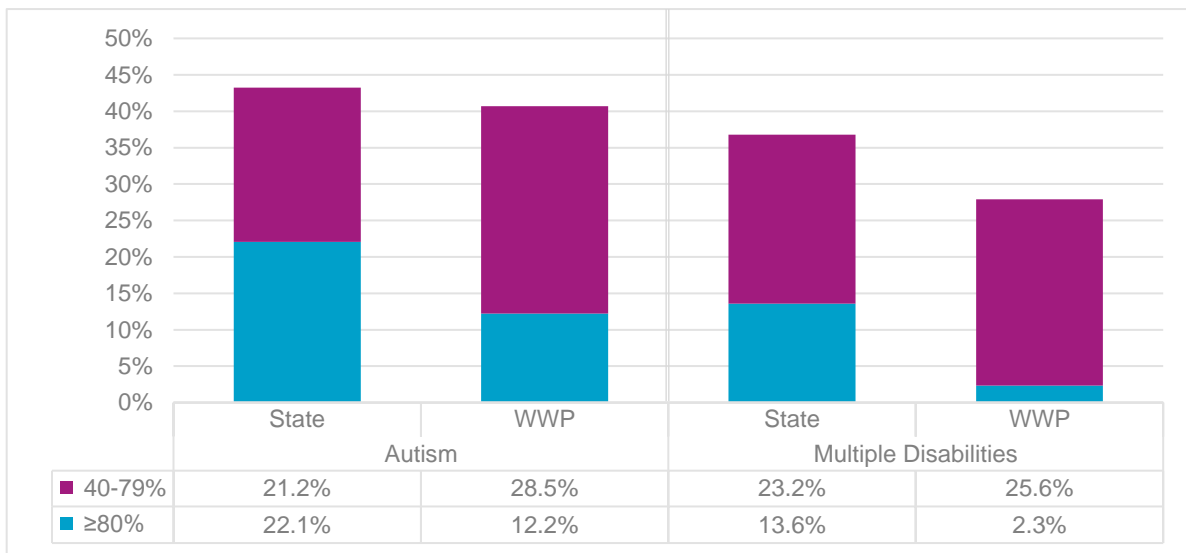
Separate Settings. In 2019-20, 9.3% of WW-P students with an IEP were placed in a separate setting. Of the students in a separate setting, 47.6% had a primary eligibility of Autism, 22.6% had a primary eligibility of Emotional Regulation Impairment, and 17.9% had Multiple Disabilities.
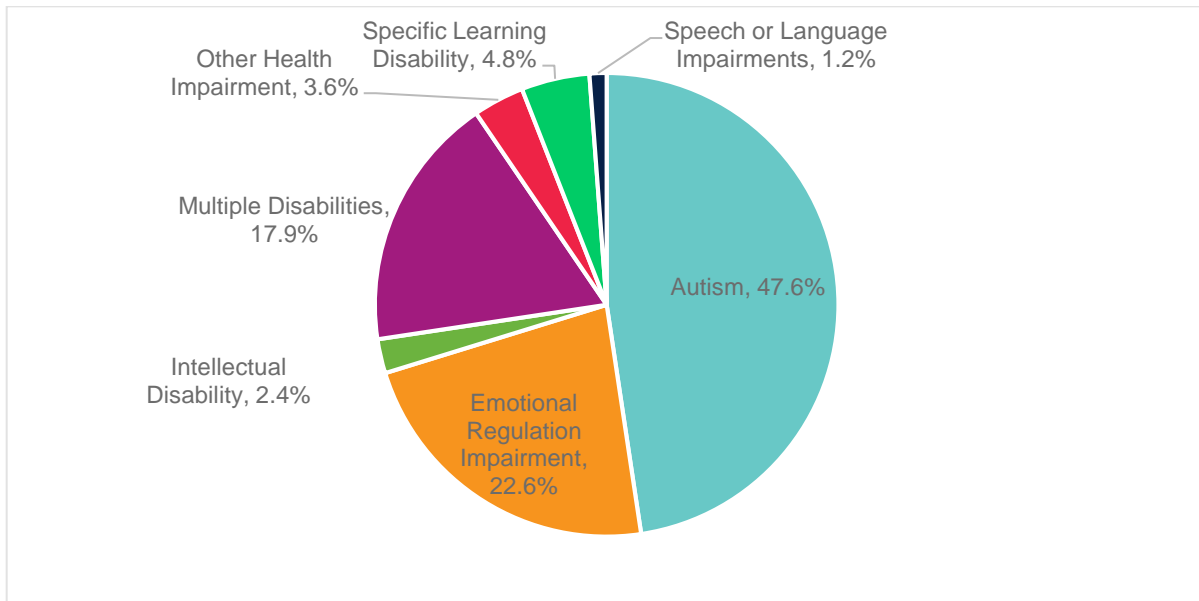
Educational Setting by Race/Ethnicity

In 2019-20, students with the following races/ethnicities were included in the general education setting for 80% or more of their school day: White (49.7%) and two or more races (42.9%).[40] These averages were above the division average for all students with disabilities (39.9%). Black or African American students and Hispanic students with disabilities had the lowest rate of inclusion in the general education setting, 30.0% and 28.9% respectively. A larger percentage of Black or African American students and Hispanic students spent between 40%-79% of their school day in the general education setting, 56.2% and 54.4% respectively.

EXHIBIT 16: RACE AND LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic	Two or more races	White	Overall
Separate	8.7%	3.8%	10.0%	4.8%	12.2%	9.1%
<40%	20.4%	10.0%	6.7%	0.0%	5.6%	12.3%
40-79%	32.6%	56.2%	54.4%	52.4%	32.6%	38.7%
≥80%	38.3%	30.0%	28.9%	42.9%	49.7%	39.9%

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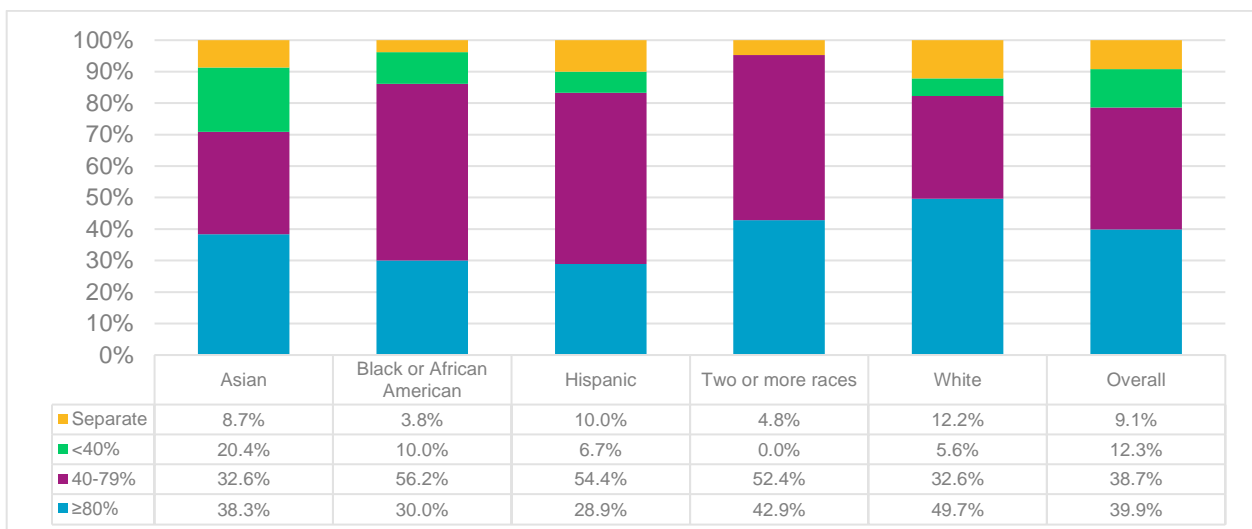
[40] Data for the following Race/Ethnicity categories were suppressed due to n<10: American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

Disproportionate Representation of Students with Disabilities

As cited on the U.S. Department of Education website, Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS) "are services provided to students in kindergarten through grade 12 who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral supports to succeed in a general education environment."[41]The goal of CEIS is to reduce the over-identification of students as disabled and in need of special education services through a positive, proactive approach. Under IDEA 2004, certain activities qualify as CEIS, such as professional development for teachers and other staff on delivering scientifically-based academic and behavioral interventions or for the use of adaptive and instructional software. Divisions can voluntarily set aside up to 15% of their federal IDEA funds for CEIS activities. If, however, a state identifies significant disproportionality based on race or ethnicity in a district, with respect to the identification of children as children with disabilities, the identification of children in specific disability categories, the placement of children with disabilities in particular educational settings, or the taking of disciplinary actions, the district must use 15% of IDEA funds for comprehensive CEIS for children in the district, particularly, but not exclusively, for children in those groups that were "significantly over-identified."

In the 2017-18 school year, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) made a finding that WW-P was overidentifying and subsequently classifying African American males for special education services. In 2018-19, WW-P was required to set aside 15% of the funds it receives from NJDOE through the IDEA grant for Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS). WW-P was one of 18 New Jersey school districts cited for disproportionality and had to set aside $279,329.

According to district administration, WW-P used these funds for the following initiatives:

Salaries & benefits for two full-time general education district reading support teachers. These support teachers will provide pull out reading support services (2-4x/week) to students in general education kindergarten classrooms in the district's four elementary schools who are displaying academic difficulties in reading. All kindergarten students are screened using a Fountas and Pinnell assessment in the Fall of each new school year. The lowest functioning readers are identified and provided this supplementary reading support service. Direct support will be provided in small, pull out groups of K students 2-4x/week. Teachers follow the progress of these students for the next two years to determine the efficacy of the interventions. By targeting these very young, at-risk, students, the district seeks to reduce the disproportionate identification of students needing special education and related services.

Compensation for contracted instructional consultants who will train GE teachers on how to develop appropriate strategies to work with identified at-risk students. Consultants model for teachers how to implement strategies, and how to analyze effectiveness of their interventions and strategies. The goal of this training is to provide teachers the tools needed to improve teacher effectiveness with disproportionately identified students.

On April 13, 2021, NJDOE informed WW-P that it was in 100% compliance with disproportionality requirements.

Risk Ratio to Assess Disproportionality

It will be important for the district to continue monitoring its **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."[42] The risk ratio can be used to calculate disproportionality at both the state and

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[41] https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/ceis_pg3.htm
[42] 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.

district levels. The analysis below is intended to provide WW-P with a tool to calculate risk ratios in order to monitor trends and identify areas of continued concern.

The risk ratio tool tells school personnel how the risk for one racial/ethnic group compares to the risk for a comparison group.[43] It can be used to assess:

- How much more likely is it for Black or African American students to be classified with a disability compared to all other students;
- How much more likely is it for Black or African American students with disabilities to be suspended for more than 10 days compared to all other students with disabilities;
- 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 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:

EXHIBIT 17: RISK RATIO

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

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. The threshold for identification of significant disproportionality is established by each state.

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

As displayed in Exhibit 18 below, Black or African American students were close to five times more likely to be identified with a Learning Disability, over four times more likely to be identified with an Emotional Regulation Impairment, and three times more likely to be identified with a Speech/Language impairment. Hispanic students were four and a half times more likely to be identified with a learning disability. White students were four and a half times more likely to be identified with an Emotional Regulation Impairment and four times as likely to be identified with Other Health Impairment.

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[43] 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.

EXHIBIT 18: RISK RATIOS BY RACE/ETHNICITY AND DISABILITY, 2019 -20

	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic	White
■ Autism	0.87	1.07	1.49	0.95
■ Emotional Regulation Impairment	0.09	4.02	2.87	4.48
■ Multiple Disabilities	0.26	2.87	1.53	2.96
■ Other Health Impairment	0.18	3.14	1.66	4.05
■ Specific Learning Disability	0.14	4.94	4.48	2.55
■ Speech/ Language Impairment	0.51	3.32	2.35	0.97
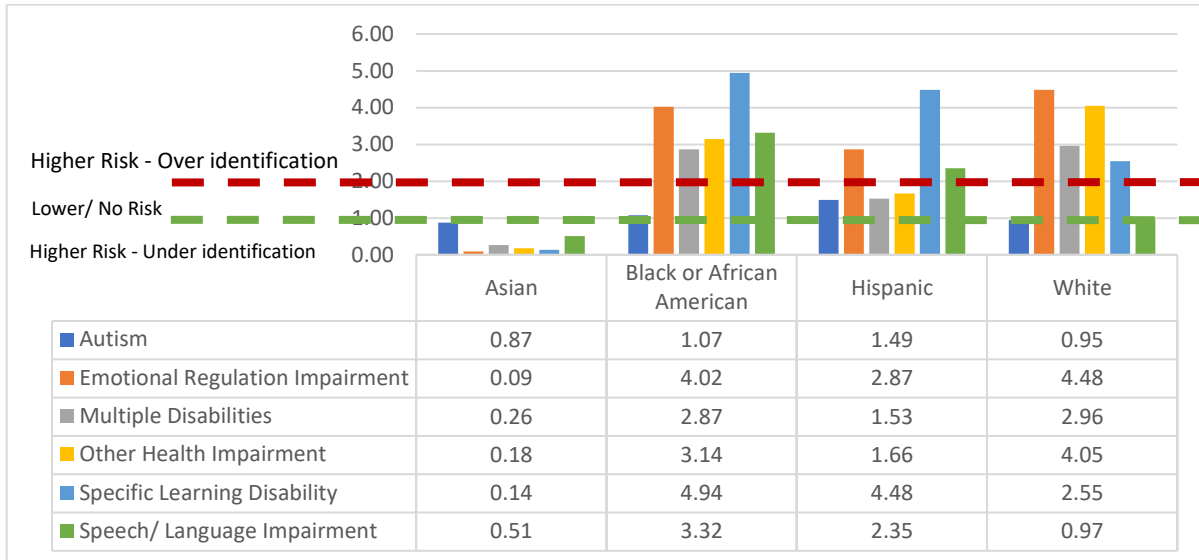
CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

For students with disabilities to improve their academic achievement and reduce the achievement gap with their nondisabled peers, they must be included in the core curriculum and receive evidence-based interventions that are targeted and implemented with fidelity.

Schools also need to create an environment in which each student is expected to learn, be supported and demonstrate learning at high levels. All teachers need more training and support throughout the school year to confidently implement differentiated instruction, accommodations and modifications, and specially designed instruction.

As of the 2020-21 school year, the district provides its continuum of special education programs for its students in the following manner.

EXHIBIT 19: SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM LOCATIONS BY SCHOOL

	Preschool Disabled (Half & Full Day)	Integrated Preschool	Autism	ICR	Resource Classrooms	LLD	MD	BD
Dutch Neck Elem. (k-3)				X	x	X		
Hawk Elem. (PreK-3)	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Town Center (K-2)	Preschool Autism (full day) X		X		X	X		
Wicoff Elem. (K-3)				X	X	X		
Millstone River Elem. (3rd-5th)			X	X	X	X	X	
Village Elem. (4th & 5th)				X	X	X		
Community MS (6th-8th)			X	X	X	X	X	

Grover (6th-8th)				X	X			
High School North (9th-PostGrad)			X	X	X	X	X	X
High School South (9th-Post-Grad)				X	X			

According to district administration, the district follows state terminology defined in NJAC 6A:14 to describe its programs. These include the following, with titles and descriptions provided by the district:

Pre School Disabilities: Students aged 3 yrs. -5 yrs. With disabilities as defined NJAC 6A:14

Pre school Disabilities (Autism): Students aged 3 yrs.-5 yrs. diagnosed with Autism and requiring ABA instructional strategies

Integrated Preschool: Students aged 3 yrs. – 5 yrs. with disabilities who can be educated with non-disabled peers

Autism Programs: Program and instruction designed using strict ABA methodologies

Language and/or Learning Disabilities (LLD): LLD Classes are self-contained, small-group classes for students with mild to moderate, and severe disabilities. Students in the LLD class receive instruction in all major academic areas. Students receive their academic instruction in an individualized or small group setting, while participating with their peers in GE to the maximum extent possible. LLD teachers make modification and accommodations to the GE curriculum. Additional support is offered by Instructional Assistants.

Multiple Disabilities (MD): Students in the MD classrooms learn in different ways. Each student's IEP informs their individual instruction utilizing their individual strengths and weaknesses to support their learning.

Behavioral Disturbance: The Academy Program in HS North supports students' emotional, social, and academic needs, while offering them the opportunity to be a part of their district high school. This program integrates inclusion in the general academic program with both a counseling component and related support classes.[44]

According to the district, WW-P also provides the following continuum of services to high school students. According to the district, these services include, but are not limited to, self-contained classes, learning and language disabilities (LLD) classes, resource center (RC) classes, in-class resource (ICR), support provided by inclusion consultants (IC) and in-class assistants (ICA). According to the district, appropriate services are determined annually in the IEP meeting. The district provided the following list of programs and definitions thereafter.

The Larks Program: The Larks Program is designed to provide students who require greater academic and social support. As needed, students receive instruction in functional academics, communication skills, adult living skills, daily living skills, social skills, and job skills. Students also participate in job sampling in a variety of settings to practice skills needed for life after high school.

Mathematics (Grades 9-12): This program is designed for students with special needs in mathematics skills – computation, number concepts, measurement, algebra, geometry, and consumer related skills. Emphasis

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[44] In 2020, this classification was renamed from 'emotional disturbance' to 'emotional regulation impairment' in NJAC 6A:14.

is placed on the practical application of these skills to daily living situations. The program is adapted to the student's specific learning needs as identified in the Individualized Educational Program.

Language Arts (Grades 9-12): This program is designed for special needs' students and will follow the mainstream curriculum at a modified and individualized pace. The program is adapted to the student's learning needs as identified in the Individualized Educational Program.

History (Grades 9-12): This program is designed for special needs' students and will follow the mainstream curriculum at a modified and individualized pace. The program is adapted to the student's learning needs as identified in the Individualized Educational Program.

Science (Grades 9-12) This program is designed for special needs' students and will follow the mainstream curriculum at a modified and individualized pace. The program is adapted to the student's learning needs as identified in the Individualized Educational Program.

Study Skills (Grades 9-12) This program is designed for students with special needs. Emphasis is upon monitoring of academic progress, study skills and self-advocacy skills.

Learning and Language Disabilities: The LLD course of study offers students the opportunity to focus on transitional skills in an educational program.

Parent Satisfaction with Program Offerings

Of the parents who responded to the parent survey, parents noted high satisfaction with service offerings as it related to overall services, teacher awareness of needs, teacher skill related to student needs.

EXHIBIT 20: PARENT SURVEY RESULTS: SATISFACTION WITH CHILD'S PROGRAM
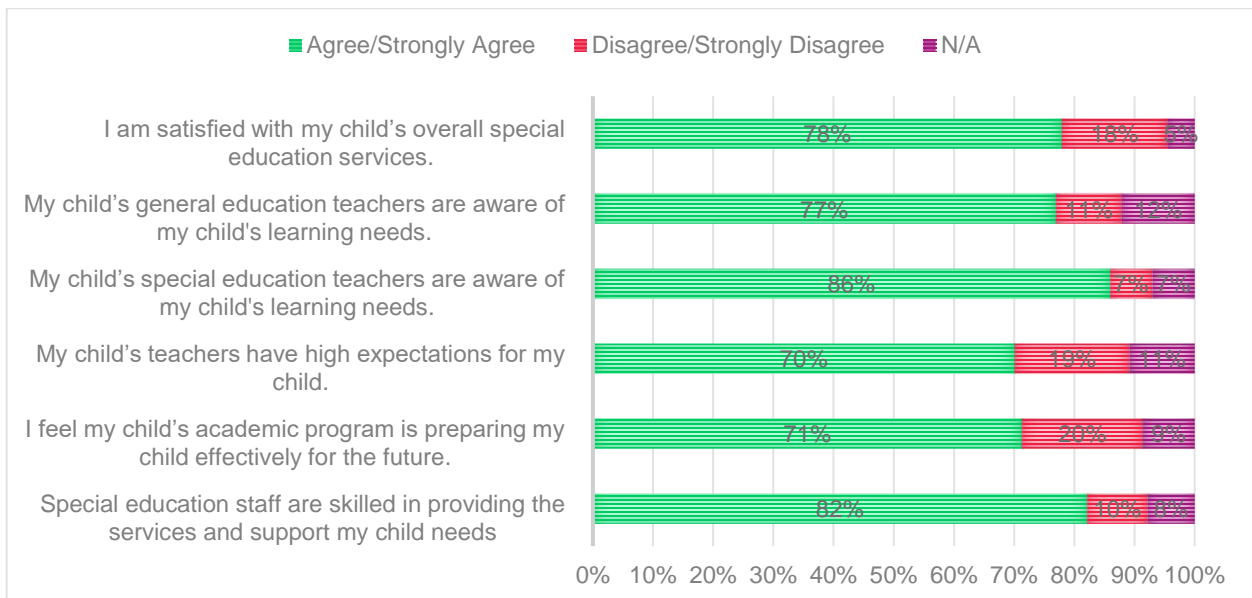
In addition, parents who responded to the survey showed strong satisfaction with overall academic progress.

EXHIBIT 21: PARENT SURVEY RESULTS: SATISFACTION WITH CHILD'S PARTICIPATION AND PROGRESS

Within the survey, PCG observed the following themes. In addition, PCG included specific quotes shared by parents.

EXHIBIT 22: THEMES AND QUOTES SHARED IN PARENT SURVEYS

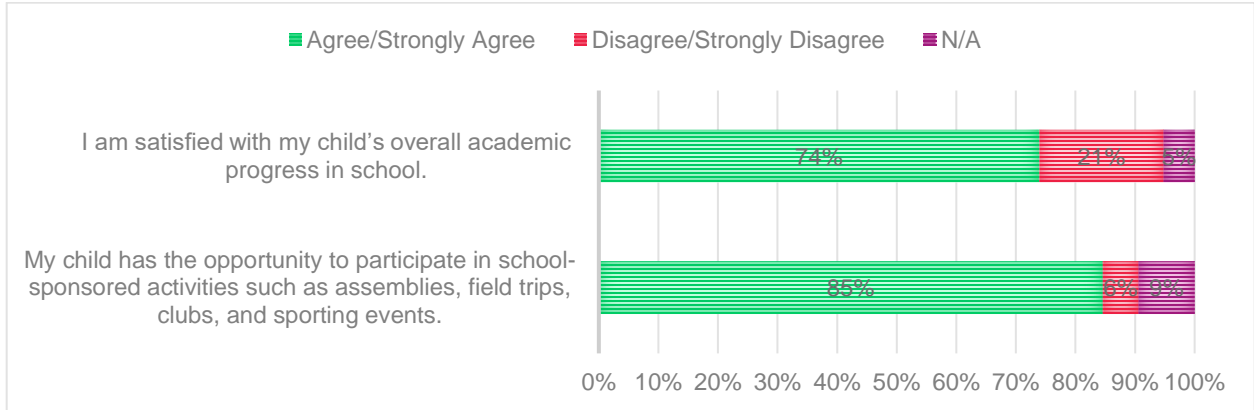| Repeated Themes	Specific Quotes Shared
Supportive Placement, Teachers, and Programs	• *"My son's 4th grade teacher recognized his disabilities and called for an IR&S team to have him evaluated. We are grateful that he was evaluated when he was and steps were taken to help him. "* • *"We have been really happy with the in-class teachers who have helped our son be successful in the subjects that he needed help in. They also communicated well when things weren't going well."* • *"The extra support teacher in our child's primary subject classes is extremely helpful and supportive of our child's needs."* • *"SpEd teachers in the integrated classrooms have done an excellent job breaking work into chunks, highlighting the most important information, and meeting with him to ensure he understands his assignments."* • *"Teachers and support staff members are well educated knowing exact need of the child. They helped our child in many areas. I have observed my child improvement since my child started going to school. He started talking bit functionally, he understandard well now, he started following direct bit more than earlier. Overall I see big improvements."*

It is important to note that parents who attended parent focus groups had different views on their overall satisfaction with the service offerings of WW-P. Focus group parents shared opinions centered around the following themes from the parent survey.

Repeated Themes	Specific Quotes Shared
Difficulties with Program Continuum	• *"We have this program and that program and then were can put your child, placement is derived from what is available"* • *"We don't see the data to support the placement."* • *"The district failed to provide the parent with any evidence-based data to measure student performance."*
Parent input is ignored	• *"Parent input is ignored"* • *"Supervisors don't listen to us."* • *"Interventions are decided by the teachers and they do not want parent input"* • *"There is no transparency of services. Rather, the district relishes hiding information from parents and students."* • *"Parent concerns are trivialized."*

Feedback About Scheduling Raised by Students and Staff

During file review focus groups as well as during the student focus group, the issue was raised about how scheduling problems can interfere with service delivery. In most cases it was specific to students receiving In Class Resource services who dealt with scheduling conflicts in wanting to take courses in the arts or other electives but had to choose between forgoing ICR for other electives. This issue was raised by multiple students during the student focus group and was often specific to music (e.g. band or chorus).

Parent Feedback as Part of the IEP Process

Parents are critical members of the IEP team. As the primary support during the hours their students are not in school, parents can offer a unique perspective on a student's academic and functional performance through homework support, functional needs within the home, and social interaction with family and friends. For these reasons, obtaining parent feedback during the IEP meeting is considered a best practice. When it appropriately supports academic or functional goals within the IEP, the IEP team may consider including it in the Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance section of the IEP.

During file review focus groups, a consistent pattern emerged among CST members about the use of the "Parent Concerns" section of the IEP. Within WW-P's IEP case management system, there is a special place for parent feedback called "Parent Concerns." During the file review focus groups, in many cases it was either left blank or it only contained concerns. When probed deeper, IEP team members consistently said, "the heading says concerns, therefore it is only for concerns." This title, a possible misnomer, is likely preventing additional parent input. In particular, the team may only be including feedback which they consider "concerning."[45]

According to district special education administration: "PLAAFP input is developed by teacher and provides info on student's performance and achievement, as documented/observed by teachers. Parental input provides insight into parent's comments/feedback/concerns regarding academic performance. CST is trained to include and accurately record parental +/- feedback."

During file review focus groups, it was made clear that some parents create feedback statements ahead of the meeting and request it be part of the IEP. In addition, it was shared that at one of the

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[45] Special education administration disagreed.

high schools, some of the case managers sends out a questionnaire ahead of the meeting seeking this information.

Out-of-District Placements

When an IEP team determines that it cannot offer a Free and Appropriate Education in the Least Restrictive Environment, it may choose to have a student with an IEP placed in an out-of-district private school, also known as an out-of-district placement. The New Jersey Department of Education provides school districts with a listing of approved private schools both within the state of New Jersey as well as out of state. Sending a student out of their home district is often a team decision of last resort; nevertheless, there are instances when the impact of a child's disability on their education is so profound that the only way they can receive FAPE and LRE is in such a placement.

In WW-P, a relatively small number of its students with IEPs attend an out-of-district private school through an IEP team determination. In the 2019-20 school year, 83 students attended an out-of-district private school; whereas in the 2018-19 school year there were 90 students and in the 2017-18 school year there were 93 students.

In the 2019-20 school year, the top three disability classifications of students attending out-of-district schools are (1) Autism; (2) Emotional Regulation Impairment and (3) Multiple Disabilities.

EXHIBIT 24: OUT-OF-DISTRICT PLACEMENTS, 2017-18, 2018-19, AND 2019-20 BY CATEGORY AND TOTAL[46]

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Autism	44	43	38
Communication Impairment	*	*	*
Emotional Regulation Impairment	11	16	18
Multiple Disabilities	25	17	16
Intellectual Disabilities	*	*	*
Other Health Impairment	*	12	*
Specific Learning Disability	*	0	*
TOTAL	93	90	83

In addition, the number of students attending out-of-district schools in the PK-5 category has notably declined from 39 students in the 2017-18 school year to 23 students in the 2019-20 school year.

EXHIBIT 25: OUT-OF-DISTRICT PLACEMENTS BY GRADE LEVELS, 2017-18, 2018-19, AND 2019-20

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
PK-5	39	31	23
6-8	15	20	20
9-Post Graduate	39	39	40

The top three highest providers of out-of-district programming for students of WW-P attending an out of district private school are: (1) Mercer County Special Services School District, with the primary disability categories comprised of Autism, Multiple Disabilities, and Other Health Impairments; (2) the Eden Institute, Autism; and (3) Rock Brook, Autism and Multiple Disabilities.

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[46] Student numbers under 10 are suppressed and noted with *

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Primary disability categories of WW-P enrolled students
Mercer County ESC	23	28	33	Autism, MD, OHI
Eden	10	10	*	Autism
Rock Brook	*	*	*	Autism, MD

During parent focus groups, some parents of students placed out-of-district expressed concerns with ineffective communications between the special education supervisor, the parent, and the out-of-district school.

According to district administration, the district has been making a concerted effort to enhance the supports of students with low incidence disabilities. As such, more students can now receive FAPE in the LRE in their home school district.

Discontinuation of IEP Services

As part of the provision of FAPE in the Least Restrictive Environment, it must be remembered that special education is a service (or series of services) and not a place. If an IEP team determines that a child no longer needs special education services because their disability is not impacting their education, those special education services may be discontinued. Should it be determined later that services may be needed, a child may be reevaluated.

Overall, the total number increased from 15 students during the 2014-15 school year to 36 students in the 2019-20 school year. According to district administration: "The increase in our rate of de-classification is likely a result of the district's revised discrepancy model. The prior discrepancy model applied different criteria for continuing the eligibility of classified students, than was applied to newly evaluated students. The revised discrepancy model requires staff to apply the same/equitable criteria to all students being evaluated and reevaluated for eligibility."

EXHIBIT 27: DISCONTINUATION OF IEP SERVICES FROM THE 2014-15 TO 2018-19 SCHOOL YEARS
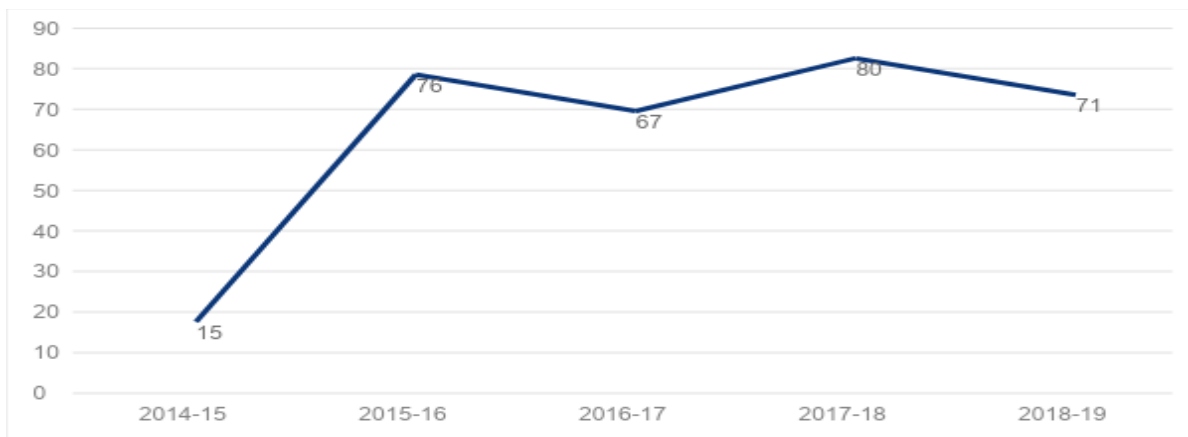
In WW-P, the three top categories of IEP discontinuation are (1) Speech and Language Services; (2) Specific Learning Disability; and (3) Preschool Child with a Disability. Discontinuations for Speech and Language Services has notably decreased over the past three years, whereas preschool child with disability and Specific Learning Disability have stayed the same.
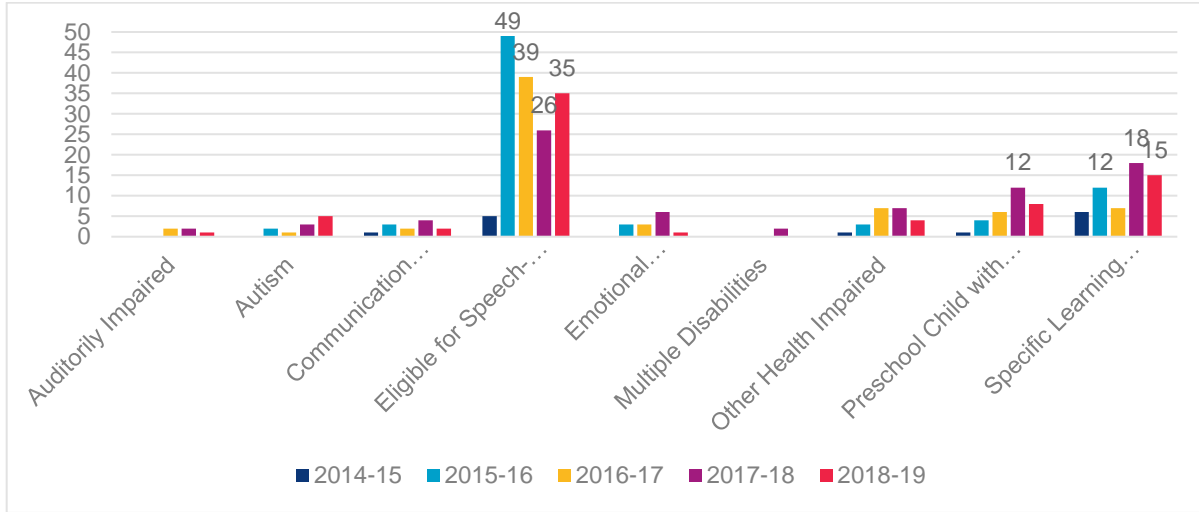
During parent focus groups, some parents expressed concern and distrust about the district wanting to "take away" services or the district not providing enough data to provide a rationale for a reduction or discontinuation of services.

III. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORT

Strengths	Opportunities
• In Class Resource Supports (ICR) is available in all grades. • During remote classroom visits, PCG consistently saw high quality, robust co-teaching in ICR settings. • Teachers frequently engage in planning time as often as possible to enhance co-taught instruction • Consistent CST adherence to written protocols on the appropriate instructional aides.	• Improve scheduling opportunities to support students enrolled in electives (e.g. music, arts). • Further study opportunities for planning time among co-teaching pairs. • Further engage in Understanding by Design if this continues to be a district priority. • Enhanced clarity around districtwide assistive technology procedures.

SPECIALLY DESIGNED INSTRUCTION

In order for all students, including those with IEPs, to meet high academic standards and fully demonstrate their knowledge and skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening and mathematics, their instruction must be flexible, yet challenging, and incorporate scaffolds and accommodations to overcome potential learning barriers. It is essential that that the curriculum be designed to enable all students to successfully access and engage in learning without changing or reducing instructional goals. In order to meet the needs of all diverse learners in the classroom it is important to implement UDL (in the general education classroom as solid core instruction), Differentiated Instruction, Accommodations and Modifications, and Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) based to the support access and success of the learners. Implementing such a balanced mix of appropriate supports while maintaining the integrity of the curriculum can be challenging but needed to support diverse learners.

Co-Taught Instruction

Co-teaching is the practice of pairing teachers together a special education teacher and a general education teacher in a classroom to share the responsibilities of planning, instructing, and assessing students. In a co-teaching setting, the teachers are considered equally responsible and accountable for the classroom; however, the special education teacher has a responsibility of ensuring the academic needs of the students with IEPs in that classroom are being met. In New Jersey, co-taught instructional settings are typically referred to as In-Class Resource Support (ICR).

One significant issue that was raised by teachers was planning time. Through surveys and conversations during pre and post-visits from classroom visits, teachers firmly believe they could be more effective at co-teaching if they had more planning time. Teachers repeatedly shared that if they had more time to build relationships and co-plan, they could better support their students. Yet many teachers shared they are spending nights and weekends (especially during remote instruction during COVID-19) to prepare for co-taught instruction.

During classroom visits, most co-taught instructional settings were conducted with strategies whereby teachers clearly had shared responsibilities. In co-taught settings within WW-P, it was rare to see the special education teacher co-teacher serve as a "helper teacher" and the general education teacher. Commendably, during classroom visits in many situations it was difficult for PCG to identify which teacher was the special education teacher and which was the general education teacher. In situations where the general education teacher played a more prominent role with instruction, there was consistently discussion during post-visit, often unprompted, that if the teachers had more time to plan, there would be equal opportunities for equal instructional time. In addition, and it is important to

note, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly changed the educational setting for most of our visits. Nevertheless, WW-Ps teachers worked diligently to plan, and revise plans based on changes that occurred quickly. Many of the teaching pairs spoke of working nights and weekends, on their own. All of this is worthy of much commendation for the teaching staff at WW-P – both general and special education faculty.

WW-P district special education administration noted it is working to support consistent practices for the delivery co-teaching/collaborative instruction by providing training to three teacher pairs who will provide professional development to co-teachers throughout the district.

In addition, district special education administration noted to the greatest extent possible, the district keeps effective co-teaching pairs together, year after year. However, schedules do not always permit this.

According to responses from the teacher survey:

- Over 30% general education teachers and 18% special education teachers <u>disagreed</u> that WW-P has established standards for delivering co-teaching/collaborative instruction

According to teacher survey:

- Over 65% of general education teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed that general and special education teachers have collaborative planning time to prepare effective instruction for students. This differed from surveyed special education teachers, in which over 44% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Statements from general education teachers surveyed on this that were recurring in theme include:

- "There needs to be shared prep periods for general education and special education teachers who co-teach a class."
- "Gen ed teachers need more collaboration with special ed teachers."
- "I have taught inclusion math for most of my career. It is frustrating that my co-teacher changes every year. I feel that effective co-teaching develops over time."
- "I know that not all departments have regular solid and committed teams teaching the ICR classes. I also know that there have been years when I have not had an actual prep period with my partner, and it was our experience working together, along with familiarity with the curriculum that helped to create a successful year for our students."
- "I would like to see the World Language classes follow the ICR model. What we have now does not work."

Statements from special education teachers surveyed on this that were recurring in theme include:

- "I think that there should be more planning time with classroom staff, more staff in classrooms especially when there are significant behaviors, there shouldn't be this acceptance that it is ok for staff and teachers to get hurt just because they work in a classroom with students with special needs. There needs to be more done about students who have aggressive behaviors in our programs."
- "Special education teachers should have more consistency in their year-to-year schedule. Moving them from grade level to grade level, team to team, content area to content area is disruptive to everyone. They should also be asked for feedback regarding the general education teachers they are working with. Often, there are pairs of teachers who work extremely well together, but then are not working together the next year because of being moved by administration or due to scheduling. On the flip side, there are pairs of teacher who do not work effectively together who are kept together."
- "Teachers (and IA's) who share students should have time to collaborate regularly. Students who only need special education for writing (but not reading) should be allowed to just be pulled for writing, rather than lumping Reading and Language Arts together."

- "That gen ed teachers have time to work with SPED ICR teachers to coordinate instruction and priorities for student learning including modifications and accommodations listed on IEPs."
- "In all of my years in WW-P, there has been very little focus on bringing general ed and sped teachers together to help foster and establish co-teaching relationships."
- "I feel that there needs to be more preparation time for collaboration with co-teachers and time to prepare for IEP meetings. Personally, it seems that the time we get is not sufficient for all of the components for developing and updating an IEP with fidelity."
- "I've also had 3 inclusion gen ed partners in my 6 years here. It doesn't give me a chance to make a connection with my co teacher - right when we develop a good rapport so that we could have a more seamless partnership, I get moved or things change. I understand staffing needs come up, but keeping people who work well together would be beneficial for inclusion."

Understanding by Design (UbD) to Support Co-Teaching and Differentiated Instruction

Understanding by Design, or UbD, is an educational planning approach. UbD is an example of backward design, the practice of looking at the outcomes in order to design curriculum units, performance assessments, and classroom instruction. UbD focuses on teaching to achieve understanding. It is advocated by Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins in their Understanding by Design (1998), published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. According to district administration, UbD has been a core tenet of lesson planning and has served as a tool to support districtwide differentiated instruction.

According to administration, the district has supported an Understanding by Design (UbD) framework for several years, however UbD appears to be less familiar at this time by newer faculty. Of the 35 classrooms PCG visited, only two teachers recalled receiving training in UbD.

Statements from administration include:

- "Yes we talk about UbD and special education teachers are invited to different trainings", but they are not mandated.
- "UbD (Grant Wiggins approach) is a hallmark of what we do, we are always looking at the end goal, back in the day it folded into the philosophy of the district"
- It is a buzz word, like UDL which is coming back, but everything needs to be differentiated in autism; everything in special education is differentiated"
- "DI happens a lot in our general education classes"
- "Supervisors have a better idea on the use of DI"
- "Differentiation is thought to be a future initiative."

During classroom visits, PCG saw several examples of differentiated instruction and teachers were very knowledgeable on how to support classrooms with students who have varied learning needs. In addition, although teachers were unaware of UbD; PCG saw many examples of backwards design and lesson plans that were thoughtfully created to support differentiated instruction.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) provides an approach based on neuroscience and cognitive science and a framework for front- loading instructional design to reach a wider range of learners, including students with IEPs.[47] UDL provides a common, district-wide foundational set of practices that align with the districts' beliefs and vision and mission statements about the role of the teacher, how students learn best, and the purpose of education. UDL provides all educators a common set of

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[47] National Center on UDL. UDL Guidelines- Version 2: Research Evidence.
http://www.udlcenter.org/research/researchevidence

understandings and language and practices for designing and implementing instruction that engages learners and proactively anticipates and responds to diversity in learners. Furthermore, UDL helps educators think strategically about their current practices and provides a framework to expand their thinking about planning and varied ways to engage students, present new learning, and facilitate the learning process.

UDL is firmly grounded in the belief that every learner is unique and brings different strengths and weaknesses to the classroom. Traditional curricula are "one-size-fits-all," designed to meet the needs of a "typical" student. As a result, any student that falls outside this narrow category is presented with a host of barriers that impede access, participation, and progress in the general curriculum.[48] UDL can make instruction more accessible to all students when used in designing the district's curriculum, scope and sequence, pacing, lesson plans, and assessments. There are three main learning guidelines: multiple means of engagement-the why of learning, multiple means of representation-the what of learning, and multiple means of action and expression-the how of learning.

EXHIBIT 29: UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING GUIDELINES, 2018[49]
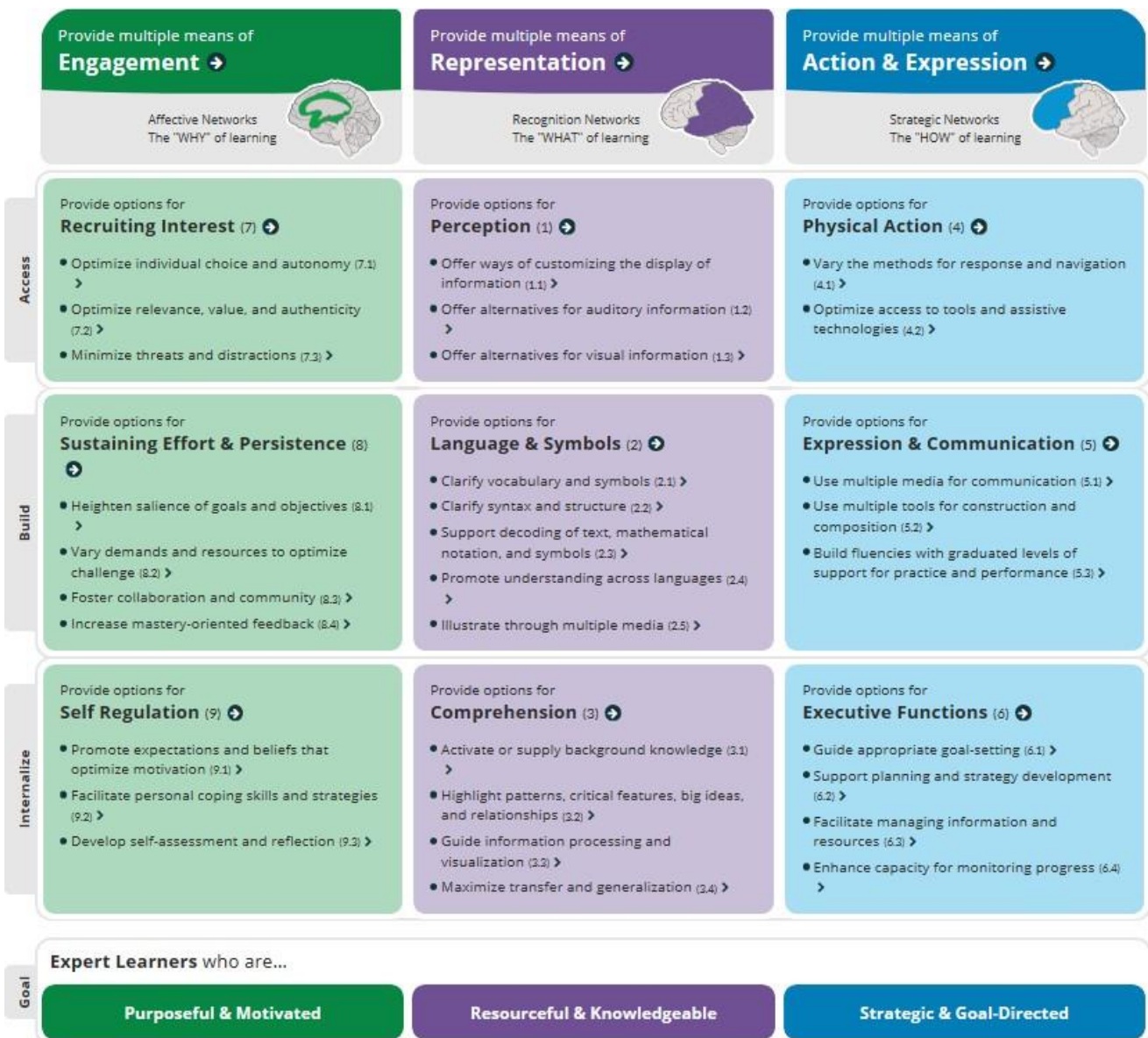
[48] LD Online. http://www.ldonline.org/article/13002/
[49] CAST (2018). Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 2.2. Retrieved from http://udlguidelines.cast.org

According to building administrators. There are no explicit Universal Design for Learning (UDL) practices being implemented. Some building administrators shared the following statements:

- "My personal opinion there are pockets but it is not strong as it should be, I don't think it is widespread"
- "I am not familiar with the term"
- "UDL is our inclusion design, and not used with intention"

Based on information gathered from classroom visits, PCG saw several examples of teachers effectively utilizing UDL, through interactive slides, use of the interactive board and having students mobile in the room, to assessing students through different means.

Accommodations

During focus groups, content supervisors all shared they have a responsibility to address the needs of ALL students. However, through these focus groups, content supervisors shared varying degrees of responsibility based on grade level and content area. In addition, during focus groups, it was shared by content supervisors a strong feeling that teachers are well informed and provide the accommodations that are in students' IEPs. However, there is a concern that some of the accommodations are incongruent with the best content practices that can further isolate students with disabilities.

During file review focus groups, CST members referred to the intentional desire for IEP teams to focus on appropriate accommodations.   However, at the same time, there are parental pressures of adding accommodations that may sometimes be inappropriate. It was shared that some parents expect an a la carte menu of accommodations and that it can be challenging to educate parents on the harmful impact of having inappropriate accommodations.

During classroom visits, PCG observed that many teachers list the accommodations within their actual lesson plans and were intentional with supporting students with them during the lesson.

Assistive Technology (AT)

In IDEA 2004, assistive technology was defined as: "any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of children with disabilities" (20 U.S.C. 1401(1)). In addition, IDEA defines an assistive technology service as "any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, and use of an assistive technology device. The term includes-

- The evaluation of the needs of a child with a disability, including a functional evaluation of the child in the child's customary environment;
- Purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices by children with disabilities;
- Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, retaining, repairing, or replacing assistive technology devices;

Coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs;
Training or technical assistance for a child with a disability or, if appropriate, that child's family; and
Training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals or rehabilitation services), employers, or other individuals who provide services to employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of children with disabilities."[50]

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[50] 20 U.S.C. 1401(2)

WW-P special education administration noted it supports a wide range of assistive technologies for students with disabilities. Special education administration shared the following examples: "Snap Type app or Co-Writer for motor aspect of writing and composing written material; predictable books and adaptions for page turning for reading; picture schedules, aids to find materials; recorded materials, electronic organizers for learning/studying; non-slip surfaces for chairs, adaptive seating/standers for position and seating." Furthermore, according to special education district administration, when it is determined necessary by the IEP teams, the district conducts AT evaluations to determine appropriateness of AT in a child's special education program.

Based on information gathered from interviews, focus groups, and classroom visits, the use of assistive technology may be isolated to applications for students with low incidence disabilities. However, it is important to note that instruction during COVID-19 may have influenced these responses and PCG's ability to observe the use of AT in classrooms during our remote visits. In addition, there may be some confabulation between instructional technology versus assistive technology. No interviews yielded an impression that there is a formal and systematic assessment process or the use of assistive technology for students with learning and executive functioning difficulties; however, district special education administration does not believe this to be the case. Most interviewees focused on instructional technology and the districts capacity to infuse technology within the learning environment.

Building principals shared there is no formal system / protocol for assistive technology assessment and/or implementation, this is left to special services and the Tech Department.

Building administrators shared the following statements about assistive technology implementation:

- "There is not a designated AT professional; but we have a large tech department."
- "Special services handles all the devices, however, we have a tech ticket system but all the devices are from special services."
- "There is no designated AT professional"
- "We have a district person for AT but they focus on the students with more severe disabilities."

According to district administration, some speech and language pathologists receive training on transitioning from Picture Exchange Communication Systems (PECS) to Speech Generating Devices (SGDs). The district indicated that assistive and/or augmentative communication evaluations are conducted by SLPs by a district protocols and procedures to determine appropriate mode of communication as well as transition from PECS to SGDs. In addition, according to the district, it employs a Technology Coordinator to augment and set-up technology and associated trainings with staff for individualized student use. The technology coordinator organizes programs/accommodations such as Book Share, Learning Ally, and Google Read/Write are utilized for students.

During classroom visits, PCG saw consistent and effective use of document cameras. PCG also observed consistent and appropriate use of speech generating devices in settings where they were used by students.

Use of Para-educators

In New Jersey, a para-educator is considered a non-certified instructional staff person who does not hold the position of teacher but assists in the classroom under the guidance of a teacher. This has been articulated since the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and has remained the same since the 2017 reauthorization of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Locally, sometimes paraprofessionals

are called teacher aides or instructional aides.[51] When it comes to supporting the needs of students with disabilities, paraprofessionals may provide supplementary support to a student or students in areas including, but not limited to:

- Prompting, cueing, redirecting student participation;
- Reinforcing of personal, social, behavioral, and academic learning goals;
- Organizing and managing materials and activities; and
- Implementing teacher-directed follow-up and practice activities.[52]

Para-educators play an important role in providing some students with disabilities access to the Least Restrictive Environment. This is especially true for the following needs, all of which were reiterated by WW-P administrators, staff, and paraprofessionals as activities that are occurring in the district:

- Student needs assistance in self-care (e.g. toileting, feeding, dressing, mobility.)
- Student needs intensive assistance in the area of communication support.
- Student behavior poses a significant disruption in the classroom.
- Student behavior poses a direct discernible safety risk to him/herself or others.
- Student needs intensive, ongoing support in vital areas (e.g. academics, functional skills, re-direction to benefit from instruction).[53]

Decision-making Around Paraprofessionals

According to Professor Michael Giangreco of the University of Vermont, a leading scholar on the provision of paraprofessional supports in public schools, "If schools respond exclusively to the request for a paraprofessional without fully understanding the meaning behind the request, it increases the likelihood of masking the underlying issues and delaying attention to them."[54] Instead, he says, "the task is to identify the underlying issues so that they can be addressed."[55]

Instructional Assistant in WW-P

In WW-P, the terms 'instructional aide,' 'instructional assistant,' and 'paraprofessional' are used interchangeably by staff. In 2012-13 school year, WW-P instituted the use of the following forms to support the appropriate determination of placing an instructional assistant into a child's program and subsequently into their IEP. The form was created by special education administration and was adapted from materials created by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). The form, called "Determining When a Student Requires Paraprofessional Support" offers CSTs a specific checklist in determining the appropriateness of an instructional aide. Having such a form is commendable, as many districts offer IEP teams little guidance in making such an important decision.

The form is require when an IEP team is considering instructional assistant support; however, it is used as a paper form and the data is not kept electronically (to review trends over time). There is not a section; however, on planning to fade the support and what data should be collected when making that assessment.

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[51] NJDOE Highly Qualified Staff, https://www.state.nj.us/education/title1/hqs/pp/ppfaq.shtml
[52] Effective IEP Decision-making, NJDOE, 2015-16.
https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/idea/lre/year1trainings/7/IEPDevDecisionmaking.pdf and N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.5(b)
[53] NJDOE ESSA Requirements for Title I Paraprofessionals can be accessed at:
https://www.state.nj.us/education/title1/hqs/pp/ppfaq.shtml
[54] Giangreco, M.F., Doyle, M.B., Suter, J.C., Constructively Responding to Requests for Paraprofessionals: We Keep Asking the Wrong Questions. Remedial and Special Education 33(6), October 2012, 362-373.
[55] Giangreco, M.F., Halvorsen, A.T., Doyle, M.B., Broer, S.M., Alternatives to Overreliance on Paraprofessionals in Inclusive Schools. Journal of Special Education Leadership 17(2), October 2004, 82-90.

Determining When a Student Requires Paraprofessional Support

Student Name:_____ Case Manager:_____

Date of Review:_____ Date Amended:_____

Team Members Who Reviewed This Document:_____

What follows is a decision-making model that attempts to have all stake-holders on the same page and focused on goals that are objectively determined. Its focus is to determine the role of the Paraprofessional in relation to:

- The specific support needs of the student.
- How independence can be progressively furthered.
- What natural supports are to be used to support the student.
- How social acceptance can be increased.

The intent of support services is to promote independence, not dependence.

Intensive Needs Checklist

1. Is there a safety concern for self or others? Please describe in detail.　　☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Does the student require continual teacher prompts:
   During Instruction and/or　　☐ Yes ☐ No
   After instruction (e.g., during independent work)?　　☐ Yes ☐ No
   In unstructured time?　　☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Does the student require assistance with basic functional skills?
   Toileting　　☐ Yes ☐ No
   Mobility, feeding and/or dressing　　☐ Yes ☐ No
   Following basic safety rules　　☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Is the student's performance consistent with his or her aptitude/disability?　　☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Do his or her peers include the student in classroom activities?　　☐ Yes ☐ No

   Is the student receptive to peer tutoring and support?　　☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Is the student currently receiving specialized small or individualized group instruction in specific academic areas? If yes, please describe　　☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Please note what interventions or program changes you have tried and describe their rate of success (e.g., cooperative learning, behavior management plan, re-grouping within the classroom, pairing with other students). *If these interventions are not an option, please explain why.*

8. Has an administrator or CST observed the student?　　☐ Yes ☐ No

9/12　　This form was adapted from information presented by CEC

Student Abilities and Assistance Needs Matrix

The Student's Abilities and Assistance Needs Matrix focuses specifically on what the student can, or cannot, do and the extent to which he or she needs assistance. The objective is to systematically review the student's entire day.

Activity	What student can do without assistance	What student cannot do and needs accommodation to complete	What student cannot do and needs Assistance with	Identify areas to promote social acceptance and how peers will be utilized	Identify areas you will target for independence (should be identified in IEP)
Arrival/Time					
Period 1/Time					
Period 2/Time					
Period 3/Time					
Period 4/Time					
Lunch/Time					
Recess/Time					
Period 5/Time					
Period 6/Time					
Period 7/Time					
Period 8/Time					
Departure/Time					

Plan for Paraprofessional Assistance

Specify Class Activity	Identify need for Paraprofessional	Identify areas To increase socialization (utilize natural supports, peers)	Identify how independence will be encouraged	Total time Needed for paraprofessional support	Total anticipated time reduction in Paraprofessional support by annual review

In completing all three parts of the instrument, the team will have undertaken a thorough review of what the student needs in terms of Paraprofessional support. They will have systematically ensured that the school provides support according to real versus perceived.

9/12   This form was adapted from information presented by CEC

According to data gathered from interviews and focus groups, instructional assistants are trained on their role of supporting the teacher and have limited access to student IEPs. In addition, there was discussion that the supervision of instructional aides can sometimes be complicated between the building administrator, the teacher, and the Supervisor of Special Education for that building, specifically if there are performance issues.

According to the survey administered to staff, with responses from instructional assistants:

- 24% of instructional assistants surveyed disagreed or strongly disagreed that there is sufficient communication between special educators and instructional assistants about the needs and progress of students with IEPs; over 24% disagreed or strongly disagreed with that statement.

Instructional assistants shared the following comments within the survey:

- "The teachers have time to collaborate, but there is rarely time for the IA's to do so - especially those that 'share' a student. The teachers often will not correct IA's if they are instructing the student in a manner that isn't the best practice, which is a failure on us as a whole, and detrimental to the student in the long run. We are here to support each other, and if we can improve, we should."
- "The instructional assistants, who work closely with special education students, should be solicited more for their observations and insights. IAs are often left out of the information dissemination process which is counterproductive to the goals of making our students successful learners."
- "Provide collaborative time for teachers and IAs."
- "Keeping everyone involved with student on the same page."

During classroom visits, PCG observed instructional assistants serving as supports for students – both with academic needs as behavioral. However, because of the changes in the instructional environment caused by COVID-19, many of the instructional assistants were providing support virtually – an initiation that never would have occurred otherwise. Nevertheless, PCG observed instructional assistants supporting students 1:1 or via group setting in online break-out rooms.

Person Centered Planning

According to data gathered from interviews and focus groups with special education administration, WW-P consistently follows the Needs-Based IEP approach modeled after the P-CAST Program at the Boggs Center, Rutgers University. The district relies on its IEP case management system's IEP goal bank to ensure that pre-populated goals are based on the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.[56]

According to information gathered from IEP file review focus groups, P-CAST is somewhat well known by educators within the district. According to district special education administration, the creation of a student-led "person centered plans" or students engaging in in a "Person Centered Planning meeting" are utilized when determined appropriate by the IEP team.

Progress Monitoring and Reporting for Specially Designed Instruction

Progress monitoring is a scientifically-based practice used to assess a child's academic progress on IEP goals and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Progress monitoring tells the teacher, child, and family what a student has learned and what still needs to be taught. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 states that an IEP must contain a description of how the child's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured, and that periodic reports be provided. Progress monitoring is a separate activity from the progress reports that may be issued for all students in a school on a quarterly basis; they are specific to students with IEPs. Progress monitoring, however, includes qualitative and quantitative data on student progress that is directly linked to a student's IEP goals. The data derived from progress monitoring can subsequently be used to inform quarterly IEP progress reports.

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[56] In addition, the district also created functional, speech, occupational therapy, and physical therapy goals in its IEP case management system. Committees within the district have created these goals that are included within the system.

WW-P CST members and teachers could consistently provide a thorough definition of progress monitoring. In addition, they consistently spoke of collecting data for the purpose of progress monitoring. In district progress reports, IEP teams utilize progress indicators (e.g. "meets standards"). District special education administration shared that staff have a criteria for progress indicators. However, IEP teams typically do not include quantitative data within progress reports.[57]

One case manager shared:

- "In cases that are more contentious where the parent wants specific data about programming teachers do include specific data under the see comments section of the progress report."
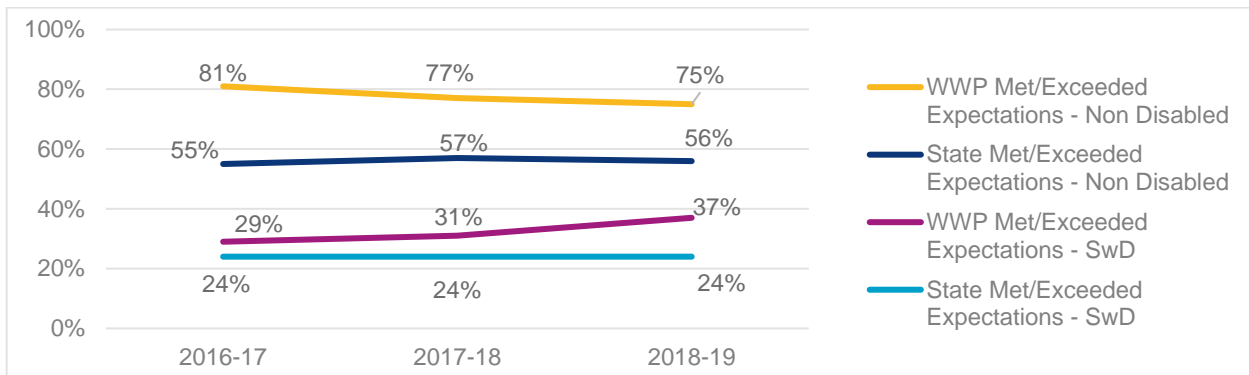
ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

This section provides a longitudinal analysis of student outcomes on the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) reading/ELA and in mathematics. Exhibits 32-37 compare the performance of students at WW-P with state averages for students with IEPs and those without, documenting possible achievement gaps over time.[58]

Reading

Grade 3. Between 2016-17 to 2018-19, WW-P students with IEPs performed above the state average of students with disabilities. In 2018-19, the percentage of WW-P students who met or exceeded expectations was 13 percentage points higher than the state average for students with disabilities. When compared to their non-disabled peers, the percentage of WW-P students with IEPs who met or exceeded expectations was, on average, 45 percentage points lower.

EXHIBIT 32: GRADE 3 READING, 2016-17 TO 2018-19

Grade 8. Similar to the Grade 3 trends, the percentage of WW-P students with IEPs who met or exceeded expectations on the grade 8 reading assessment was above the overall state pass rate for students with disabilities. However, between 2016-17 to 2018-19 the percentage of students with disabilities who met or exceeded expectations decreased 15 percentage points. When compared to their non-disabled peers, WW-P students with IEPs who met or exceed expectations on the grade 8 reading assessment was significantly lower. The three-year average achievement gap between WW-P students with IEPs and non-disabled students was 60 percentage points.

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[57] On this matter, district administration shared: "This is not mandated by code nor is appropriate for all types of goals and objectives."

58NJSLA scores obtained from NJ School Performance Report: https://rc.doe.state.nj.us/. PCG looked at the percentage of testers who met/exceeded

expectations for students who took the specific grade level learning assessment.
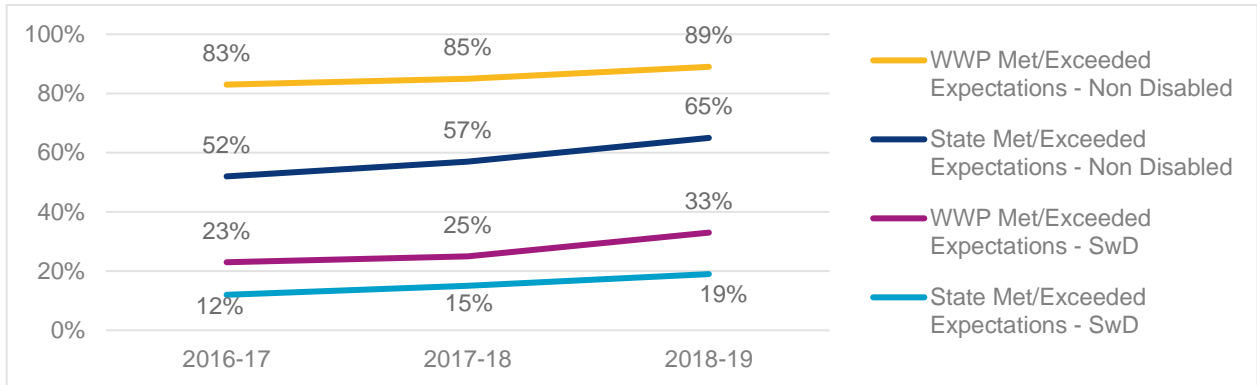
EXHIBIT 33: GRADE 8 READING, 2016-17 TO 2018-19
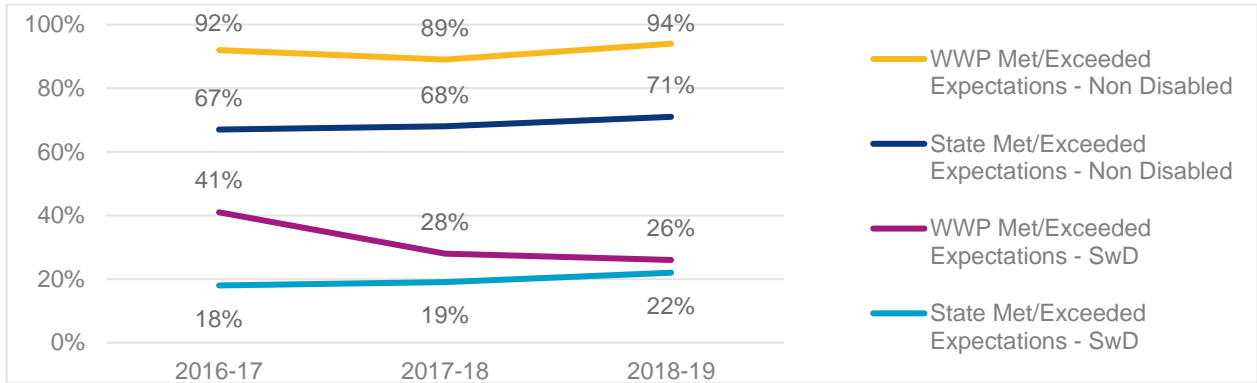
Grade 10. The percentage of WW-P students with IEPs who met or exceeded expectations on the grade 10 assessment was higher than the state average for all students with disabilities. Between 2016-17 to 2018-19 the percentage of WW-P students with IEPs who met or exceeded expectations increased 10 percentage points. Similar to other grade levels, when compared to their non-disabled peers, a substantially smaller group of students with IEPs met or exceeded expectations on the grade 10 reading assessment. The three-year average achievement gap between WW-P students with disabilities and those without disabilities was 58.6 percentage points.

EXHIBIT 34: GRADE 10 READING, 2016-17 TO 2018-19

Math

Grade 3. The percentage of WW-P students with IEPs who met or exceeded expectations on the grade 3 math assessment was near the state average for students with disabilities. Between 2016-17 and 2018-19, the percentage of students with IEPs who met or exceeded expectations most remained unchanged. When compared to their non-disabled peers, a smaller percentage of WW-P students with IEPs met or exceeded expectations. The three-year average achievement gap between WW-P students with disabilities and those without disabilities was 47 percentage points.
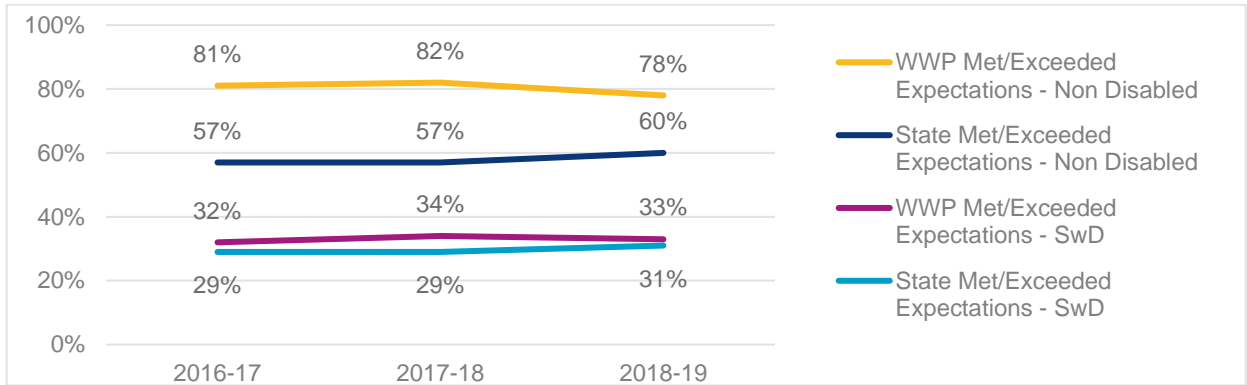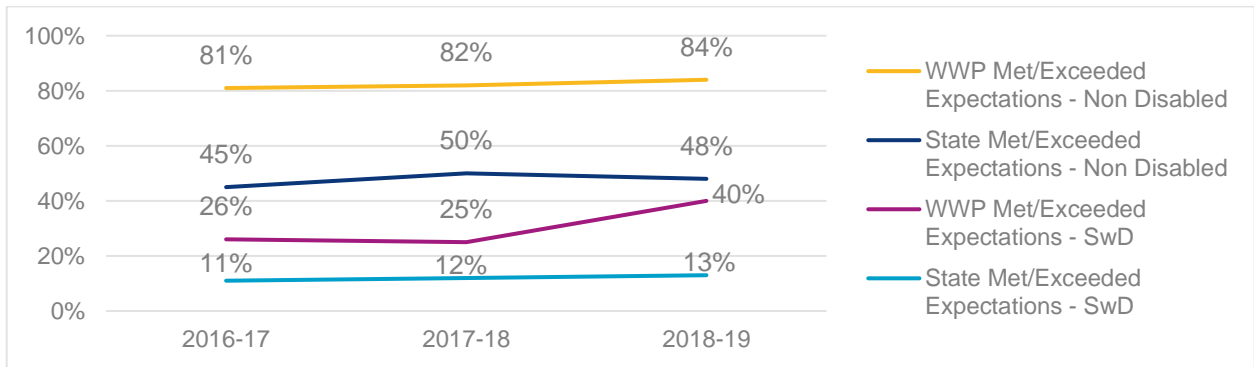
EXHIBIT 35: GRADE 3 MATH, 2016-17 TO 2018-19

Legend:
- WWP Met/Exceeded Expectations - Non Disabled
- State Met/Exceeded Expectations - Non Disabled
- WWP Met/Exceeded Expectations - SwD
- State Met/Exceeded Expectations - SwD

Data points:
- WWP Non Disabled: 81%, 82%, 78%
- State Non Disabled: 57%, 57%, 60%
- WWP SwD: 32%, 34%, 33%
- State SwD: 29%, 29%, 31%

Years: 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19

Grade 7. Between 2017-18, the percentage of WW-P students with IEPs who met or exceeded expectations on the grade 7 math assessment increased 15 percentage points from 25% to 40%. Unlike the grade 3 assessment, a larger percentage of WW-P students with IEPs met or exceeded expectations than the state average for students with disabilities. When compared to their non-disabled peers, the percentage of WW-P students with IEPs who met or exceeded expectations was significantly smaller. Between 2016-17 to 2018-19, the overall achievement gap between WW-P non-disabled students and students with IEPs was 48.6 percentage points.

EXHIBIT 36: GRADE 7 MATH, 2016-17 TO 2018-19

Legend:
- WWP Met/Exceeded Expectations - Non Disabled
- State Met/Exceeded Expectations - Non Disabled
- WWP Met/Exceeded Expectations - SwD
- State Met/Exceeded Expectations - SwD

Data points:
- WWP Non Disabled: 81%, 82%, 84%
- State Non Disabled: 45%, 50%, 48%
- WWP SwD: 26%, 25%, 40%
- State SwD: 11%, 12%, 13%

Years: 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19

Algebra. Between 2016-17 to 2018-19, the percentage of WW-P students with IEPs who met or exceeded expectations on the Algebra assessment decreased 18 percentage points. While above the state average for students with disabilities, a smaller percentage of WW-P students with IEPs met or exceeded expectations when compared to their non-disabled peers. The three-year average achievement gap between WW-P students with disabilities and those without disabilities was 56.3 percentage points.
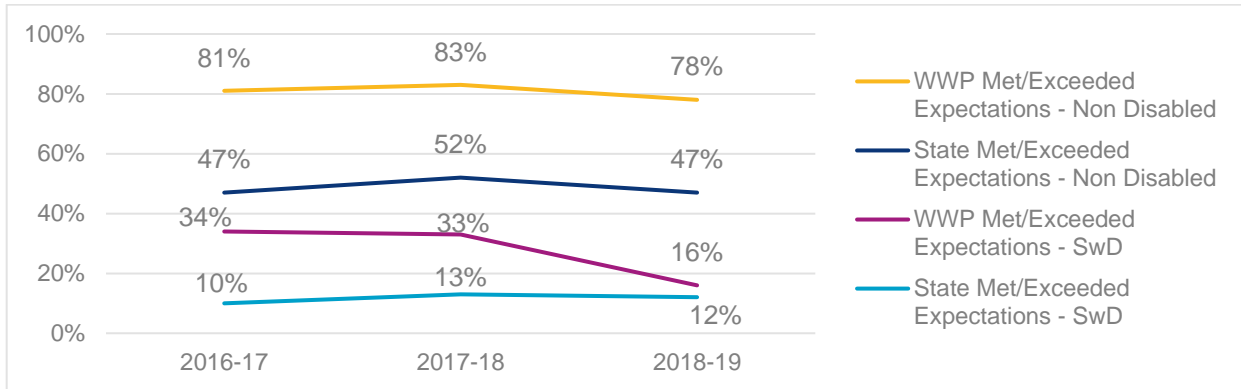
Graduation and Drop Out Rates

Between 2016 to 2017, the percentage of WW-P students with IEPs graduating from high school with a standard diploma in four years was above the overall statewide graduation rate.[59] Between 2017 and 2020, the percentage of WW-P students with an IEP graduating from high school decreased 6 percentage points, aligning with the state graduation rate for students with IEPs. When compared to their non-disabled peers, WW-P students with IEPs graduate at a lower percentage. In 2020, the difference between the percentage of students with disabilities graduating was 16 percentage points lower than the districtwide average.

EXHIBIT 38: PERCENT OF WW-P AND STATE STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT IEPS GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL IN 2015-19
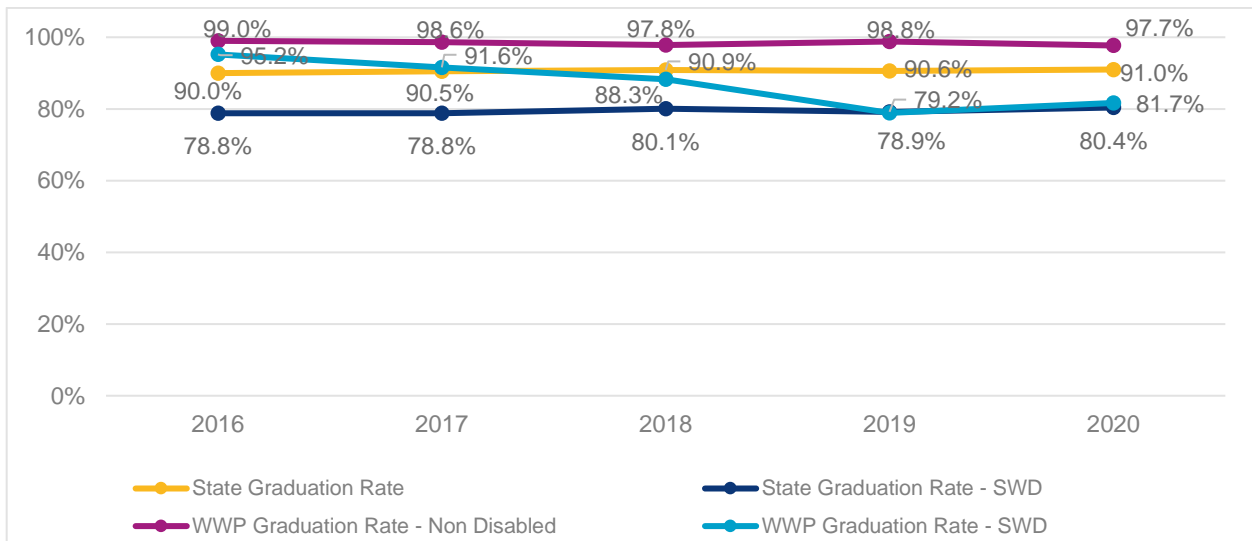
Between 2015 to 2019, the percentage of WW-P students with IEPs who dropped out aligned with the overall statewide drop out rate, with the exception of 2017. Between 2016 and 2017, the drop out rate for students with disabilities at WW-P increased .9 percentage points, and decreased 1 percentage point between 2017 to 2018. WW-Ps dropout rate for students without disabilities is relatively low, ranging between .1% to .4% between 2015 to 2019.

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[59] WW-P Graduation and drop out data provided by WW-P in 2020. Statewide graduation and drop out data obtained from NJ School Performance Report: https://rc.doe.state.nj.us/.

EXHIBIT 39: DROPOUT RATE OF WW-P STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT IEPS COMPARED TO STATE AVERAGES, 2015-19
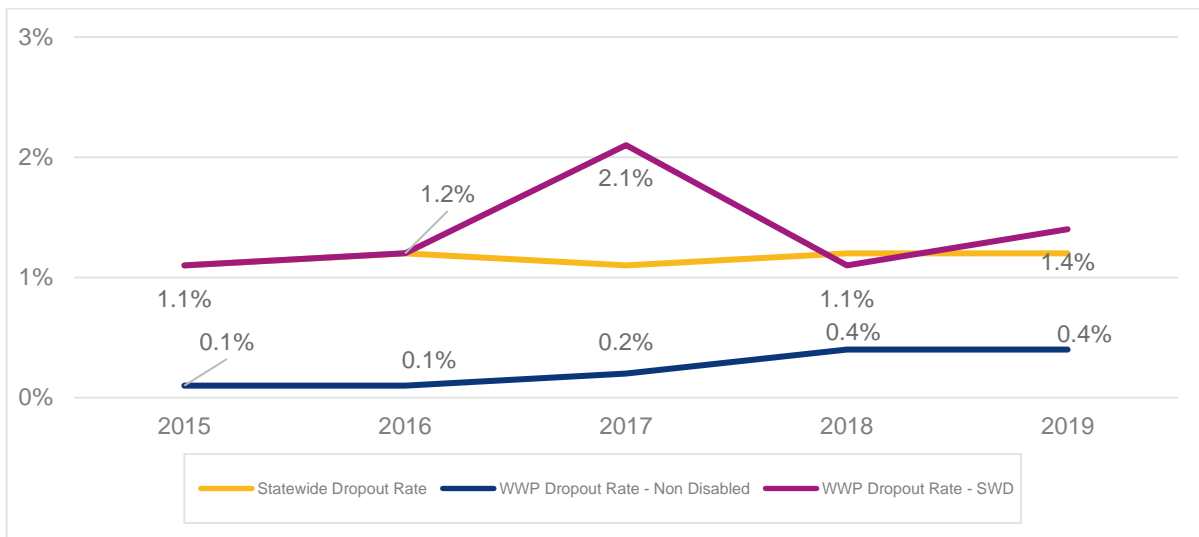
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Quality teaching in all classrooms and skilled leadership in all schools will not occur by accident. It requires the design and implementation of the most powerful forms of professional development. High quality professional development must be sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused (not one-day or short-term workshops or conferences) to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and teacher's performance. Research reports that elementary school teachers who received substantial professional development—an average of 49 hours—boosted their students' achievement by about 21 percentile points.[60]

Special Education Professional Development in WW-P

Professional Development (PD) is noted by administration to be strong and comprehensive with examples such as support from Teachers College in Literacy and Math workshop approaches; however, the PD is required for all special education and general education teachers relevant to their program. Although special education teachers may attend these trainings, they have separate PD that focuses on special education.

According to special education administration, the district requires all elementary and middle school R/LA special education staff be Orton Gillingham trained inclusive of 30 hours of Orton Gillingham educator direct training. The district pays the annual dues and certification fees for all certified staff and a district Orton Gillingham fellow mentors staff.   Administration shared that Orton Gillingham Fellows conduct annual follow-up training for staff who have previously trained. The district also shared the provide training on the K-12 Units of Study developed through Lucy Calkins and TCRWP. Furthermore, specific to staff part of an Autism program, therapists, teachers, and instructional aides receive trainings from one of the district's Board Certified Behavior Analysts on data collection and ABA discrete trial methodologies.

During focus groups with content supervisors, there is a strong theme across content supervisors that although the district offers a great deal of professional development, the general education teachers

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[60] 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.

are not mandated to attend special education professional development. According to content supervisors, this can create difficulties in the implementation of programs specific to their content-area. Furthermore, there is a collective opinion among content supervisors that additional professional development topics and skills that exist need to be addressed.

The Special Education Department offers additional trainings to both special education and general education teachers. These include the following professional development offerings that have occurred over the past three years, provided by the district:

EXHIBIT 40: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFERINGS TO GENERAL EDUCATION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF ON SPECIAL EDUCATION TOPICS: 2017-18 SCHOOL YEAR

July 2017	Handle With Care training for SE & GE staff Orton Gillingham Classroom level training Financial Literacy: modifications and accommodations Health: modification and accommodations Autism Assessment: VB MAPP Statistics: Modifications and accommodations Preschool Curriculum review
August 2017	New Teacher Training IEP Direct Training
September 2017	Opening PD day training PECS Level 1 training Co-teaching Strategies & Planning (4 sessions across year) Parent Training series across the year (Parents of students w/ Autism)
October 2017	Orton Gillingham training through April 2018 ABA Training for Instructional Assistant [by Eden] Monthly ECERS training for targeted Preschool Staff through May 2018 HS Dept. Mtg. PD Review of RC/LLD/ICR curriculum
November 2017	PECS Level 1 Training for all AU teachers, targeted SLPS, targeted CST, BCBAs Handle with Care- refresher training
December 2017	
January 2018	PD training for upcoming Annual Reviews
Feb. 2018	District SE atty presented on current topics in SE PD Offerings for Related Service Staff, SE Teachers, MD/Autism Teachers
March 2018	HS Dept. Mtg. PD - What Does Educational Progress Look Like?
April 2018	
May 2018	HS Dept. Mtg. PD - Lesson Planning
June 2018	Creative Curriculum Training

EXHIBIT 41: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFERINGS TO GENERAL EDUCATION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF ON SPECIAL EDUCATION TOPICS: 2018-19 SCHOOL YEAR

July 2018	Handle With Care training for SE & GE staff PD for the special ed student in Financial Lit
August 2018	New Teacher Training IEP Direct Training
September 2018	Opening Day PD Training Instructional Assts. PD - Master Teacher Online Platform Autism & Data Collection Training Parent Training series across the year (Parents of students w/ Autism)

October 2018	All CST Dept. Mtg. Orton Gillingham training through April 2019 ABA Training for all AU teachers, targeted CST and therapists [by Eden] DTI training for PreK-5 AU Teachers and IAs SE Teachers Join Content Area GE Dept. Mtg. SEMI
November 2018	All CST Dept. Mtg. Regression/Recoupment Data Collection review Assessment of the Emerging Bi-lingual Speaker [all SLPs]
December 2018	All CST Dept. Mtg. CMS School Meeting Oppositional Defiant Disorder SE Teachers Join Content Area GE Dept. Mtg.
January 2019	All CST Dept. Mtg. Legal Updates: Why we do what we do. Special Service Department Meeting PD training for upcoming Annual Reviews
Feb. 2019	District SE atty presented on current topics in SE PD Offerings for Related Service Staff, SE Teachers, MD/Autism Teachers DLM Training ABA Strategies and Introduction ODD/FBA presentation to Guidance Department Neuroscience & Self-Regulation Using Curriculum-Based Language Interventions to Meet Individual Goals (SLPs) Technology & Digital Resources
March 2019	All CST Dept. Mtg. SE Teachers Join Content Area GE Dept. Mtg.
April 2019	All CST Dept. Mtg.
May 2019	All CST Dept. Mtg. SE Teachers Join Content Area GE Dept. Mtg.
June 2019	"How to Write Curriculum" training for MD/AU teachers in Middle and High School levels. HWC- initial and ref

EXHIBIT 42: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFERINGS TO GENERAL EDUCATION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF ON SPECIAL EDUCATION TOPICS: 2019-20 SCHOOL YEAR

July 2019	Handle With Care training for SE & GE staff PD for Financial Lit RC course PD for Drivers Education for the special ed student PD for Study Skills course
August 2019	IEP Direct Training New Teacher Training
September 2019	Opening Day PD Training. All CST Dept. mtg. Review of Fed. Monitoring of NJDOE issues/resolutions Review revised CST evaluative rubric Review new Bill of Rights for Deaf and HOH students Review of June 2019 NJOSEP monitoring Review SEMI

	Instructional Asst. Training (confidentiality and the role of and IA) Training for new CST case managers #1 Orton Gillingham training through November Regression/Recoupment data collection review Parent Training series across the year (Parents of students w/ Autism)
October 2019	All CST Dept. Mtg. NJOSEP monitor reviewed findings from monitoring Independent evaluation request criteria ASSA common errors TOD services and responsibilities SEMI review Instructional Asst. Training (fading prompts) LRE Special Services Department Meeting DTI training for PreK-5 AU Teachers and IAs HS Dept. Mtg. PD - Building Relationships and Safe Classrooms SEMI
November 2019	Training for new CST case managers #2 HS Dept. Mtg. PD - Compare/Contrast Student Placement and Student Profile
December 2019	All CST Dept. Mtg. Requirements for providing Extended Day programming OCR review: Exclusion of students pending psychiatrics Trauma Conference share out Reviewed noncompliance cited by NJOSEP SEMI review Dynamic Learning Map Training Inclusion Trends Special Service Department Meeting HS Dept. Mtg. PD - How to Best Utilize your Inst. Asst in the Classroom
January 2020	Training for new CST case managers #3 PD training for upcoming Annual Reviews
Feb. 2020	All CST Dept. Mtg. Gaming Addiction conference share out SEMI review District SE atty presented on current topics in SE PD Offerings for Related Service Staff, SE Teachers, MD/Autism Teachers Dynamic Learning Maps Training The IEP Challenge: Special Services Department Meeting
March 2020	Middle School Autism/Related Arts Teacher Training
April 2020	Instructional Assistant Training via Google Platforms
May 2020	RBT(Registered Behavioral Technician) training for IAs
June 2020	

- According to surveyed teachers:
- Over 50% of special education teachers agree or strongly agree that General education teachers are provided adequate training in effectively supporting the needs of students with IEPs; over 31% disagreed or strongly disagreed and over 14% did not know.
- Over 56% of general education teachers disagree or strongly disagree that general education teachers are provided adequate training in effectively supporting the needs of students with IEPs.

Special education teachers shared the following comments in the survey:

- "We are provided instruction in Orton Gillingham practices and are told to use them in the classroom. When non-special education administrators attend the class, they state their use are inappropriate and give special education teachers negative evaluations. There isn't a clear continuum of services from K-12 i.e. resource setting for science and social studies in grade 6-12 but not in K-5. LLD classroom is not consistent and too many grades blended together in the LLD setting."
- "Training for new special education teachers needs to be more specific to their job placement. I felt unprepared going into my first year of teaching and would have benefitted from more trainings and time with veteran special education teachers or the special education service department."
- "PD that allows uniquely for cross team and grade Sped teachers to share experiences, strategize and help each other with a variety of topics."
- "General education teachers who have never worked in an inclusive classroom should have to attend some type of PD on different disabilities, how to effectively work with classified students, and have a clear understanding of the special education teacher's responsibilities."
- "I believe that general education teachers should be trained with regards to working in an inclusion classroom."
- "Trainings for instructional assistants."
- "I think we should provide training for co-teachers before beginning inclusion instruction. I also believe that any general education teachers that have not had any prior special education teacher experiences and/or are not certified to teach special education, should be given training before teaching in a co-teaching inclusive role."
- "Providing more support with Professional Development geared toward educational strategies supporting students with special needs. Special Education Teachers would benefit from continued support and professional development with Orton Gillingham and Framing Your Thoughts. I would also like to have more Professional Training on using Orton Gillingham techniques to support teaching math in the elementary classroom."

General education teachers:

- "I would love to see more PD for the general education teacher on how to be a better teacher for our special education students."
- "I would like to receive a little training about the system at WW-P"
- "I think we need some more professional development as well as more time set aside to meet together to discuss our students we have in common and how we can work together."

During focus groups with content supervisors, there were subtle but consistent suggestions that general education teachers feel that certain courses are used as a "special education option" over others. Additionally, along the same vein, they suggested there are some general education teachers who feel students are not "ready" or equipped to handle content, which subsequently creates honors and AP courses for students with disabilities.

Professional Development to Support Cultural Differences

As stated earlier, the district has seen a significant demographic change in its population with an increase in students whose families identify as Asian. A body of scholarly research has emerged over the past two decades on this topic, primarily focused on cultural responsiveness respective to (1) special education referral; (2) classification; and (3) academic expectations of Asian families, especially first generation families.[61]

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[61] Nguyen, Quynh and Hughes, Margaret (2013) "Perspectives of Asian American Parents towards Children with Disabilities and Their Educational Programs," The Journal of Special Education Apprenticeship: Vol. 2 : No. 2 , Article 4.; Cho, J. (2009).

According to Nguyen and Hughes:[62]

> "When first sharing the diagnosis of the child's disability with families, special education professionals should be <u>prepared to provide any and all verbal and written information about the cause and the characteristics of the disability with the families in their preferred language</u>…
>
> …Teachers also need to consider the fact that most Asian families <u>want to be more involved in the educational programs of their children either in school or at home than they might expect; therefore they should solicit each family's preference and plan together a meaningful way</u> to ensure this happens. Special education team members need to be culturally responsive to the fact that most Asian families have very high educational expectations even for their children with disabilities, and <u>they should not confuse a family's effort to achieve this expectation as them just being difficult</u>. Instead, they should be very prepared to provide all appropriate programs and resources available to the child and family according to the Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004)…
>
> …Professionals need to understand that some Asian families <u>might not express their true opinions about the team's recommendations at the public and more formal Individual Educational Plan meetings due to their traditional belief of loss of face</u>. Therefore, when professionals are aware of the traditional cultural beliefs of families, they may need to consider having more sensitive conversations or informal opportunities prior to the formal group meetings where families can truly advocate for themselves and their children regarding their priorities, needs and concerns. Ultimately, this may ensure that IEP goals are not only reflective of the team's recommendations but also of the families input."[63]

During interviews and focus groups with administrators it was shared that in some cases, for some parents of children with disabilities, this may be their first encounter with special education in the US. In addition, through interviews and focus groups, it was shared by staff that there are sometimes misaligned expectations between parents and CSTs about expectations.

Speaking Another Language at Home and Interpreters

On the parent survey, parents were asked "Do you speak another language at home?" If the parent responded "yes," they were prompted to a set of questions specific to their participation in the IEP meeting. Out of 135 parents who responded "yes," 35% indicated they were asked if they wanted an interpreter in IEP meetings. In the next question, parents were asked "If you asked for an interpreter, was one provided at IEP meetings?" Out of 102 parent responses, 10% responded "yes," 31% responded "no" and 59% responded "don't know."

According to the district, in 2019-20, interpreters were utilized in 57 instances. District administration are unaware of any instances where an interpreter was requested, and the request was denied. The district administration also noted that it provides "interpreters for students being tested, for parents to

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Cultural patterns of parental beliefs and involvement of mothers of children with autism spectrum disorders. Pro Quest Information & Learning. Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences, 69(10); Chan, S., & Lee, E. (2004). Families with Asian roots. In E. W. Lynch, & M. J. Hansen (Eds.). Developing cross-cultural competency: A guide for working with children and their families (pp. 219-298).Baltimore, ML: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.
[62] Nguyen, Quynh and Hughes, Margaret (2013) "Perspectives of Asian American Parents towards Children with Disabilities and Their Educational Programs," The Journal of Special Education Apprenticeship: Vol. 2 : No. 2 , Article 4
[63] This is a direct quote which refers to the Individualized Education Program as an Individualized Education Plan.

attend/participate in IEP meetings, and for parents that are deaf to enable them to understand school programs in which their children participated."

Although the district actively provided interpreters, based on the survey, there are more parents who believed they asked for one and never received one or were never asked at all. The perception that parents were not given access to interpreters needs to be addressed. Perceived English fluency does not necessarily mean that English is the preferred language of communication for parents, especially on matters related to special education programming.

EXHIBIT 43: PARENT SURVEY: NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING PARENT'S PARTICIPATION IN THE IEP
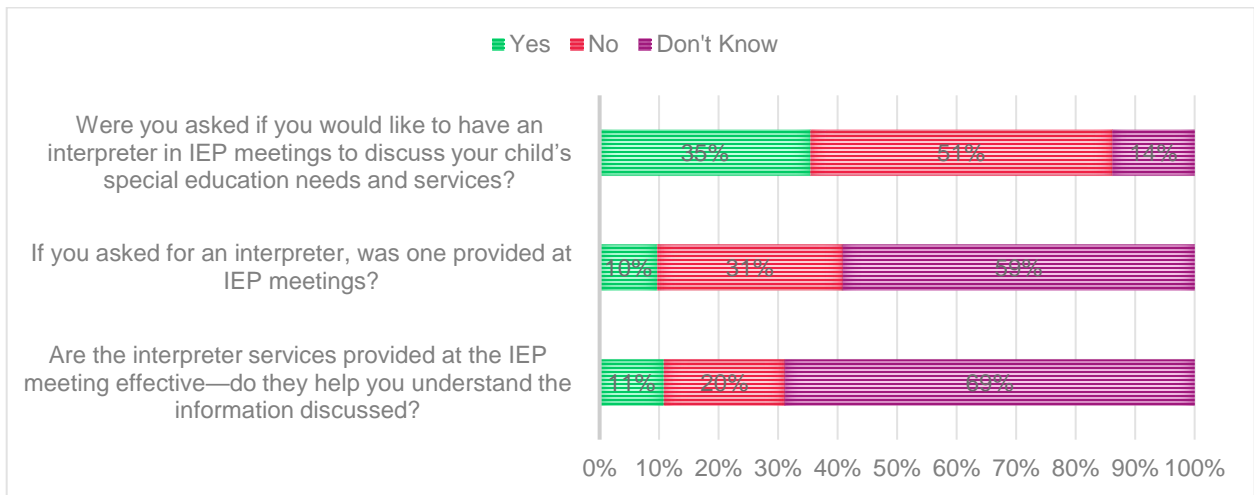
IV. SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Strengths	Opportunities
• District has made commitment to ensuring that both students with IEPs and their typically developing peers have access to BCBAs.	

SPECIALIZED BEHAVIOR SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

With the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) and its amendments, Congress recognized schools must be inclusive of all students and use evidence-based approaches to support the behavioral needs of students with disabilities. The law states education for students with disabilities can be more effective when schools[64]:

- Provide incentives for whole-school approaches
- Implement scientifically-based early reading programs
- Use early intervention services to stop labeling students as 'disabled' in order to address their learning and behavioral needs[65]

WW-P offers the following behavioral support programs:

- Within all four of its preschool programs, it utilizes *Second Step for Early Learning*;
- At the K-5 level it utilizes *Zones of Regulation* through its school psychologists and social workers in their work with students in teaching scaffolded skills toward developing a metacognitive pathway to build awareness of their feelings/internal state and utilize a variety of tools and strategies for regulation, prosocial skills, self-care, and overall wellness.
- At the K-3 level, it will be utilizing *Social Explores and Social Problem Solvers*; however, training was delayed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. This offers a research-based perspective on social emotional learning and executive functioning/self-regulation—and their interactive impact on socio-communicative abilities—and how to put the research and best practices of teaching social information into action.

According to interviews and focus groups with administration, the following information was shared around the provision of behavioral support for students with disabilities. One of the comments indicates there may be confusion between "manifestation determination" and a functional behavioral assessment (FBA).

- "Manifestation is done by a number of people, for example, FBAs are done by the BCBAs if it is a formal process."
- "If it is an issue of anxiety or something, I encourage the School Psychologist to just get in there"
- "IEP Direct has a form for making a manifestation determination"
- FBA do not necessarily lead to BIPs.
- BIPs do not seem to be always generated by a completed FBA.
- "Sometimes FBAs are done in the home and the school by an independent professional"

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[64] OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (2021). Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports <https://www.pbis.org/topics/disability>
[65] Id.

- "The CST conduct the manifestation determinations, you need to do a lot before you do a FBA
- "Our students are very compliant"
- "Unclear if there is some level of a District-Wide PBIS Model."
- "We have more compliant students"

According to teacher surveys:

- Over 22% of special education teachers and over 31% of general education teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed that there is a well-articulated approach in my school(s) to address the behavior needs of students with disabilities
- Over 30% of special education teachers and 27% general education teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed that students with IEPs have adequate services in place to manage challenging behavior in the classroom

Use of Board Certified Behavior Analysts

A Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) is a person with a certification in applied behavior analysis. BCBAs receive this certification through the Behavior Analyst Certification Board.[66] Applied behavior analysis (ABA) uses scientific and systematic processes to help influence an individual's behavior. Behavior analysts can work in schools, classrooms, hospitals, clinics, and nonprofits; many analysts specialize in certain areas like autism, developmental disabilities, or mental health issues.[67]

In WW-P, the district has five BCBA positions, two of which are used to support general education initiatives and three who are dedicated to special education programing. In the general education setting, the BCBAs are known as "Teacher Resource Specialists for General Education." In particular, the BCBA supports the district's Autism Program, the work of teachers and instructional assistants who support ABA discreet trials with students, and provide guidance on Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) and Behavioral Intervention Plans (BIPs). However, the BCBAs who support special education students are available to support all students with disabilities, not solely students with Autism.

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[66] https://www.thechicagoschool.edu/resources/your-guide-to-bcba-certification-requirements/
[67] Id.

V. SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL

Strengths	Opportunities
• District has committed a Supervisor to for each level- elementary, middle, and high schools. • Staff speak highly of collaboration between Supervisors, Case Managers, and Director of Special Education	• Continue identifying opportunities to attract a diverse and representative staff and administrative team. • Develop a district wide Special Education Standard Operating Procedures manual; post manual online so processes are transparent to all constituents.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

WW-P has a Director of Special Education who reports directly to the Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Personnel and Instruction. The district also as a three Supervisors if Special Education – one for grades PK-3; one for grades 4-8; and one for grades 9-Post Graduate. These three positions report to the Director of Special Education.
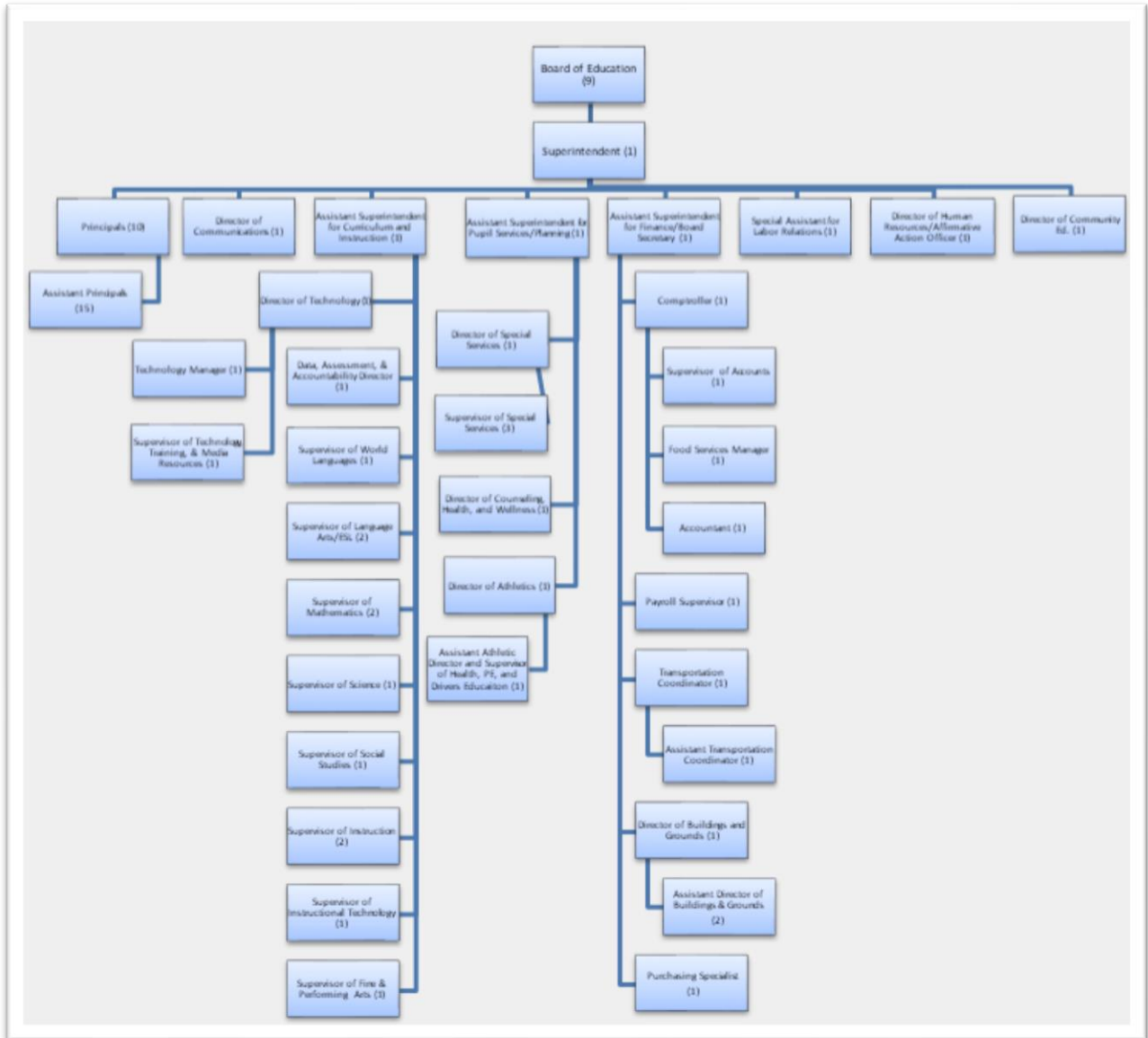
CHILD STUDY TEAMS

As required by the New Jersey state regulations, Child Study Teams (CSTs) have broad responsibility, consisting of the identification, evaluation, determination of eligibility, development and review of the individualized education program, and placement. CST Teams play an important role in compliance and creation of high-quality special education documents. CSTs consist of three educational professionals: psychologist, a social worker, and a learning disabilities teacher consultant (LDTC).

WW-P has 11 Child Study Teams (CSTs) and Related Service Staff comprised of the following:

- 16 School Psychologists
- 11 Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultants (LDTCs)
- 9 School Social Workers
- 21 Speech and Language Pathologists (SLPs)
- 5 Occupational Therapists who are Registered (OTRs)

- 2 Physical Therapists (PTs)
- 3 Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs)
- 2 Teacher Resource Specialists for Reading (1 is an Orton Gillingham Fellow)

According to district administration, Child Study Team caseloads are delineated by program per building. Numbers are reviewed and adjusted annually as necessary by the respective supervisor and Director of Special Education.

CASE MANAGERS AND TEACHERS

According to district administration, special education instructional and teacher resources are allocated consistent with NJAC 6A;14-4.6 -4.7. The district limits preschool class rosters to 6 in an Autism based preschool environment. Consideration is also given to the specific student make-up of all programs. If a particular group of students requires more significant supports and/or are challenging, we reduce the number of students in the group size. Commendably limiting the roster to 6 students is well below the limit set in code and, according to district administration, is done to maximize instruction and service to students.

Case managers in district case manage average caseloads of approximately 28 students. The maximum number on a caseload is typically 38.

Interviews and focus groups with the Director of Special Education and Supervisors of Special Education indicate a consistent and agreed collaboration with building administration and central office administration. They discussed the shared supervision of special education teachers and instructional aides, in addition to CST, therapists, and BCBAs.

Data gathered through focus groups with principals indicated several themes including: (1) a perception of increased collaboration or partnership with CST members, special education supervisors, and past directors; (2) the concept of "shared responsibility" or "shared oversight" was either directly labeled and/or described by the majority of principals. This belief of shared responsibility is commendable.

REPORTING STRUCTURE AND OBSERVATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANTS

The job description and job responsibilities for Instructional Assistants (IAs) is the same for all IAs in the district; the specific type of instructional support provided varies and is specific to individual student needs.

Case managers are required to observe students in classroom settings, collect data and share with supervisor prior to assigning any student with an IA. This applies to students both in- and out-of-district settings. Before a determination is made, they must complete an IA form. Additionally, IAs are assigned to self-contained programs. According to the district, determination for a 1:1 or shared IA is based on IEP team decision. According to the district, in instances, hiring of IAs may be discussed with supervisor(s) i.e. medical requirements, behavioral concerns.

A summative evaluation is conducted annually by district administrators on each Instructional Assistant to their job performance.

CULTURE AND CLIMATE OF SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Throughout every interview and focus group with administrative staff, there was a strong culture of shared responsibility between general education and special education. Administrators and staff within the district attribute this to the fact that the current Superintendent of Schools initially served as the district's Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Personnel Services. Long-time staff and administrators share a similar belief: "the superintendent gets it." Across the district, administrators praised the Superintendent for being hands on, supportive, and culturally aware.

The district has an orientation toward college and career – 90% of all its seniors go onto higher education. In the 2019-20 school year, 80% of graduating students at High School South with IEPs went onto college and 80% of students at High School North with IEPs went onto college. The mindset student-success within the district, from the Superintendent's Office on down fosters a culture that is focused on improving outcomes and post-secondary preparation.

DIVERSITY AND REPRESENTATIVENESS OF STAFF

According to the New Jersey School and District Profile, approximately 6.1% of the faculty and 0% of the district administration have identified as Asian[68]. The district acknowledges this challenge and has been actively trying to recruit teachers and administrators who are as diverse as the district's student body. According to administration, "the district has taken the lead in seeking to hire staff more representative of its student body. To this end, the district hosts the CJ Pride Job Fair each year, whose mission is to attract minority candidates. The district's hiring process also requires administrators to report the ethnicity of all candidates who were interviewed for a position, and to provide an explanation why one candidate was offered a position over the other candidates." In addition, according to district administration, providing data with greater specificity than what is included on the district's state report card, 142 or 10.74% employees identify as fully Asian or multiracial, partly Asian.

EXHIBIT 45: 2019-20: WW-P, RACIAL COMPOSITION OF TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS COMPARED TO STATE

Category	Students in District	Teachers in District	Administrators in District	Students in State	Teachers in State	Administrators in State
Female	48.5%	76.5%	52.0%	48.5%	77.0%	55.5%
Male	51.5%	23.5%	48.0%	51.5%	23.0%	44.5%
Non-Binary/Undesignated Gender	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
White	17.6%	87.5%	88.5%	41.4%	83.2%	77.0%
Hispanic	4.4%	3.5%	1.9%	30.5%	7.6%	7.4%
Black or African American	4.8%	2.5%	7.7%	15.1%	6.6%	14.1%
Asian	71.4%	6.1%	0.0%	10.2%	2.1%	1.2%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
Two or More Races	1.8%	0.4%	1.9%	2.4%	0.2%	0.2%

SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

In PCG's experience, highly effective special education departments have a standard operating procedure manual. This manual typically is inclusive of Board approved policies as well as state and federal code and it offers the step-by-step "how to" on policies and procedures that impact special education. It is intended as a resource for district staff, administration, and community stakeholders. It can serve as a resource for decisions relating to a child's special education program, including but not limited to identification; subsequent evaluation(s); classification; development and review of a child's IEP; educational placement of a child; annual IEP Meetings; triennial reevaluations; accommodations protocols; and assistive technology procurement and service delivery protocols. It

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[68] New Jersey School and District Profile, West Windsor-Plainsboro, 2019-20

should provide clear definitions about district practices. In addition, it should be highly accessible, online and in a format that is easy to navigate.

WW-P does not have a special education standard operating procedures manual. The Director of Special Education, the Supervisors of Special Education, and the CSTs do meet and share presentations that are saved on the districts Google Drive. In these presentations, guidance and or changes in procedure may be listed. However, these are not available for all parties impacted and do not serve the same purpose as a special education standard operating procedures manual.

RESOURCES

In reviewing how a district leverages its financial resources on special education and comparing the review district to peers, PCG refers to the New Jersey User Friendly Budgets for each district.

The New Jersey User Friendly Budgets provide a count of "students on roll" among other groups of students, including out of district placement students. For purposes of this analysis, because the Special Ed Instruction; Child Study Team expenditures; and OT, PT, Related Services are all for students within the schools, PCG used the "students on roll" count.

Although it is fairly easy to identify peers to WW-P based on overall enrollment, number of schools, and socio-economic status, it is almost impossible to identify a district that meets those characteristics and also has one of the lowest special education classifications in the state. The closest is Edison, NJ with a classification rate of 10.3%

EXHIBIT 46: 2018-19, PEER DISTRICTS, EXPENDITURES ON SPECIAL EDUCATION, CHILD STUDY TEAMS, AND RELATED SERVICES

|	% Classified	On Roll Total Students (full time and shared time)	SWDs on Roll (full time and shared time)	OT, PT, Related Services Expenditure	Child Study Teams Expenditure	Special Ed Instruction Expenditure
1. Edison	10.3%	16023	1423	$5,439,066	$4,655,438	$22,100,477
2. Hamilton	17.5%	11750	1663	$2,722,088	$6,296,845	$17,855,884
3. Cherry Hill	19%	10966	1634	$5,085,424	$4,009,106	$20,015,822
4. WW-P	9.5%	9703	862	$2,290,713	$3,573,785	$14,913,197
5. Middletown Twp	20.2%	9572	1639	$2,727,536	$6,282,273	$17,999,526

When reviewing special education instruction cost, per student with disability on roll, WW-P expends the most among the other peer districts.

EXHIBIT 47: PEER DISTRICTS, SPECIAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTION COST PER STUDENT (SWD ON ROLL)
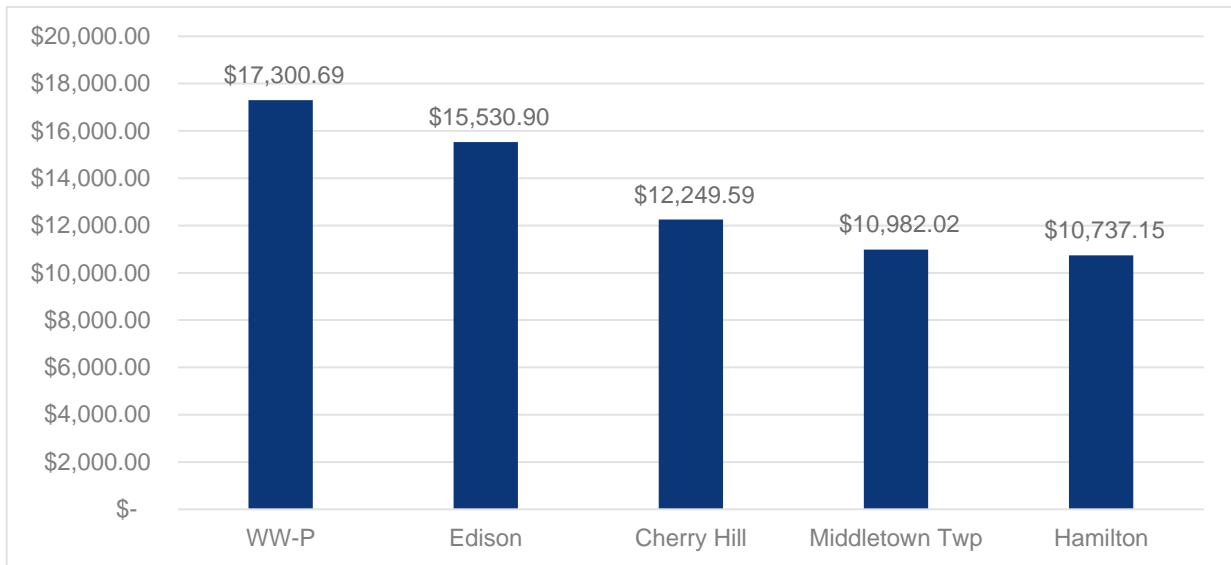

When reviewing OT, PT, and related service costs per student with disability on roll, WW-P's expenditure is in the middle among the peer districts reviewed.

EXHIBIT 48: PEER DISTRICTS, OT, PT, RELATED SERVICES COST PER STUDENT (SWD ON ROLL)
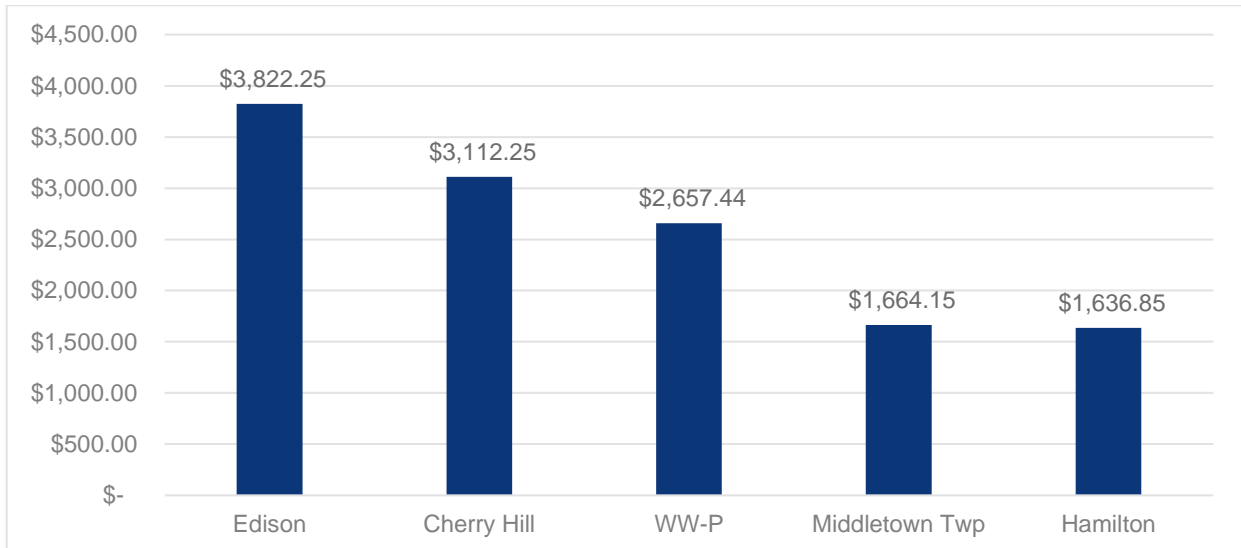
When reviewing child study team cost per student with a disability on a roll, WW-P's expenditure is the highest.

EXHIBIT 49: PEER DISTRICTS, CHILD STUDY TEAM COST PER STUDENT (SWD ON ROLL)
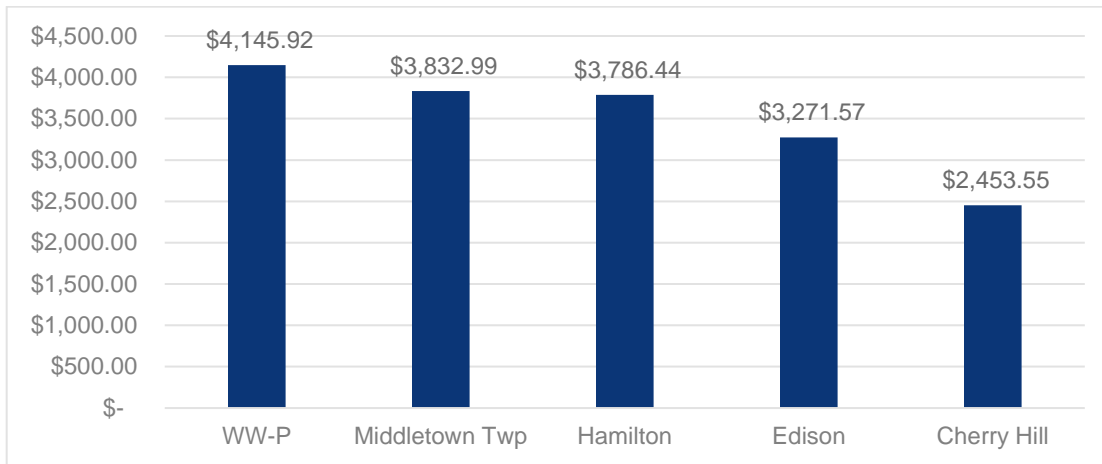
It is important to note that COVID-19 created financial challenges that are not acknowledged in these data. Therefore, although these data may serve as useful points of reference for past expenditures, their relevance in a post-COVID environment may not be as useful.

VI. PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Strengths	Opportunities
• District's SEPAG and SEPTSA are active organizations that support families • Various opportunities for district, SEPAG, and SEPTSA opportunities for parent engagement	• Further consider differing views on special education

SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Having a functioning Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is one essential ingredient to engage the families of students with disabilities. It is also required by law. According to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-1.2(h), each district board of education must ensure that a special education parent advisory group is in place in the district to provide input to the District on issues concerning students with disabilities.

The New Jersey Department of Education, in partnership with the New Jersey Statewide Parent Advisory Network (SPAN), recently developed an online and printed manual on the creation, purpose, mission, and activities of a SEPAC.   WW-P has two parent groups – its Special Education Parent Advisory Group, which serves as its mandated SEPAC, and its Special Education Parent Teacher and Student Association, that serves as an extension of its Parent Teacher Student Association.

OTHER FORMS OF PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Based on data gathered from interviews and focus groups with the special education administration, parent engagement is viewed as effective. In addition, special education administration shared that parent engagement has improved over the past few years. Furthermore, it was noted that there are a variety of avenues of communication and suggested there is easy and ample access to case managers. They also shared that parents are "informed, knowledgeable, and are unafraid to speak-up to advocate for their children."

Over the past two years, district administration noted there have been several letters/emails from the Director sent directly to parents of classified students addressing Welcome Back information., communications with CST, SEMI program, COVID instructional plans, and transportation plans during inclement weather days.

District administration shared that opportunities for parent engagement include the following:

- PTA meetings
- IEP Meetings
- Program of Studies Parent Night
- Transition Meetings for building level changes (i.e. 5th to 6th grade, 8th to 9th grade)
- Special Services Newsletter
- Home Programming for AU programs and student specific needs
- Parent workshops (e.g. Resource Fairs, DTI)
- Parent University
- Coffee with the Principal
- CST engagement with parents

PERCEPTIONS ON PARENT ENGAGEMENT

In order to obtain data on stakeholder perceptions of the quality and effectiveness of special education services in the district, PCG collaborated with district staff to develop and disseminate a survey to WW-P parents of students receiving special education services.

The following items in Exhibit 50 highlights specific data from this study.

EXHIBIT 50: PARENT SURVEY RESPONSES: PARTICIPATION IN IEP MEETINGS AND SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION
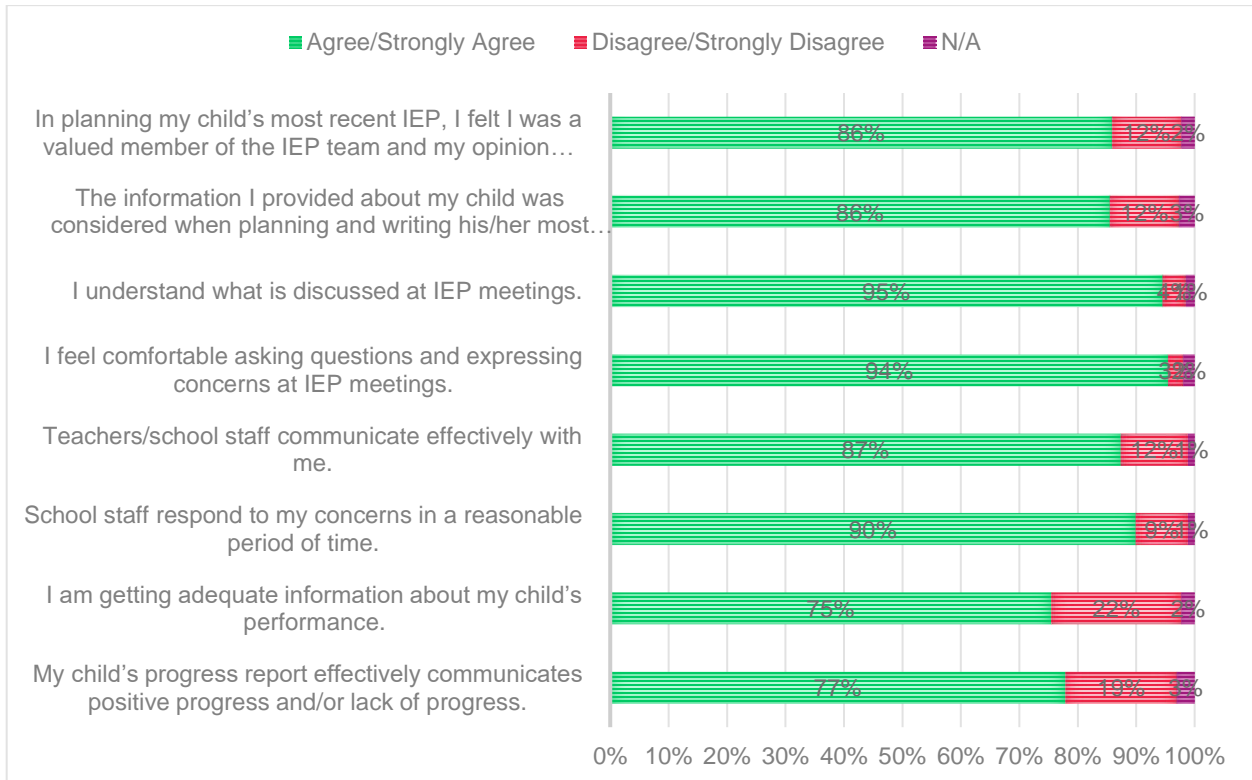
Differing Views

There were differences between what parents indicated in the survey versus what they shared during the parent focus groups.

In Exhibit 51, the following positive statements were shared, and themes emerged, in parent surveys.

EXHIBIT 51: THEMES AND STATEMENTS SHARED BY PARENTS IN SURVEY

Theme	Specific Quotes Shared
Effective Home-School Collaboration and Communication	• *"The special ed teachers are supportive and flexible. They really care about our child and are setting her up for success. They communicate effectively and listen."* • *"The special education teacher who is providing ICR for my child, along with the general education teacher, have been very supportive in meeting my son's needs. They recognize when he requires support, and effectively provide what he needs. They keep me informed on a regular basis, and we have open communication."* • *"The school communicates with me whenever there is a problem, or if there is certain assignment or quiz*

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	• *happening in the future."* • *"Effectively communicating with staff and parents. Discussing alternatives options. Reaching out for additional district support."* • *"IEP is implemented correctly, communication from teachers is very good, my child feels successful."*
Supportive Placement, Teachers, and Programs	• *"Small classes, personal attention, very supportive teachers. Special Ed teaching well educated about learning disabilities especially dyslexia. Classes based on a structured literature program and implemented with fidelity. Very supportive case manager, all my concerns answered in very timely manner."* • *"The programs and supports that are offered are good, but additional program offerings are needed. Good child study team staff and special education teachers."* • *"My child is in an out of district placement and we are very pleased with the program. He has made real progress in the two years of this placement."* • *"Overall there is nothing that can really be improved outside of individual teachers. Overall the program is well implemented with the overwhelming majority of teachers expressing thoughtfulness, empathy and passion when working with our child."*

However, in Exhibit 52, the following negative statements were shared, and themes emerged, during focus groups.

EXHIBIT 52: THEMES AND STATEMENTS SHARED BY PARENTS DURING FOCUS GROUPS

Theme	Specific Quotes Shared
Lack of Home-School Collaboration/Communication	• *"There is a lack of communication, I myself did not have any contact with my case manager"* • *"I want to highlight the lack of communication and overall collaboration"*
Negative/Not Collaborative Supervisors	• *"The attitude of the supervisor is poor"* • *"They are heavy-handed, it is my way or the highway"*
Difficulties with Program Continuum	• *"We have this program and that program and then were can put your child, placement is derived from what is available"*
Go to due process	• *"They said for me to go the legal route"* • *"There is always a threat if you do not like what you hear, they say go the legal route"*
Parent input is ignored	• *"Parent input is ignored"* • *"Interventions are decided by the teachers and they do not want parent input"*

Concerns about Retaliation	• *"Families are concerned about retaliation",* • *"Some parents who absolutely know that they will be retaliated against"*

VII. SPECIAL EDUCATION COMPLIANCE AND DUE PROCESS

Strengths	Opportunities
• The district has consistently received positive compliance ratings from NJDOE; in areas it is not "meeting targets" on the SPP/APR WW-P has not been found to be out of compliance. • Surveyed parents in conflict with the district report satisfaction with resolution	

STATE PERFORMANCE PLAN AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

The United States Department of Education (USED), Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has established SPP/APR requirements that include 17 indicators.[69] These indicators are categorized as either Compliance Indicators or Performance Indicators. In recent years, through RDA, USED OSEP has increased the emphasis of the Performance Indicators. While compliance indicators remain important, under RDA, 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 is 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. Districts need both to raise the level of and access to high levels of rigor, and also to generate a culture of academic optimism.

> ### 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*

Per the definitions provided by OSEP, RDA focuses on Performance Indicators (1-8, 14-16, and 17). Indicators 9-13 are Compliance Indicators. Although compliance remains important, RDA has amplified the meaningfulness of Performance Indicators.

Based on requirements set by OSEP, each state is required to develop annual targets and monitor Local Education Agency (LEA) performance on each special education indicator. The state must

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[69] New Jersey's Annual Performance Plan can be accessed online at:
https://osep.grads360.org/#report/apr/2017B/publicView?state=NJ&ispublic=true

report annually to the public on its overall performance and on the performance of each of its LEAs according to the targets in its Annual Report (APR).[70]

Although the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) reviews all special education indicators, according to the state's SPP/APR, it gives special consideration to indicators 4B, 11, 12, and 13, stating the following:[71]

> *The NJDOE monitors all districts each year through NJSMART, New Jersey's student level data system. Findings of noncompliance with Indicators 4B, 11 and 12 and with requirements related to Indicators 4A and 4B are identified through review of data from NJSMART and the Electronic Violence and Vandalism Report. Once districts are identified as noncompliant with Indicators 11 and 12 through written notification, a review of subsequent data or an onsite targeted review is conducted to ensure correction of noncompliance. For Indicators 4A and 4B, a self-review is conducted in districts that demonstrate a significant discrepancy in their rate of suspensions and expulsions over 10 days and/or a significant discrepancy in suspension/expulsion rate by race and ethnicity. Compliance with IDEA requirements related to discipline procedures, and positive behavioral supports, is reviewed.*
>
> *For Indicators 4A and 4B, a self-assessment of discipline requirements, including policies, procedures and practices regarding development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports and procedural safeguards is conducted by the LEA. Following the self-assessment, a written report of findings is generated. Corrective action activities are included in the report if noncompliance is identified and are based on any identified root causes of the noncompliance. Corrective action activities may include: the revision of procedures, staff training, and activities related to implementation of procedures, and/or oversight of implementation of procedures.*
>
> *Findings of noncompliance with Indicator 13 are identified through a targeted desk audit review. Districts and charter schools are selected for the targeted review based on a schedule that ensures that each district and charter school, with students ages 16 and above enrolled will participate once during the SPP period. The selection of districts is aligned with the selection for Indicator 14, so that districts participate in the Indicator 13 targeted review 2 years prior to their participation in the outcome study. The intent is to ensure that appropriate transition planning will lead to better outcomes for the students in each cohort.*

In the 2017-18 school year, RTSD did **not** meet SPP targets in five of the seventeen indicators.[72] These areas include the following four performance indicators and one compliance indicators:

> Indicator 3: Assessment – Performance Indicator
> Indicator 5: School Age LRE – Performance Indicator
> Indicator 6: Preschool LRE – Performance Indicator
> Indicator 8: Parent Involvement- Performance Indicator
> Indicator 11: Effective General Supervision of Part B/ Child Find

Below is a detailed analysis from WW-P's NJDOE analysis of each indicator where RTSD did not meet state targets.

Excerpts from WW-P's most recent APR report where WW-P did not meet state targets are listed below.[73]

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[70] Annual reporting on the performance of each New Jersey school districts according to the targets in New Jersey's State Performance Plan can be accessed online at: https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/info/spp/
[71] Introduction to New Jersey State Performance Plan (SPP)/ Annual Performance Report (APR) FFY 2017: https://osep.grads360.org/#report/apr/2017B/Introduction?state=NJ&ispublic=true
[72] Because of the collection schedule of these data, the most recently available data is from the 2017-18 school year.
[73] A finding with 'N' indicates the district did not meet the specific target created by NJDOE.

Indicator 3: Assessment - Performance Indicator
Data Source: ESEA Accountability Data

B. Participation rate for children with IEPs in a regular assessment with no accommodations; regular assessment with accommodations; alternate assessment against grade level standards; alternate assessment against alternate achievement standards.

Subject	LEA Data	State Target	Met State Target	Subject	LEA Data	State Target	Met State Target
LAL	96.5%	97.0%	N	Math	96.9%	97.0%	N

C. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade level standards and alternate achievement standards

Subject LAL	LEA Data	LEA Target	Met LEA Target	Subject MATH	LEA Data	LEA Target	Met LEA Target
Grade 3	33.3%	70.4%	N	Grade 3	31.6%	74.6%	N
Grade 4	32.6%	70.4%	N	Grade 4	35.6%	74.6%	N
Grade 5	25.6%	70.4%	N	Grade 5	19.8%	74.6%	N
Grade 6	30.7%	70.4%	N	Grade 6	28%	74.6%	N
Grade 7	33.8%	70.4%	N	Grade 7	36.9%	74.6%	N
Grade 8	28.6%	70.4%	N	Grade 8	30.2%	74.6%	N
Grade HS	28.4%	70.4%	N	Grade HS	19.4%	74.6%	N

* Did not meet the state "n" size of 20 for participation and   performance at Grade level
** No data reported
*** No eligible students
NA Not applicable as grades are not offered

Indicator 5: School Age LRE - Performance Indicator
Data Source: NJSMART (Collection Date: October 15, 2018)

** : Indicates no reported data on October 15th collection
*** : Indicates no reported data on 6-21 age group

Note: The LRE data for public reporting were collected on October 15 2016 and do not include Non-Public School students.

	Local Data	State Target	Met State Target
A. Percent of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21 inside the regular class 80% or more of the day.	42.5%	50.5%	N
B. Percent of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21 inside the regular class less than 40% of the day.	10.1%	15.0%	Y
C. Percent of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21 served in public or private separate schools, residential placements, or homebound or hospital placements.	9.1%	6.9%	N

Regarding Indicator 5A, district administration reports that the district has continued to focus efforts and resources on improving the programs and services delivered to our students with autism, a disability classification that has had the greatest impact on this ratio. According to the district, the instructional modalities necessary for these students to progress requires placement in small groups and/or self-contained classrooms for larger portions of the school day.

Regarding Indicator 5B, district administration reports that a permanent Director of Special Services was hired by the district in Dec. 2016. For the 3-4 years prior to December 2016 there were two interim Directors and administrative inconsistencies in the district. These inconsistencies resulted in reduced supervision of students who were placed in out-of-district locations. Strict protocols were put into place which resulted in lower number of classified students and lower number of students placed in out-of-district programs.

Indicator 6: Pre-School LRE - Performance Indicator Data Source: NJSMART (Collection Date: October 15, 2018) * Indicates no reported data on October 15th collection NA: Indicates not a pre-school district Note: The LRE data for public reporting were collected on October 15 2016 and do not include Non-Public School students.			
	Local Data	State Target	Met State Target
A. Percent = [(# of children aged 3 through 5 with IEPs attending a regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program) divided by the (total # of children aged 3 through 5 with IEPs)] times 100.	35.4%	45.0%	N
B. Percent = [(# of children aged 3 through 5 with IEPs attending a separate special education class, separate school or residential facility) divided by the (total # of children aged 3 through 5 with IEPs)] times 100	63.3%	34.0%	N

For Indicator 6A, the district administration reports that it has continued to focus efforts and resources on improving the programs and services delivered to our preschool students and to our preschool students with autism. As space has allowed, over the years we have increased the number of in-district preschool classrooms available.

For Indicator 6B, the district indicates this was the result from a combination of a lack of space to build additional in-district programs, and reduced supervision of students who were placed OOD.

EXHIBIT 56: INDICATOR 8

Indicator 8: Parent Involvement - Performance Indicator Data Source: Survey Report			
Percent = # of respondent parents who report schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities divided by the total number of respondent parents of children with disabilities times 100. NIC Indicates "Not in Cohort" * Indicates the number of survey responses were too low to yield meaningful interpretation of the data	Local Data	State Target	Met State Target
	84.5%	86.0%	N

For Indicator 8, the district missed the state target by a very small amount. In addition, primary administration and advertising for this survey is by the New Jersey Department of Education. NJDOE has recently changed the manner it administrates Indicator 8 surveys, now offering them in multiple languages. The state has reported this has impacted results; this may have had an impact on WW-P's response rate.

EXHIBIT 57: INDICATOR 11

Indicator 11: Effective General Supervision Part B/Child Find Data Source: NJSMART (Collected on October 15, 2019 for the period July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019)			
Percent of children who were evaluated within the State established timeline of receiving parental consent for initial evaluation or, if the State establishes a timeframe within which the evaluation must be conducted, within that timeframe *** Indicates no reported data on October 15th collection* **** 0 students received parental consent to evaluate*	*Local Data*	*State Target*	*Met State Target*
	92.9%	*100.0%*	*N*

For Indicator 11, the district administration shared that it works diligently to have as many evaluations conducted during the timeline as possible. District special education administration noted that evaluation timelines go unmet when parents delay evaluations due to not having students available for evaluations, delay of outside evaluations, and/or travel.

DUE PROCESS

Under IDEA and NJAC 6A:14, when there is conflict about a child's free and appropriate education, offered in the least restrictive environment, children and families are afforded due process rights. When families and school Districts disagree on matters related to special education they may resolve their disputes through a variety of channels, including: (1) voluntary mediation; (2) due process hearing; (3) and IDEA complaint to the NJDOE OSEP. In addition, families and school Districts can resolve matters outside of mediation and due process through legal settlements.
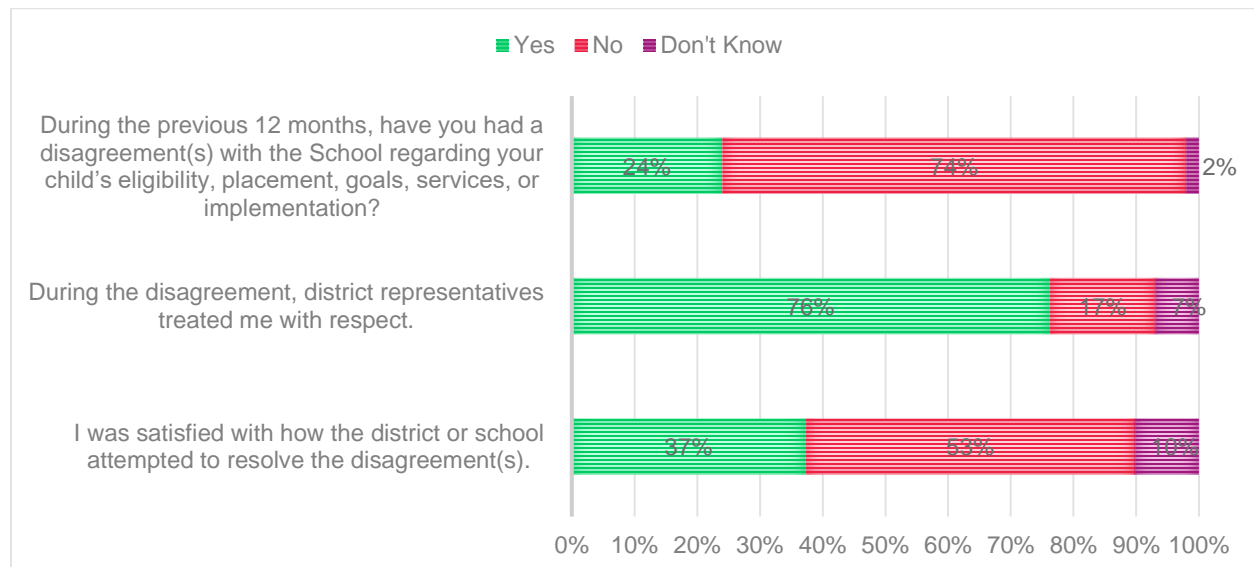
In addition, in New Jersey, parents and districts have access to a new program offered by the Department called Facilitated IEP (FIEP). It has two main purposes: (1) to promote student-centered IEP meetings that are conducted in a respectful and collaborative manner; and (2) to maximize District-level capacity to develop student-centered IEPs and minimize state-level procedural protections and interventions which often result from ineffective IEP meetings. FIEP Is an option for using a third-party facilitator to promote effective communication and assist the IEP team in developing a mutually agreeable IEP. It focuses on the needs of the student, the IEP process, and an agreed upon IEP document. The program is of no cost to participating families or the school district and may be initiated by either party.

In WW-P, during the 2018-19 school year, 32 due process cases were filed. Of those, 25 were settled. Of the issues raised with due process claims during the 2018-19 school year, the top three issues were: (1) FAPE; (2) Compensatory Education; and (3) Independent Evaluations.

According to parents who responded to the survey:

Among the 65 parents who reported a disagreement with the school, the majority (76%) felt that the district treated them with respect, but only 37% (22 parents) were satisfied with how the school attempted to resolve the conflict.

EXHIBIT 58: PARENT SURVEY: SATISFACTION WITH RESOLUTION WITH CONFLICTS

COMPLAINTS TO THE NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

In addition to the procedural safeguards and due process rights afforded to families in state and federal law, parents and school districts may also make a complaint to the state education agency regarding special education matters.

During the 2019-20 school year, the New Jersey Department of Education Office of Special Education and Dispute Resolution (SPDR) issued findings in a complaint investigation involving a student. In that matter, WW-P informed a student that they were to be excluded from school due to behavioral problems and could not return until psychiatric clearance was obtained.

SPDR found that this violated the IDEA, and directed the WW-P to distribute a memorandum to building administrators and child study teams advising that a student with disabilities may not be excluded from school without following the requirements concerning the discipline of students with disabilities as set forth in the IDEA and N.J.A.C. 6A:14, such as holding a manifestation determination and filing a petition for due process seeking permission to provide home instruction as a change in placement.

OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLAINTS

During the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years there were three complaints made to the US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights. The three complaints were unfounded.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

PRE-REFERRAL, REFERRAL, ELIGIBILITY AND CHILD FIND

Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS)	✓ Develop districtwide I&RS practices to ensure consistent intervention tools, documentation, including data setting forth the type of interventions utilized, the frequency and duration of each intervention, and the effectiveness of each intervention.
District Tiered System of Support	✓ Further expand tiered system of support throughout all buildings in the district.
Disproportionality	✓ Internally engage in calculating risk ratio; assess risks quarterly and further support students at risk through initiatives such as the district's Tiered System of Support. As noted in report, Black or African American students were close to five times more likely to be identified with a Learning Disability, over four times more likely to be identified with an Emotional Regulation Impairment, and three times more likely to be identified with a Speech/Language impairment. Hispanic students were four and a half times more likely to be identified with a learning disability. White students were four and a half times more likely to be identified with an Emotional Regulation Impairment and four times as likely to be identified with Other Health Impairment
English Learners and Recently Arrived Immigrant English Learners	✓ Further study the needs around supporting English Learners and Recently Arrived Immigrant English Learners who may be academically struggling and/or have a disability. ✓ Support CSTs with the differentiation between disability and EL and effective data use.
Parent Feedback as Part of the IEP Process	✓ Include "Parent Feedback" in addition to "Parent Concerns" within PLAAFP when it is determined appropriate by the IEP team.
Ensuring Parent Awareness of Access to Interpreters	✓ Ensure families are aware they can have access to interpreters. ✓ At least annually, Special Education Supervisors review access to interpreters at department meetings early in the year. ✓ Provide additional professional development, as needed, for CST members and case managers on supporting the interpreter needs of families.
Engaging in Cultural Sensitivity to Support	✓ Engage case managers, CST members, and Supervisors in ongoing professional

Families	development that supports the needs of WW-P's multi-cultural families on the following: (1) special education referral; (2) classification; and (3) academic expectations.

TEACHING, LEARNING, AND SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORT

Co-taught Instruction	✓ Study opportunities for co-teaching pairs to have additional planning time ✓ As part of district's future co-teaching training, that new ensure co-teaching pairs participate.
Monitoring Paraprofessional Data Using Existing Forms	✓ Convert current "Determining When a Student Requires Paraprofessional Support" paper form to an electronic form and monitor data over time to observe patterns to support student needs; take note of patterns within buildings, programs, disability categories. ✓ Develop similar form to support CSTs in data collection for the purposes of fading paraprofessional support when determined appropriate by the IEP team.
Progress Monitoring and Reporting for Specially Designed Instruction	✓ When appropriate as determined by the IEP team, include quantifiable data in quarterly IEP progress reports.
Assistive Technology Procedures	✓ Create standard operating procedures around the evaluation, procurement, and maintenance of assistive technology that are accessible to building leaders, teachers, related service providers, and case managers.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL

Diversity and Representativeness of Student Body	✓ Continue identifying opportunities to attract a diverse and representative staff and administrative team.
Special Education Department Standard Operating Procedures	✓ Develop a district wide Special Education Standard Operating Procedures manual; post manual online so processes are transparent to all constituents.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Differing Views on Special Education	✓ Address concerns raised by parents with differing views on home/school communication; collaboration; special education eligibility; understanding expectations around continuum; due process; parent input. Further engage Director of Special Education and Supervisors as active participants.

IX. APPENDIX

TABLE OF EXHIBITS

DOCUMENTS REQUESTED

Quantitative Data Requested

Student Level Data (2017-18; 2018-19; and 2019-20 Sys)

For all students *with and without IEPs*, please complete the student level data template, attached.

Graduation rate by students: a) without IEPs AND b) by students with IEPs for the last five years.

Drop-out rate by students: a) without IEPs AND b) by students with IEPs for the last five years.

Exiting Special Education. For the last three years, provide the number of students by disability area who exited from special education. Of these students, provide the number who transitioned to a Section 504 plan.

Achievement. For all students with IEPs assessed:

Percentage on state assessments meeting/exceeding proficient standard in reading performance for the last five school years.

Percentage on state assessments meeting/exceeding proficient standard in math performance for the last five school years.

If assessments changed during this period of time, explain when they changed and any impact on results.

Special/city-wide programs. Number and location of special programs for students with IEPs: by preschool, by elementary school, by middle schools, and by high school, and for students in high school past 12th grade to complete postsecondary transition activities.

Personnel. Number of FTE staff (including contractual and staff who may be employed in other departments) in the areas below. Include personnel for charter schools also if the information is available. If not, please specify that the charter school personnel data are not available.
Special education teachers
Paraprofessionals (only for students with IEPs)
Psychologists
Speech/language Pathologists
Social Workers
Nurses
Occupational Therapists
Physical Therapists

Qualitative Data Requested

Organization. Provide a detailed copy of the a) district's organization chart and b) the department of special education's organization chart. For the department of special education, also provide a description of and number for each area of personnel.

Choice Programs. Describe all WW-P choice program types (if any), e.g., charters, magnets, selective enrollment. Describe any implications for students with disabilities.

Instruction aligned with core standards & curriculum. Districtwide initiatives for the provision of instruction to all students based on core curriculum aligned with state standards that includes students with IEPs.

Improvement planning. Districtwide improvement plans and templates for school-based improvement plans that pertain to all students, including those with IEPs.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). District implementation of MTSS, including academic and positive behavior intervention and supports. Please provide information on:

Districtwide implementation of MTSS, including academic and positive behavior intervention and supports. Please address: the organizational structure for supporting MTSS, universal screening, progress monitoring, problem-solving, data collection and review, data reports, procedures, and training.

Any written guidance for MTSS.

List of general education interventions available in WW-P.

Referrals. Any initiatives taken during the past several years that relates to ensuring the appropriate referral of students for a special education evaluation and the responsibility of school principals and other school-based staff for overseeing this process.

Students Educated in General Education Classes. Provide any district guidance regarding the support of students with disabilities while they are educated in general education classes when their achievement levels are below their peers.

Interventions for Students with IEPs. Describe any district sponsored/funded interventions for students with IEPs for literacy, math, behavior when achievement/behavior is substantially below expectations

Configuration of special education programs. Describe the configuration of special education programs, including any separate special education class or school, including any district special school, another district's special school, nonpublic schools and residential treatment centers, and any placement criteria. Describe the regular early childhood program and any placement criteria. For each special program, describe the program, and any placement criteria.

Instructional Support. <u>For early childhood and for school-aged students as appropriate</u>, please briefly describe and/or provide copies of any relevant documents reflecting district initiatives/training regarding the following areas regarding positive educational outcomes, and briefly describe any challenges.

Students who are English Learners and have an IEP. To support improved teaching and learning for ELs with IEPs with respect to the above three areas

Assistive Technology. To improve access to and usage of assistive technology.

Post-Secondary Transition. To support the provision of improved transition activities and services for post-secondary success, including access to community-based work experiences.

Professional development (PD).

Provide the number of days the district establishes for staff development (school-based and districtwide) and any current policies regarding mandatory nature of any PD for special education.

Briefly describe how PD is provided on a systemic level, and content related to students with IEPs.

Briefly describe what PD is integrated for special educators jointly and in collaboration with general educators or others.

Special education teachers

Allocation. Process for determining the allocation of special educators to schools.

Evaluation. Process for evaluating special educator performance.

Related Services

Allocation. Briefly describe method for allocating related services staff (i.e., social workers, psychologists, nurses, speech/language pathologists, and occupational and physical therapists) to schools.

Monitoring Performance. Briefly describe/provide samples of any systemic (or other) mechanisms in place for relevant clinicians to monitor the effectiveness of their instruction, e.g., S/L, etc.

Coordination/Supervision. Briefly describe how each area of related service providers are supervised.

Paraprofessionals.

Types. If there is more than one position for paraprofessionals/aides, describe the various positions and duties.

Determination of need. Any written guidance for IEP teams to determine a student's need for additional adult support, and any form(s) used to document need.

Allocation. Process for determining the allocation of paraprofessionals to schools, e.g., by program or IEP need.

Evaluation. Process for evaluating paraprofessional performance.

Special education standard operating procedures. Provide a copy or URL link to written procedures for governing the administration of special education and related services.

State Performance Plan indicators. Copy of the last three notices from the state regarding the district's state performance plan indicator outcomes, and the district's outcomes for each of the indicators.

State/OCR Compliance. A summary of any state or Office for Civil Rights findings and required actions from the last school year and the current school year to date.

Due process. Number of due process requests and any additional data readily available about due process cases, issues, settled, won, compensatory services, attorney fees, etc. for the last school year, and the current school year to date.

Data reports. Copies of any regular data reports available for special education administrators and local school administrators to help them manage and coordinate services, monitor performance, and ensure

compliance for students with disabilities; and for students who are struggling academically and behaviorally.

Fiscal (2016-17; 2017-18; and 2018-19 SY)

Provide total revenues and expenditures by federal, state, local, and any other sources for the education of all district students and for students with IEPs, including transportation and placement out-of-district.

Provide detailed information regarding high cost areas for special education, including the area of concern, and relevant current and historic fiscal information.

Strategies to address funding and high cost issues, such as strategic advocacy focused on adequate/equitable funding; realigned resources to district priorities to ensure appropriate services and fiscal accountability; effective/efficient programs that transition students from high cost external programs to district services, etc.

Provide total revenue for the last three years for Medicaid based on fee for service and administrative outreach.

Current cost of educating a student with IEP compared to a general education student for 2016-17; 2017-18; 2018-19.

Parents. Briefly describe ways in which parents are provided with training, supported in meetings to meaningfully participate, etc.

Accountability. Provide information on the district's system of accountability for student performance that is inclusive of students with IEPs, e.g., school report card, dashboards, etc. Describe timely progress reporting, data collection, and other accountability measures for students with disabilities.

Collective Bargaining Agreements. Copies of any collective bargaining agreements as they relate to special education.

Additional Information. Please provide any additional information regarding district challenges to high quality instruction for students with IEPs that would be helpful to the team.

PARENT SURVEY

Overall, the largest proportion of responses were from elementary school parents (48%), followed by middle school parents (27%) and high school parents (25%). Dutch Neck Elementary School and JVB Wicoff Elementary School had the smallest proportion of parents participating in the survey (5% each). The largest proportion of respondents were from High School North (16%).

Responses by School

School	Percent	Count
Dutch Neck Elementary School	5%	14
Maurice Hawk Elementary School	6%	16
Town Center Elementary School at Plainsboro	9%	26
J.V.B. Wicoff Elementary School	5%	14
Millstone River School	11%	31
Village School	12%	32
Community Middle School	14%	39
Grover Middle School	11%	30
High School North	16%	45
High School South	11%	30
	Totals	**277**

Parents of students in grades 3-6 and grades 9-12 had the highest proportion of responses 28% and 27%, respectively).

By Grade Level

Grade	Percent	Count
PK	9%	24
K-2	17%	49
3-6	28%	78
7-8	19%	50
9-12	27%	76
	Totals	**277**

By Primary Eligibility

Eligibility	Percent	Count
Autism	22.0%	61
Deaf-Blindness	*	*
Developmental Delay	6.1%	17
Emotional Regulation Impairment	8.7%	24
Hearing Impairment	1.1%	3
Multiple Disabilities	4.3%	12
Orthopedic Impairment	*	*
Other Health Impairment	19.1%	53
Specific Learning Disability	17.3%	48
Speech or Language impairment	10.1%	28
Traumatic Brain Injury	*	*
Visual Impairment	*	*

Don't Know	5.1%	14
Other	4.3%	12
	Totals	**277**

Survey Responses

Parent information and Participation
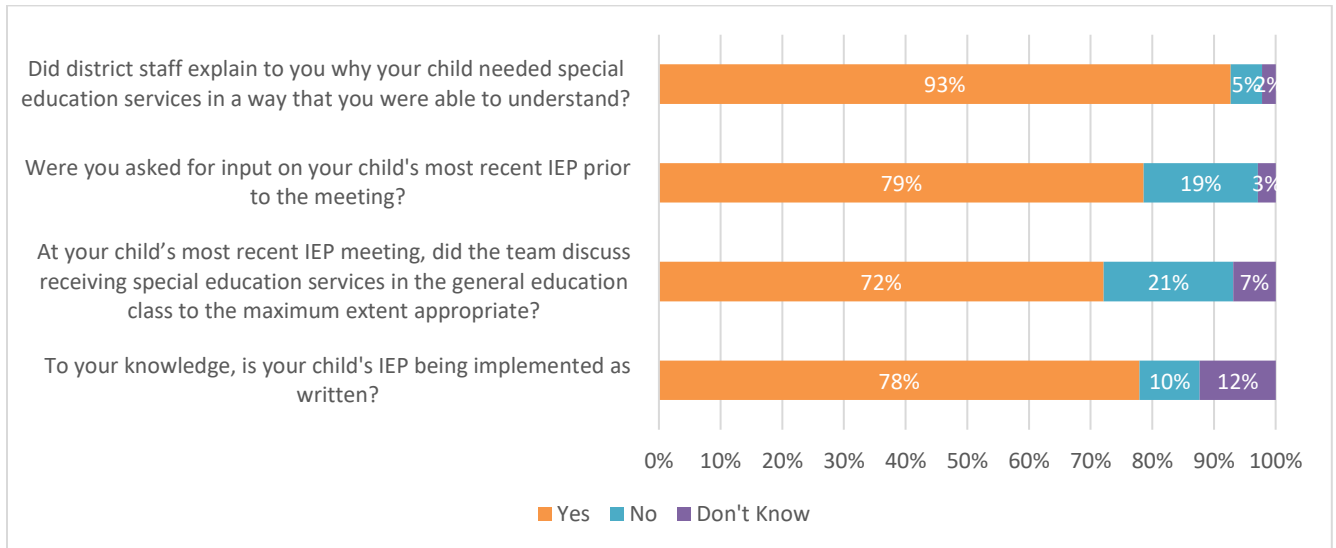
Parent Information and Participation by Grade Level

Question		N	%Yes	%No	% Don't Know
Did district staff explain to you why your child needed special education services in a way that you were able to understand?	PK	24	92%	8%	0%
	Elem (K-5)	107	90%	7%	3%
	Middle (6-8)	71	93%	4%	3%
	High (9-12)	73	97%	1%	1%
Were you asked for input on your child's most recent IEP prior to the meeting?	PK	24	79%	21%	0%
	Elem (K-5)	107	71%	24%	5%
	Middle (6-8)	72	85%	14%	1%
	High (9-12)	73	84%	14%	3%
At your child's most recent IEP meeting, did the team discuss receiving special education services in the general education class to the maximum extent appropriate?	PK	24	67%	17%	17%
	Elem (K-5)	107	65%	28%	7%
	Middle (6-8)	72	76%	17%	7%
	High (9-12)	73	79%	16%	4%
To your knowledge, is your child's IEP being implemented as written?	PK	24	83%	8%	8%
	Elem (K-5)	107	73%	10%	17%
	Middle (6-8)	72	85%	6%	10%
	High (9-12)	73	77%	14%	10%

District Parent Training
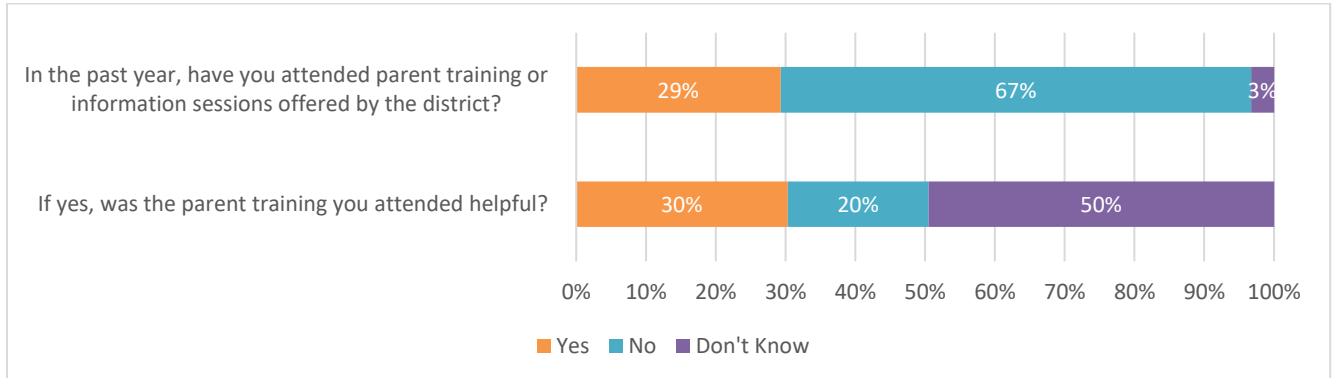
District Parent Training by Grade Level

Question		N	%Yes	%No	% Don't Know
In the past year, have you attended parent training or information sessions offered by the district	PK	24	17%	83%	0%
	Elem (K-5)	107	30%	67%	3%
	Middle (6-8)	72	29%	67%	4%
	High (9-12)	73	33%	63%	4%
If yes, was the parent training you attended helpful?	PK	*	*	*	--
	Elem (K-5)	38	55%	45%	--
	Middle (6-8)	36	50%	22%	--
	High (9-12)	26	65%	35%	--

IEP for students over 14 years old
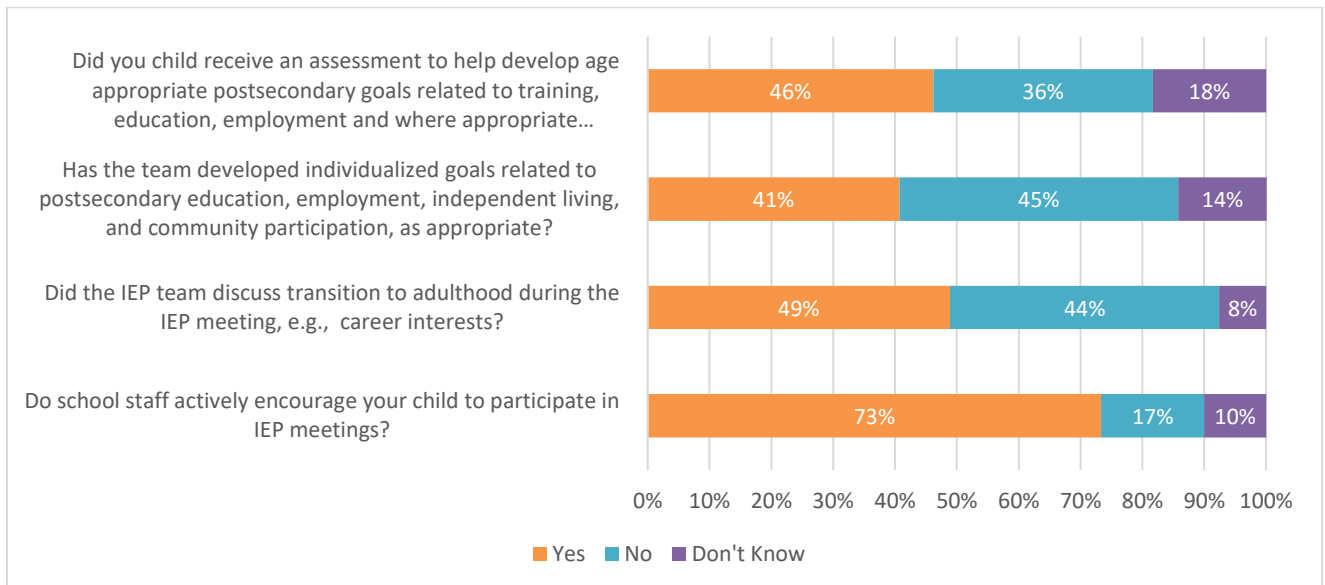
IEP for students over 14 years old by grade level

Question		N	%Yes	%No	% Don't Know
Did you child receive an assessment to help develop age appropriate postsecondary goals related to training, education, employment and where appropriate independent living skills?	Middle (6-8)	20	35%	40%	25%
	High (9-12)	73	49%	34%	16%
Has the team developed individualized goals related to postsecondary education, employment, independent living, and community participation, as appropriate?	Middle (6-8)	19	21%	58%	21%
	High (9-12)	72	46%	42%	13%
Did the IEP team discuss transition to adulthood during the IEP meeting, e.g., career interests?	Middle (6-8)	19	26%	63%	11%
	High (9-12)	73	55%	38%	7%
Do school staff actively encourage your child to participate in IEP meetings?	Middle (6-8)	19	47%	32%	21%
	High (9-12)	71	80%	13%	7%

Non-English-Speaking Parents' Participation in IEP
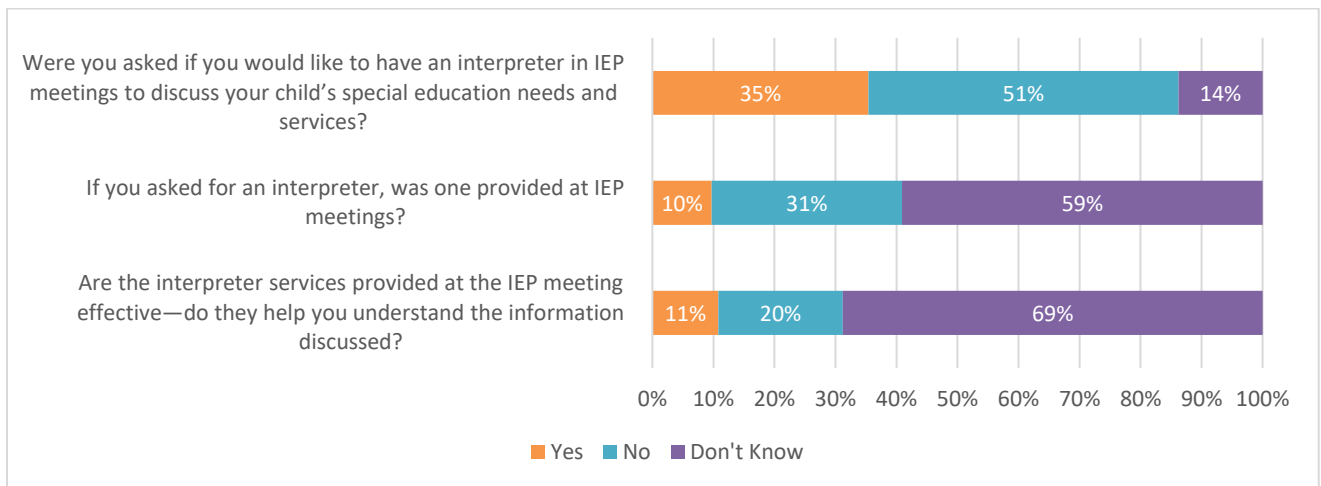
Non-English-Speaking Parents' Participation in IEP by Grade Level

Question		N	%Yes	%No	% Don't Know
Were you asked if you would like to have an interpreter in IEP meetings to discuss your child's special education needs and services?	PK	12	42%	50%	8%
	Elem(K-5)	58	36%	53%	10%
	Middle (6-8)	27	44%	37%	19%
	High (9-12)	33	24%	58%	18%
If you asked for an interpreter, was one provided at IEP meetings?	PK	10	10%	30%	60%
	Elem (K-5)	40	10%	40%	50%
	Middle (6-8)	20	15%	75%	60%
	High (9-12)	23	4%	22%	74%
Are the interpreter services provided at the IEP meeting effective? Do they help	PK	*	*	*	89%
	Elem (K-5)	40	10%	30%	60%

you understand the information discussed?	Middle (6-8)	20	15%	20%	65%
	High (9-12)	24	8%	13%	79%

Participation in IEP Meeting

In planning my child's most recent IEP, I felt I was a valued member of the IEP team and my opinion was respected. — 86% / 12% / 2%

The information I provided about my child was considered when planning and writing his/her most recent IEP. — 86% / 12% / 3%

I understand what is discussed at IEP meetings. — 95% / 4% / 1%

I feel comfortable asking questions and expressing concerns at IEP meetings. — 94% / 3% / 2%

Legend: Agree/Strongly Agree · Disagree/Strongly Disagree · N/A

Participation in IEP Meeting by Grade-level

Question		N	% Agree/ Strongly Agree	%Disagree/ Strongly Agree	% Don't Know
In planning my child's most recent IEP, I felt I was a valued member of the IEP team and my opinion was respected	PK	24	75%	21%	4%
	Elem(K-5)	104	81%	15%	4%
	Middle (6-8)	71	90%	10%	0%
	High (9-12)	70	93%	6%	1%
The information I provided about my child was considered when planning and writing his/her most recent IEP	PK	24	79%	17%	4%
	Elem (K-5)	104	79%	17%	4%
	Middle (6-8)	71	92%	8%	0%
	High (9-12)	70	91%	6%	3%
I understand what is discussed at IEP meetings.	PK	24	96%	0%	4%
	Elem (K-5)	103	92%	6%	2%
	Middle (6-8)	70	99%	1%	0%
	High (9-12)	69	99%	0%	1%
I feel comfortable asking questions and expressing concerns at IEP meetings.	PK	24	92%	4%	4%
	Elem (K-5)	104	90%	8%	2%
	Middle (6-8)	71	97%	1%	1%
	High (9-12)	70	97%	1%	1%

Satisfaction with Communication
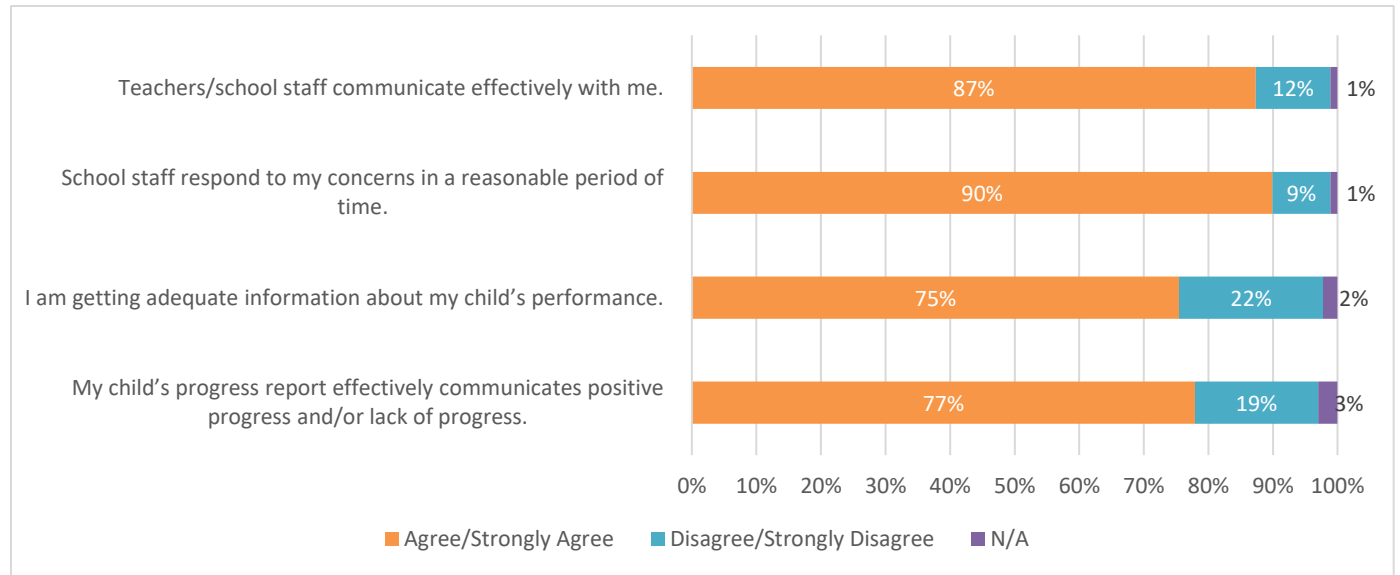
Satisfaction with Communication by Grade-level

Question		N	% Agree/ Strongly Agree	%Disagree/ Strongly Agree	% Don't Know
Teachers/school staff communicate effectively with me.	PK	24	79%	21%	0%
	Elem(K-5)	104	87%	12%	2%
	Middle (6-8)	71	92%	8%	0%
	High (9-12)	70	87%	11%	1%
School staff respond to my concerns in a reasonable period of time.	PK	24	88%	13%	0%
	Elem (K-5)	104	73%	24%	3%
	Middle (6-8)	70	94%	6%	0%
	High (9-12)	70	93%	6%	1%
I am getting adequate information about my child's performance.	PK	24	67%	29%	8%
	Elem (K-5)	104	73%	24%	3%
	Middle (6-8)	71	85%	15%	0%
	High (9-12)	70	73%	24%	3%
My child's progress report effectively communicates positive progress and/or lack of progress.	PK	24	79%	13%	8%
	Elem (K-5)	103	77%	20%	3%
	Middle (6-8)	71	85%	15%	0%
	High (9-12)	69	72%	23%	0%

Satisfaction with Special Education Program
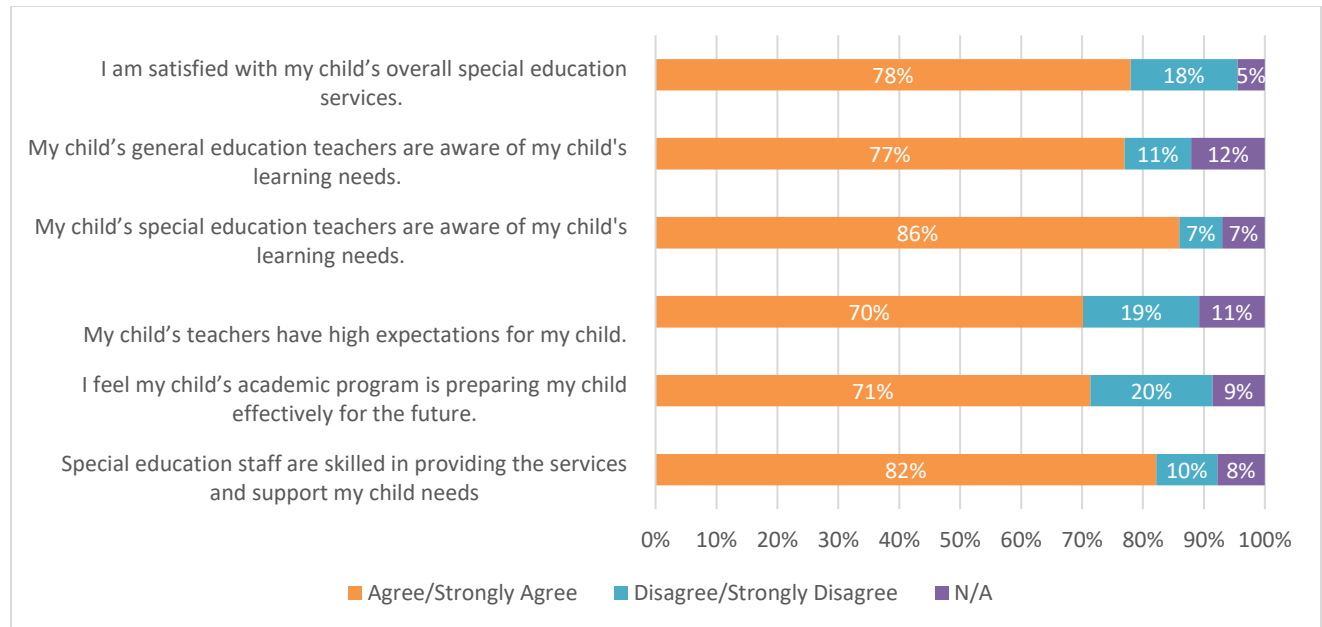
Satisfaction with Special Education Program by Grade Level

Question		N	% Agree/ Strongly Agree	%Disagree/ Strongly Agree
I am satisfied with my child's overall special education services.	PK	22	82%	18%
	Elem(K-5)	97	76%	24%
	Middle (6-8)	70	84%	16%
	High (9-12)	67	87%	13%
My child's general education teachers are aware of my child's learning needs.	PK	21	86%	14%
	Elem (K-5)	87	87%	13%
	Middle (6-8)	62	90%	10%
	High (9-12)	63	86%	14%
My child's special education teachers are aware of my child's learning needs.	PK	23	91%	9%
	Elem (K-5)	96	91%	9%
	Middle (6-8)	66	95%	5%
	High (9-12)	66	92%	8%
My child's teachers have high expectations for my child.	PK	20	65%	35%
	Elem (K-5)	89	74%	26%
	Middle (6-8)	66	85%	15%
	High (9-12)	64	83%	17%
I feel my child's academic program is preparing my child effectively for the future.	PK	22	73%	27%
	Elem(K-5)	94	72%	28%
	Middle (6-8)	67	79%	21%
	High (9-12)	63	87%	13%
Special education staff are skilled in providing the services and support my child needs	PK	23	87%	13%
	Elem(K-5)	93	85%	15%
	Middle (6-8)	67	96%	4%

	High (9-12)	65	89%	11%

The majority of parents (74%) are satisfied with their child's overall academic progress.

The majority of parents (85%) agree that their child has the opportunity to participate in school-sponsored activities.

Satisfaction with Child's Participation and Progress
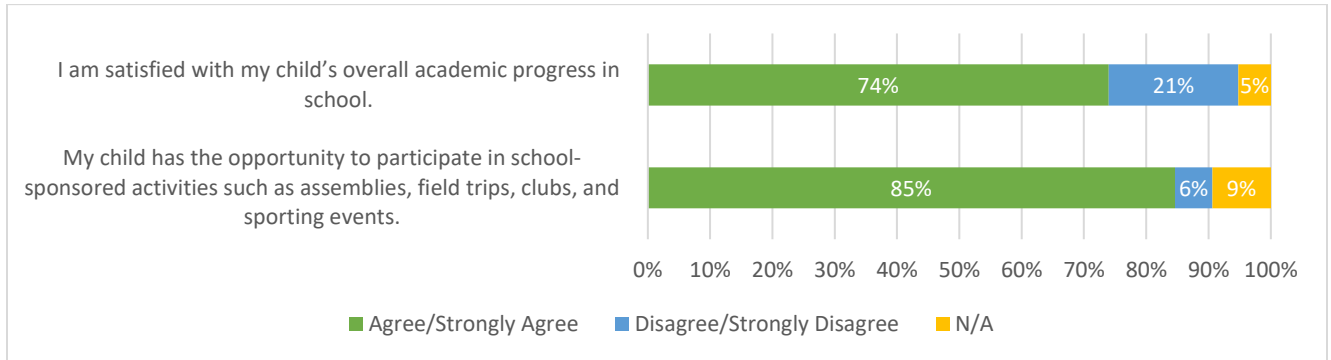
Satisfaction with Child's Participation and Progress by Grade Level

Question		N	% Agree/ Strongly Agree	%Disagree/ Strongly Agree	% N/A
I am satisfied with my child's overall academic progress in school.	PK	24	79%	17%	4%
	Elem(K-5)	105	69%	25%	7%
	Middle (6-8)	70	83%	16%	1%
	High (9-12)	70	71%	21%	7%
My child has the opportunity to participate in school-sponsored activities such as assemblies, field trips, clubs, and sporting events.	PK	23	48%	0%	52%
	Elem (K-5)	104	85%	7%	9%
	Middle (6-8)	71	93%	6%	1%
	High (9-12)	69	88%	7%	4%

Among the 65 parents who reported a disagreement with the school within the past 12 months, the majority (76%) felt that the district treated them with respect, but only 37% (22 parents) were satisfied with how the school attempted to resolve the disagreement.

Exhibit 8. Satisfaction with Resolution of Conflicts
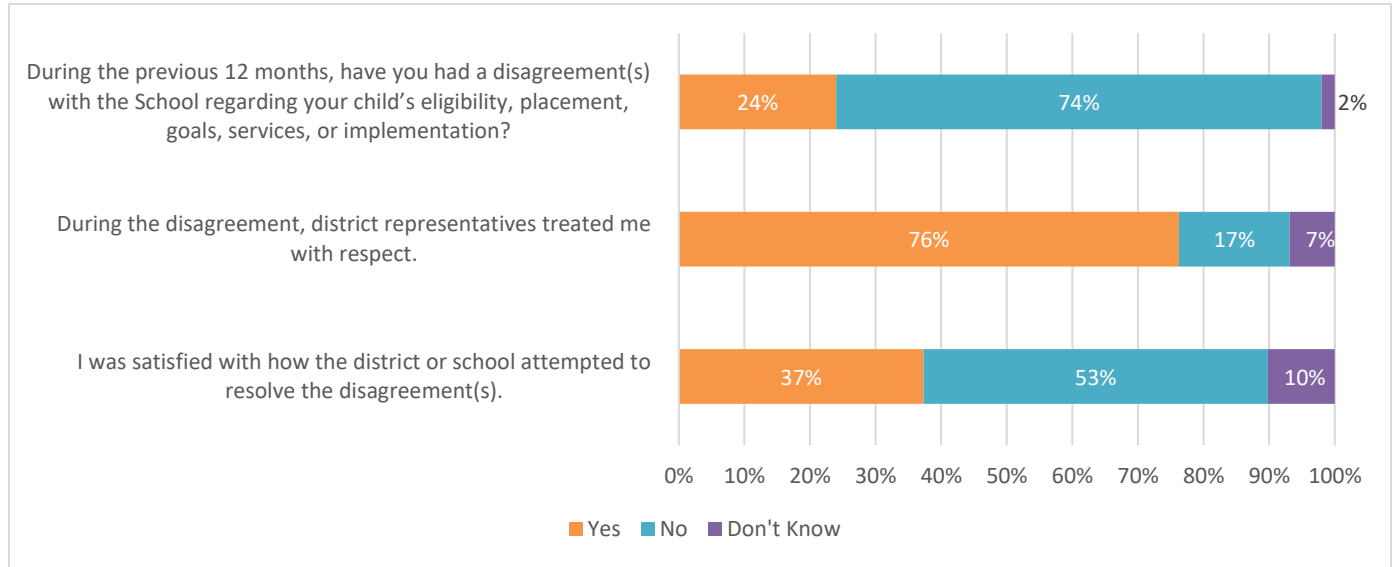
Satisfaction with Resolution of Conflicts by Grade Level

Question		N	% Yes	% No	% Don't Know
During the previous 12 months, have you had a disagreement(s) with the School regarding your child's eligibility, placement, goals, services, or implementation?	PK	24	29%	67%	4%
	Elem(K-5)	103	32%	66%	2%
	Middle (6-8)	71	18%	82%	0%
	High (9-12)	72	17%	81%	3%
During the disagreement, district representatives treated me with respect.	PK	*	*	*	*
	Elem (K-5)	30	70%	23%	7%
	Middle (6-8)	12	83%	8%	8%
	High (9-12)	11	82%	9%	9%
I was satisfied with how the district or school attempted to resolve the disagreement(s).	PK	*	*	*	*
	Elem (K-5)	23	61%	65%	4%
	Middle (6-8)	12	33%	50%	17%
	High (9-12)	11	36%	64%	0%

*Responses under 10, not reported

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Response Statistics

A "partial" count is when staff responded to some but not all questions.

	Count	Percent
Complete	235	53
Partial	208	47
Totals	443	

Which one of the following best describes your position relative to special education services?
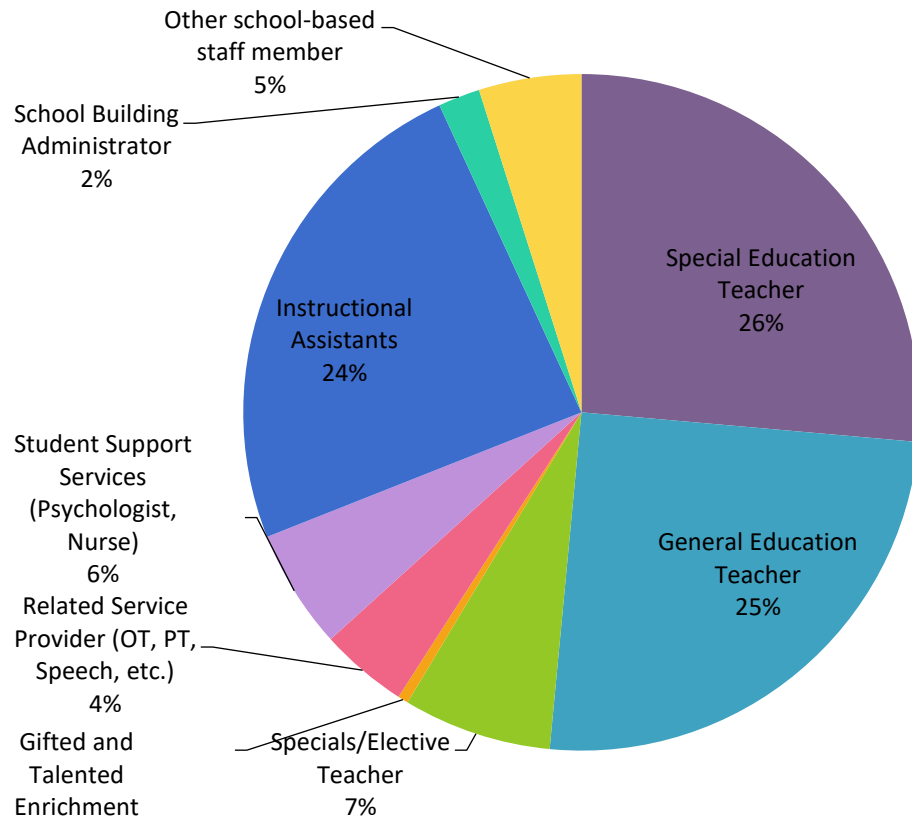
Value	Percent	Count
Special Education Teacher	26.4%	107
General Education Teacher	25.1%	102

Specials/Elective Teacher	7.1%	29
Gifted and Talented Enrichment Teacher	*	*
Related Service Provider (OT, PT, Speech, etc.)	4.2%	17
Student Support Services (Psychologist, Nurse)	5.7%	23
Instructional Assistants	24.1%	98
School Building Administrator	*	*
Other school-based staff member	4.9%	20
	Totals	406

Please select the primary grade level you serve.

All Grades 1%	Preschool/Pre-K 7%
High (9-12) 30%	Elementary (K-5) 36%
Middle (6-8) 26%	
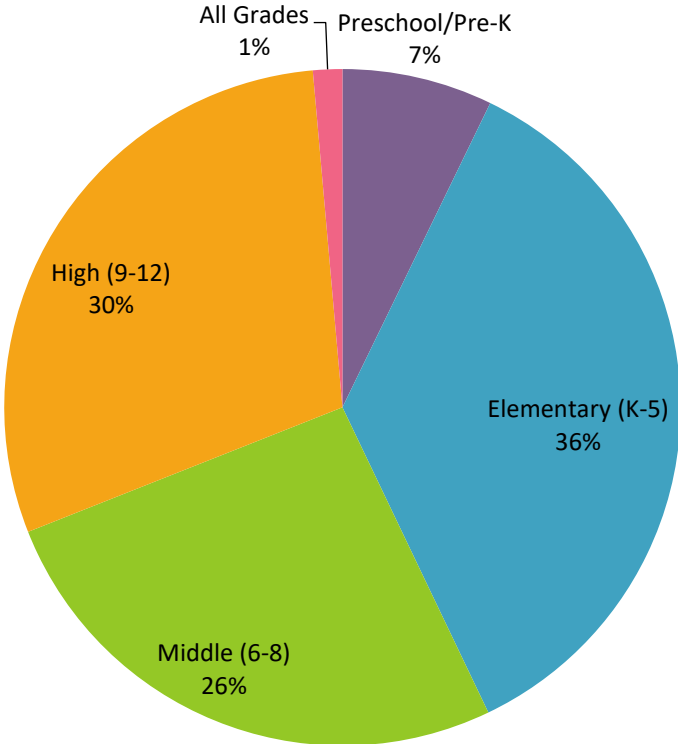
Value	Percent	Count
Preschool/Pre-K	7.2%	25
Elementary (K-5)	35.7%	123

Middle (6-8)	26.1%	90
High (9-12)	29.6%	102
All Grades	*	*
	Totals	345

Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Don't Know		Not Applicable		Responses
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count
I am aware of available interventions that should be implemented prior to a CST referral.	104	36.5%	124	43.5%	11	3.9%	4	1.4%	19	6.7%	23	8.1%	285
I feel confident that multiple general education interventions have been trialed with data taken and analyzed over a significant length of time prior to referring a student for a special education evaluation.	85	30.7%	127	45.8%	14	5.1%	3	1.1%	22	7.9%	26	9.4%	277
Our school provides	85	30.5%	84	30.1%	19	6.8%	8	2.9%	55	19.7%	28	10.0%	279

sufficient Tier 1 general education reading intervention support. (Tier 1 means all students receive high-quality, scientifically based instruction provided by qualified General Education personnel in general education.)													
Our school provides sufficient Tier 1 general education math intervention support.	67	24.1%	93	33.5%	21	7.6%	5	1.8%	61	21.9%	31	11.2%	278
Our school provides sufficient Tier 1 general education behavior intervention	49	17.7%	112	40.4%	29	10.5%	7	2.5%	60	21.7%	20	7.2%	277

support.													
Prior to a referral for special education, the impact of a child's native language on academic performance or behavior is considered.	82	29.4%	117	41.9%	14	5.0%	4	1.4%	47	16.8%	15	5.4%	279
I fully understand the steps and timelines associated with the referral process.	82	29.4%	118	42.3%	27	9.7%	5	1.8%	20	7.2%	27	9.7%	279
Staff in my school(s) fully understand the steps and timelines associated with the referral process.	55	19.8%	119	42.8%	28	10.1%	6	2.2%	52	18.7%	18	6.5%	278
I have been invited to participate in IEP meeting(s).	169	60.8%	38	13.7%	20	7.2%	18	6.5%	1	0.4%	32	11.5%	278

I am given adequate time/coverage when participating in IEP meeting(s).	105	37.8%	72	25.9%	17	6.1%	4	1.4%	4	1.4%	76	27.3%	278
I am a valued member of the IEP team.	113	40.6%	80	28.8%	8	2.9%	9	3.2%	6	2.2%	62	22.3%	278
I feel comfortable asking questions at IEP meetings.	124	44.6%	70	25.2%	10	3.6%	1	0.4%	1	0.4%	72	25.9%	278
At IEP meetings, I am asked to share my concerns about the student's performance.	142	51.6%	57	20.7%	3	1.1%	0	%	1	0.4%	72	26.2%	275
The IEP process involves collaboration between general education teachers, special educators, and parents.	155	55.8%	78	28.1%	10	3.6%	1	0.4%	10	3.6%	24	8.6%	278
Parents are given	154	55.8%	81	29.3%	2	0.7%	1	0.4%	15	5.4%	23	8.3%	276

a meaningful opportunity to participate in IEP meetings.													
All team member concerns are addressed at IEP meetings.	109	39.1%	95	34.1%	18	6.5%	3	1.1%	28	10.0%	26	9.3%	279
Special education evaluations are sufficiently comprehensive to identify students' specific strengths and needs.	118	42.8%	108	39.1%	8	2.9%	2	0.7%	25	9.1%	15	5.4%	276
The results of special education evaluations are shared with me in ways that provide meaningful insights into students' educational needs.	95	34.5%	116	42.2%	34	12.4%	9	3.3%	6	2.2%	15	5.5%	275
The IEP team discusses instruction and support in	97	35.5%	104	38.1%	20	7.3%	3	1.1%	27	9.9%	22	8.1%	273

general education classes to the maximum extent possible when making service recommendations for students with disabilities.

Are you familiar with and/or have you received training in Universal Design for Learning (UDL)?
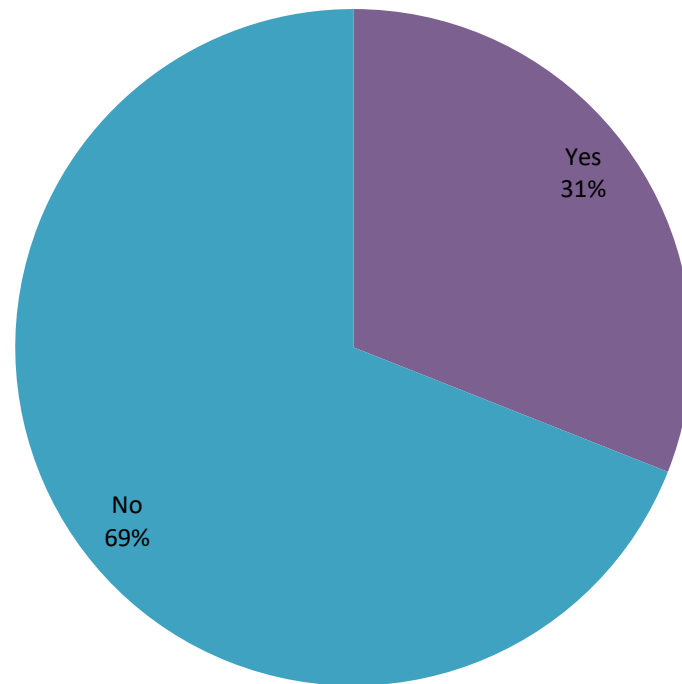
Value	Percent	Count
Yes	31.0%	86
No	69.0%	191

	Totals	277

Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Don't Know		Not Applicable		Responses
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count
WWP offers a continuum of services to meet the needs of all students with IEPs.	99	38.2%	125	48.3%	16	6.2%	0	%	12	4.6%	7	2.7%	259
Students with IEPs in my school(s) are receiving instruction and services in general education classes to the maximum extent possible.	89	34.9%	119	46.7%	16	6.3%	3	1.2%	21	8.2%	7	2.7%	255
Students with disabilities at my school(s) are treated with respect by school staff and students.	146	57.5%	98	38.6%	3	1.2%	2	0.8%	4	1.6%	1	0.4%	254
My school(s) provide an inclusive environment for	133	52.2%	110	43.1%	9	3.5%	0	%	1	0.4%	2	0.8%	255

students with disabilities.													
Student progress toward IEP goals is analyzed and discussed regularly by his/her teachers and/or related service provider(s).	99	38.7%	100	39.1%	24	9.4%	4	1.6%	19	7.4%	10	3.9%	256
There is an adequate number of staff to implement student IEPs with fidelity.	73	28.5%	99	38.7%	38	14.8%	10	3.9%	28	10.9%	8	3.1%	256
I understand what is documented within students' IEPs.	130	51.0%	108	42.4%	6	2.4%	2	0.8%	3	1.2%	6	2.4%	255
I am confident in how to implement IEPs as written.	114	44.7%	107	42.0%	11	4.3%	2	0.8%	5	2.0%	16	6.3%	255
Special education teachers at my school are used effectively to support the needs of students with IEPs.	116	45.7%	100	39.4%	17	6.7%	4	1.6%	14	5.5%	3	1.2%	254

General education teachers are provided adequate training in effectively supporting the needs of students with IEPs.	23	9.1%	92	36.5%	66	26.2%	15	6.0%	48	19.0%	8	3.2%	252
Instructional Assistants at my school(s) are used effectively to support the needs of students with IEPs.	57	22.4%	135	53.1%	30	11.8%	8	3.1%	22	8.7%	2	0.8%	254
Related Service providers (OT, PT, Speech Therapists) at my school are used effectively to support the needs of students with IEPs.	106	41.7%	107	42.1%	7	2.8%	1	0.4%	29	11.4%	4	1.6%	254
The special education/related services, accommodations, and/or modifications identified in students' IEPs are provided as written.	106	41.9%	121	47.8%	7	2.8%	0	%	11	4.3%	8	3.2%	253
School administrators have high	89	35.3%	117	46.4%	10	4.0%	1	0.4%	27	10.7%	8	3.2%	252

expectations for students with disabilities.													
The special education teaching staff have high expectations for students with disabilities.	118	46.6%	108	42.7%	6	2.4%	1	0.4%	14	5.5%	6	2.4%	253
The general education teaching staff have high expectations for students with disabilities.	73	29.0%	126	50.0%	17	6.7%	2	0.8%	25	9.9%	9	3.6%	252
Related service providers have high expectations for students with disabilities.	96	37.9%	107	42.3%	2	0.8%	0	%	39	15.4%	9	3.6%	253
Related service providers can meet the service times of all students on their caseloads.	52	20.6%	84	33.3%	12	4.8%	6	2.4%	84	33.3%	14	5.6%	252
WWP has established	48	19.0%	101	39.9%	34	13.4%	9	3.6%	48	19.0%	13	5.1%	253

standards for delivering co-teaching/collaborative instruction.													
Services for dually-identified (English Language Learner students with disabilities) students at my school(s) are meeting student needs.	32	12.6%	67	26.5%	28	11.1%	8	3.2%	95	37.5%	23	9.1%	253
There is a well-articulated approach in my school(s) to address the behavior needs of students with disabilities.	39	15.4%	114	44.9%	54	21.3%	10	3.9%	31	12.2%	6	2.4%	254
Students with IEPs have adequate services in place to manage challenging behavior in the classroom.	43	17.1%	113	44.8%	56	22.2%	8	3.2%	28	11.1%	4	1.6%	252
Services for students with disabilities also enrolled in gifted and talented enrichment programming are	27	10.7%	52	20.6%	11	4.4%	5	2.0%	132	52.4%	25	9.9%	252

meeting their needs.													
Modern, or current, instructional technology is considered when recommending accommodations for students with disabilities	59	23.5%	131	52.2%	11	4.4%	0	%	41	16.3%	9	3.6%	251
The special education program/services at my school(s) are of high quality.	118	46.5%	121	47.6%	8	3.1%	1	0.4%	5	2.0%	1	0.4%	254
The special education program/services across all WWP schools are of high quality.	97	38.6%	93	37.1%	6	2.4%	2	0.8%	51	20.3%	2	0.8%	251

Do you support post-secondary transition activities and/or the development of transition IEP goals?
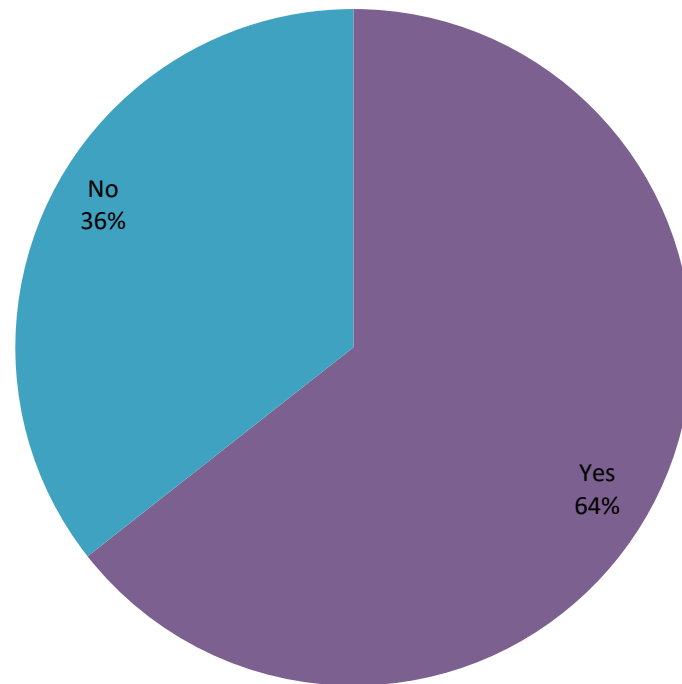
Value	Percent	Count
Yes	64.4%	152
No	35.6%	84

	Totals	236

Planning effective services and activities for postsecondary transition begins for students at age 14 at my school(s).
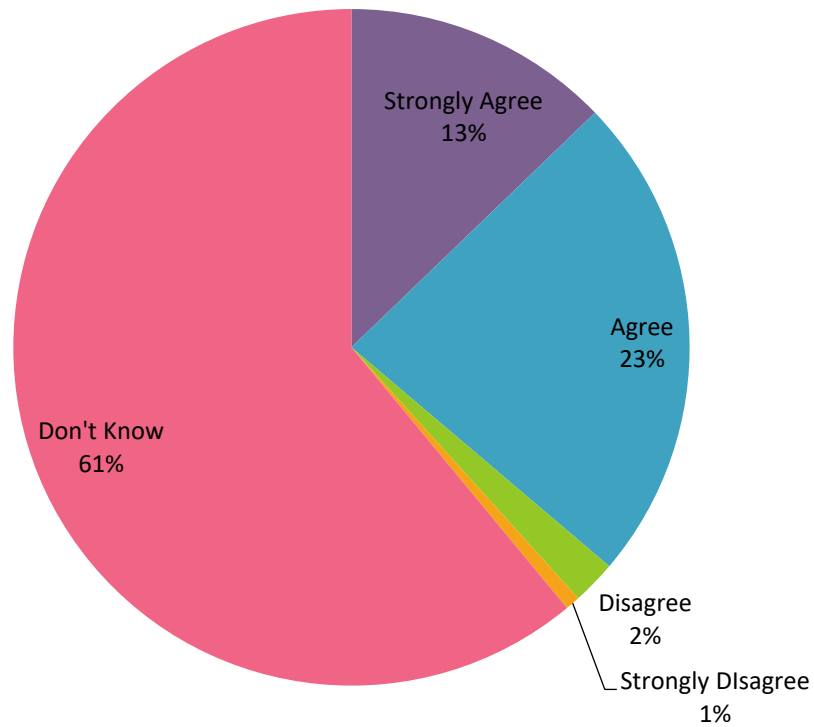
Value	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	12.8%	18
Agree	23.4%	33

Disagree	2.1%	*
Strongly Disagree	0.7%	*
Don't Know	61.0%	86
	Totals	141

8.Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Don't Know		Not Applicable		Responses
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count
Staff in my building(s) have an effective process by which they collaborate with each other regarding the needs of students with disabilities.	66	26.6%	123	49.6%	33	13.3%	4	1.6%	16	6.5%	6	2.4%	248
General and special education teachers have collaborative planning time to prepare effective instruction for students with IEPs.	27	11.0%	71	28.9%	72	29.3%	26	10.6%	41	16.7%	9	3.7%	246

There is sufficient communication between general and special educators about the needs and progress of students with IEPs.	38	15.4%	114	46.3%	43	17.5%	8	3.3%	36	14.6%	7	2.8%	246
There is sufficient communication between special educators and instructional assistants about the needs and progress of students with IEPs.	48	19.5%	104	42.3%	42	17.1%	4	1.6%	42	17.1%	6	2.4%	246
My school(s) effectively responds to the needs and concerns of families of students with	85	34.7%	118	48.2%	6	2.4%	1	0.4%	32	13.1%	3	1.2%	245

IEPs.													
The central special education office effectively responds to the needs and concerns of families of students with IEPs.	52	21.4%	79	32.5%	9	3.7%	1	0.4%	95	39.1%	7	2.9%	243
There is effective and consistent communication between my building(s) and the central special education office.	46	18.9%	57	23.5%	29	11.9%	5	2.1%	98	40.3%	8	3.3%	243

Professional development offerings I have attended enable me to better support the teaching/learning of students with IEPs.
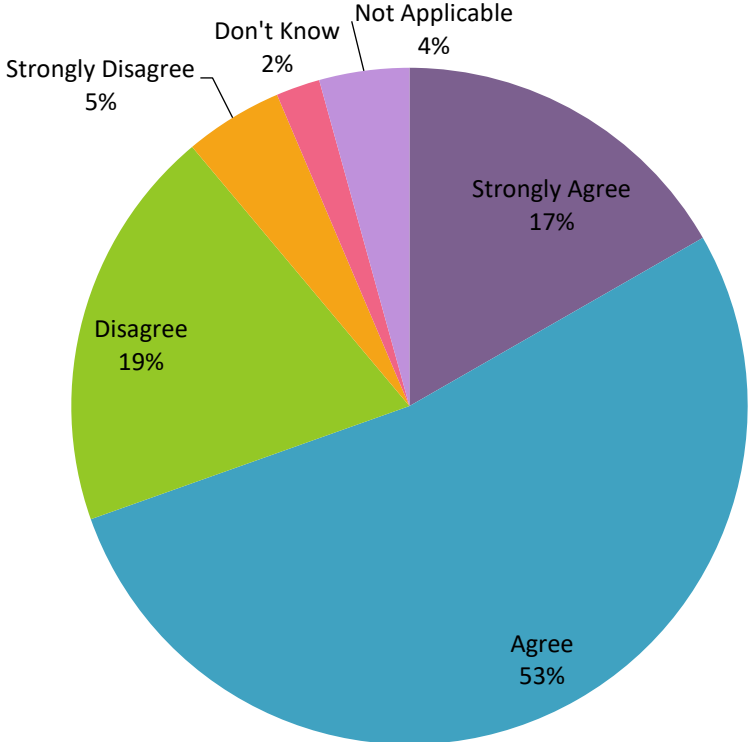
Value	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree	16.7%	39

Agree	52.8%	123
Disagree	19.3%	45
Strongly Disagree	4.7%	11
Don't Know	2.1%	*
Not Applicable	4.3%	10
	Totals	233

I would like to attend professional development on the following topics:

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Not Applicable		Responses
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count
Differentiated Instruction	46	20.4%	115	51.1%	35	15.6%	6	2.7%	23	10.2%	225
Increasingly intensive reading interventions	38	17.1%	92	41.4%	35	15.8%	8	3.6%	49	22.1%	222
Increasingly intensive math interventions	39	17.8%	79	36.1%	29	13.2%	13	5.9%	59	26.9%	219
Positive behavior intervention and supports	77	33.3%	128	55.4%	15	6.5%	2	0.9%	9	3.9%	231
Response to Intervention (RtI) or Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)	43	19.3%	95	42.6%	46	20.6%	5	2.2%	34	15.2%	223

Facilitating inclusion in general education	64	28.1%	106	46.5%	29	12.7%	5	2.2%	24	10.5%	228
Developing functional behavior assessments (FBAs)	41	18.6%	81	36.7%	40	18.1%	6	2.7%	53	24.0%	221
Developing behavior intervention plans (BIPs)	43	19.3%	90	40.4%	38	17.0%	3	1.3%	49	22.0%	223
Teaching students with curriculum aligned with alternate assessments	42	19.0%	99	44.8%	38	17.2%	2	0.9%	40	18.1%	221
Specific disability information (e.g., autism, emotional regulation impairment, etc.)	64	28.4%	123	54.7%	28	12.4%	3	1.3%	7	3.1%	225

Independent living skills	34	15.4%	55	24.9%	43	19.5%	10	4.5%	79	35.7%	221
Assistive technology	47	20.9%	106	47.1%	35	15.6%	4	1.8%	33	14.7%	225
Collaborating with Instructional Assistants	54	24.0%	110	48.9%	29	12.9%	3	1.3%	29	12.9%	225
Federal, state, and division special education regulations	29	13.2%	78	35.5%	59	26.8%	18	8.2%	36	16.4%	220
Postsecondary transition planning	21	9.6%	50	22.8%	54	24.7%	14	6.4%	80	36.5%	219
Using/analyzing data to inform instruction	48	22.0%	91	41.7%	42	19.3%	9	4.1%	28	12.8%	218
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	41	18.1%	115	50.7%	32	14.1%	7	3.1%	32	14.1%	227

Please select the location(s) where you work.

	Percent	Count
Dutch Neck Elementary School	3.3%	*
Maurice Hawk Elementary School	12.3%	26
Town Center Elementary School at Plainsboro	14.6%	31
J.V.B. Wicoff Elementary School	3.8%	*
Millstone River School	10.8%	23
Village School	3.3%	*
Community Middle School	16.5%	35
Grover Middle School	11.8%	25
High School North	20.3%	43
High School South	15.6%	33

Please select how many year(s) you have worked in the district

Pie chart:
- 0-2 years 10%
- 3-5 years 17%
- 6-10 years 18%
- More than 10 years 55%
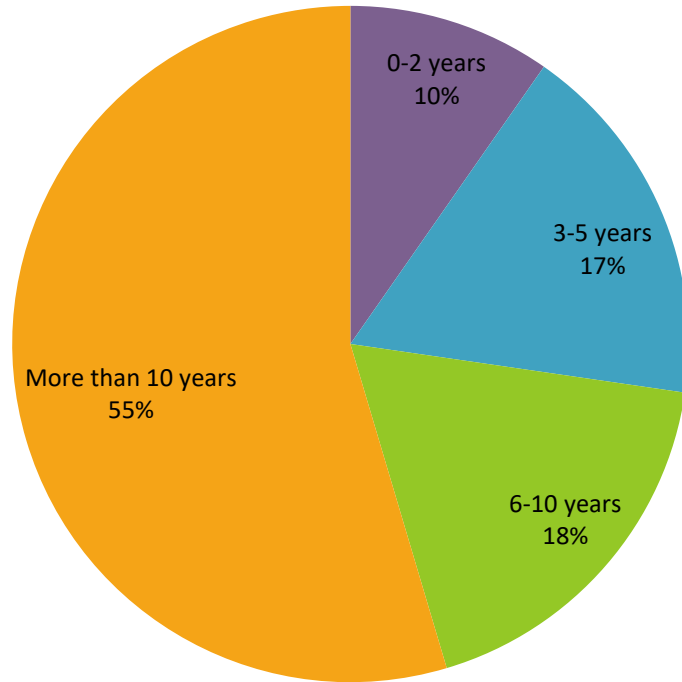
Value	Percent	Count
0-2 years	9.7%	21
3-5 years	17.6%	38

| 6-10 years | 18.1% | 39 |
| More than 10 years | 54.6% | 118 |