Comprehensive Special Education Program Review

Findings and Recommendations

Presentation to the Board of Education

West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District

September 21, 2021

Public Consulting Group

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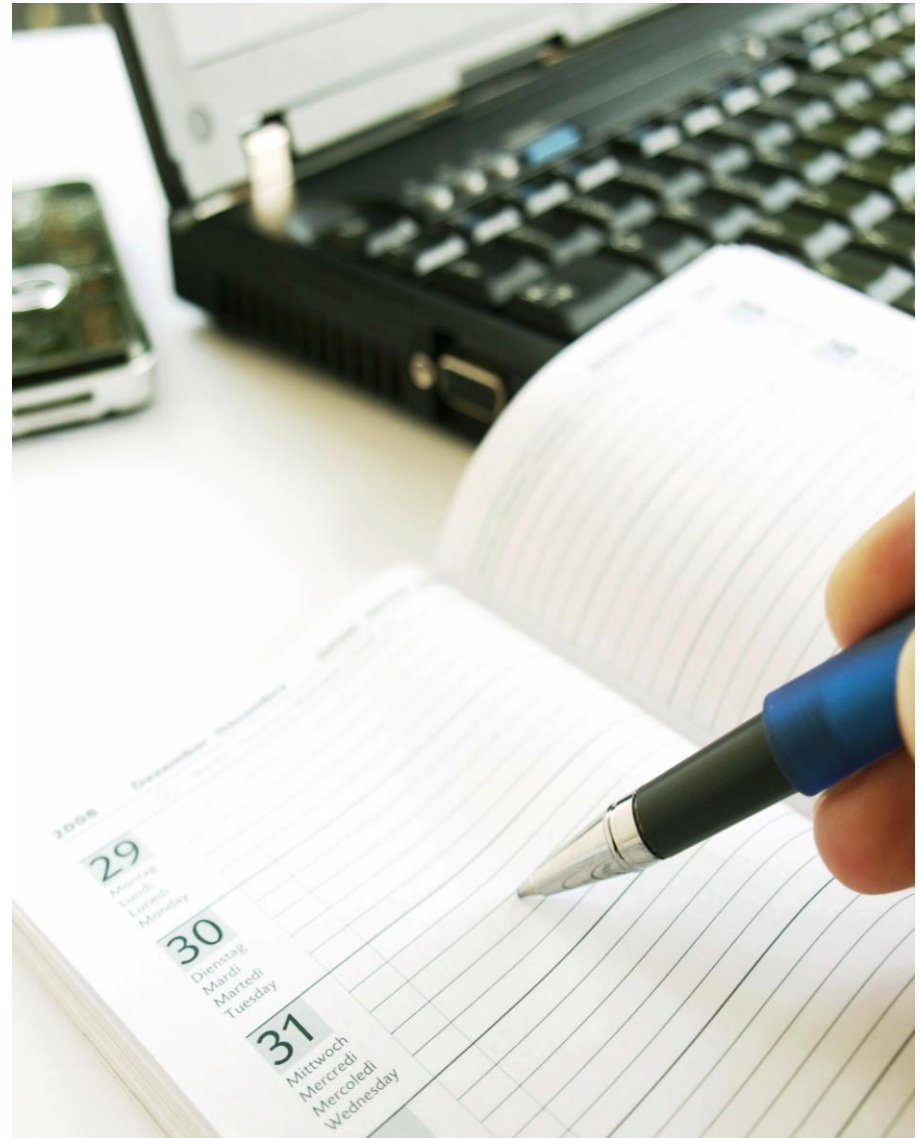
Solutions that Matter

Agenda

Project Approach

Strengths and Opportunities

Special Education Effectiveness
Domains and Corresponding
Recommendations

Questions from the Board

> To PCG, a review is not just about identifying the challenges and offering recommendations - it's about creating an intentional, ambitious, and urgent path forward for the West Windsor-Plainsboro community to improve the outcomes of students with disabilities.

Guiding Questions

1. How is the District's continuum of services organized to support a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE)?

2. To what degree do students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum?

3. 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?

4. How has WW-P's school and district leadership fostered a culture that is focused on improving outcomes and post-secondary preparation?

5. 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?
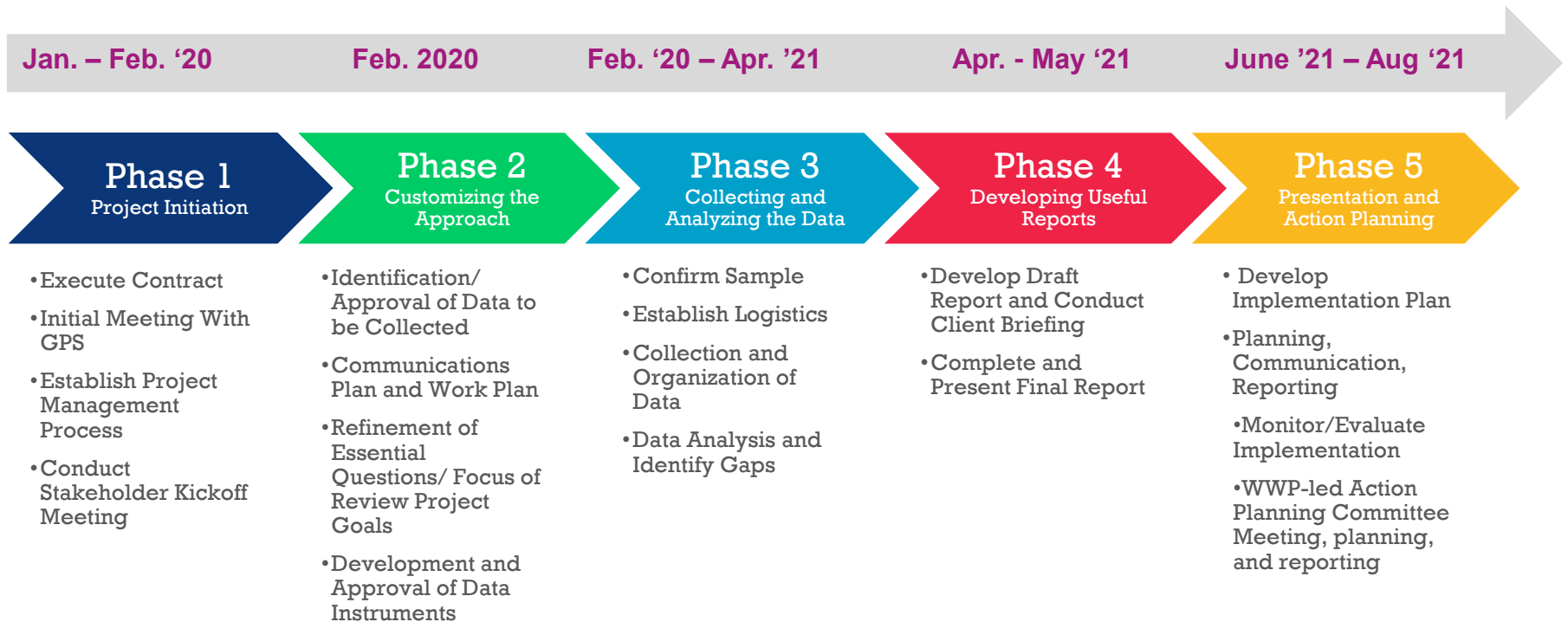
How We Approach This Work

Organizational & Program Analysis

Research & Practice Literature

Outcome Analysis

Findings and Recommendations

Data Collection Methods

1) **Data and Document Review**

2) **Focus Groups and Interviews**

3) **Student File Review Focus Groups**

4) **Remote Classroom Visits**

5) **Surveys**

Project Timeline

Jan. – Feb. '20	Feb. 2020	Feb. '20 – Apr. '21	Apr. - May '21	June '21 – Aug '21

Phase 1
Project Initiation

Phase 2
Customizing the Approach

Phase 3
Collecting and Analyzing the Data

Phase 4
Developing Useful Reports

Phase 5
Presentation and Action Planning

Phase 1
- Execute Contract
- Initial Meeting With GPS
- Establish Project Management Process
- Conduct Stakeholder Kickoff Meeting

Phase 2
- Identification/ Approval of Data to be Collected
- Communications Plan and Work Plan
- Refinement of Essential Questions/ Focus of Review Project Goals
- Development and Approval of Data Instruments

Phase 3
- Confirm Sample
- Establish Logistics
- Collection and Organization of Data
- Data Analysis and Identify Gaps

Phase 4
- Develop Draft Report and Conduct Client Briefing
- Complete and Present Final Report

Phase 5
- Develop Implementation Plan
- Planning, Communication, Reporting
- Monitor/Evaluate Implementation
- WWP-led Action Planning Committee Meeting, planning, and reporting

Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement

Process

Strengths

Opportunities for Improvement

Recommendations

District Context and Demographics

Strengths

- **High performing.** WWP community prides itself in learning.

- **District culture of self reflection**. Board and District leadership committed to assessing and improving upon its practices through internal/external review and action planning processes.

- **Whole Child, Every Child, Global Child.** District's racial and cultural composition has changed, thus positioning the district from a regional to a global perspective.

Opportunities for Improvement

- **Need for continued family engagement.** Further outreach for parents ensuring cultural awareness in addressing referral/classification process and academic expectations.

- **Inconsistent multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) in supporting struggling learners and students with potential disabilities.**

Teaching, Learning, and Special Education Support

Strengths

- 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.

Teaching, Learning, and Special Education Support

Opportunities for Improvement

- Further scheduling opportunities to support students enrolled in electives (e.g. music, arts).

- Further opportunities for planning time among co-teaching pairs.

- Determining if Understanding by Design continues to be a district priority.

- Further clarity around districtwide assistive technology procedures.

Social Emotional Support for Students with Disabilities

Strengths

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

Social Emotional Support for Students with Disabilities

Opportunities for Improvement

- None cited.

Special Education Department Organization and Personnel

Strengths

- 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

Special Education Department Organization and Personnel

Opportunities for Improvement

- Continue identifying opportunities to attract a diverse and representative staff and administrative team.

- No present Special Education Standard Operating Procedures manual

Parent Engagement

Strengths

- District's SEPAG and SEPTSA are active organizations that support families

- Various opportunities for district, SEPAG, and SEPTSA opportunities for parent engagement

Parent Engagement

Opportunities for Improvement

- Differing views on special education.

Special Education Compliance and Due Process

Strengths

- 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.

Special Education Compliance and Due Process

Opportunities for Improvement

- None cited.

Special Education Effectiveness Domains and Corresponding Recommendations

Recommendations

Pre-referral, Referral, Eligibility and Child Find

- **Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS)**: Develop consistent districtwide practices.

- **District Tiered System of Support**: Further expand.

- **Disproportionality**: Internally engage in calculating risk ratio.

- **English Learners and Recently Arrived Immigrant English Learners**: Further study
- needs around English Learners and Recently Arrived Immigrant English Learners either academically struggling or classified

- **Parent Feedback as Part of the IEP Process**: Consider "Parent Feedback" in addition to "Parent Concerns"

- **Ensuring Parent Awareness of Access to Interpreters**: Ensure families are aware of interpreter access. At least annually, Supervisors review access to interpreters; provide PD

- **Engaging in Cultural Sensitivity to Support Families**: Engage case managers, CST, and Supervisors on special education referral; classification; and academic expectations.

Recommendations

Teaching, Learning and Special Education Support

- **Co-Taught Instruction**: Study opportunities for pairs to have additional planning time; ensure new co-teaching pairs participate in districts future co-teacher training.

- **Monitoring Paraprofessional Data Using Existing Framework**: Convert existing documentation to electronic format; develop similar data collection protocols for fading.

- **Progress Monitoring and Reporting for Specially Designed Instruction**: When as determined by IEP team, include quantifiable data in the quarterly IEP progress reports.

- **Assistive Technology Procedures**: Create standard operating procedures.

Recommendations

Special Education Organization and Personnel

- **Diversity and Representativeness**: Continue identifying opportunities to attract a diverse and representative staff and admin team.

- **Special Education Standard Operating Procedures**: Develop a district wide Special Education Procedures manual, post online for transparency.

Recommendations

Parent Engagement

- **<u>Differing Views on Special Education</u>**: 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.

Questions from the Board

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