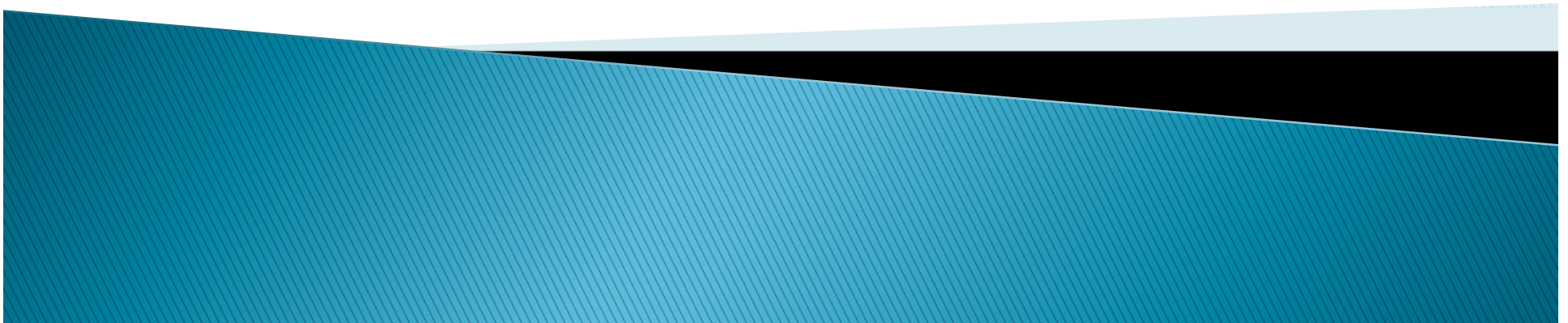


WEST WINDSOR – PLAINSBORO SCHOOL DISTRICT

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM REVIEW

BOARD PRESENTATION SUMMARY

Michele Wilson Kamens, Ed.D.
September 2012



Program Review Research Questions

- ▶ What are stakeholder perspectives (administrators, teachers, parents, students, and related service providers) related to special education practices in the school district?
- ▶ In what ways do West Windsor's special education programs and processes align with current research about effective practices in special education?
- ▶ In what ways do West Windsor's special education processes and programs align with current federal and state requirements related to special education practice?
- ▶ Do special education programs and practices align with district values, vision and mission?



The Review Process:

Data Collection

Phase 1:

- ▶ Visits to all schools in the district; collect contextual data related to programs, processes, and facilities (observations and interviews)
- ▶ Document and data review

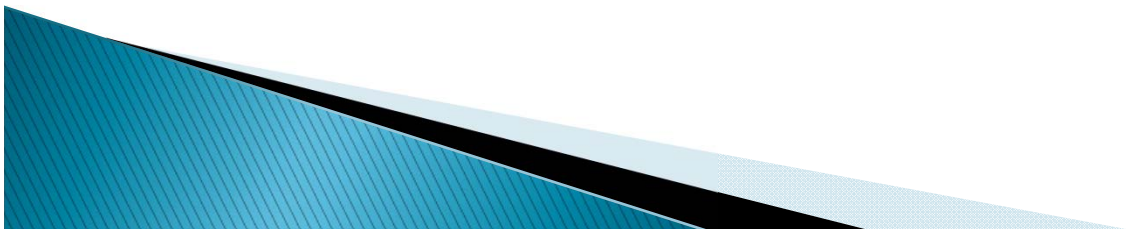
Phase Two:

- ▶ Focus group meetings with various stakeholders were conducted throughout the district.
 - Meetings open to anyone interested
 - Organized by interest groups (elementary parents, secondary parents, out-of-district placement parents, teachers, administrators, child study teams, paraprofessionals, related service providers, etc.)
- ▶ Electronic survey was distributed to parents of special education students (150 responses)



Summary of Findings: Strengths

- ▶ Consistent focus and common goal of all stakeholders – to provide the best programs and opportunities for every child; compliance with special education law
- ▶ Services are provide as determined by the IEP team.
- ▶ Caring, strong participation of families in their children’s education
- ▶ Caring, very qualified staff, dedicated to children
- ▶ Continuum of services to meet a variety of needs
 - Support of out-of-district placements when appropriate



Summary of Findings: Challenges

- ▶ Size of district
- ▶ District/parent communications; culture of negative interactions, mistrust; however, survey indicates that some families have had positive interactions and are happy with their child's progress (What are the opinions of the non-participating families?)
- ▶ Need for more professional development on special education and RTI for general education administration, staff, and faculty
- ▶ Need for consistency in vision, goals, and processes related to special education
- ▶ Turnover in administration
- ▶ Articulation between buildings
- ▶ Child study team assignment structure
- ▶ Need for consistent and structured ongoing data collection and self-evaluation related to all aspects of special education (program offerings, program effectiveness, time management, as well as related general education
- ▶ Funding in this economy



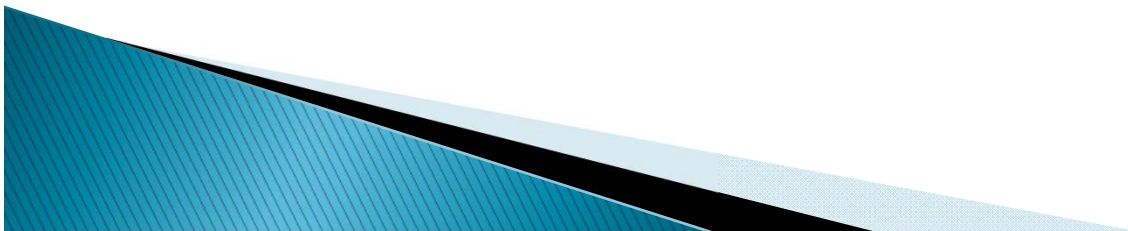
Overall Recommendations

- ▶ Develop structures for consistent, accurate data collection across the district related to program and procedural effectiveness
- ▶ Plan for comprehensive, consistent, and focused professional development related to special education programs
- ▶ Create a focused, organized plan to develop positive relationships with parents (PD for all stakeholders, parent groups, information sessions, etc.)
- ▶ Use turnover in administration as an opportunity to make a “fresh start” in changing culture of interactions with parents
- ▶ Ongoing review of continuum of services, with attempt at a long-term plan for program growth and development



Professional Perspectives

- ▶ The district has strong programs and strives for continuous improvement
- ▶ Everyone is focused on children and their progress
- ▶ Culture of parental mistrust is due to multiple factors, often typical in special education contexts



Special Education Program Review

Internal Team Review: Executive Summary
and Final Recommendations



WW-P Program Reviews

- The WW-P BOE has had a long standing practice of studying our programs and curricular offerings to determine if we can enhance the product provided to our school community.



WW-P Program Reviews

- During the past several years program reviews have been conducted in the following areas:
 - Mathematics
 - Social Studies
 - ESL
 - Language Arts (ongoing)
 - Special Education (complete)



Process: Program Reviews

- During the 2009 – 2010 school year the Curriculum Committee reviewed and adopted a standardized process for program reviews to follow. The process included the following areas of exploration:
 - Curriculum
 - Instruction
 - Assessment and Student Performance
 - Professional Development
 - Resources
- This process creates both an Internal and External Review process by which our programs are reviewed and measured.



Special Education Program Review

- During the 2009 – 2010 school year Dr. Stanley Vitello was hired by the school district to prepare a needs assessment to prepare a request for proposal to study the Special Education Program.
- The request for an external consultants involvement in the creation of the request for proposal (RFP) was as a direct result of the Board of Education and Central Office listening to the concerns of parents.
- Dr. Vitello's data gathering and RFP concluded at the end of the 2009 – 2010 school year.



Request for Proposal

- During the 2010 – 2011 school year a formal request for proposal was released.
- Dr. Michele Kamens, a Rider University Professor with extensive knowledge and background in Special Education programs and services was selected to conduct the review.
- Dr. Kamens conducted her review during the Spring and Fall of 2011.
- Her findings and recommendations were kept separate from the Internal Review Committee as we completed our work during the 2011 – 2012 school year.



Internal Review

- The Internal Team conducted our review during the Spring and Fall 2011 and Spring 2012.
- The Internal Team review encountered several delays as we had a transition in our Special Education leadership team during the 2011 – 2012 school year.

External Consultant

Dr. Michele Kamens

Internal Committee

Dr. Deborah Batchelor



Participants

- Administrators
 - Dr. David Aderhold
 - Dr. Deborah Batchelor
 - Ms. Susan DiDonato
 - Ms. Kathryn Mitchell
 - Dr. Erin Falk
 - Ms. Samantha Tognela
 - Ms. Donna Gibbs-Nini



- General Education Teachers

- Special Education Teachers

- Ms. Rebecca Totaro
- Ms. Faye Airey

- Ms. Samantha Tognela
- Ms. Sue DeForest
- Mr. Todd Robinson
- Ms. Marissa Farber
- Ms. Kimberly Dolin

- 
- Guidance
 - Gifted and Talented
 - Special Area Teacher
 - Instructional Assistant
 - Instructional Technology
 - Ms. Nancy Dunne
 - Dr. Joan Ruddiman
 - Ms. Cindy Westbrook
 - Ms. Karen Sorensen
 - Mr. Russell Wray



- Child Study Team Members

- Dr. Astrid Bohler-Montforte
- Ms. Carolyn Montoney
- Ms. Cheryl Lowenbraun
- Ms. Karen Kelley



Internal Team Process

Meetings held to review programs and services

- 2010-2011 school year
 - Spring of 2011

- 2011-2012 school year
 - Fall of 2011
 - Spring of 2012



Internal Team: Committees Formed

- Subcommittees
 - Divided by grade level
- Curriculum
- Student Assessment and Performance
- Instruction
- Resources
- Professional Development
- Special Education Code



Staffing Special Education Teachers

- High School 41
- Middle School 32
- Upper Elem. 18
- Elementary 24
- Total 115



Staffing - Instructional Assistants

• High School	31
• Middle School	17
• Upper Elem.	21
• Elementary	60
Total	129



Staffing Related Services

- Speech and Language Therapists 17
- Occupational Therapists 5
- Physical Therapists 2



Staffing – Child Study Team Members

- School Psychologists 12
- Social Workers 11
- Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultants 13

Internal Committee Findings:



Programs and Services

- Full Continuum of Programs and Services defined by DOE code requirements
- In class Resource
- Resource Center
- Learning and Language Disabilities
- Multiply Disabled
- Multiply Disabled/Autism
- Behavioral Disabilities
- Preschool Disabilities



Curriculum

- IEP goals and objectives are based on individual needs and upon the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards
- Job Sampling to assist with transition to post secondary programs and services
- Technology tools utilized include iPads, internet resources, student computers, smart boards, flip video/cameras, overhead projectors, document cameras



Instruction

- Differentiated for each student
- Replacement programs
- Co-teaching models
- Inclusion consultant
- Accommodations and modifications incorporated into lesson plans



Assessment and Performance

- CST meets with teachers to review IEP
- In-View, ERB, NJASK, HSPA, Biology Test
- Curriculum Based Measures
- Standardized Measures
 - GRADE
 - Key Math
 - Slosson
- Norm reference tools
- Data on ABA instruction
- Alternate Proficiency Assessment
- Progress Indicators related to Goals and Objectives
- Performance Matters for tracking growth



Resources

- Survey results indicated need more access to resources
- Specialized resources used included Wilson Reading, Touch Math, Reading Milestones, Edmark
- Assistive technology - communication devices, Phonak devices, sound field systems, FM systems, iPads, Alpha Smarts, Rifton chairs, standers, specialized feeding tools



Professional Development

- CST – working collaboratively with parents
- 21st Century Competencies
- Traumatic Loss training
- Global Compliance Network training
- iPad training
- HIB training



Code Compliance

- Monitoring December 2008
- 2009-2010 state performance plan , Indicator # 8 - Parent Involvement
- January 2012 – disproportionate representation
- Code compliant – report on website
- 82.9 % of parents reported WW-P facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services
- Currently participating in technical assistance sessions



Post Secondary Transition Outcomes

- 2011 annual survey of students with disabilities who exited high school during 2009-2010 school year
- 86% of our WW-P special education students pursue post secondary schooling



Model of Excellence

- NJ Office of Special Education Programs indicated that WW-P served as a model of excellence in its delivery of special education programs and services for review by the NJ State Legislature Office of Legislative Services of the State Auditor in June 2012.

Internal Committee Recommendations:



Recommendations

- Parent Relations
- Referral/Placement Process
- Program Offerings
- Staff Roles -
Instructional assistants
- Establishment of SEPTSA
- Interventions and options for general education and I& RS
- Expand in district
- Expand professional development opportunities



Recommendations continued

- Consistency and Articulation
- Curriculum
- Instruction
- Expand vertical and horizontal articulation about programing and implementation
- Social skills enhanced – BCBA hire
- Explore differentiation, writing of measurable goals and objectives – IEP Direct purchased



Recommendations continued

- Assessment and Performance
- Resources
- Continued professional development in this area
 - review of data to enhance instructional practice
- Purchase of instructional reading and math materials for below grade level students



Recommendations continued

- Professional Development
- Code compliance
- Training for instructional assistants and general education personnel
- Program expansion - behavior disabilities and autism; disproportionality review

Special Education Program Review

Recommendations and Action Plans

WWPSEPTSA Meeting

October 10th, 9:30 AM at Village Elementary School