

**WESTERLY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**AN EDUCATION SERVICES ANALYSIS**

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## INTRODUCTION

### EXECUTIVE PROCESS SUMMARY

The leadership of the Westerly Public Schools (hereafter, referred to as the District or WPS) commissioned this review of specific areas that support struggling learners. In conducting this analysis, the review team employed proprietary methodology from a pre-established paradigm (i.e., an Educational Services Analysis), which triangulates information gleaned from qualitative and quantitative information.

More specifically, the qualitative analyses comprised: (1) a series of interviews or surveys with special education teachers, general education teachers, service providers, para-professionals, central office administrators, school-based administrators, personnel from out of District placements, Board Members, stakeholders from the community, and representatives from the (special education) local advisory committee;<sup>1</sup> (2) a review of documents (i.e., IEPs) to ascertain the degree and appropriateness of services; (3) non-evaluative site visits to all the District schools and selected out of district programs to ascertain the array of services and programs available to SWDs.

Quantitative analyses included: (1) multidimensional analyses of information contained within the IEPs; (2) comparative analyses of staffing and corresponding workloads; (3) student outcome data; and (4) financial data pertaining to programmatic expenditures. Given the number of data points, the results that are reported within this document represent recurring themes from the interviews (outlying comments were not included as part of the primary findings) coupled with quantitative data.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to acknowledge District staff and school personnel. This project necessitated a great amount of effort in facilitating logistics and in securing documents; the team is grateful for the efforts of all central office and school-based staff. Throughout the entire process, the cooperative relationship between Futures and the District has enabled the team to work with District leadership in a collegial and transparent manner to maximize the benefits of this analysis for the District.

### GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ARI:</b>	<i>Availability Ratio Index</i>
<b>CSD:</b>	<i>Cohort School District</i>
<b>FTE:</b>	<i>Full-time equivalent</i>
<b>IEP:</b>	<i>Individualized Education Program</i>
<b>LAC:</b>	<i>Local Advisory Committee</i>
<b>LRE:</b>	<i>Least Restrictive Environment</i>

<sup>1</sup> The complete breakdown of interviewees is presented in **Appendix A**

- ODP:** *Out of District Placement*
- OT:** *Occupational Therapist or occupational therapy services*
- PD:** *Professional development*
- PT:** *Physical Therapist or physical therapy services*
- RIDE:** *Rhode Island Department of Education*
- Rtl/MTSS:** *Response to Intervention/Multi-Tiered System of Supports*
- SDI:** *Specially Designed Instruction*
- SEL:** *Social-Emotional Learning*
- S-LP:** *Speech-Language Pathologist or speech-language pathology services*
- SWDs:** *Students with Disabilities*

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

### **Continuum**

**Of Supports:** The range of programs, personnel, and resources to support all students.

**Co-Teaching:** A model whereby a special education teacher and a general education teacher jointly plan and deliver instruction to students with and without disabilities.

**Effectiveness:** The degree to which the services under review promote optimal educational outcomes and student access to the curriculum.

**Efficiency:** The degree to which the special education services and personnel under review are responsibly, uniformly, and optimally utilized to ensure District resources are being expended in a fiscally sound manner.

### **Horizontal**

**Alignment:** Practices that correlate special education instruction to grade-level expectations.

**Ownership:** The philosophy whereby general and special education staff view all students as their responsibility.

### **Vertical**

**Alignment:** The degree to which the transition of SWDs, as they progress from one grade, school, or program to another, is seamless.

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## DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

The staff of Futures is pleased to provide this report of the comprehensive analysis of the programs and services that was conducted from June through November 2019. The primary purposes of this analysis are to describe, and to provide suggestions to improve, specific areas within its education delivery system that include:

- (1) Related Services
- (2) Utilization of Para-Professional Supports
- (3) Out of District Placements
- (4) Continuum of Services
- (5) Organizational Structure and District Coordination of Programs and Services

Because these five areas are presumed to overlap, the report considers these with respect to *Organizational Considerations* and *Continuum of Services*. In turn, each area is divided into *Overview*, *Findings* (comprising *Driving Questions*), and *Areas of Opportunity*.

## METHODOLOGY

- Two hundred and fourteen (214) confidential interviews with central office leadership, school-based administration, certified teachers, non-certified instructional staff, related service providers, out of district representatives, and parents of students with disabilities (please see **Appendix A** for interviewee roster)
- Non-evaluative on-site visits to seven District school locations (including the Babcock Hall pre-school and the Tower Street Community Center) and selected out of district placements.
- Comparative data to Cohort School Districts (CSDs): Burrillville Public Schools, Johnson Public Schools, Lincoln Public Schools, Middletown Public Schools, and the North Providence Public Schools.
- Documents provided to the Futures staff (e.g., Staff Rosters, Organizational Charts, etc.)
- Data retrieved from the District’s IEP system
- Student data from the Rhode Island Department of Education (<http://www.ri.gov/>)

## CLIMATE, CULTURE, AND ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

### OVERVIEW

The authors intentionally begin this document with a consideration of the cultural capacities of, and within, the special education delivery system. The reason for this is that without the requisite capacities, the forthcoming recommendations concerning the programmatic and fiscal enhancements will have less potential for successful implementation.

With respect to personnel as addressed in Driving Question #5, it is not possible to consider the efficacy of the District’s continuum of services and the concomitant horizontal and vertical alignment without an understanding of the current staffing models. To this end, the personnel under review available to support SWDs was gauged by benchmarking the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff members to this overall District special education population of 443 Pre-K-12 SWDs (as per the most recent data). In essence, this statistic is an “availability ratio index (ARI)” and allows an equivalent comparison to other districts with respect to staffing from a “macro” perspective.

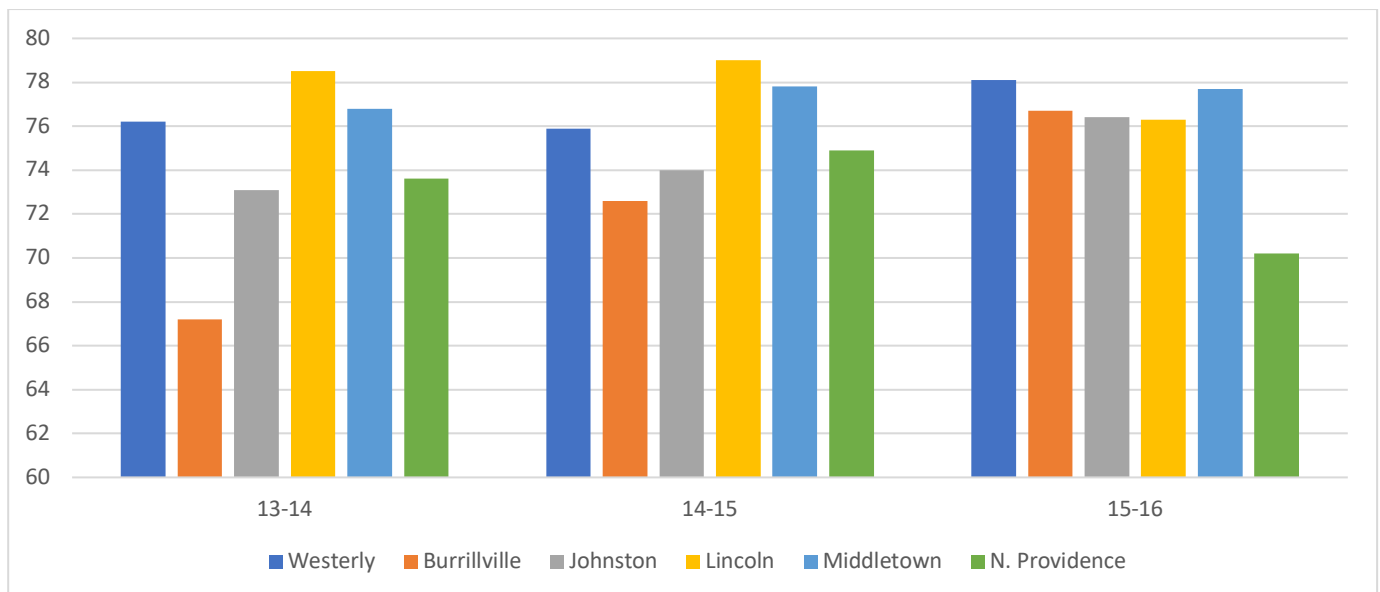
## FINDINGS

### *Driving Question #1: Is there a healthy culture of student “ownership” within the District?*

- As described by interviewees, ownership, or responsibility for SWDs, in the District has not been fully embraced. Although there is a relatively high degree of acceptance of students with disabilities by all staff, there still remains pockets of “your kids-my kids” versus “our kids” within the ranks of general education as well as special education staffs. This lack of universal ownership may impact the extent to which SWDs are fully integrated to the general education experience in the least restrictive environment. It also may adversely impact the extent to which some general educators accept personal responsibility for the total educational experience of those SWDs assigned to them.
- It is notable that Westerly ranks highest of districts in South County with regard to the prevalence of homelessness, free and reduced-price lunch (nearly 30% of the District’s students receive FRPL), single parent families, domestic violence and child abuse. These issues present a substantial challenge to the culture and climate of the District.
- In the authors’ experience, inclusionary practices are “spearheaded” by principals. Within the District each principal has acknowledged the importance of his/her leadership role in creating an inclusive school environment and has worked with the Director of Pupil Personnel Services to create a continuum of least restrictive program options to address the broad range of student needs.

As indicated in **Figure 1**, the percentage of SWDs spending at least 80% of their time in the general education environment has increased substantially within the District across the past three reported years.

**Figure 1.** The Percentage of SWDs Spending At Least 80% in the General Education Environment.



***Driving Question #2: Are IEP Meetings and Processes Conducted in a Manner that is Efficient?***

- With respect to engagement of parents at the “IEP table” it appears the concepts of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and Free Appropriate Education (FAPE) are generally conveyed to, and understood by, the team members. Although there is a small cadre of parents who resist the IEP team decisions regarding dismissal or diminution of services, it was reported that these decisions are essentially celebratory in nature.

***Driving Question #3: Do Staff Perceive That They Have Sufficient Resources, Materials and Professional Development?***

- Generally, respondents indicated that the District provided staff with sufficient supplies, materials and instructional technology to optimize the teaching-learning processes.
- Based on the Professional Development document (detailing offerings for the District staff spanning 2017-2018) is to be commended. The array of content instructional and material purchases has included: explicit instruction created by CEEDAR and the National Center on Intensive Intervention; High Leverage Practices (HLPs) for Inclusive Classrooms and Read & Write for Google Chrome™.
- Although the District has developed a Social Emotional Rubric, initiated PBIS, and developed sub-separate Behavior Support Programs (BSP) in an elementary school and the middle school, it does not appear that the District has made a full commitment to embedding evidenced-based social emotional learning into academic curriculum or professional development.

***Driving Question #4: As Currently Constituted, Is Central Office Staffed to Meet the District’s Needs?***

- From a quantitative perspective, the administrative structure for PPS is leanly staffed. The 1.0 FTE administrators to oversee 493 SWDs, equates to a ratio of 1:493, and compares to an expected range of 1:150-1:250 from the authors’ work nationally and falls within a range of 1:304-1:370 in comparison to the CSD; it should be noted that there are school-based supports (LEAs) who do help with day to day functions.

***Driving Question #5: At the Instructional Level, How Does the District Compare to Other Districts?***

- As delineated in **Figure 2**, the District is: (1) generously staffed for non-certified special education staff (para-professionals); (2) within expectations for certified teachers, S-LP, and psychology; and (3) leanly staffed with respect to OT and PT.

**Figure 2.** The Availability Ratio Index (ARI) for the Special Education Staff (instructional)

Discipline	FTE	District ARI	Expected ARI	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Special Education Teachers	36.5	12.1:1	11:1	3	Staffed to Expectations
Para-professionals	67.2	6.6:1	11:1	3	Generously Staffed
S-LP	7.6	62:1	60:1	10	Staffed to Expectations
OT	2	221:1	180:1	30	Leanly Staffed
PT	.8	738:1	430:1	100	Leanly Staffed
Psychology	5.5	540:1	582:1	--	Staffed to Expectations

**Additional Commentary**

**Speech-Language Pathologists:** An analysis of the S-LPs’ schedules (**Appendix B**) reveals that 68% of their time is spent providing direct services to students, comparing to an expected range of 55-60%; 58% of that direct time is spent providing group treatment, which compares to an expected percentage range of 50-75%. Approximately 10% of the mandated time is devoted to consultation, which represents a good mix of service delivery options. The average mandated (IEP-directed) caseload of 31 and the average service weekly service minutes of 54 is about 10 minutes higher than expected based on the authors’ past experience.

**Occupational Therapists:** An analysis of the OTs’ schedules (**Appendix B**) reveals that 70% of their time is spent providing direct services to students, comparing to an expected range of 60-65%; 48% of this direct time is devoted to individual treatment, which may appear to be on the high side but it is notable that approximately 19% of their time is spent in consultation with staff. The average mandated (IEP-directed) weighted caseload of 38 and the average service weekly service minutes of 30 are within expected limits.

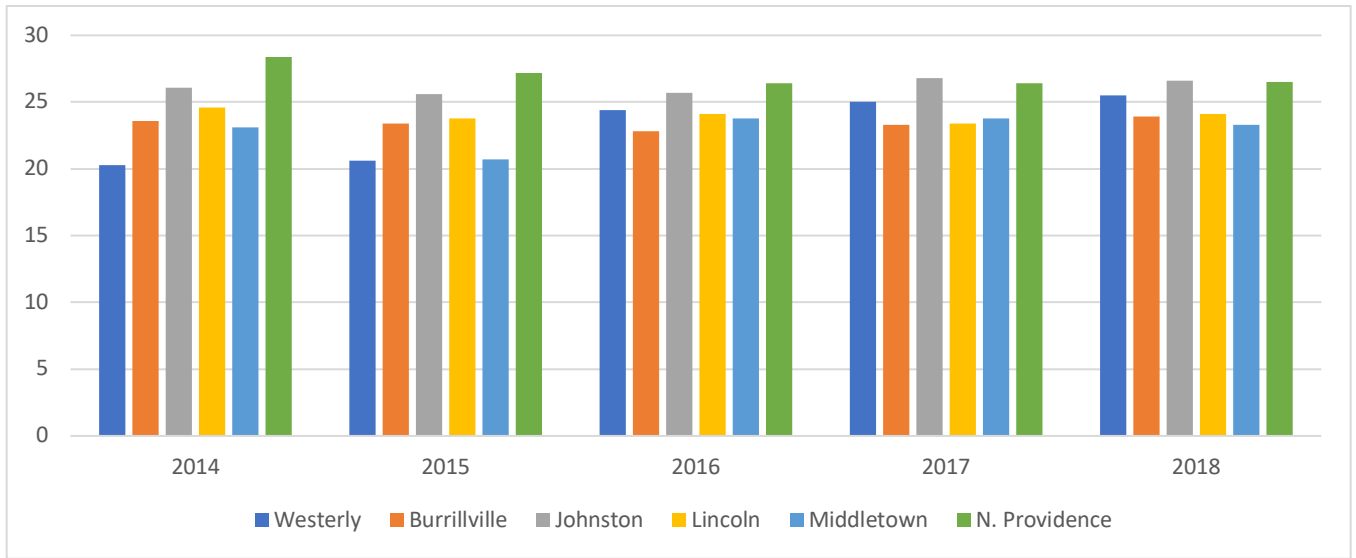
**Physical Therapy:** An analysis of the PT’s schedule (**Appendix B**) reveals that 67% of his time is spent providing direct services to students, comparing to an expected range of 60-65%; 100% of this direct time is devoted to individual time, which is within expectations given the nature of the SWDs receiving PT services. The weighted (IEP-directed) caseload of 42 is within expected limits.

**Driving Question #6: Are the District’s Expenditures Devoted to Special Education Within Expectations?**

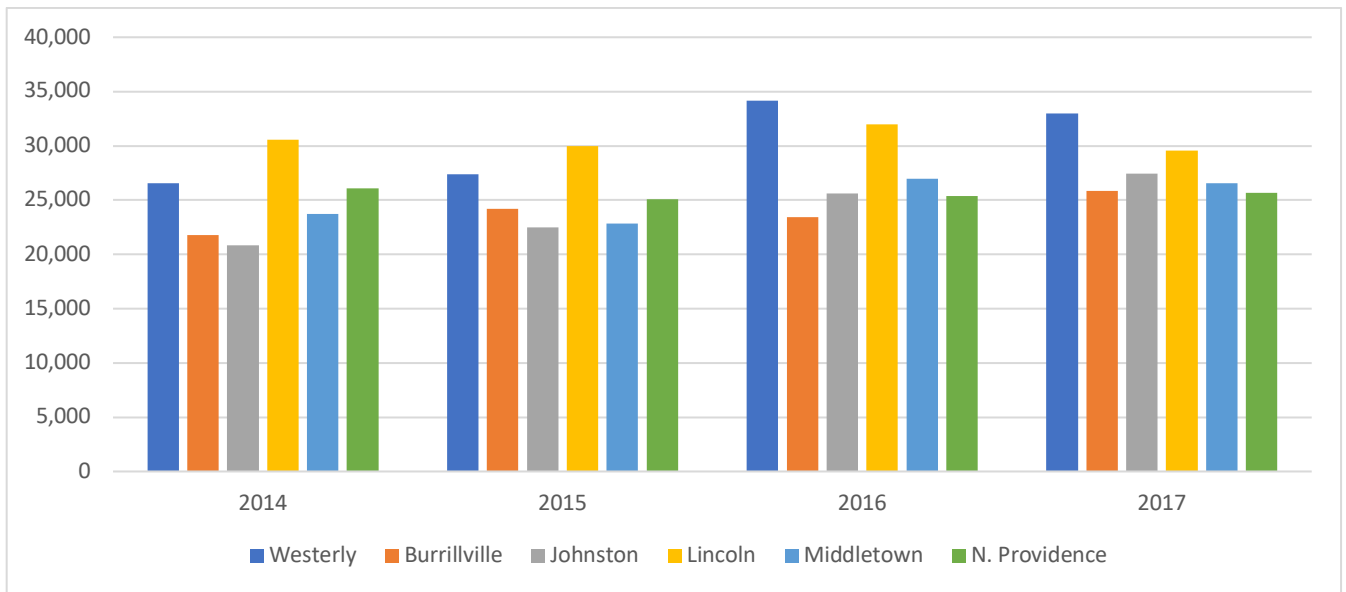
- As indicated below, the expenditures as a proportion of the operating budget (**Figure 3**) and per pupil spending (**Figure 4**) has increased significantly during the past four-five reported years.



**Figure 3.** Special Education Expenditures as a Percentage of the Operating Budget

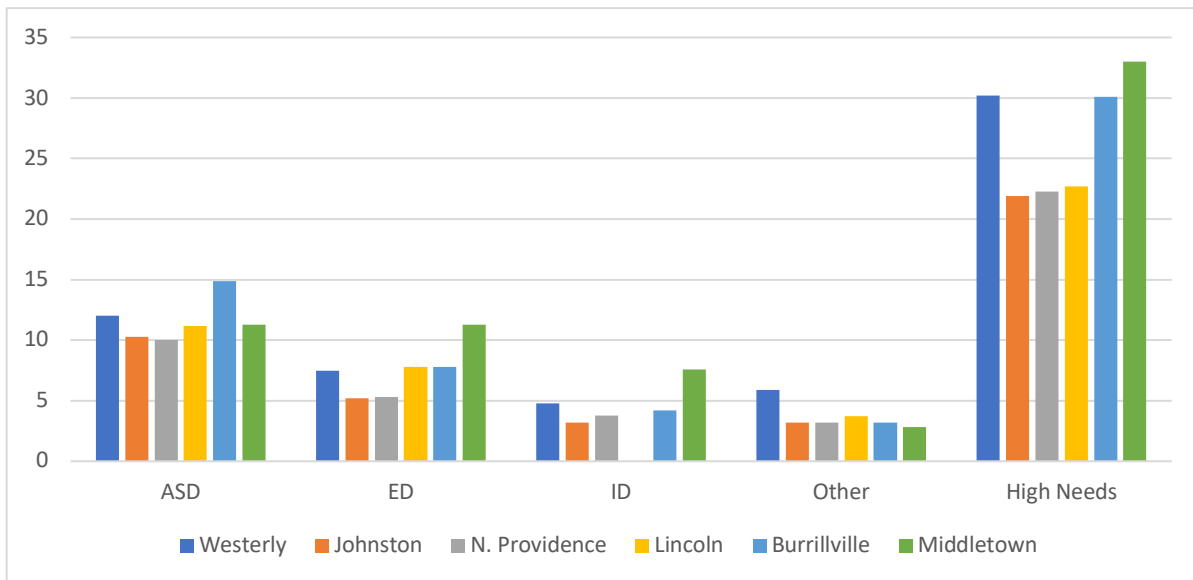


**Figure 4.** Per Pupil Special Education Expenditures (Expressed in Dollars)



- One of the major factors in considering a per student cost is the constellation of the high-needs disabilities. As indicated in **Figure 5**, the District's high needs students, which is 30.2% of the total SWD population, is the second highest in the CSD.

**Figure 5.** The Percentage of the Autism, Multiple Disabilities (MD), Emotional Disturbance (ED), and Intellectual Disability (ID), and Other (Comprising low-incidence disabilities such as Orthopedic Impairments) Disability Categories Among All SWDs



## AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

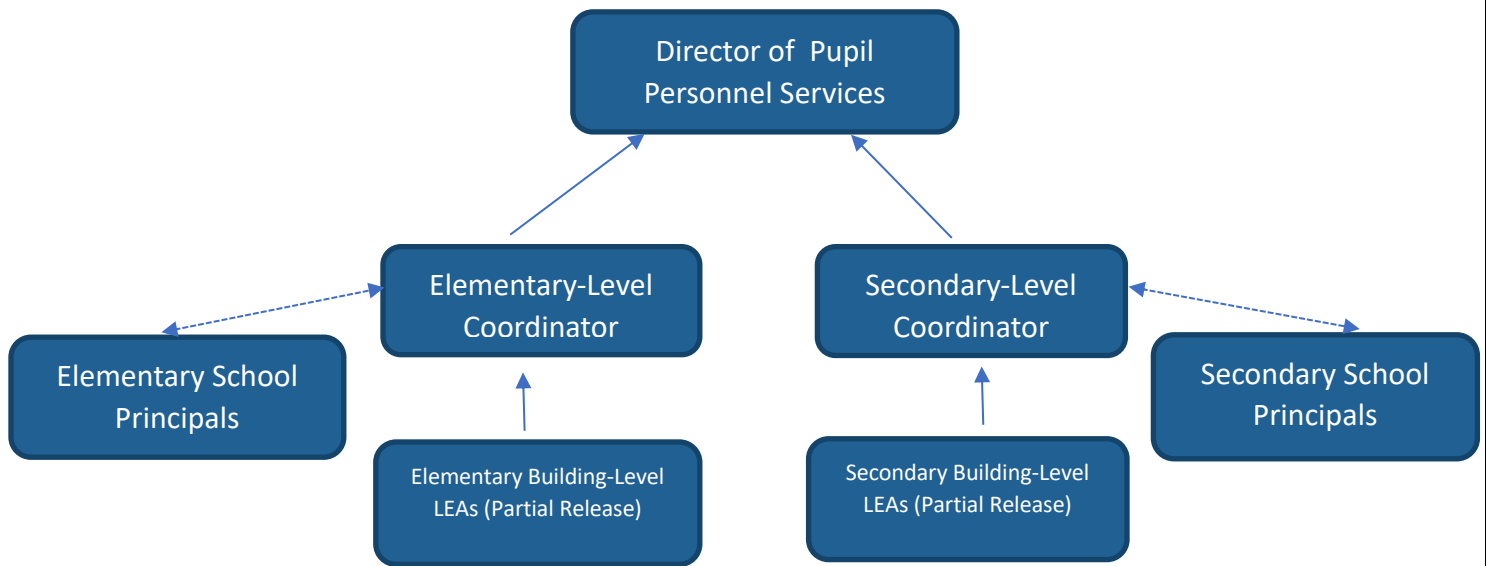
- To promote harmony, develop a unified vision, and enhance the working environment among general and special education departments across the District, leadership may consider the following:
  - ✓ Create a mission statement explicitly containing elements of general and special education and make this visible to personnel at all schools;
  - ✓ If contractual parameters allow, expand the teacher evaluation process to include the ownership issue, to recognize those teachers who take ownership of all students, and to provide specific Professional Improvement Plans to those who do not; and
  - ✓ As new teachers are hired in the District, provide all principals with an operational hiring guide, thus ensuring all teachers understand the ownership standard of their jobs.
- As part of leadership’s continued plan to update processes and procedures, it may also be beneficial to re-visit the establishment of descriptions that further define the in-District continuum of programs so that students have access to consistent frameworks and curriculum as they progress from grade to grade and from school to school. This would span the forthcoming discussion of ensuring co-teaching models are included to programs supporting students with intensive needs.

With respect to “rolling” out the information, develop user-friendly formats that could be placed at each school and on the District’s website.

- As previously reported, as currently constituted, the PPS department is leanly staffed. Therefore, this might present an opportunity to re-organize the Department. Although there are many models that may

be considered, the one described below is one that we believe may lead to a more streamlined process to support students, staff, and other stakeholders. This model (**Figure 6**) constitutes an added layer of oversight at the building-level; it is expected that the current LEAs will be able to assume and/or continue both IEP-oversight and other duties (e.g., carrying an instructional caseload, coaching teachers on best practices etc.).

**Figure 6.** Proposed Organizational Model



It is also considered critical that the Coordinators have administrative certification, which would allow this cache with other school-based leaders as well as the ability to evaluate special education staff.

- Consider expanding the District’s LAC to the school-level (e.g., hold meetings at specified times at each school throughout the year) to further support representative parent engagement across WPS, it may be beneficial to have school principals host these meetings in conjunction with PPS leadership to ensure this initiative is well-represented and publicized.
- As is currently occurring, the District is encouraged to re-visit systematic, District-wide entry and exit criteria for speech-language services. This document could be modified to specify the intensity of service delivery based on the variables of age, effect(s) of the disability on academic performance, and the nature of the educational curricula. Once ratified, it will be necessary to train the LEAs and principals, so they can be conversant with respect to the document around the IEP “table.”

## CONTINUUM OF SUPPORTS

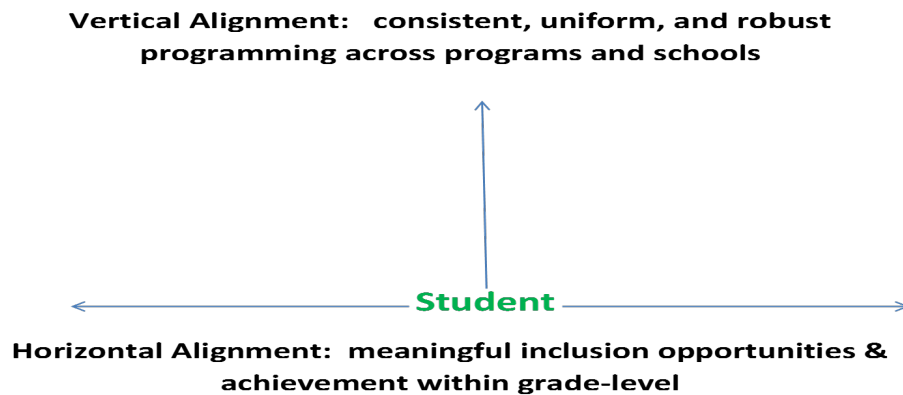
### OVERVIEW

Although the term “continuum of services” is associated with special education, it is useful to broaden this definition to “continuum of supports” because it can be used to conceptualize a system of instructional and

programmatic provisions for all students (i.e., students with and without disabilities). Ideally, this continuum provides programming, personnel, and resources to appropriately address the educational needs of students in the general education classrooms; or, if needed, in special education programs designed to be closely integrated with the general education environment.

The other framework that is inherent in a programmatic discussion encompasses the student-centric constructs of *horizontal alignment* and *vertical alignment*. Horizontal Alignment refers to practices that correlate special education instruction and supports to grade-level expectations; it can be measured academically by student achievement and more broadly by the quantity and quality of opportunities that SWDs have with their typical peers. Vertical Alignment is the degree to which the transition of SWDs as they progress from one grade, school, or program, is seamless; vertical alignment requires consistent, uniform, and robust programming that ensures the needs of SWDs are consistently met until they graduate or are deemed ineligible to receive special education services. **Figure 7** illustrates these two dimensions of alignment.

**Figure 7.** The Two-dimensions of Alignment



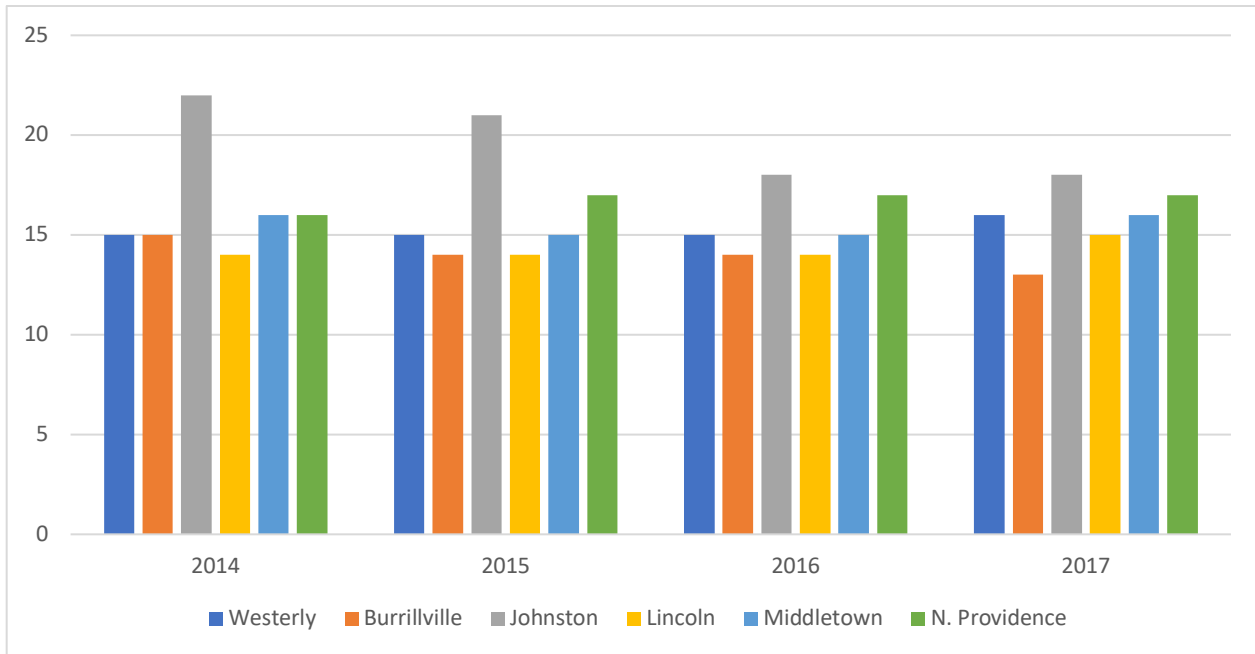
Source: Futures Education, 2019

## FINDINGS

### ***Driving Question #7: As Currently Constituted, Is the District's Early Intervening Process Working Well?***

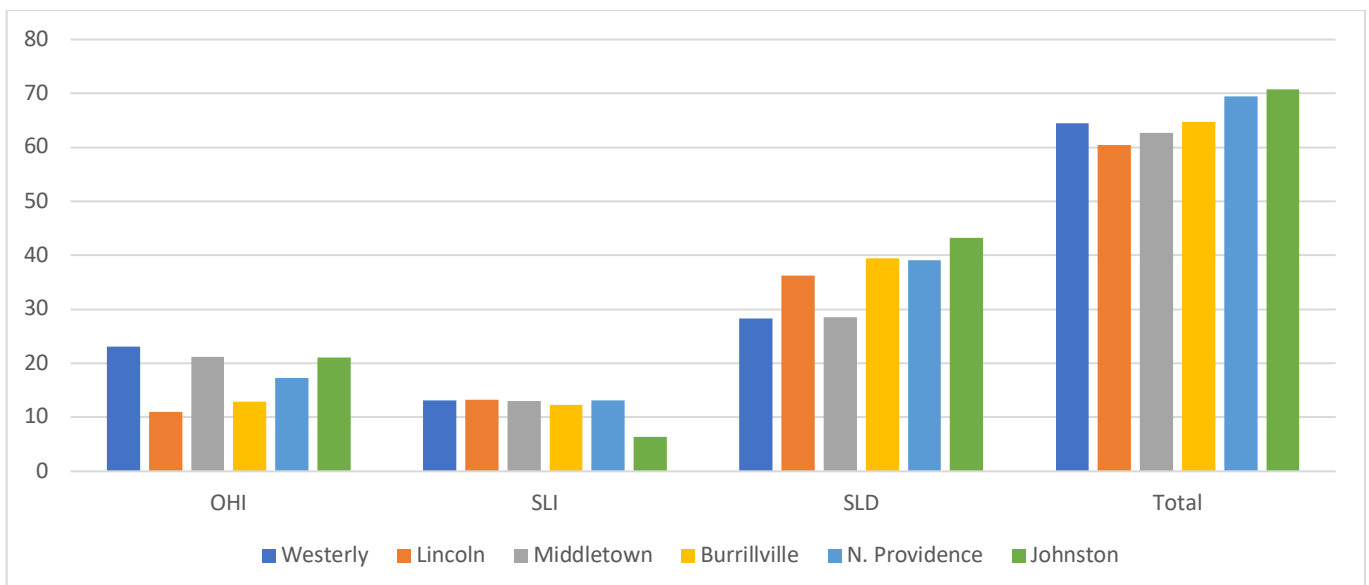
- Response to Intervention (RtI) or Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) is reported to be fairly well developed in the WPS. Commendably, central office administration and building principals have acknowledged that pre-referral intervention is a function of general education.
- From a quantitative perspective, the RtI process appears to be effective in that the percentage of SWD in the District has been consistently maintained below the state average of 18% and compares favorably to the cohort districts.

**Figure 8. Special Education Trend Data**



- Another indicator of an effective early intervening process is the degree to which high frequency-lower needs disability categories may be over-represented in that these students may not be receiving supports in general education that are meeting their instructional needs. As indicated in **Figure 9**, there was not a disproportionate number of SWDs classified with the three primary areas of high-incidence, low needs disabilities (i.e., specific learning disabilities, other health impairment, or speech-language impairment) in comparison with the CSDs.

**Figure 9. The Percentage of the Specific Learning Disability (SLD), Speech-Language Impairment (SLI) and Other Health Impairment (OHI) Disability Category Among All SWDs**



- In a related matter regarding possible over-identification, the District is to be commended for its recent record of not having disproportionate representation for sub-groups or for specific disabilities.<sup>2</sup>
- Despite the encouraging reports and data, there are elements of the early intervening process that could be improved. Based on multiple interviews, there are mixed perceptions regarding implementation effectiveness with some staff expressing frustration in meeting Rtl time restraints and data recording expectations; as a result the reported data from progress monitoring is not always reliable.

General education teachers are reported to have the skill sets necessary to provide most Tier 1 interventions. That being stated, they are not typically well trained in handling student SEL and behavioral needs. Moreover, currently each school maintains its own pre-referral data; as a result, there is no uniformity as to which interventions are effective and which are not.

### ***Driving Question #8: Once Identified Is the In-District Continuum of Services Meeting Student Needs?***

#### ***The Pre-School Program***

- As reported in September, the total preschool enrollment was approximately 120 students with 60 students on IEPs; 47 of the SWD attend the ½ day preschool classes. Referral data is well maintained and reflects that screening occurs throughout the year resulting in students being referred throughout the year. Thus, it is difficult to always predict enrollment.
- WPS preschool programs and services constitute an effective blend of research-based pedagogy, federal and state standards and special education best practice. The program is guided by Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards which...”are intended to provide guidance to families, teachers and administrators on what children should know and be able to do as they enter kindergarten (RIDE, Early Learning and Development Standards, 2013).
- PK SWDs are educated in the least restrictive environment alongside their non-disabled peers. There are 9 half day preschool programs in the district. Students attend 4 days/week Monday-Thursday. Friday is a planning and family support day. The morning sessions are typically reserved for 3-year-olds while the afternoon programs serve 4 and some 5-year-old SWD. Interviews and visitation to the programs suggest that WPS is following enrollment requirements (i.e., at least 51% non-disabled students).

#### ***In-District K-12 Special Education Programs***

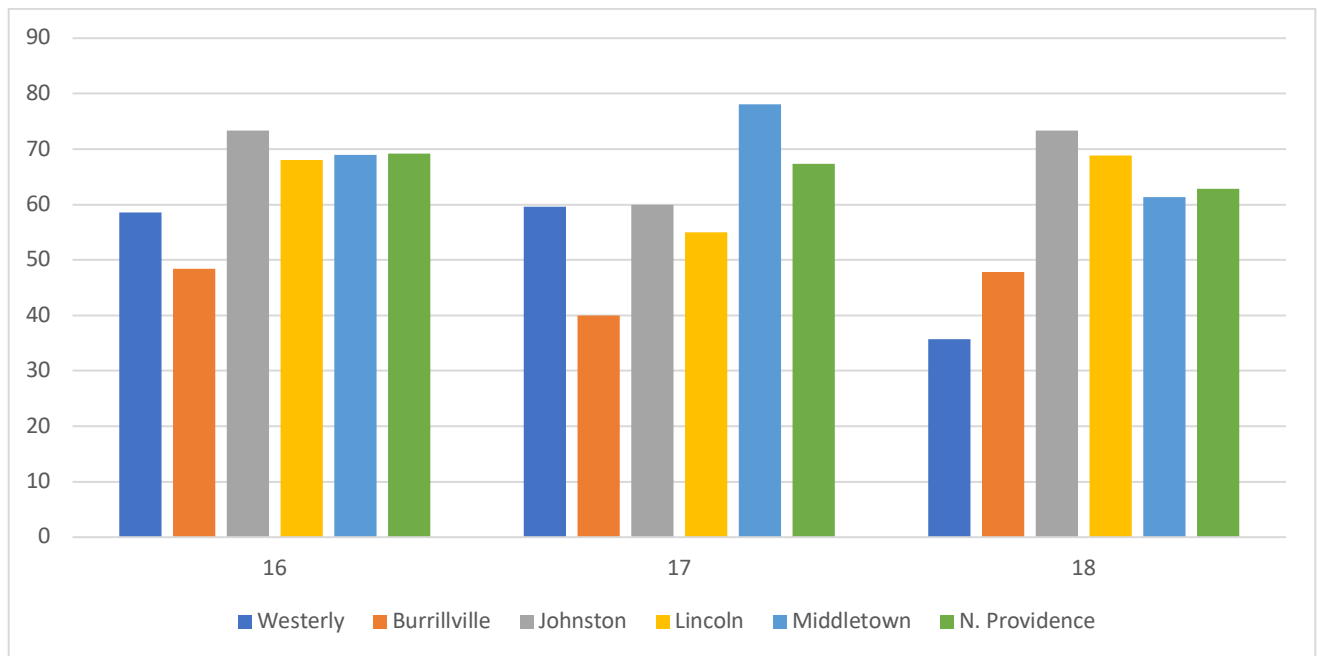
- In meeting its responsibility to provide all students with a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment, WPS has developed an appropriate range of special education programs and services in accordance with federal and state regulations. However, it should be noted that co-teaching is poorly developed, and is only sporadically employed across the District.

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<sup>2</sup> Disproportionality is over-representation of minority students identified with a learning disability or other type of disability under the IDEA. When a minority group's numbers in special education are statistically higher than they should be, they are considered disproportionate.

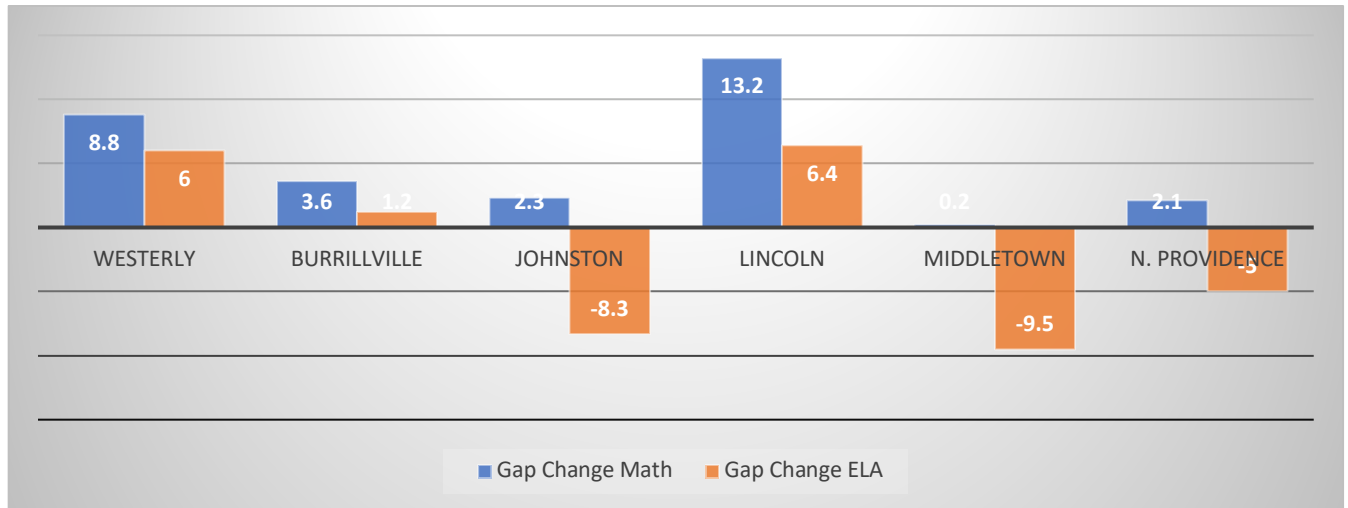
- The District has developed a comprehensive and effective post-secondary community-based program for SWD ages 18-21 requiring intensive and highly individualized programming. Alternatively, career technical opportunities for SWD who demonstrate moderate to mild needs, some of whom may in fact receive a high school diploma, are limited. Per report, practical opportunities for community networking, job placement and post-secondary educational opportunities are lacking for students with moderate to mild disabilities.
- Although the District has developed a Social Emotional Rubric, initiated PBIS, and developed sub-separate Behavior Support Programs (BSP) in an elementary school and at the middle school, it does not appear that the District has made a full commitment to embedding evidenced-based social emotional learning into the academic curriculum or as part of the professional development priorities.
- To the degree that special education is meant to “level the playing field,” performance has been mixed with respect to the performance of SWDs. The percentage of SWDs graduating (**Figure 10**) is alarming low as is the achievement gap data (**Figure 11**). This is in contrast to the commendable graduation rate for the general student population – as previously noted. However, the proficiency rate for SWDs (**Figure 12**) is the highest in the Cohort Group; in a related finding a stratified, random sampling of IEPs

**Figure 10.** Graduation Rates of the SWD Cohort

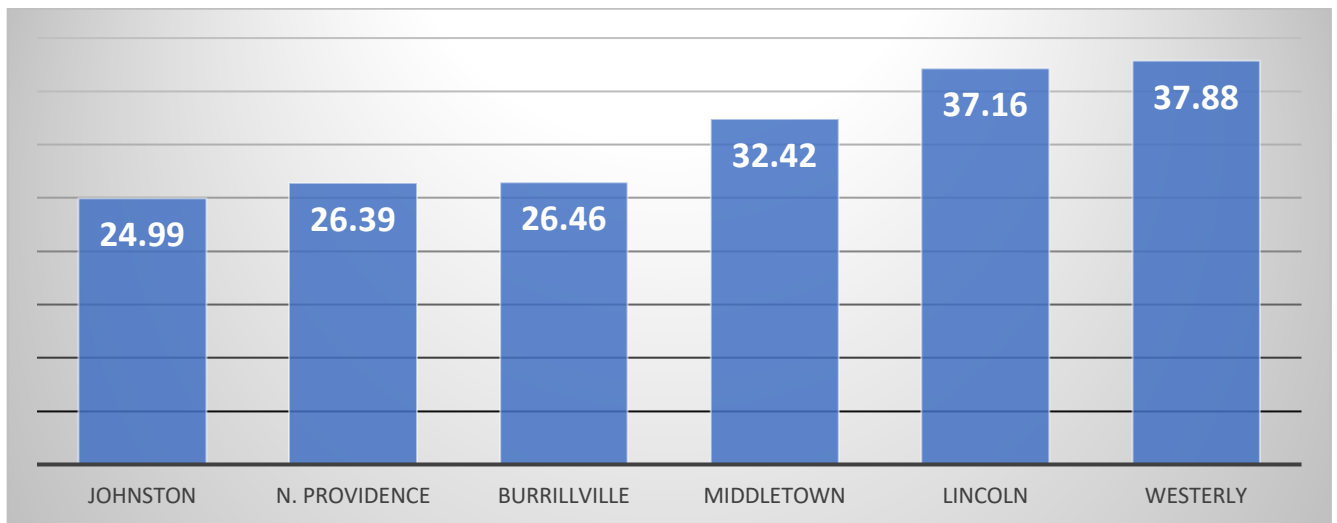


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**Figure 11.** Achievement Gap Data for ELA and Math



**Figure 12.** Proficiency Rate for SWDs Against Grade Level, Modified and Alternate Academic Achievement Standards.



- A stratified, random review of IEPs (N=50) revealed:
  - ✓ Present levels of achievement that consistently described the students' needs; and
  - ✓ Goals were clear, measurable, and linked to Rhode Island standards.

***Out of District Programs***

- In FY14, 71 students (13%) were placed out of the district. In September 2019 it was reported that there are 35 students placed out of the district (7.3%) by Westerly, the courts or DCYF. An additional 8 students are placed at Chariho Career and Tech (1.7%), and 3 students are serviced in private schools, home schooled



or hospitalized (0.6%). The range is 7.3% - 9.6% depending on how the data is reported compared to 13% five years ago and is consistent with expectations, especially in view of the constellation of SWDs who are in the Out of District Placements.

## AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

### MTSS

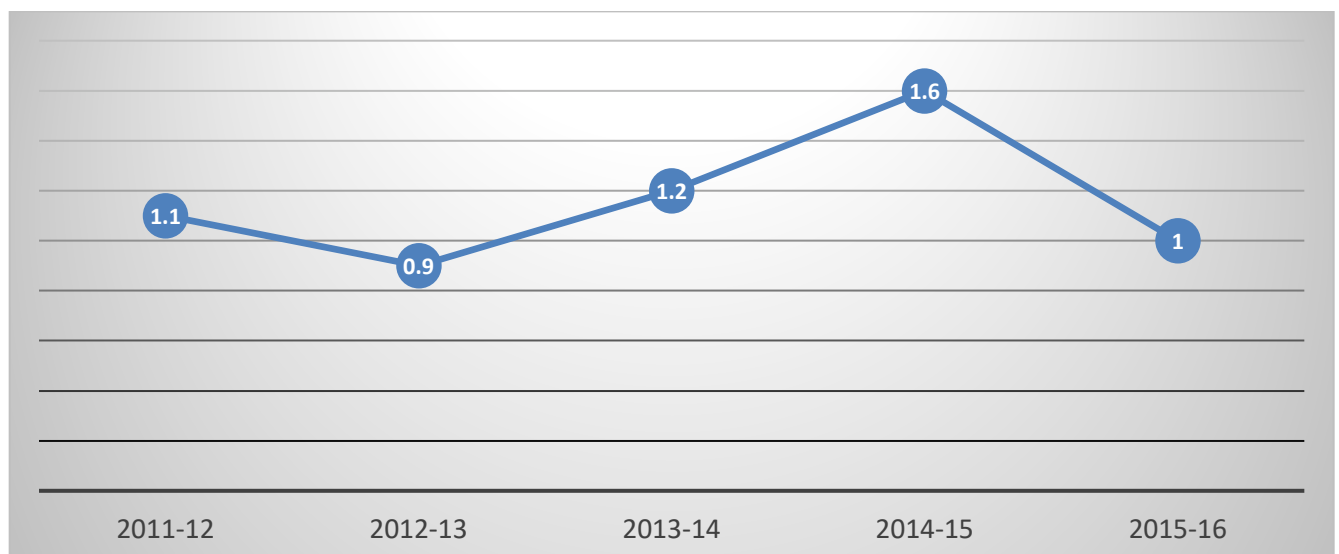
#### Ownership and Capacity

- Leadership at both the central office and school-based level will continue to emphasize the importance that general education teachers see MTSS/RtI as a general education initiative and responsibility, and not as a “pass-through” for IEP referral or solely for the provision of intervention by an interventionist. Moving in this direction will support the District’s All Students/Our Students agenda.
- Expectations for MTSS should be reviewed annually and supported through easily accessible and understood protocols.

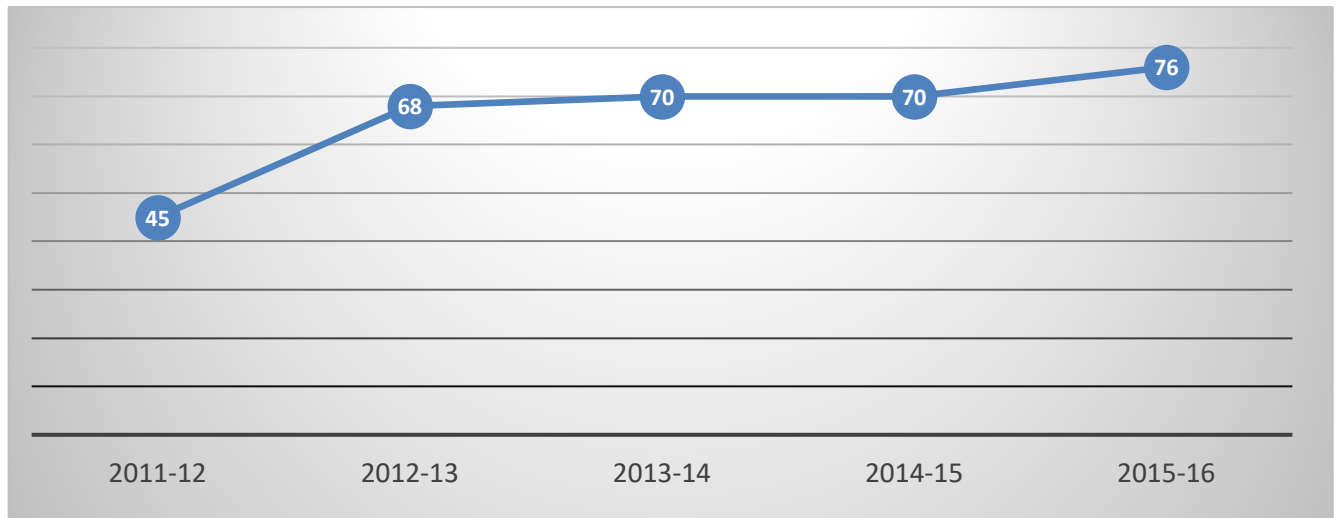
#### Data Considerations

- To supplement the qualitative approach to MTSS, it will be helpful to quantitatively “roll up” this data across the District to ensure that school-based administrators can reflect on students who went to evaluation and those who did, or did not, qualify. This data, both in “real time” and longitudinally, will provide valuable data with respect to the efficacy of MTSS within, and across, schools and across content areas (i.e., ELA, math, and behavior). The utility of being able to report referrals for assessments and those students who qualified is reflected below in **Figures 13** and **14** from another public-school district.

**Figure 13.** Referrals for an Initial Special Education Evaluation-Expressed as a Percentage of the Overall Student Population



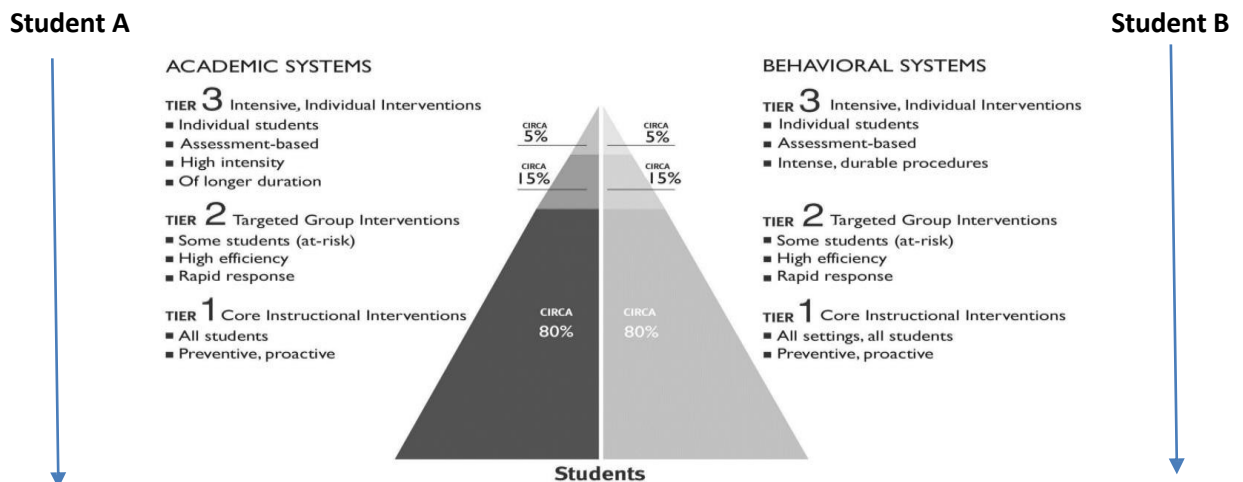
**Figure 14.** Referrals to IEP who Qualified-Expressed as a Percentage of Students Who Qualified for Special Education Services



**MTSS as a Step Down**

- Once MTSS is more systematic and operational with respect to processes and procedures (e.g., high quality core instruction, timely/effective interventions, use of data to evaluate/problem-solve issues of student learning) it may be “reversed” (i.e., the MTSS pyramid is in effect inverted) as a systematic step-down for students who are no longer eligible for IEPs.
- This is best illustrated by considering two hypothetical students. In this scenario, assuming the students were deemed eligible for exiting an IEP, the tiers comprising the MTSS model may be used to support the students in academic (Student A) and behavioral (Student B) domains. In this sense, the robust nature of MTSS is illustrated because it provides a platform to address student needs “where they are at,” irrespective of their previous special education status.

**Figure 15.** Utilization of the “Step Down” from an IEP



## ***In-District Continuum of Services***

- Re-visit the co-teaching model to ensure that, where it exists, it integrates specially designed instruction. Referring to the leadership capacity, it will be essential for special education leadership and the principals to collaborate on: (1) requisite professional development for the co-teaching dyads; (2) effective scheduling of students; and (3) on-going problem solving.

In this regard, to the degree that struggling students may have their needs addressed by strategy experts, co-teaching will be an excellent supplement to the aforementioned RtI recommendations. The reader is referred to **Appendix C** for principles that underlie effective co-teaching.

- To supplement inclusivity currently occurring at the high school with respect to the integration of general and special education students in extra-curricular activities, the District may wish to establish a credit-bearing peer mentorship program at the secondary level. This will ensure that the peer interactions remain systematic, meaningful, and interactive. In addition, this initiative should be included in the students' IEPs. The authors will provide District leadership with examples.
- Institute "Vertical Articulation" teams for the upper grade of the sending schools and the lowest grade of the receiving schools with an overall agenda to ensure the continuum of services continues to meet the needs of all students. In this manner, it is speculated that the "gap" in vertical articulation between the schools will be addressed and the staff at all schools can be part of ongoing solutions.
- As it pertains to engaging SWDs at the secondary level, and thus increasing the graduation rate, continue to provide the following:
  - ✓ It is recommended that leadership build a cohesive communication plan, and then clearly communicate this plan to all stakeholders. Ensure that all programs are aligned to the District Strategic Plan and implement the Core Curriculum established by the District. It is notable that the District's focus on strengthening Core Instruction is a key variable to consider.
  - ✓ Provide elective options focused on specific areas of interest, career and vocational preparation, etc. should be monitored to ensure these traditional and non-traditional options offer students a meaningful pathway to educational success culminating with high school graduation.
  - ✓ Create and implement a regular review process that identifies barriers to student success. This process should be completed on a three-year cycle. The results of this analysis shall inform the high school regarding their ability to meet student needs as well as drive the addition, elimination, or targeted improvement of specific programs to maximize student outcomes.
  - ✓ Develop a process to ensure that SWDs receive the necessary supports that are outlined within their IEPs (e.g., ensure that the program is fitting the needs of the student and not fitting the student to the program) and that guidance counselors ensure all students can engage in CTE experiences.

## ***Out of District Programs***

- As it pertains to the potential "bring back" of students currently in ODPs, the challenge is for the District to provide the seminal elements of an "appropriate" educational program (as required by federal and state law)

including environment, educational strategies, and (as required by law) to meet the special educational needs of students with disabilities.

The net fiscal, educational, and logistical “cost- benefit” devoted to the creation of special programs within an ODP, the District to address the special education needs of some students, who might otherwise be in ODPs, could potentially be cost-effective and reflect best practice. The number of net savings to the District, and ultimate short- and long-term success of the programs, centers around three primary issues, which District leadership continues to address on an annual basis:

- ✓ Personnel capacity, or the degree to which staff in District programs have the requisite training, competence, and administrative support to serve students currently requiring ODPs;
- ✓ Physical plant capacity, or the degree to which the District can house the programs in a manner that will optimize educational outcomes; and
- ✓ Fiscal capacity-the degree to which staffing, building, and “other” costs will make investment a viable option for the District.

If the District can neither replicate programs from personal, physical plant, and fiscal capacities nor create programs that adhere to the spirit and letter of LRE and FAPE, then it is recommended that students in these ODP programs not be brought back in District.

- From a vertical alignment perspective, establishing a “point person” (e.g., a psychologist) could provide oversight of programs supporting students with more intensive needs (e.g., those on the Autism spectrum, life skills, and emotional-behavioral needs) within the District and represent the District at IEP meetings. In addition, the staff member could facilitate access to a mental health provider who can support the medication component of students’ care and facilitate Wraparound community-based mental health supports.

## SUMMARY AND FINAL COMMENTARY

The overall results suggest that there is a high-level of dedication and commitment of administrators, teachers, specialists and support personnel who are working diligently to meet the needs of students; however, there are several capacities that will need to be enhanced to best meet the needs of SWDs and struggling learners. Although there are many recommendations contained throughout this report, the following are priority areas for District leadership to consider as part of its strategic planning, and to enhance the programs.

### ***Organizational Considerations***

1. Revisit, develop and implement a comprehensive District plan for the enhancement of “ownership” of SWDs as a District expectation on the part of all staff; including such components as professional development, recruitment, assessment and retention practices.

2. Continue outreach to the community with respect to topics pertaining to special education with both school-based (e.g., holding LAC meetings) and District-wide (e.g., expanding the website as resource) initiatives.
3. Consider a re-organization of the PPS department with the addition of elementary and secondary coordinators.

### ***Continuum of Supports***

1. Continue the District initiative to implement a comprehensive (K-12) Response to Intervention (MTSS) program. Specific areas of focus may include professional development opportunities for teachers and paraprofessional in math interventions, SEL and progress monitoring.
2. A projected increase in SEL needs requires long-range comprehensive planning. It is suggested that the District initiate a 3-year SEL Strategic Plan process through which students and adults (i.e. school staff, parents and community cohorts) are actively engaged partners.
3. Ensure that co-Teaching remains a viable option as part of the continuum of services, which will require strengthening pedagogy and principal capacity.
4. Strengthen the CTE and other avenues to optimize graduation rates.

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## APPENDIX A: RESPONDENT ROSTER (N=188)

Discipline	Number Interviewed in Person	Number Surveyed
Central Office Administrators	4	
Principals	5	
Assistant Principals	1	
Special Education Teachers	12	97***(split)
General Education Teachers**	6	97***(split)
Para-Professionals	12	
LEAs	5	
Rtl/MTSS Point Persons	5	
Coordinators	3	
Speech-Language Pathologists	7	
Psychologists/BCBA	3	
Social Workers	4	
Parents	6	28
City Stakeholder/Board Members	2	3
Out of District Personnel	12	
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>128</b>

\*\*One of the Teachers was also interviewed in his capacity of a Union Representative

\*\*\*There was a total of 97 certified teachers who responded-there was not a distinction in the survey if the respondent was special education or general education

## APPENDIX B: WORKLOAD ANALYSIS

### Discipline Workload Summary - Speech and Language Pathology

Total Hours Analyzed	<b>230</b>	
Number of Staff	<b>7</b>	
Number Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Staff	<b>7.0</b>	
Total Hours Minus Testing	<b>219.75</b>	
Total Testing Hours ( % in italics)	<b>10.25</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
Total Direct Service Hours ( % in italics)	<b>150.25</b>	<b>68.4%</b>
Individual	<b>53.25</b>	<b>35.4%</b>
Group	<b>87.25</b>	<b>58.1%</b>
Consult	<b>9.75</b>	<b>6.5%</b>
Total Indirect Service Hours ( % in italics)	<b>69.5</b>	<b>31.6%</b>
Travel	<b>2</b>	<b>2.9%</b>
Meetings	<b>15.5</b>	<b>22.3%</b>
Other	<b>52</b>	<b>74.8%</b>

#### Therapist Caseload Ranges

	<b>MIN</b>	<b>MAX</b>
caseload	23	43
weighted case	23	43

#### Therapist Workload Percentages

	<b>MIN</b>	<b>MAX</b>
group	21	86
individual	11	71
consult	0	15
direct	58	73
testing	0	9
meetings	0	14
other	12	30
travel	0	5

	<b>AVG</b>	<b>units/caseload</b>
caseload	31.4	1.8
weighted case	31.4	
units	56.7	

Individual Breakdown of Weekly Workload by Therapist

SLP										
Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	4	2	5.5	4.5	4.5	20.5	0.86	37.00	37.00	73.00
individual	1.25	0	0	0.5	0.75	2.5	0.11			
consult	0.25	0.5	0	0	0	0.75	0.03			RTI
direct	5.5	2.5	5.5	5	5.25	23.75	0.73			
testing	0	1	0	0.5	0.5	2	0.06			
meetings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
other	1	3	1	1	0.75	6.75	0.21			
travel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>1.00</b>			

SLP										
Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	4	2	3	0.5	3.5	13	0.68	34.00	34.00	68.00
individual	1	2	2	0.5	0.5	6	0.32			
consult	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			RTI
direct	5	4	5	1	4	19	0.58			
testing	0	0.5	0	2	0.5	3	0.09			
meetings	0	0	0	2	0	2	0.06			
other	1.5	2	1.5	1.5	2	8.5	0.26			
travel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>1.00</b>			

SLP										
Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	1.25	1.25	1	1	0	4.5	0.21	23.00	23.00	43.00
individual	3.5	3.5	4	4	0	15	0.71			
consult	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.5	1.5	0.07			RTI
direct	5	5	5.25	5.25	0.5	21	0.65			
testing	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	0	1.5	0.05			
meetings	0	0	0	0	4.5	4.5	0.14			
other	0.5	0.5	0.25	1.25	1.5	4	0.12			
travel	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	0	1.5	0.05			
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>1.00</b>			

SLP										
Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	2.5	2	3	2.5	2	12	0.53	23.00	23.00	39.00
individual	2	2	1	2.5	0.5	8	0.36			
consult	0.25	0.25	0.5	0.25	1.25	2.5	0.11			RTI
direct	4.75	4.25	4.5	5.25	3.75	22.5	0.69			
testing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
meetings	0	1	0	0	1	2	0.06			
other	1.75	1.25	1.75	1.25	1.5	7.5	0.23			
travel	0	0	0.25	0	0.25	0.5	0.02			
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>1.00</b>			

SLP										
Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	3.5	2	3.5	2	3.5	14.5	0.69	34.00	34.00	56.00
individual	0.5	1	1.5	2	0	5	0.24			
consult	1	0	0	0.5	0	1.5	0.07			RTI
direct	5	3	5	4.5	3.5	21	0.65			
testing	0	1	0	0	1	2	0.06			
meetings	0	1	0	0	1.25	2.25	0.07			
other	1.5	1.5	1.5	2	0.75	7.25	0.22			
travel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>1.00</b>			

SLP										
Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	1.5	2	1	2	2.5	9	0.44	26.00	26.00	42.00
individual	1.5	1.5	3	1.5	1	8.5	0.41			
consult	0.5	0.5	1	0	1	3	0.15			RTI
direct	3.5	4	5	3.5	4.5	20.5	0.59			
testing	0.5	0	0	0	0.5	1	0.03			
meetings	1	1	0	1	0	3	0.09			
other	2	2	2	2.5	2	10.5	0.30			
travel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>1.00</b>			

SLP										
Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	3.75	3	2.25	2.75	2	13.75	0.61	43.00	43.00	76.00
individual	1.25	1.5	1.25	1.75	2.5	8.25	0.37			
consult	0	0.5	0	0	0	0.5	0.02			RTI
direct	5	5	3.5	4.5	4.5	22.5	0.69			
testing	0	0	0	0	0.75	0.75	0.02			
meetings	0	0	1.75	0	0	1.75	0.05			
other	1.5	1.5	1.25	2	1.25	7.5	0.23			
travel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>1.00</b>			

### Discipline Workload Summary - Occupational Therapy

Total Hours Analyzed	<b>84</b>	
Number of Staff	<b>3</b>	
Number Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Staff	<b>2.6</b>	
Total Hours Minus Testing	<b>72.5</b>	
Total Testing Hours ( % in italics)	<b>11.5</b>	<b>13.7%</b>
Total Direct Service Hours ( % in italics)	<b>51</b>	<b>70.3%</b>
Group	<b>17</b>	<b>33.3%</b>
Consult	<b>9.5</b>	<b>18.6%</b>

Total Indirect Service Hours ( % in italics)	<b>21.5</b>	<b>29.7%</b>
Travel	<b>1.5</b>	<i>7.0%</i>
Meetings	<b>7</b>	<i>32.6%</i>
Other	<b>13</b>	<i>60.5%</i>

**Therapist Caseload Ranges**

	<b>MIN</b>	<b>MAX</b>
caseload	13	56
weighted case	16	70

**Therapist Workload Percentages**

	<b>MIN</b>	<b>MAX</b>
group	0	64
individual	21	72
consult	14	28
direct	35	81
testing	0	44
meetings	0	16
other	12	19
travel	0	4

	<b>AVG</b>	<b>units/caseload</b>
caseload	32.3	1.01
weighted case	38	
units	32.7	

**Individual Breakdown of Weekly Workload by Therapist**

OTR Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	13.00	16.00	13.00
individual	4.5	2	0	0	0	6.5	0.72			
consult	1	1.5	0	0	0	2.5	0.28			<b>RTI</b>
direct	5.5	3.5	0	0	0	9	0.35			
testing	0	0	2	4	5.5	11.5	0.44			
meetings	0	2	0	0	0	2	0.08			
other	0.5	0.5	0	2	0	3	0.12			
travel	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.5	0.02			
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1.00</b>			

COTA Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	3	3.5	3.5	3.5	0	13.5	0.64	56.00	70.00	56.00
individual	1	1.5	2	0	0	4.5	0.21			
consult	1.5	0.5	0	1	0	3	0.14			RTI
direct	5.5	5.5	5.5	4.5	0	21	0.81			
testing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
meetings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
other	0.75	1.25	0.5	1.5	0	4	0.15			
travel	0.25	0.5	0.25	0	0	1	0.04			
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>7.25</b>	<b>6.25</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1.00</b>			

COTA Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	0.5	1	1	1	0	3.5	0.17	28.00	28.00	29.00
individual	4	3	3	3.5	0	13.5	0.64			
consult	1	0.5	1	0.5	1	4	0.19			RTI
direct	5.5	4.5	5	5	1	21	0.66			
testing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
meetings	0	1	0	0	4	5	0.16	Sheri		
other	1	1	1.5	1.5	1	6	0.19	Leander		
travel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1.00</b>			

PT Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	25.00	42.00	24.00
individual	5.5	0	3	0	5.5	14	1.00			
consult	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			RTI
direct	5.5	0	3	0	5.5	14	0.67			
testing	0	0	1.5	0	0	1.5	0.07			
meetings	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.05			
other	1.5	0	2.5	0	0.5	4.5	0.21			
travel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>1.00</b>			

### Discipline Workload Summary - Psychology

Total Hours Analyzed	<b>97.5</b>	
Number of Staff	<b>3</b>	
Number Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Staff	<b>3.0</b>	
Total Hours Minus Testing	<b>75.5</b>	
Total Testing Hours ( % in italics)	<b>22</b>	<b>22.6%</b>
Total Direct Service Hours ( % in italics)	<b>30</b>	<b>39.7%</b>
Group	<b>7.5</b>	<b>25.0%</b>
Consult	<b>9.25</b>	<b>30.8%</b>

Total Indirect Service Hours ( % in italics)	<b>45.5</b>	<b>60.3%</b>
Travel	<b>0.5</b>	<i>1.1%</i>
Meetings	<b>20.75</b>	<i>45.6%</i>
Other	<b>24.25</b>	<i>53.3%</i>

**Therapist Caseload Ranges**

	<b>MIN</b>	<b>MAX</b>
caseload	10	16
weighted case	10	16

**Therapist Workload Percentages**

	<b>MIN</b>	<b>MAX</b>
group	0	67
individual	0	60
consult	28	40
direct	15	61
testing	22	25
meetings	15	34
other	3	47
travel	0	2

	<b>AVG</b>	<b>units/caseload</b>
caseload	13	1.19
weighted case	13	
units	15.5	

**Individual Breakdown of Weekly Workload by Therapist**

Psych Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
individual	0	0	0	1.5	1.5	3	0.60			
consult	2	0	0	0	0	2	0.40			<b>RTI</b>
direct	2	0	0	1.5	1.5	5	0.15			
testing	0	0	0	4	4	8	0.25			
meetings	0	5.5	5.5	0	0	11	0.34			
other	4	1	1	1	1	8	0.25			
travel	0.5	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.02			
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>1.00</b>			

Psych Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	1.5	1.5	0	1	0	4	0.20	16.00	16.00	21.00
individual	1.5	3	0.25	1.5	4	10.25	0.52			
consult	1	1.25	0.25	1	2	5.5	0.28			RTI
direct	4	5.75	0.5	3.5	6	19.75	0.61			
testing	2.5	0	2	2.5	0	7	0.22			
meetings	0	0.75	4	0	0	4.75	0.15			
other	0	0	0	0.5	0.5	1	0.03			
travel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>1.00</b>			

Psych Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	1.5	0	1	0.5	0.5	3.5	0.67	10.00	10.00	10.00
individual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
consult	0.5	0.5	0.25	0	0.5	1.75	0.33			RTI
direct	2	0.5	1.25	0.5	1	5.25	0.16			
testing	1	0	1	2	3	7	0.22			
meetings	0	3	1	1	0	5	0.15			
other	3.5	3	3.25	3	2.5	15.25	0.47			
travel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>1.00</b>			

### Explanatory Notes

1. Workloads are all student-directed activities that include both direct and indirect times and are used as opposed to caseloads given that workloads are a more valid metric to determine how the services providers are spending their time.
2. Direct services include therapy (individual or group) and consultation; “other” services are those such as preparation, paperwork, and non-travel activities.
3. A weighted statistic was used to account for the part time status of staff. For example, an S-LP that works 1 day is a .2 FTE and if her caseload were 10, then her weighted caseload would be 50.
4. The individual breakdown of each service providers’ time was calculated from weekly time studies and is reported as (actual) total weekly hours in each category and in percentages in the following pages.
5. A unit is defined as 30 minutes of treatment.



## APPENDIX C: PRINCIPLES OF CO-TEACHING

- Co-Teaching can be misunderstood to mean one general education teacher and one special education teacher in a classroom all day long. That may not always be the case. Co-teaching, like every other model on the continuum, can vary each day and for every class period. It does mean that based on Co-Planning, Co-Teaching, and Co-Reflection, teachers (general and special) make day to day and class to class decisions based on: (1) the needs of the special education student(s); (2) the IEP requirements; (3) the core content; and (4) the instructional requirements of these class periods.
- When new concepts are introduced, it is often important that the special education teacher conduct some pre-introduction for younger SWDs. This preview of material could be accomplished in many ways (resource room, alternative co-teaching model for a short period of time, etc.).
- During the actual direct instruction time, the co-teaching model (team teaching, station teaching, parallel teaching or alternative teaching) is most useful when it includes specially designed instruction. However, it should be noted that when students are practicing, the general education teacher in consultation with the special education teacher, should develop the classroom practices such that the special needs student(s) can participate without the special education teacher having to be present the entire time.
- The key to good co-teaching is the effective and efficient use of teacher time. That does not necessarily mean being in the general classroom every minute. Co-planning is critical to ensure that special education teacher is utilized in the most effective and efficient manner; being in the classroom and “helping, assisting, or tutoring” is not an efficient use of a special education teacher’s time if a paraprofessional or peer can assist the student.
- To the extent that continuity of team partnerships typically supports student achievement via mutual respect, collegiality, competence, and the acceptance of total ownership for all students, District leadership may consider maintaining the continuity of these teams when possible and to provide the teams with as much common planning as is possible and practicable.