## West Orange Public Schools



### SPECIAL EDUCATION AUDIT ACTION PLAN YEAR 1 PROGRESS

Presented by:
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May 7, 2018

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## **Instructional Program**

ENHANCE THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES TO MEET THE INDIVIDUALIZED NEEDS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS IN PRE-K TO 12.

OBJECTIVE 1: RESEARCH AND ESTABLISH EFFECTIVE AND APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENTS, INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS, AND RESOURCES TO MEET THE INDIVIDUALIZED NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH AUTISM (PRE-K TO 12).

Major Activities	Timeline	Year 1 Progress
1. In collaboration with the self-contained teachers of students with Autism, <b>develop a program philosophy</b> specific to the district self-contained Autism classes (Pre-K to 12) that will guide how academic, social, emotional, behavioral, transition, and community based needs are addressed.	Year 1 Completed	<ul> <li>All self-contained teachers of students with Autism met to develop a program philosophy.</li> <li>Program philosophy has been completed.</li> </ul>
2. <b>Research effective instructional programs</b> for students with Autism and evaluate the strengths of our current district program in order to inform curricular and programmatic changes.	Year 1, 2	<ul> <li>Consultant is scheduled to come on 05/15/2018 to provide a three-hour professional development to the teachers of students with Autism, specific to the development of instructional programs to meet student needs.</li> <li>Self-contained teachers of students with Autism are scheduled to visit other school districts with Autism programs, as well as possible out-of-district placements to evaluate instructional programs in May / early June.</li> <li>An evaluation instrument is being created, so teachers can consistently collect similar information during their school visits.</li> </ul>
3. Research effective assessment practices for students with Autism and evaluate how students are currently assessed in the self-contained Autism classes in order to establish and consistently implement a developmentally appropriate assessment model for each grade span.	Year 1, 2	<ul> <li>Self-contained teachers of students with Autism are scheduled to visit other school districts with Autism programs, as well as possible out-of-district placements to evaluate assessment measures in May / early June</li> <li>An evaluation instrument is being created, so teachers can consistently collect similar information during their school visits.</li> </ul>

### OBJECTIVE 2: DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE K-12 CURRICULUM TO MEET THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS IN THE INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES PROGRAM.

Major Activities	Timeline	Year 1 Progress
1. In collaboration with the self-contained teachers of students with intellectual disabilities, <b>develop a program philosophy</b> specific to the district Intellectual Disabilities program (K -12) that will guide how their specific developmental needs are addressed.	Year 1	Self-contained teachers of students with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) have met to develop a program philosophy, which will be completed by the end of May 2018.
2. Research effective assessment practices for students with intellectual disabilities and evaluate how students are currently assessed in the Intellectual Disabilities program in order to establish and consistently implement a developmentally appropriate assessment model for each grade span.	Year 1, 2	<ul> <li>Self-contained teachers of students with Intellectual Disabilities are scheduled to visit other school districts with ID programs, as well as possible out-of-district programs to evaluate a variety of assessment measures in May / early June.</li> <li>An evaluation instrument is being created, for teachers to use as a standard of measure when collecting information during their school visits.</li> </ul>

# OBJECTIVE 3: EVALUATE DISTRICT PROGRAMS, INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES, RESOURCES, AND THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRUCTURE TO ENSURE THE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS ARE BEING MET.

Major Activities	Timeline		Year 1 Progress
1. Evaluate Special Education program options and availability by location based on student program projections (as outlined by student IEPs) and fiscal efficiencies.	Annually Year 1 Completed	•	A projections process was established to compile Special Education program projections by grade-level and school to maximize staff assignments, while remaining in compliance with the legal class size limit.  Projections were shared with each of the building Principals to promote discussion regarding building needs via a shared document.  Projections aligned to program options by building are monitored on a monthly basis.
2. Ensure alignment between proposed programs (as outlined in IEP) and district instructional models to include required instructional minutes per content area by grade level.	Year 1 Completed	•	Program projections in student IEPs continue to be aligned with the district instructional minutes based on content area and grade-level.
3. Develop a framework for the delivery of Orton-Gillingham reading instruction to include: use of trained staff; identification of students; frequency and duration of services; scheduling and room utilization.	Year 1, 2	•	Orton-Gillingham teachers continue to meet with building administration and Central Office administration to discuss the most effective strategies for integrating Orton-Gillingham services.  A framework outlining criteria is being developed to identify students who would benefit from Orton-Gillingham reading instruction.
4. <b>Identify a Child Study Team Evaluation model</b> for implementation during the 2018- 2019 school year.	Year 1, 2 Completed	•	Danielson Framework for Teaching has been identified as the district evaluation model with specific rubrics for instructional support staff (Learning Disabilities Teacher-Consultant; School Psychologist; School Social Worker; Speech Therapist; Occupational Therapist; BCBA).  A rubric for each discipline has been identified and communicated to the Child Study Team members and Related Services providers.  Child Study Team members and Related Service providers received professional development specific to Danielson's Framework for Teaching.

### **Process & Communication**

CLARIFY AND REFINE DEPARTMENT PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE, AS WELL AS MAXIMIZE PROACTIVE, TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATION.

OBJECTIVE 1: CREATE A DETAILED SPECIAL SERVICES PROCEDURES MANUAL AND CORRESPONDING TRAINING AND ADVISORY DOCUMENTS TO OUTLINE DEPARTMENT PROCEDURES AND ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH ALL LEGAL REGULATIONS AND IMPROVE QUALITY ASSURANCE ACROSS THE DISTRICT.

Major Activities	Timeline	Year 1 Progress
1. Establish a <b>procedure for assigning paraprofessionals</b> within buildings to maximize staff efficiency and ensure compliance with student IEPs.	Annually Year 1 Completed	<ul> <li>A formal documentation process was established to ascertain paraprofessional needs by building. Paraprofessional needs are continually monitored by Special Services administration.</li> <li>Professional development, facilitated by the district attorney, was conducted with the case managers, which focused on procedures for documenting the support of a paraprofessional in the Individualized Education Program (IEP), as well as a plan to decrease the need for a paraprofessional, when appropriate. Follow-up communication was sent by the Director reinforcing the key components of the professional development session with the district attorney.</li> <li>The Director and Supervisor met with each building Principal to review the paraprofessional projections for their respective school.</li> <li>Each building Principal was given a roster, which reflected their paraprofessional needs for the 2018-2019 school year. The roster was used to maximize the assignment of paraprofessionals, while remaining in compliance with student IEPs, as well as legal class size requirements.</li> </ul>
2. Continue to ensure the implementation of modifications as outlined by student IEPs in Related Arts classes.	Annually Year 1 Completed	<ul> <li>All teachers who work with students with disabilities are required to read each student's Individualized Education Program and sign a document indicating that they have read the IEP.</li> <li>Lesson plans are monitored to ensure the modifications outlined by a student's IEP are being addressed.</li> <li>As part of the new teacher evaluation model, pre and post-observation conference forms will require teachers to outline modifications / accommodations for special education students based on their IEPs.</li> <li>Walkthroughs / Observations will continue to serve as a ongoing monitoring tool to ensure effective implementation of modifications / accommodations.</li> </ul>

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Major Activities	Timeline	Year 1 Progress
3. Establish an accountability system to monitor student progress.	Year 2 Completed	<ul> <li>Progress reports are completed four times per year (November; February; April; June) for Special Education students to monitor and report progress towards meeting the goals and objectives as outlined by student IEPs.</li> <li>Various professional development sessions, specific to inputting progress marks with relation to each student's goals and objectives, were provided to Special Education teachers, Related Service providers, and Case Managers.</li> <li>Case managers received training on uploading student progress reports from IEP Direct to Power School.</li> <li>Parents/guardians were informed of progress report timelines and directions to access progress reports via a hard copy letter.</li> <li>Pre-K students are continually assessed through daily play planning to measure the development of self-regulation, executive functioning, and core academic skills.</li> <li>Special Education students (K-5) are administered the Fountas and Pinnell Assessment three times per year to obtain each student's independent and instructional reading levels.</li> <li>Special Education students (K-10) are administered the MAP Growth Assessment in English Language Arts and Mathematics three times per year to measure growth towards standards.</li> </ul>
4. <b>Develop a Special Services Procedures Manual</b> , which encompasses pre-referral, referral, evaluation, eligibility, determination, placement, exiting procedures for students with disabilities, and corresponding district forms to be used as a reference tool to ensure consistency across the district.	Year 1, 2	<ul> <li>A Special Services Procedures Manual Committee was established and several meetings have been conducted.</li> <li>The committee reviewed different sample manuals.</li> <li>To date, the committee has approximately ten chapters drafted, in addition to chapters for Speech and Behavior. The content is being reviewed for revisions and updates.</li> </ul>

## OBJECTIVE 2: ESTABLISH AND IMPLEMENT COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES TO FACILITATE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS.

Major Activities	Timeline	Year 1 Progress
1. Create a monthly meeting schedule for the West Orange Special Education Parent Advisory Council (WOSEPAC) to include regular communication with the chairperson around current issues.	Annually Year 1 Completed	<ul> <li>A monthly meeting schedule for the West Orange Special Education Parent Advisory Council (WOSEPAC) was developed by the co-chair of the WOSEPAC and the Director of Special Services in September 2017.</li> <li>A monthly meeting schedule will be developed prior to start of each school year.</li> </ul>
2. Establish multiple methods of communicating WOSEPAC events to parents/guardians with a focus on parents/guardians of students placed in out-of-district schools.	Annually Year 1 Completed	<ul> <li>The monthly WOSEPAC meetings are communicated (both in English and Spanish) in the following manner:</li> <li>Educational Events: Flyer is posted on social media; Hard copy flyer is mailed to parents/guardians of students placed in out-of-district schools; Hard copy flyer is sent home via student backpacks; Posted on the district webpage; Flyer is sent to parents/guardians via a School Messenger e-mail the day prior to the event</li> <li>General Meetings: Flyer is posted on social media; Hard copy flyer is mailed to parents/guardians of students placed in out-of-district schools; Posted on the district webpage; Flyer is sent to parents/guardians via a School Messenger e-mail the day prior to the event</li> </ul>

## OBJECTIVE 2: ESTABLISH AND IMPLEMENT COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES TO FACILITATE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS.

Major Activities	Timeline	Year 1 Progress
3. Provide timely communication to parents/staff regarding program or policy changes within special education.	Annually Year 1 Completed	<ul> <li>Parents/guardians were informed of progress report timelines and directions to access progress reports via a hard copy letter, as well as a School Messenger e-mail with the letter attached.</li> <li>Hard copy letter is sent to parents/guardians to inform them when a teacher, Case Manager, or Related Service provider will be out for an extended period of time.</li> <li>Any major program changes will be communicated in advance.</li> </ul>
4. Continue to work in collaboration with the Transportation Department to improve communication procedures for parents/guardians of Special Education students, as well as bus issues that manifest throughout the school year.	Annually Year 1	<ul> <li>Communication between the West Orange Public Schools and Sussex and Essex Co-Op occurs bi-monthly to discuss the concerns regarding transportation for out-of-district students.</li> <li>The Director of Special Services and the Director of Transportation developed a letter to inform parents/guardians when a bus route is quoted for an out-of-district student, so the parent/guardian is aware in advance that there is a possibility that the transportation company may change within a 90 day timeframe.</li> <li>A new procedure has been established, in which the Transportation Department, will inform parents of any changes to a bus company for out-of-district students.</li> </ul>

## Staffing, Roles & Responsibilities

MAXIMIZE, UNDERSTAND AND COMMUNICATE THE PROPER USE OF STAFF VIA PROJECTIONS, PLACEMENT, AND ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

# OBJECTIVE 1: CLARIFY AND MONITOR STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES VIA ARTICULATION DOCUMENTS, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND STAFF OBSERVATION.

Major Activities	Timeline	Year 1 Progress
1. Provide educational opportunities to paraprofessionals with a focus on understanding the requirements of an Individualized Education Program (IEP).	Year 1 Completed	<ul> <li>District paraprofessionals were provided with professional development, specific to the components of an Individualized Education Program.</li> <li>Special Services department has started the process of creating accounts for each paraprofessional to have read-only access to student IEPs via IEP Direct.</li> <li>Continued oversight to paraprofessionals to ensure that they are effectively implementing instructional strategies to meet the needs of students in accordance with their IEPs.</li> </ul>
2. Communicate clear, specific expectations and provide targeted professional development to paraprofessionals on appropriate techniques and strategies that facilitate student learning.	Annually Year 1 Completed	to include the following:
3. Provide focused professional development to building administrators specific to the roles and responsibilities of Child Study Team members and Related Services providers.	Year 1, 2	<ul> <li>District attorney will provide professional development to building administrators in May / June 2018.</li> <li>Professional learning will continue to take place during the 2018-2019 school year.</li> </ul>

# OBJECTIVE 2: EVALUATE THE STAFF STRUCTURE WITHIN THE SPECIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT TO IDENTIFY EFFICIENCIES AND MAXIMIZE THE ASSIGNMENT OF STAFF MEMBERS TO SUPPORT STUDENT LEARNING.

Major Activities	Timeline	Year 1 Progress
1. Assign informal mentors to new Child Study Team members and Related Service providers to support their day-to-day responsibilities.	Annually Year 1 Completed	<ul> <li>At the start of the 2017-2018 school year, a mentor was assigned to each new Child Study Team member and Related Services provider.</li> <li>This practice will continue with all new hires.</li> </ul>
2. Evaluate the staff structure specific to the ratio of Child Study Team members and Related Service providers to maximize staff assignments by building.	Annually Year 1	<ul> <li>Caseload and building assignments for Child Study Team members and Related Service providers will be evaluated and finalized in June / July 2018.</li> </ul>
3. Assess the support structure including the ratio of paraprofessionals to maximize staffing efficiencies.	Annually Year 1 Completed	<ul> <li>Meetings with individual Child Study Team members were held by Special Services administration to review paraprofessional projections by school.</li> <li>A roster for each school was developed to reflect paraprofessional needs, and maximize paraprofessional assignments, while remaining in compliance with student IEPs, as well as legal class size requirements.</li> <li>Meetings with individual principals were held to review paraprofessional needs, assignments, and supports.</li> <li>Subsequent reductions were included as part of the preliminary budget.</li> </ul>
4. <b>Refine the process for utilizing district BCBAs</b> to maximize their role in supporting students with behavioral needs.	Year 1, 2 Completed	<ul> <li>The Director worked with the district BCBAs to establish protocol for district staff to follow prior to referring a student for a Functional Behavioral Assessment or consultation with the BCBA.</li> <li>New protocols were shared with Child Study Team members and School Counselors in order to streamline the referral process.</li> </ul>

## IEP Development & Compliance

ENHANCE KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF COMPONENTS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION LEGAL MANDATES AND INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS (IEP) TO MAKE THOUGHTFUL DECISIONS AND DEVELOP LEGALLY COMPLIANT IEPS.

OBJECTIVE 1 - DEVELOP A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRUCTURE TO SOLIDIFY UNDERSTANDING OF SPECIAL EDUCATION LAW; HOW TO WRITE COMPREHENSIVE PRESENT LEVELS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND FUNCTIONAL PERFORMANCE (PLAAFP) STATEMENTS; HOW TO DEVELOP LEGALLY COMPLIANT INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS (IEPS).

Major Activities	Timeline	Year 1 Progress
1. Provide comprehensive training to Child Study Team members with a focus on determining eligibility for Special Education and Related Services under the criteria of Specific Learning Disability, Communication Impaired, and Multiply Disabled.	Year 1 Completed	<ul> <li>Special Education Audit, specifically the Record Review section, was reviewed with the Child Study Team and Related Services providers.</li> <li>Special Education Audit Action Plan was presented to Child Study Team members and Related Service providers.</li> <li>Full-day professional development, facilitated by the district attorney, was conducted with case managers with a focus on:         <ul> <li>Comprehensive review of how to develop a legally compliant IEP</li> <li>Determining eligibility under the criteria of Specific Learning Disability, Communication Impaired, and Multiply Disabled</li> </ul> </li> <li>Key components of the professional development session with the district attorney were followed-up and reviewed with case managers.</li> <li>Special Services administration conduct random IEP reviews, which include a review of the eligibility criteria.</li> </ul>
2. Provide professional development to Child Study Team members that includes the procedures for documenting the support of a paraprofessional in the Individualized Education Program (IEP), as well as a plan to decrease the need for a paraprofessional.	Year 1 Completed	<ul> <li>Professional development, facilitated by the district attorney, was conducted with case managers, with a focus on procedures for documenting the support of a paraprofessional in the Individualized Education Program (IEP), as well as a plan to decrease the need for a paraprofessional, when appropriate.</li> <li>Key components of the professional development session with the district attorney were followed-up and reviewed with case managers.</li> </ul>

OBJECTIVE 1 - DEVELOP A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRUCTURE TO SOLIDIFY UNDERSTANDING OF SPECIAL EDUCATION LAW; HOW TO WRITE COMPREHENSIVE PRESENT LEVELS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND FUNCTIONAL PERFORMANCE (PLAAFP) STATEMENTS; HOW TO DEVELOP LEGALLY COMPLIANT INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS (IEPS).

Major Activities	Timeline	Year 1 Progress
3. Provide targeted professional development for teachers, specific writing comprehensive Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) writing.	Year 1, 2	<ul> <li>Special Services administration conduct random IEP reviews, continuing to provide feedback to teachers, specific to the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) based on the review.</li> <li>A plan of the training schedule for the 2018-2019 school year is being developed.</li> </ul>
4. Provide focused professional development for <b>building Principals</b> around Special Education Law.	Year 1	<ul> <li>District attorney will provide professional development to building administrators in May / June 2018.</li> <li>Professional learning will continue to take place during the 2018-2019 school year.</li> </ul>
5. Continue to reinforce legal updates and critical elements of the IEP writing process with Child Study Team members and Speech Therapists.	Annually Year 1	<ul> <li>Special Services administration conduct random IEP reviews, continuing to provide feedback via e-mail to case managers, specific to the overall IEP based on the review.</li> <li>Child Study Team members and Related Service providers engage in a Peer Review of IEPs, in which areas of strength, as well as areas in need of improvement are identified through group discussion.</li> <li>Full-day professional development, facilitated by the district attorney, was conducted with case managers with a focus on:         <ul> <li>Comprehensive review of how to develop a legally compliant IEP</li> <li>Key components of the professional development session with the district attorney were followed-up and reviewed with case managers.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## **Intervention & Referral**

EVALUATE THE CURRENT INTERVENTION & REFERRAL SERVICES (I & RS) PROCESS FOR CONSISTENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS.

OBJECTIVE 1: EVALUATE THE INTERVENTION & REFERRAL SERVICES PROCESS TO BE UTILIZED ACROSS DISTRICT SCHOOLS WITH A FOCUS ON SCIENTIFICALLY-BASED INTERVENTIONS THAT CAN BE IMPLEMENTED AND MONITORED TO ASSESS STUDENT PROGRESS IN ORDER TO DETERMINE THE CONTINUED NEED FOR INTERVENTION OR REFERRAL TO THE CHILD STUDY TEAM.

Major Activities	Timeline	Year 1 Progress
1. Create a committee to evaluate the current Intervention and Referral Services (I & RS) process in each building to examine the determination of interventions and their impact on student learning.	Year 1	Committee has been established to examine the existing I&RS process and ensure the implementation of measurable interventions prior to Child Study Team referrals.
2. Monitor district classification rate as compared to other similar districts.	Annually Year 1	<ul> <li>Initiated communication with surrounding districts to obtain information on district classification rate, both excluding and including non-public school students.</li> <li>Continue to monitor the district classification rate, with a focus on the criteria to meet eligibility within the different eligibility categories.</li> <li>In addition to determining eligibility, considerations must be made to ensure that there is an adverse educational impact that warrants classification.</li> <li>Examine pre-referrals of students with interrupted formal education; language and/or communication barriers that may mask learning ability; and no or limited documented, measurable interventions attempted prior to referral.</li> </ul>