



Bristol Public Schools Special Education Review

*Respectfully submitted by the
CREC Special Education
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*“In order to transform schools successfully,
educators need to navigate the difficult space
between letting go of old patterns and
grabbing on to new ones”*

— Deal —

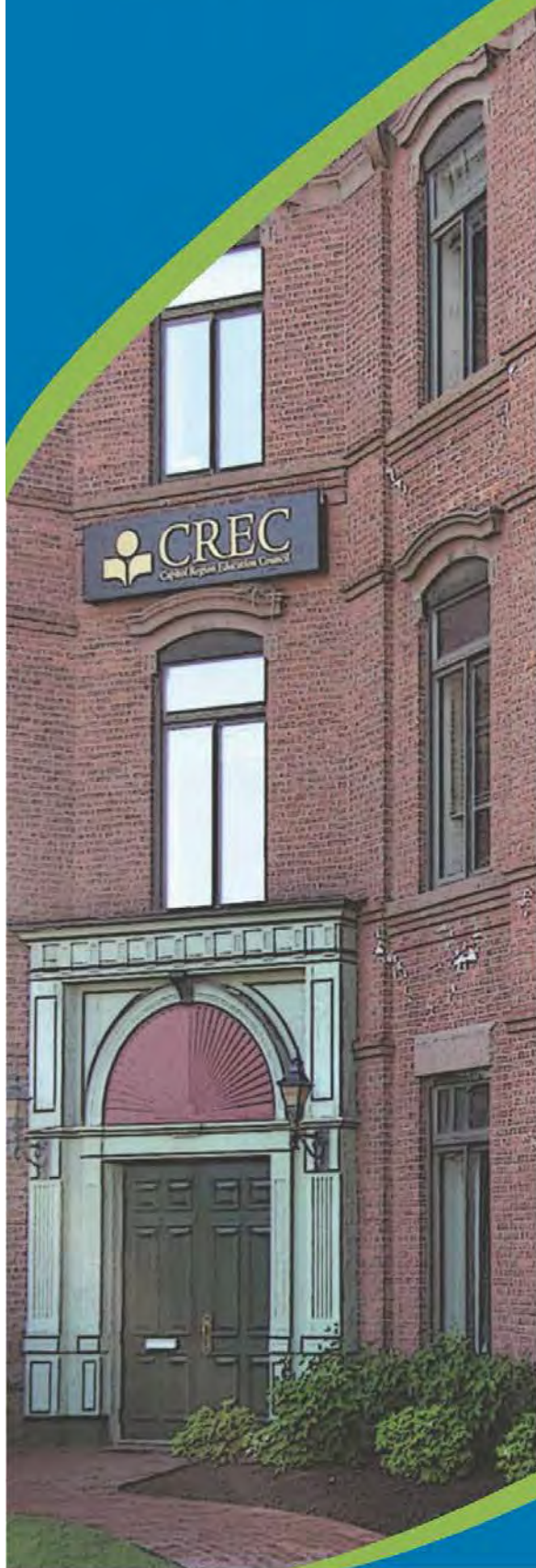


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The objective for the Special Education Review was to assist the district in providing summary information and recommendations on processes, resource allocation, communication and educational benefit provided to students with disabilities. The four month mixed method study gathered and analyzed qualitative and quantitative data from state and local documents, IEP and in-depth student reviews, classroom observations, and staff and parent interviews.

The final report, entitled Bristol Special Education Review, is organized into four independent, but mutually supportive analyses, each containing an evaluation question posed by the Bristol Board of Education with results and findings. This format allows for each inquiry to be discussed independently, or when taken together, readers can look at the district special education as a whole. The final section of the report provides commendations and recommendations presented in goal format with activities to support accomplishment of each goal.

Findings

Overall, evidence supports the finding that the Bristol special education system is stressed by a variety of internal and external factors which impact the ability to provide quality programs and services. Currently, the special education system is functioning beyond its intended capacity and the district will need to embrace changes in both special and general education processes, practices, and resource allocation to meet current and future student needs. Factors that have contributed to system stress include: 1) inadequate funding to support general education interventions prior to special education referral, resulting in student over identification, insufficient staffing, and delayed assistance 2) a changing student demographic with increased needs around mental health and behavior and 3) limited special education service options in least restrictive environments. These factors, over a period of time can impact staff morale, quality of services, communication, and student performance. Working in collaboration with the town and community should assist the district to address these issues.

The first analysis reviewed special education **allocation of resources**. Bristol's per pupil expenditures are and have been one of the lowest in the state at \$13,898. When general education resources are limited, it impacts the district's ability to provide academic and behavioral services through the Scientific Research Based Intervention System (SRBI). SRBI, a federal legal mandate, when used consistently as part of the general education system, reduces the number of referrals to special education and the amount of services students require later are also reduced. Limited general education interventions are at least partially responsible for the over identification of Bristol's special education population education, which in turn has caused problems in special education staff ratio and student performance. General education and special education are so closely intertwined, when there is a problem with one system, it can significantly impact the other and currently special education appears to be used to "make up" for lack of resources in general education. This is both an inefficient use of resources and an ineffective way to meet the needs of struggling students.

1. Over the past 5 years, Bristol's **identification rate** has increased and been higher than the state and district averages. This may be in part due to the lack of general education services to meet students' needs.
2. The increase in number of special education students impacts the **staff ratio** of special education students to special education staff. Bristol's ratio of special education students to special education teachers, paraprofessionals and social workers, psychologists and counselors is higher than comparative districts and the state average. Stretching of staff and other resources to meet the needs of the growing special education population can impact the quality of services.
3. Timely general education interventions have proven to be effective in improving special and general education **student performance**. Without these, the district has to try to "make up" for time lost. In the long run, this may require more services and staffing than the district has available.

The percent of the budget spent on special education transportation and tuition is higher than district and state averages. This is an interesting statistic, since the percent of students placed out of district in Bristol is lower than state and district averages. Medicaid reimbursements and excess cost funding has gone to the town in the past. Bristol leaders report that it will be coming directly to the district in the future. The district should be able increase their Medicaid reimbursement by submitting for all possible reimbursements. These additional funds should be used to support some of the recommendations in this report.

The second analysis considers **impact of the learning environment on the educational benefit** of students with disabilities. A review of IEPs, student achievement outcomes, and classroom observations revealed that while effective instruction was observed in some settings, and some student outcomes were positive, the district is challenged to provide consistent educational benefit to the students with disabilities. Reasons for this include:

- Insufficient staffing and inconsistent processes for general education SRBI interventions.
- Limited special education service options in the home school least restrictive environment, resulting in district wide programs filling up by October.
- Changes to the community and student demographic and a noted increase in the transitional student population who come to Bristol with IEPs.
- IEP development
- Limited professional learning options and time for collaboration.

The third analysis reviews the **effectiveness and efficiency of processes**. Findings indicate that special education compliance processes are effective and overall comply with legal mandates. The general education SRBI process appears to be underfunded and inconsistently applied within the district schools. Processes for entry and exit into programs, location of programs, and staffing less restrictive options are implemented differently in the district's schools. Staff and administration do not have a shared understanding of the district wide programs.

The final analysis examines staff and parent interviews to document the effectiveness of **communication**. Special education staff indicated that they were spread too thin, impacting both staff morale and their ability to communicate with each other and parents. There are some parents who indicated that the district has not been transparent nor communicated effectively with them. The issues tend to focus around disagreement of services and some mixed messages from building and the central office administrators. Parent concerns appear to be handled in a variety of ways, depending upon which administrator is involved. Building administrators do not consistently attend PPT meetings and are not involved in all special education staff supervision. General and special education staff appear to work well together, but they report that there is insufficient time to plan and collaborate.

Commendations

- Bristol staff are dedicated to the students in their care.
- The Bristol parents have formed a parent group that supports parents in a variety of ways.
- The Bristol special education office has worked to keep students in district and they met state target for decreasing number of students in separate schools.
- The district met state compliance targets for timelines, general supervision, timely reporting, IEP transitions for age 3 and transition goals.
- The district met state target on outcome indicators for dropout rate, chronic absenteeism and graduation rate.
- Scores on Smarter Balanced Assessments improved from 2014 to 2015 and exceeded district and state averages.
- The district has begun to explore more appropriate locations to house their 18-21 year old program.
- Bristol utilizes outside agencies to support their district special education programs.
- Special Education administrators are utilizing some monitoring processes for IEPs, paraprofessional support and referrals to special education or districtwide programs.

Recommendations

This report provides specific recommendations that can be used to support a five year strategic plan focusing on the goals described below and additional goals, as issues emerge. Because the recommendations reflect a significant systemic change, we recommend that the district form a stakeholder group to include representatives from parents of students with disabilities, community businesses, agencies, general education teachers and administrators, and central office staff that can help to support the goals of the plan. Goals for this plan should be closely aligned with the District Strategic Plan. Strengthening the SRBI system should take priority and funds to support this goal should be allocated in the 2017-18 school year. Suggested activities for each goal can be found in the Commendation/Recommendations section of this report.

Goal 1: Strengthen the general education SRBI system

Goal 2: Strengthen school based continuum of special education services

Goal 3: Improve educational benefit to special education students through consistent use of effective instructional, behavioral and inclusive practices

Goal 4: Improve communication and collaboration among stakeholders

Goal 5: Increase funding and maximize resources

INTRODUCTION

Background Information

The Bristol Board of Education requested a comprehensive special education study to look at all areas of the special education program as defined by four evaluation questions. A program review is a broad investigation that considers a variety of data sources. Its purpose is to provide feedback that can be used to direct program change, validate program progress, or, as in many cases, both. This review was conducted by Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) consultants from August to November, 2016.

Evaluation Questions

The Bristol Board of Education posed the following four questions for this review:

1. Are resources utilized effectively and efficiently to meet the needs of the special education population?
2. To what extent are special education students receiving educational benefit from the programs and services provided by the Bristol Public Schools?
3. Are the processes used by special education and related services effective and efficient?
4. To what extent is the communication with stakeholders effective in meeting special education student needs?

Methodology

A variety of data were collected and analyzed in order to answer the evaluation questions (Table 1).

Documents and Reports

1. Aggregate and disaggregate trend data at the state, DRG, and local level regarding special education
2. District budget, staffing, in-district and out-of-district placement information
3. Reports from the district and state on state indicators from the State Performance Plan (SPP)
4. Student achievement data
5. Staff caseloads and staff and student schedules
6. Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

Student IEP Review

A representative sample of 20 special education student IEPs were selected and reviewed utilizing established protocol designed to assess educational benefit. See Appendix A for protocol and demographics.

In-depth Student Review

Six special education students representing various disability categories and ages were selected for in-depth reviews. See Appendix C for protocol. These students were observed in classrooms, their work IEP reviewed, and their parent(s) and staff interviewed.

Observation of Classrooms

A total of 64 observations were conducted in all district schools to assess the learning environment for inclusion and instructional practices, school/classroom climate, and implementation of the IEP. Observations of a variety of classroom settings included co-taught classes, general and special education classes, and specialized programs.

Individual and Group Focus Interviews

Input from the following 74 stakeholders was obtained through individual and focus group interviews conducted September through November. Interview participants include:

- 38 parents of students receiving special education were interviewed in three different sessions to accommodate parent schedules.
- 36 building and central office staff, including, administrators, special education and general education teachers, and related services staff.

Table 1 - Matrix of Key Questions with a Cross-Walk of Data Sources

	IEP/In-Depth Student Review	Classroom Observations	District and State Data	Focus Interviews
1. Are resources utilized effectively and efficiently to meet the needs of the special education population?	X	X	X	X
2. To what extent are special education students receiving educational benefit from the programs and services provided?	X	X	X	X
3. Are the processes used by special education and related services effective and efficient?	X	X	X	X
4. To what extent is the communication with stakeholders effective in meeting the needs of students requiring special education?	X		X	X
	20 IEP Reviews- 6 In-Depth Reviews	64 Classroom Observations		38 Parents and 36 Staff were Interviewed

KEY FINDINGS

RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Allocation of special education resources was assessed by reviewing the special education budget and the percent allocated from the district budget for special education, staff ratios and caseloads, prevalence rate, out-of-district expenditures, classroom observations, in-depth reviews, IEP reviews, parent survey responses, and focus interviews.

Data from the following sources were collected and analyzed.

Question 1 Resource Utilization	Ed Benefit/ In-depth Student Review	Classroom Observations	District and State Data	Focus Interviews
Are resources utilized effectively and efficiently to meet the needs of the special education population?	X	X	X	X

Finding 1: Bristol Per Pupil Expenditure

A review of Bristol's 2014-15 and 2015-16 net current expenditures per pupil (NCEP) compared to the 13 districts in Bristol's DRG revealed that Bristol had the lowest per pupil expenditure in both years. In 2015-16 Bristol's per pupil expenditures were \$2,250 less than the DRG average (Table 2). There were only six other districts in the state that had a per pupil expenditure as low as Bristol's in 2015 and most of those districts were small rural districts with a less challenging student population. Low per pupil expenditures has an impact on special education programs and services by driving the identification rate up, delaying delivery of general education interventions, and utilizing special education resources on students who might not have been identified if general education interventions were available. Staff indicate that the district's general education resources have been reduced and it is very difficult to get staffing or materials to support the early intervention efforts for general education students that are struggling. Trend analysis data from staff and parent interviews revealed that students are referred to special education many times because there is no other good alternative for them to get the help that they need. Districts are required by law to provide Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) as part of their general education program, prior to identification of students as requiring special education, the increasing special education population in Bristol may be a result of the underfunding of general education and lack of SRBI interventions.

Table 2 - 2015-16 Net Current Expenditures Per Pupil

District G	Per Pupil Expenditures
Bristol	\$13,898
Bloomfield	\$21,160
East Haven	\$15,271
Groton	\$15,605
Hamden	\$18,348
Killingly	\$16,732
Manchester	\$16,251
Middletown	\$16,406
Naugatuck	\$15,065
Plainfield	\$14,144
Putnam	\$16,740
Stratford	\$14,631
Torrington	\$16,343
Vernon	\$15,472
DRG Average	\$16,148

Source: Connecticut State Department of Education Bureau of Grants Management, Edsight

Finding 2: Special Education Budget Revenue

Medicaid Billing

Districts can claim reimbursement for eligible Medicaid services such as related services. Bristol utilizes a software program to gather the data needed for reimbursement. In 2014 Bristol’s reimbursement from 2014 to 2015 went from \$307,818 to \$418,208. Currently in 2016 the district has received \$250,751 in reimbursement. The reimbursement amounts seem low given the Bristol student population. It is unclear why the amount is lower than would be expected, but it could be a combination of a number of factors:

1. staff indicated that they do not have time to enter all data into the software.
2. the district is not claiming for all the new eligible services.
3. parent permission to bill for Medicaid reimbursement has not been received (special education teachers indicate that they are tasked with the job of attempting to get permission forms signed, but they do not have sufficient time to do so).
4. monitoring of the program is not sufficient. We believe that the amount could be much more than what the district currently receives. It is possible that the district could have another \$500,000 annually to put toward staff and instructional resources.

Finding 3: Special Education Budget Expenditures

One measure of examining how a district expends its budget is to look at the proportion of its spending that is devoted to special education. Table 3 represents the percent of the total district budget that is spent on special education services for Bristol in comparison with the selected districts and the state. While Bristol’s percent has been slightly above the state percent each year, it is about the same as the average of the four comparison districts. Special education expenditures as a percentage of total expenditures in Bristol increased by 1.3% over the five years of data, the state average increased by 1.2% and the district average decreased by .5%. In analyzing these data, it is important to consider that the Bristol per pupil cost is much lower than the comparison districts, so most probably, the actual amount spent on special education could also be much less than the comparison districts.

Table 3 - Special Education Percent of Budget

	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	% of Change
Bristol	22.2%	22.7%	23.1%	23.2%	23.5%	1.3
Manchester	22.7%	24.1%	23.7%	23.1%	21.1%	-1.6
Meriden	25.7%	25.6%	24.1%	23.4%	23.4%	-2.3
Middletown	22.4%	21.8%	22.4%	23.6%	23.6%	1.2
Plainfield	24.8%	24.6%	22.1%	23.6%	23.9%	0.9
District Average	23.6%	23.8%	23.1%	23.4%	23.1%	-0.5
State	21.8%	21.9%	22.1%	22.5%	23.0%	1.2

Source: Edsight <http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>

A review of special education expenditures in Bristol from 2012-2015 indicates that there are two areas of increase: purchased services and special education transportation. We attempted to conduct a transportation audit, but did not receive data in time for the report, so the reason for a greater proportion of the budget spent on special education transportation could not be determined. This expenditure is puzzling, given that the tuition has not increased. There is a decrease in the proportion of the budget spent on Bristol certified and noncertified staff since 2012 (Table 4).

Table 4 - 2014-15 and 2015-16 Bristol Expenditure Special Education Comparison

Budget Category	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Certified personnel	33.7%	32.7%	31.4%	30.9%
Non-certified personnel	10.9%	10.0%	9.8%	10.8%
Purchased services	2.5%	3.2%	3.6%	4.5%
Tuition to other schools	25.2%	26.9%	26.4%	25.2%
Special Education Transportation	15.0%	14.0%	15.0%	16.8%
Other expenditures	12.7%	13.2%	13.8%	11.8%
Total district special education expenditures*	22.7%	23.1%	23.2%	23.5%

Source: Edsight <http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>

A comparison of the breakdown of 2014-15 expenditures in Tables 5, 6 and 7 indicate that Bristol expended a smaller proportion for certified personnel than the state proportion and about the same proportion as the district average. Bristol's proportion spent on noncertified personnel was lower than the district and state averages. Bristol's proportion of the budget spent on certified staff was less than the state average and similar to the district average over the three year period. The proportion of the budget spent on noncertified personnel has been consistently lower than the state and district averages over the three year period.

Purchased services were higher than the district average and lower than the state average in each of the three years. In spite of the relatively low percentage of students with disabilities placed in out of district settings, the percentage of special education expenditures used for tuition and transportation has been consistently higher in each year than the state and district average level. This may indicate that students placed out of district are in relatively expensive placements and the transportation for these students is also more expensive.

Table 5 - Special Education Expenditures (% of special education expenditures) 2014-15

	Bristol	Manchester	Meriden	Middletown	District Avg.	State
Certified personnel	31.4%	33.6%	35.5%	27.2%	31.9%	34.3%
Non-certified personnel	9.8%	16.0%	14.0%	13.6%	13.3%	14.4%
Purchased services	3.6%	1.3%	0.8%	4.6%	2.6%	5.2%
Tuition to other schools	26.4%	15.2%	26.8%	29.1%	24.3%	22.9%
Special Education Transportation	15.0%	7.3%	9.9%	13.2%	11.35%	8.5%
Other expenditures	13.8%	26.6%	13.1%	12.2%	16.4%	14.7%
Total district special education expenditures	23.2%	23.1%	23.4%	23.6%	23.3%	22.5%

Source: Edsight <http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>

Table 6 - Special Education Expenditures (% of special education expenditures) 2013-14

	Bristol	Manchester	Meriden	Middletown	District Avg.	State
Certified personnel	32.7%	32.6%	35.4%	29.7%	32.6%	35.1%
Non-certified personnel	10.0%	14.8%	13.6%	14.7%	13.3%	14.2%
Purchased services	3.2%	1.5%	1.6%	4.9%	2.8%	5.2%
Tuition to other schools	26.9%	16.8%	13.9%	28.3%	21.5%	22.0%
Special Education Transportation	14.0%	7.5%	10.0%	12.1%	10.9%	8.6%
Other expenditures	13.2%	26.8%	13.9%	10.3%	16.0%	14.9%
Total district special education expenditures	23.1%	23.7%	24.1%	22.4%	23.3%	22.0%

Source: Edsight <http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>

Table 7 - Special Education Expenditures (% of special education expenditures) 2012-13

	Bristol	Manchester	Meriden	Middletown	District Avg.	State
Certified personnel	33.7%	32.9%	34.6%	30.8%	33.0%	35.6%
Non-certified personnel	10.9%	15.5%	13.4%	14.2%	13.5%	14.5%
Purchased services	2.5%	1.7%	1.8%	5.1%	2.8%	5.0%
Tuition to other schools	25.2%	17.3%	28.1%	28.7%	24.8%	21.4%
Special Education Transportation	15.0%	8.0%	9.5%	10.4%	10.7%	8.5%
Other expenditures	12.7%	24.6%	12.6%	10.8%	15.2%	14.9%
Total district special education expenditures	22.7%	24.1%	25.6%	21.8%	23.55%	21.9%

Source: Edsight <http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>

Finding 4: Special Education Staff

In a majority of the instances illustrated in Table 8, Bristol employed fewer full time equivalent (FTE) staff per 1000 students than the comparison district averages in 2014. Bristol’s ratio of school psychologists, social workers, and counselors is significantly lower than the district average. Staff indicate that the district decided to hire school psychologists instead of social workers and many felt this has caused the district to be less proactive in dealing with parents, home situations, and challenging student behaviors. A review of the social workers, psychologists and counselors from 2012 indicate that the ratio has consistently been less than state and district averages and the FTE has remained the same, although the number in each position may have changed. A second personnel category that has a significantly lower ratio than the district average is paraprofessionals. The district has developed a process using a rubric to reduce excessive use of paraprofessionals. Given that the district educates a relatively high proportion of its SWD within the district, it might be expected that it would employ more FTEs of staff than the other districts. However, the proportion of funds expended for tuition and transportation may prohibit employing additional staff. As student mental health needs continue to grow, the current staffing may not allow for proactive practices to maintain student success within the district’s schools.

Speech and Language Pathologists indicate that they are challenged to meet compliance with IEP hours due to increasing responsibilities, caseload size and staff reductions. Parents indicated concern that speech and language services are not adequate because of staff shortages. The preschool program has insufficient Speech and Language, PT and OT staff.

**Table 8 - 2014-15 Comparative Staffing
Full Time Equivalencies (FTE)**

Staff	Bristol	Manchester	Meriden	Middletown	District Avg.
# of SWD	1360	891	1483	635	
Special education teachers	84.2	69.0	88.4	49.4	
Per 1000 SWD	61.9	77.4	59.6	77.8	69.2
School psychologists, social workers, counselors	35.2	49.1	41.6	33.0	
Per 1000 SWD	25.9	55.1	28.1	52.0	40.3
Special education paraprofessionals	115.0	110.6	137.0	107.6	
Per 1000 SWD	84.6	124.1	92.4	169.4	117.6

Source: Edsight <http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>

Utilization of Staff

There was limited evidence of sufficient staff to provide SRBI Tiers 2 and 3 academic and behavioral interventions. Since SRBI is a general education responsibility, it should be staffed by general education interventionists. We saw limited evidence of early childhood SRBI interventions. Special education staff and building administrators indicate that there are not sufficient resources to implement SRBI with fidelity. There is a districtwide SRBI committee and currently it is chaired by a building administrator. No one has been assigned districtwide responsibility for implementation of the SRBI system. This results in a message to staff that SRBI is not considered important if there isn’t central office leadership in developing a plan and monitoring it.

The district uses a reactive system to deal with students that have mental health needs and the lack of social workers can causes difficulties in servicing these students.

The district contracts Occupational and Physical Therapy services and BCBA’s. This could account for the higher purchased services costs. Parents and staff discussed lack of sufficient services in all these areas. Staff indicate that OT/PT is a pull out model and issues within the classroom setting require more consideration/support.

Staff report that there is insufficient time to meet and plan with other staff and parents. The influx of students with mental health issues and increased paperwork requirements pull them from instruction. This is especially problematic with co-teachers.

Special education staff are allocated to various levels of more restrictive classrooms, limiting opportunities for less restrictive environments such as resource room and co-taught classes. Our observations and feedback from staff indicate that because of the emphasis on staffing the in-district more restrictive programs, it impacts the ability for the district to sufficiently staff the less restrictive options (in general education classrooms or resource rooms).

Finding 5: Out of District Placements and Least Restrictive Options

Bristol has decreased the proportion of its students with disabilities being educated in out-of-district (OOD), while the district and state averages have increased over a five year period. Out of district placements by Bristol have been consistently below the state-wide and district rate for students placed out of district from 2011 to 2015 (Table 9).

Table 9 - Special Education Students Placed OOD (%)

	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Bristol	8.2%	7.4%	7.1%	7.7%	7.3%
Manchester	5.1%	5.1%	5.6%	12.4%	10.5%
Meriden	11.6%	10.2%	8.4%	7.3%	10.3%
Middletown	10.3%	11.1%	10.4%	13.8%	12.1%
District Average	8.8%	8.5%	7.9%	10.3%	10.1%
State Average	7.3%	7.2%	7.4%	8.4%	8.4%

Source: Bureau of Data Collection, Research & Evaluation

Note: the category percentages in the two above tables may not sum to 100 as services plan students (students with disabilities placed by their parents in private/parochial schools) are included in the denominator, but excluded from the numerator.

A basic requirement of federal and state special education rules states that students with disabilities (SWD) must be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE). One way to examine LRE is to look at the amount of time that Students with Disabilities spend being educated with their non-disabled peers. Table 10 represents the most recent information available for the proportion of identified students educated in the four federally-recognized placement categories. (*note: >79-100% TWNDP means the SWD is being educated with his/her non-disabled peers more than 79% of the time and is generally considered 'regular class placement'. 40-79% TWNDP means the SWD is being educated with his/her non-disabled peers between 40% and 79% of the time and is generally considered 'resource room placement'. 0-40% TWNDP means the SWD is being educated with his/her non-disabled peers between less than 40% of the time and is generally considered 'substantially separate placement'. Finally, OOD means that the SWD is being educated in a separate placement outside of the district.*)

The district did not meet the state target of 68% of SWD in regular class placements (more than 79% of the time with non-disabled peers) for 2015-16 and compared to the state and district average in Table 10, Bristol had fewer students placed 79% to 100% of the time with nondisabled peers. Bristol had a higher proportion of its SWD placed in substantially separate settings (within the district) than the district and state averages in 2014-15. Bristol's rate of SWD placed OOD is lower than the state and district averages. One hypothesis to be reached from these data is that Bristol strives to educate as many SWD as possible within the district. It is important to verify that SWD educated in the district, especially those educated in resource room and substantially separate settings are receiving appropriate instruction related to their needs and related to the general education curriculum and grade level standards. In addition, given the proportion of SWD educated in regular classroom settings, it appears worth examining whether there is a need for educators to better meet the needs of diverse learners in the least restrictive environment.

Table 10 - Bristol Placement Data (0-40, 40-79, >79, OOD) 2014-15
Percentage of SWD in each setting

	>79-100% TWNDP	40-79% TWNDP	0-40% TWNDP	OOD
Bristol	61.2%	21.7%	9.4%	7.7%
Manchester	66.3%	12.5%	8.8%	12.4%
Meriden	63.3%	19.3%	10.2%	7.3%
Middletown	67.9%	15.1%	3.2%	13.8%
District Average	64.7%	17.2%	7.9%	10.3%
State Average	68.7%	16.7%	5.2%	8.4%

The district reported that they are piloting less restrictive service options at South Side and Mountain View elementary schools and have been pleased with the results.

Finding 6: Special Education Prevalence Data

A review of prevalence data in Table 11 indicates that the rate of identification of students with disabilities in Bristol has steadily increased each year from 2011 to 2015. In addition, the actual headcount of students identified for special education has increased annually during that same time span (indicating that the increase in the rate is not due to decreased overall enrollment). During this same period of time, both the state-wide and the district averages of identification for special education has also increased annually. However, Bristol’s rate of identification has consistently been noticeably above the state and district averages. A review of special education population November 1, 2016 shows a continued increase.

Table 11 - Identified Special Education Students (%/headcount) K-12

	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	Nov. 1, 2016
Bristol	14.4% 1211	14.9% 1233	15.6% 1292	16.5% 1360	16.9% 1382	1538
Manchester	13.7% 980	13.4% 940	12.6% 891	12.4% 891	12.2% 873	
Meriden	14.3% 1267	14.4% 1295	15.8% 1410	16.7% 1483	17.3% 1509	
Middletown	11.8% 617	11.5% 594	11.9% 603	12.5% 635	13.0% 643	
District Average	13.6%	13.6%	14.0%	14.5%	14.9%	
State Average	11.7%	12.1%	12.4%	13.0%	13.4%	

Source: <http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>

Students New to the District

The pattern of increase in the identification of students for special education services is an area of concern for the Bristol Schools and raises questions regarding other interventions available to students, the transient nature of the student population and the number of special education student entering the district each year.

An analysis of the 2016-17 new students to Bristol was conducted by the Director of Pupil Services. Findings indicate that from the period 7/1 through 9/15/16 a total of 241 new students were enrolled in the Bristol public schools. Sixty six of those students came to the district with IEPs, representing 27.3% of all new students to the district. Since the district rate is 16.9%, this demonstrates that the district is contending with an influx of new special education students that is significantly higher than the district prevalence rate. Focus interviews with staff also support these data. Staff indicate that not only are a number of new students coming in with IEPs from previous districts, but there are a number of students who although not identified by their last district, should have been.

The special education office assessed the number of referrals and percent deemed eligible in the last two years. Data indicate that the percent of students deemed eligible was 59% last year, and so far this year it is 42%. The Director of Pupil Services attributes this decrease to a new process where the special education supervisors review all new referrals and subsequent assessments. So far this year there have been 98 referrals and 42 (42%) students are deemed eligible for special education. In 2015-16 there were 127 referrals and 75 (59%) students were deemed eligible.

In addition to examining the overall prevalence rate of identification, Table 12 reviewed the most recent available breakdown by primary disability category of those students identified for special education. Bristol’s data stands out in a couple of areas. The District identifies a significantly higher proportion of SWD as students with a learning disability than any of the comparison districts or the state as a whole. Also noteworthy, Bristol identifies a higher proportion of students as other health impaired (OHI) than the other three districts and the state. OHI includes students diagnosed with attention deficit disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Conversely, Bristol identifies a much smaller proportion of its SWD as intellectually disabled and as students with autism.

Identification in a specific category as part of determining eligibility for special education should not affect the services received for an individual student as services as to be designed by the planning and placement team (PPT) to meet the student’s needs, regardless of primary disability identified. However, the pattern of identification compared to the other districts and the state may indicate that the district needs to examine its SRBI and diagnostic practices.

Scientific Research Based Intervention

Typically when we see increased enrollment and referrals to special education, we also look at the process the district uses to provide interventions and supports to students prior to referral, Scientific Research Based Interventions (SRBI). Implementation of SRBI is required by the Individuals with Disabilities Act anytime students are identified as learning disabled. The Process Section of this report will look further into the effectiveness of the SRBI system.

Prevalence by Disability Category

In addition to examining the overall prevalence rate of identification, we reviewed the most recent available breakdown by primary disability category of those students identified for special education in 2015-16 (Table 12). The District identified a higher proportion of SWD as students with Learning Disabilities (LD) and Other Health Impairment (OHI) than both state and district averages. OHI includes students diagnosed with addition deficit disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. The percent of students diagnosed with speech and language impairments and autism were lower than both the district and state averages. It is not unusual that LD and OHI categories increase when speech and language and autism decrease.

Table 12 – Prevalence by Disability Category 2015-16

Table 12 - Prevalence by Disability Category 2015- 16	Learning Disability	Speech Language Impaired	Emotionally Disturbed	Intellectually Disabled	Other Health Impaired	Autism	Other
Bristol	41.2%	9.0%	9.8%	0.5%	23.7%	6.9%	9.0%
Manchester	29.4%	17.4%	7.3%	2.6%	19.6%	13.2%	10.4%
Meriden	35.6%	8.3%	11.9%	4.0%	21.1%	10.5%	8.5%
Middletown	28.1%	17.1%	10.9%	5.3%	19.1%	11.5%	7.9%
District Average	33.6%	13.0%	10.0%	3.1%	20.9%	10.5%	9.0%
State Average	34.7%	13.8%	7.7%	3.4%	20.8%	11.7%	7.8%

Source: <http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>

EDUCATIONAL BENEFIT

The examination of educational benefit for students with disabilities is determined by systemic and individual student quality indicators such as: performance index scores, smarter balanced levels of achievement, suspension, drop out and chronic absenteeism rates, IEP reviews, in-depth student reviews and classroom observations, and focus interviews.

Data from the following sources were collected and analyzed.

Question 2 Educational Benefit	IEP/ In-depth Student Review	Classroom Observations	District and State Data	Focus Interviews
To what extent are special education students receiving educational benefit from the programs and services provided by the Bristol Public Schools?	X	X	X	X

Finding 1: Student Achievement Data

A review of the Bristol District Performance Index (DPI) for 2014-15 indicated that students with and without disabilities were below the state target of 75 in English Language Arts (ELA), Math, and Science. Since this was the first year of the DPI, there is no historical data available for comparison (Table 13).

Table 13 - 2014-15 Bristol District Performance Index

Year	ELA		Math		Science		State Target
	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	
2014-15	47.6	71.1	39.4	61.4	40.4	58.6	75.0

Bristol's special education student scores that met or exceeded achievement level on the 2015-16 Smarter Balanced Assessments were compared to district and the state averages (Table 14). In English Language Arts (ELA) Bristol's scores were higher than the state and district averages. In Math, Bristol's scores were higher than the district average and lower than the state average.

Using the percentage of students with disabilities who met or exceeded the achievement standard, the 2015-16 results for Bristol represented an improvement compared to the previous year's results. In 2014-15, Bristol's percentage of SWD who met or exceeded the achievement standard was lower than the state's percentage for both English Language Arts and Math.

Table 14 - Comparison of Achievement Levels for Students with Disabilities Measured by Smarter Balanced 2015-16, Comparison Districts

District	English Language Arts Percent at Level 3 & 4: Meets or Exceeds the Achievement Level	Mathematics Percent at Level 3 & 4: Meets or Exceeds the Achievement Level
Bristol	15.9%	6.9%
Griswold	15.4%	6.7%
Killingly	13.0%	4.6%
Manchester	3.7%	2.2%
Meriden	6.1%	4.2%
Middletown	7.0%	3.3%
Plainfield	11.4%	11.4%
Torrington	11.9%	5.0%
Southington	19.8%	5.0%
District Average	11.6%	5.5%
State Average	15.6%	10.2%

Finding 2: Graduation Rate

In the most recent two years for which data is available, Bristol’s four-year graduation rate for students with disabilities is greater than the comparison districts while lower than the state rate (Table 15). The district’s rate of graduation for SWD does not meet the state target according to the most recent annual performance report (<http://edsight.ct.gov/specEdAPR/2014-2015/Bristol.pdf>). More recent data are not currently available from the Department of Education.

Table 15 - Cohort Graduation: Four Year

	Bristol	Manchester	Meriden	Middletown	State
All Students 2014-15	81.3%	80.8%	74.0%	88.3%	87.2%
SWD 2014-15	59.8%	54.9%	48.7%	52.1%	65.6%
difference	21.5	25.9	25.3	36.2	21.6
All Students 2013-14	81.8%	82.2%	76.1%	82.6%	87.0%
SWD 2013-14	66.4%	54.5%	42.5%	48.1%	65.2%
difference	15.4	27.7	33.6	34.5	21.8
All Students 2012-13	79.8%	74.7%	70.1%	81.0%	85.5%
SWD 2012-13	55.4%	46.6%	41.9%	63.5%	64.7%
difference	24.4	28.1	28.2	17.5	20.8
All Students 2011-12	85.1%	73.2%	69.5%	76.1%	84.8%
SWD 2011-12	68.8%	52.5%	45.3%	52.5%	64.4%
difference	16.3	20.7	24.2	23.6	20.4
All Students 2010-11	76.7%	71.2%	69.8%	76.9%	82.7%
SWD 2010-11	60.3%	49.4%	44.8%	55.6%	62.4%
difference	16.4	21.8	25.0	21.3	20.3

Source: Edsight <http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>

Finding 3: Suspension, Drop Out and Chronic Absenteeism

While it is somewhat positive that the rate of suspension for all students and for the subgroup of students with disabilities decreased in 2014-15 from the previous year, it is also noteworthy that Bristol’s rate of suspension for SWD is greater than the average of the three districts (Table 16).

Table 16 - Rates of Student Suspension

	13-14	14-15
Bristol – All Students	8.7%	8.4%
Bristol - SWD	17.3%	16.0%
Manchester – All Students	9.9%	8.5%
Manchester - SWD	18.3%	14.5%
Meriden – All Students	10.6%	9.8%
Meriden - SWD	16.6%	15.5%
Middletown – All Students	6.8%	7.9%
Middletown - SWD	12.2%	13.7%
State – All Students	7.4%	7.2%

Source: District APR Reports (<http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>)

Note: The Suspension Rate equals the number of students reported with at least one suspension (in-school or out-of-school) or expulsion in ED166 Data Collection divided by the unduplicated student enrollment count for the school or district across the October, January and June PSIS Collections for the given school year.

For 2013-14, the dropout rate for students with disabilities in Bristol met the state APR target and is lower than two of the three comparison districts. The 2014-15 dropout data represents a significant increase in the rate of students with disabilities who dropped out. More recent data is not currently available from the Department of Education (Table 17).

Table 17 - Drop Out Rates - SWD

District	Year	Year
	13-14	14-15
Bristol	12.3%	21.6%
Manchester	14.3%	24.4%
Meriden	33.0%	25.6%
Middletown	7.4%	*
State APR Target	14.5%	n/a

Source: June 2016 District APR (<http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>); Bureau of Data Collection, Research & Evaluation

Table 18 demonstrates that in 2015-16 Bristol’s rate of chronic absenteeism for students with and without disabilities was lower than the comparison district average and the state average.

Table 18 - 2015-16 Chronic Absenteeism

District	Percent Nondisabled	Percent Disabled
Bristol	6.9	16.6
Bloomfield	15.3	7.7
Manchester	12.6	25.9
Middletown	7.7	18.5
Meriden	10.0	24.5
Plainfield	10.3	22.5
District Average	10.5	19.3
State Average	8.3	18.1

Finding 4: Early Childhood Outcomes

Bristol Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) 2014-15 Measuring Child Progress

Table 19 indicates the percentage of young children receiving early childhood special education services who substantially increased their rate of growth, showing that Bristol met the State APR target in all three areas measured. Table 20 provides the percent of preschool children who were functioning within age expectations by the time they exited preschool services and two of the three areas measured (Positive Social-Emotional Skills and Use of Knowledge and Skills). The District did not meet the state target in 2014-15. 2015-16 data is not currently available from the Department of Education.

Table 19 - Early Childhood Rate of Growth

	14-15	Target Met (Y/N)
Positive Social-Emotional Skills	59.5%	
State APR Target	55.5%	Y
Use of Knowledge and Skills	65.9%	
State APR Target	65.5%	Y
Appropriate Behaviors to Meet Needs	56.8%	
State APR Target	52.0%	Y

Table 20 - Early Childhood Age Expectations Upon Exit

	14-15	Target Met (Y/N)
Positive Social-Emotional Skills	51.1%	
State APR Target	51.5%	N
Use of Knowledge and Skills	27.7%	
State APR Target	32.5%	N
Appropriate Behaviors to Meet Needs	27.7%	
State APR Target	25.0%	Y

Source: June 2016 District APR (<http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>)

Finding 4: IEP Review

A representative sample of 20 IEPs were randomly selected for review to determine if they were reasonably calculated to ensure educational benefit. The State Education Resource Center IEP Rubric (revised 2013) was used to assess 14 indicators needed for quality IEP development. Table 19 provides average scores from the analysis of the 14 indicators grouped into four categories. The four categories include: 1) Gap Analysis of Present Level of Performance, 2) Levels of Support: Supplemental Instruction, Accommodations, and Modifications, 3) IEP Goals and Objectives and 4) Types of Support and Placement. (<http://www.ctserc.org/assets/documents/news/2013/SERC%20IEP%20Rubric%20revised.pdf>)

The rubric has four levels of measure: Promising Practice, Progressing, Emerging, and Unacceptable. The average total score for the 20 IEPs reviewed fell into the lower end of the emerging level. The average total score for the 20 IEPs that were reviewed was 9.4 out of a total of 42 points, falling into the early emerging level. The emerging level is described in the SERC rubric as, "The IEP is loosely connected with the general education curriculum. It is unclear if a continuum of supports and services is used, or the IEP seems to flow from special education to general education. The gap analysis is vague and provides only broad understanding of the gaps. The flow of the IEP is disjointed and choppy from gap analysis to goals to services. The IEP goals and objectives are vague and broad. The IEP is not always clear for educators or family members". Of the four categories, the lowest were Present Level of Performance and IEP Goals and Objectives, scoring at the unacceptable level (Table 21).

Table 21 - IEP Review Average Scores

Indicator	Level	Comments
Gap Analysis of Present Level of Performance	2.0/9 Unacceptable	One or more of the following concerns with assessment process exist: the process does not use the age appropriate assessment or curriculum; there are very little or no technically reliable assessments used; and/or the assessment process is very narrow in scope and does not meet the standard for comprehensive assessment. The assessment is disability-driven with little to no reference to general education curriculum.
Levels of Support: Supplemental Instruction, Accommodations, Modifications	3.6/14 Low emerging	There is loose alignment between the gap analysis and specially designed instruction. The supplemental instruction, accommodations/assistive technology are logical in their use to support growth and learning. They are recorded with vague or unclear details on when, how, and where they are to be implemented. The plan includes vague description of supports that are needed to support educators in implementation.
IEP Goals and Objectives	1.5/9 Unacceptable	There is one or more of the following concerns with the goals and objectives: they are not written in measurable and observable language; they are vague; and/or there are no real measures that could track growth. The goals and objectives are not aligned with the general education curriculum. Supplemental instruction, accommodations/assistive technology, and modifications, if used, are not connected to goals. The goals and objectives do not clearly articulate the specially designed instruction that will be used to address the impact of the disability.
Types of Support and Placement	2.3/9 Low Emerging	General education is loosely referred to in the IEP. The services and supports are aligned to the IEP goals. For each goal area, certified staff are used to provide the instruction, other there is over-reliance on special education teachers and student support service professionals. The IEP uses a focus of special education programming and controlled tasks and settings for learning. The IEP reflects a plan that feels disjointed in the scope of the goals and services.

The district provided IEP training to staff last year and has followed it up with training again this year. They have also begun to customize the drop down options in the IEP software, which should improve their IEPs.

Finding 5: In Depth Student Review and Classroom Observations

In Depth Reviews

Six students representing various disability categories and grade levels were selected for in- depth reviews that included IEP review, observations of the student in class, reviews of student work and schedule, and interviews with parent(s), staff, and student (as appropriate based on age and availability of the student). A protocol was used to determine if the students received educational benefit from their programs (Appendix C). Analysis of findings indicate that educational benefit was inconsistent from student to student. In some cases the special education teacher and general education teacher plan together and in other cases they did not meet to plan. We did see evidence of goals and objectives aligned with the general education curriculum, although in some cases the IEP did not reflect this. Student activities were accommodated to meet the individual learning needs and instructional strategies were evident. Data to determine progress varied from report card and teacher observation to formative assessments.

Classroom Observations

64 classroom observations in the district schools revealed some positive instructional practices and some areas that need improvement.

Positive Practices Observed:

Instruction

- In the extended resource room at Hubbell – evidenced based methods us (LMB, higher order questions, touch math, social skills, individualized visual supports, and intense effort to increase TWNDP) we in evidence.
- In GOAL, Extended Resource and ASEP 1 classrooms students were engaged in lesson activities and lesson content and activities were tied to grade level standards. Students’ tasks and assignments evidenced reduced workload, use of manipulatives, simplified reading and use of adult supports.
- “Pilot” at SSS: Block scheduling of ‘intervention’ block schoolwide daily. All students warranting intervention or specialized instruction are provided this support within the ‘block’. This model was implemented this year as a result of a survey completed with staff at the end of last school year.
- One functional class was observed utilizing Unique Curriculum for instruction.
-

Inclusion/CRE

- Stafford special education teacher works to place students out in general education settings as much as feasible, but reports having little to no planning time with them.
- Students were seated in general education classrooms alongside typical peers consistent with the classroom seating arrangement and were receiving instruction from the general education teacher. In the majority of the classrooms the teachers were providing accommodations consistent with IEP goals/objectives. Instructional activities were tied to grade level standards. In group settings students were actively participating with others or were provided scaffolded support to complete task expectations.
- Co-teaching model observed at BEHS evidenced collaborative planning and lesson design and shared teaching and responsibility for student performance. Co-taught lesson observed at SSS Kindergarten classroom (SLP and teacher-Visualizing and Verbalizing) evidenced shared planning and instruction.
- One co-teaching pair that was observed both teachers were actively providing instruction to students and they had a shared responsibility for the class.

Early Childhood

- Majority of Special Education Early Childhood staff are highly skilled, and make substantial gains with children who have significant needs.

Accommodations

- Teachers were observed utilizing computers and smart boards to engage students in instruction.
- Teachers were observed utilizing manipulatives with students for math instruction such as cereal, clocks and coins.

Social/Behavior

- Teachers were observed having positive interactions with students.
- Teachers allowed students to work independently and checked on their progress and gave specific feedback to students.

Transition

- Transition program - Location allows for travel training and is in good proximity to the school, the variety of tasks is wide ranging. Many employees on site. The teacher/case manager is well versed and experienced in community engagement programs and has many good ideas to grow the program. Opportunities for natural consequences exist to allow for independent decision making and the “teachable moment”.

Instructional Practices of Concern:

Autism

- 2 of 3 Autism classrooms observed have dedicated paraprofessionals, but the district could not find teachers, so long-term substitutes, who were not certified special education teachers, were teaching the class. BCBAs do not have enough contracted time to effectively help staff help children and there was limited evidence of an effective progress monitoring system. Environments were reactive in nature as opposed to proactive.
- Activities were observed in autism classrooms, but not specially designed instruction linked to curriculum access. ABA / DTI approach, but silos, no evidence of scaffolding, planned link to general education classroom. No evidence of co-teaching.

Instruction/Assessment

- Other than the Extended Resource Room at Hubbell, little to no specially designed instruction or evidence based methods were observed.
- Lack of evidence of consistent use of shared tools for progress monitoring in gen ed and resource classroom settings.
- Teachers need tools to monitor student progress on goals and objectives.
- Many students receive academic instruction within the self-contained setting in place of general education curriculum.

Early Childhood

- Early Intervention Team processes –A streamline process that is not individualized was used to test all incoming 3-5 year olds. Testing is not multidisciplinary, play based assessment which utilized data from multiple sources conducted in multiple authentic contents. As a result, IEP goals are not customized.
- Little to no cultural responsiveness in early intervention /assessment, English learners are often identified as sped.
- No evidence of early childhood SRBI.

IEPs

- IEPs do not provide evidence that the teams have examined use of supports in relation to gen ed curriculum.
- IEPs do not reflect the positive instructional practices being implemented in classrooms. On the basis of IEPs one would not expect to observe the level of shared planning and collaboration and use of instructional practices evidenced by regular ed teachers and shared instructional responsibility by special ed and regular ed teachers that was noted during classroom observations.
- IEPs do not indicate how, when and where accommodations will be used in general education classrooms.

Collaboration

- Staff report lack of shared collaboration and planning time between gen ed and special ed staff.

Inclusion/LRE

- GOAL, ASEP 1 and Extended Resource classrooms do not provide students with opportunities to received instruction with non-disabled peers. Students would benefit from positive behavioral models.
- There are no specific entrance and exit criteria for self-contained classes.
- Some students are removed from general education classes to receive special education services (in place of core not in addition to).

SRBI

- Reported lack of consistent Tier 2 and 3 processes and practices across buildings by principals and teachers.
- The SRBI tiers of intervention need to be developed for academic and social/emotional/ behavioral.

Transition

- Limited vocational opportunities for students.
- Transition Program-The location of the classroom (BOE basement) is poor and the size too small. The classroom does not have equipment that a typical transition program would have to work on skills such as cooking, laundry, apartment maintenance (independent living.) There needs to be an updated curriculum for this program (Ex: teach students how to use cell phones to call UBER, or virtual banking.) Current program is worksheet driven.

Finding 6: Specialized Programs

As of November 2016, the districtwide programs were at capacity. Staff indicate that this is because of the new students with IEPs (66) that entered the district. Central office administrators indicated that they only knew about a handful of these students and the rest were unexpected.

Transition Services

- There is a vocational education class at the high school level for students in the Aim Program. Students in the functional classes at the middle and high school level have access to vocational activity boxes (sorting, nuts/bolts, etc.). Students in these classes may have jobs around the school such as delivering mail and filling and delivering supply orders for teachers. The students in the high school functional skills class prepare a snack each morning for the day. Students were observed in this class working on money skills. There is a life skills course at the high school level for students in one of the programs. There are limited elective offerings for students at the high school level. Students in the learning center have goals that they work on and monitor.
- Transition program—18-21—good community access, but the program is housed in the board of education building. Curriculum does not include technology training and use and academic rigor could be increased.
- Programs for students with emotional and behavioral challenges (GOAL classrooms at Mt. View, Greene-Hills and SSS): Students receive majority of content area instruction in self-contained setting. Administrators report challenges to increasing time with nondisabled peers for content instruction including some push back from general education teachers (this is a paradigm shift), lack of adequate classroom support, lack of knowledge and ability of general education teachers to provide appropriate and effective instructional and behavioral supports to students with significant learning and behavioral needs.
- At Mt. View and SSS administrators reported commitment to reducing students' time in self-contained classroom setting.
- There was inconsistency program to program and no evidence of exit and entry criteria or shared understanding of district wide programs. The special education office indicates that they have assigned the three BCBA's across the elementary schools to ensure consistency. They have also developed program manuals to assist with consistency.
- Typically, special education administrators attend district-wide program PPTs in lieu of building administrators. Staff reports that building administrators are not typically involved with district-wide programs.

Finding 7: Professional Development, Collaboration/Planning Time

Staff and parents both indicated that paraprofessionals do not have sufficient training to perform the responsibilities expected of them. In addition, coaching and meeting time with paraprofessionals is very limited because certified staff have large caseloads and do not have meeting time in their schedule. Lack of planning and collaboration time was also discussed as a problem for special education staff and general education staff across the district.

PROCESSES

Data from the following sources were collected and analyzed.

Question 3 Processes	Ed Benefit/ In-depth Student Review	Classroom Observations	District and State Data	Focus Interviews
Are the processes used by special education and related services effective and efficient?	X	X	X	X

Findings

The third analysis reviewed the **effectiveness and efficiency of processes** such as: Planning and Placement Team, student placement, student transition to schools and programs, identification and eligibility, and staff hiring and supervision. Findings indicate that special education compliance processes are effective. The district is not consistently implementing Scientific Research Based Intervention (SRBI) which is partially responsible for over identification of special education students and for problems with student academic and behavioral performance. Bristol’s special education model of service delivery emphasizes more restrictive environments and district-wide programs, creating problems with the ability of schools to offer a full continuum of services. Processes for entry and exit into programs, location of programs, and staffing less restrictive options are not implemented consistently.

Finding 1: Scientific Research Based Interventions (SRBI)

SRBI was implemented in Bristol three years ago. An SRBI manual was created and staff were trained. The Supervisor of Special Education chaired the SRBI committee for the past three years and this year the chair is a building administrator. There is no general education central office administrator responsible for the implementation of SRBI. Most staff view the process as a special education process, even though it is a general education process. Implementation of SRBI with fidelity varies from school to school and generally staff indicated that most schools are not doing it well. The district has been concentrating on improving academic Tier 1. Lack of a universal screening instrument, Tiers 2 and 3 academic and behavioral interventions, central office general education coordination and monitoring have hampered the impact that SRBI could have on students. SRBI is a requirement prior to identifying students with learning disabilities. The over identification of students with learning disabilities is a direct result of ineffective SRBI implementation. In addition, students are not receiving timely interventions.

Finding 2: Eligibility and Identification Process

In the resource section of this report, we reviewed the prevalence rate and found that Bristol’s rate is higher than the state and district averages and it continues to grow. The two areas that have higher than state and district averages are Learning Disabilities and Other Health Impaired. The processes for identifying these students requires further examination and the SRBI system needs to provide high quality research based interventions at all Tiers. To manage the number of referrals to special education, the district has employed a process where all referrals and subsequent assessments are reviewed by the special education supervisor.

Finding 3: Student Placement

While the district has done a good job of keeping students in district by creating programs and classrooms, the process for students to enter and exit from these programs is not clear or consistently followed. The district reports that the number of unexpected students from other districts with IEPs requiring specialized programs is problematic. As of October, 2016, many of the classrooms were already filled. The district requires schools to complete a referral packet that is reviewed by special education administrators prior to placement in a specialized district wide program.

Finding 4: Staffing

The process for hiring certified special education staff is a collaborative effort between special education and building administrators. The building administrators are not typically involved in goal setting, observations, or evaluation meetings of the special education professional staff. The administrators' involvement in supervision of special education staff and attendance at PPTs appears to depend on the specific administrator, not a recognized district procedure. The district utilizes a matrix to determine the need for paraprofessionals to avoid their excessive use.

COMMUNICATION

Effective and efficient communication and collaboration are important indicators of a successful special education program. These two areas can have a significant effect on the quality of instruction and opportunities for enhanced student learning. We reviewed how staff members interact with each other, with parents, and with the community. Data from the following sources were collected and analyzed.

Question 4 Communication and Collaboration	Ed Benefit/ In-depth Review	Classroom Observations	State and District Documents	Focus Interviews
To what extent is the communication with stakeholders both within and outside the system effective in meeting the needs of students requiring special education?	X	X	X	X

Findings

The final analysis examined staff and parent interviews to document the effectiveness of communication. Special education staff indicated that they were spread too thin and it impacts both morale and their ability to communicate. There are some parents who indicated that the district has not been transparent nor communicated effectively with them. The issues tend to focus around disagreement of services and some mixed messages from building and the central office administrators. Parent concerns appear to be handled in a variety of ways, depending upon which administrator is involved. Building administrators do not consistently attend PPT meetings and are not involved in all special education staff supervision. General and special education staff appear to work well together, but they report that there is insufficient time to plan and collaborate together.

Finding 1: Special and General Education Staff

Observations of classrooms and focus group interviews revealed that the general and special education staff work together to serve special education students, but because of lack of planning time, they are not always able to do the best practices that they know would result in greater impact.

Staff indicate that communicating with contracted staff is a barrier (BCBAs, OTs and PTs) – They do not have a district email, phone, office, mailbox etc. Contracted staff indicate that sometimes teachers do not respond when contacted and it is very difficult to schedule times to meet with special education teachers because classrooms contain students of different grades/classrooms so there is usually not a time where all students are out of the room. Additionally, many staff do not know the role of the BCBA or how or when to access services.

Finding 2: Central Office and Building Staff

Staff report a lack of consistent instructional and curricular leadership from central office. Concerns from building staff were voiced about the direction or lack of direction that the district is going regarding special education. They would like regular department meetings and more frequent involvement with central office administrators.

Finding 3: Parents

An analysis of the focus interview data from parents revealed the following trends:

- Communication during transition times parent to staff and staff to staff was not effective. Parents reported that each year was like starting over again, explaining to the staff their child’s needs because the sending staff did not.
- Parent teacher conferences were too little too late.
- Special education teachers and related services staff don’t have time to talk or explicitly model expected practices to paraprofessionals, BCBAs, and parents.
- Parents perceive that staff are told not to talk at PPTs for fear of recommending something that may cost the district money.
- Administrators at PPTs can be dismissive to the parent.
- Building staff care about their child, but are overworked and cannot always do what is promised on the IEP.

COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Commendations

- Bristol staff are dedicated to the students in their care.
- The Bristol parents have formed a parent group that supports parents in a variety of ways.
- The Bristol special education office has worked to keep students in district and they met state target for decreasing number of students in separate schools.
- The district met state compliance targets for timelines, general supervision, timely reporting, IEP transitions for age 3 and transition goals.
- The district met state target on outcome indicators for dropout rate, chronic absenteeism and graduation rate.
- Scores on Smarter Balanced Assessments improved from 2014 to 2015 and exceeded district and state averages.
- The district has begun to explore more appropriate locations to house their 18-21 year old program.
- Bristol utilizes outside agencies to support their district special education programs.
- Special Education administrators are utilizing some monitoring processes for IEPs, paraprofessional support and referrals to special education or districtwide programs.

Recommendations

This report provides specific recommendations that can be used to support a five year strategic plan focusing on the goals described below and additional goals, as issues emerge. Because the recommendations reflect a significant systemic change, we recommend that the district form a stakeholder group to include representatives from parents of students with disabilities, community businesses, agencies, general education teachers and administrators, and central office staff that can help to support the goals of the plan. Goals for this plan should be closely aligned with the District Strategic Plan. Strengthening the SRBI system should take priority and funds to support this goal should be allocated in the 2017-18 school year. Suggested activities for each goal are provided below.

Goal 1: Strengthen the SRBI System

The most important activity that the district can do is to strengthen their SRBI process from preschool to 12th grade. By doing so, the increase in students identified as special education should be reduced and the money spent on identification, PPT meetings, and special education services can be spent on early intervention and prevention. This will relieve the stress on the special education department and allow them to implement a service delivery model that supports least restrictive options. This is a general education process, and although special education can have some involvement, it should be led and monitored by general education.

The following activities will support this goal:

- Assign a central office general education administrator to be responsible for the SRBI district-wide program and who will write and implement a districtwide strategic plan to strengthen the SRBI system with specific academic and behavioral outcomes. The plan should include needed resources such as staffing and materials. The 2017-18 budget should provide needed resources.
- Assess each school's SRBI process, interventions (academic and behavior) and outcomes and develop a building action plan to address needed changes. The building principal and central office administrator will be responsible for implementation of the plan and outcomes.

Goal 2: Strengthen School Based Continuum of Special Education Services

The current model relies heavily on district-wide programs and more restrictive options, leaving staff little time to support students in general education. In addition to the expense of staffing these programs, they fill up before

November and the classes tend to move to different schools, looking for space. This model will not be able to continue to sustain itself unless the district hires additional staff and finds more permanent locations. Another option is to begin to build capacity in each school to offer a full continuum of services to the special education students in their school. There will probably always be a need for some district-wide programs, but the goal should be to first keep students in their home school with appropriate services. Building level administrators should be involved and take ownership of all students in their building whether they are from their school or not.

The following activities will support this goal:

- Building and special education administrators assess each school's current continuum of services and review all students for whom that school is their home school. Determine what resources are needed and can be reallocated if some of the students were to stay or return to their home school next year.
- Develop a plan to reallocate resources and if additional resources are needed, include them in the budget for 2017-18.
- Assess staff skills in providing continuum of services in least restrictive environment and develop and implement a professional development plan. Consider topics such as Universal Design for Learning, IEP development, and co-teaching. Learning options should consider Professional Learning Communities and coaching.
- Define and expand the role of building administrators in hiring, supervision, staff assignments and PPTs
- Regular meetings with building administrators and designated special education administrators to discuss issues related to new model.
- Work closely with community agencies to provide wrap around services.

Goal 3: Improve educational benefit to students through consistent use of effective instructional, behavioral and inclusive practices

The staff are working hard to provide the necessary services, but because of a variety of challenges, the impact of their work is not always realized.

The following activities will support this goal:

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

- Utilize the educational benefit protocol to provide professional development and follow up support to building administrators and special education certified staff on IEP development and implementation of specially designed instruction. Building and central office administrators should regularly monitor IEPs and IEP implementation for consistency and fidelity.
- Instructional leadership should be the responsibility of both the building and central office administrators, therefore, both special education and building administrators should be involved in special education teacher goal setting, observations and supervision to support improved teaching and learning.
- Improve the effective use of adult support by providing training to paraprofessionals on inclusion strategies and to co-teachers on effective co-teaching strategies. Building and district administrators should monitor implementation of these strategies through regular classroom observations and walk-throughs. Student independence and performance should be a goal for all special education certified and non-certified staff.
- Provide training to special education and general education staff on specially designed instruction and alignment of instruction to general education curriculum.
- Conduct an audit of specialized materials and AT devices, ensure sufficient devices are available, and provide training to general and special education staff on how to use and adapt.
- Develop consistent practices to monitor student progress.
- Incorporate reading programs that focus on oral language development.
- Update transition program curriculum.
- Develop at the building level a support system for the number of new special education students coming into the district each year.

Service Delivery

- Provide definition, purpose, and parameters for effective use of co-teaching and supported classrooms and schedule staff and students for these options first. Provide co-teachers time to plan.
- Relocate the transition 18-21 year old program to a college or in a community setting for more age appropriate peer models. We're pleased that the district has begun to explore this.
- Increase training, consultation and modeling practices for certified and noncertified staff to implement BCBA developed initiatives with fidelity. Monitor behavioral practices to ensure that they are consistent across schools and programs and are implemented with fidelity.
- Develop a shared vision and purpose of district programs and implement entry and exit criteria.
- Support the needs of students with challenging behaviors or mental health needs through implementation of intensive intervention teams and increased social work involvement.
- Develop and implement criteria for staff/student ratio.
- Assess the feasibility of a centralized preschool center, considering resource allocation and student outcomes.
- Develop small group and individual supports to meet student social, emotional, and behavioral needs.

Goal 4: Improve communication and collaboration among stakeholders

There is no formal consistent approach to dealing with parental concerns. Parents indicate that transitions from one program/school to another is not always smooth. There is a strong collaborative and collegial "feel" in the schools. General and special education staff appear to work well with each other, as evidenced by classroom observations and discussions with staff. Scheduled time for staff to meet and plan with each other, especially when co-teaching is inconsistent.

The following activities will support this goal:

- Develop processes for dealing consistently with parent concerns and for when students are transitioned from one school or program to another.
- Implement parent communication protocols and develop additional ways to reach out to parents to increase their involvement.
- Implement a stakeholders group (parents, agencies, general and special education staff) to assist in the implementation of the Three-Year Action Plan.
- Ensure there is transparency and consistency of message among all staff when working with parents.
- Create manageable caseloads to allow for communication and collaboration time in the staff schedules.
- Develop communication systems and processes for contracted employees to communicate with staff and parents.
- Develop written materials to describe programs and services offered.
- Improve the effectiveness of the early childhood evaluation team's procedures for evaluation, their evaluation reports, and subsequent IEPs.

Goal 5: Increase funding and maximize resources

The goals described above will require a commitment to both reallocate resources and increase funding. We have identified a few areas where there could be cost savings or increased revenue, but these may take a year or two to be realized. It is likely that without the changes we recommend, the special education system will continue to expand and require additional resources, so it is important in the next year or two to support the goals above with resources proactively, rather than reactively.

The following activities will support this goal:

- Adequately fund the SRBI general education system with staff and other resources.
- Move the 18-21 year old transition program to a community or college setting and bring students who are outplaced back and tuition in students from other districts.

- Conduct a time study of certified special education staff to find out how much time is spent on clerical tasks and hire clerical staff to take over those duties. This may save the district from the need to hire additional certified staff.
- Review transportation, tuition, and purchased services expenses and implement cost efficient measures.
- Submit for all eligible Medicaid reimbursable services, working with the parent SEPTA group, conduct a campaign to get parent approval for the district to apply for Medicaid reimbursement. Monitor monthly reports to ensure all services are submitted. These changes could result in a significant increase in revenue to Bristol that can support some of the goals in the action plan.
- Build capacity to work with a variety of students with mental health needs. Consider more social workers, intensive intervention teams, partnering with outside agencies/consultants to support the in-district programs, and use of registered behavior technicians.

Appendices

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State Education Resource Center

IEP Rubric

Developed by SERC, Middletown, Connecticut
Revised 2013



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The Overview

Connecticut's State Education Resource Center (SERC) has developed an Individualized Education Program (IEP) Rubric that measures the quality of IEP development for students with disabilities in the following categories:

- Gap Analysis of Present Level of Performance
- Levels of Support: Supplemental Instruction, Accommodations, and Modifications
- IEP Goals and Objectives
- Types of Support and Placement

The IEP Rubric defines fourteen indicators needed for quality IEP development. The rubric is designed to be analyzed holistically as well as in the four categories and their individual indicators. A school data team can analyze the data in a variety of ways to discern trends in practices, which can be used to inform professional learning and systemic strategic planning. The rubric is constructed on the premise that all students are entitled to the general education curriculum within the least restrictive environment, and therefore the design of an IEP is focused on student outcomes based in the general education curriculum. Supports operate on a continuum specifically targeted to meet the unique needs of a student. The purpose of the rubric is to provide educators and families a means to assess the quality of an IEP by shifting the IEP from a mere list of legal or compliance tasks to an instructional tool that can be used to guide teams of people in how to support a student in achieving the same general education standards as nondisabled peers.

The Quality Levels

SERC's IEP rubric has four levels of measure: promising practice, progressing, emerging, and unacceptable. The highest level, **promising practice**, is the measure of quality that promotes genuine access, participation, and progress in the general education curriculum and settings, while actively supporting the unique needs of a student. High expectations are set for each student, and the IEP actively seeks to close academic gaps. Since educational practices are continuously evolving, promising practice purposefully denotes an endless ceiling of quality. **Progressing** is the measure of quality by which an IEP supports educational benefit to facilitate a student's access to, participation in, and progress in the general education curriculum and settings. The IEP incorporates the elements of effective instructional practices into the design of how supports are organized and implemented. **Emerging** is the measure of quality by which the IEP meets a low threshold of compliance and educational benefit. The IEP is often missing critical elements needed to support its use as an instructional plan. The IEP also focuses on "special education" as a separate support system, rather than an embedded support system within the context of the general education curriculum. **Unacceptable** is the measure that generally does not meet even the basics of procedural compliance for an IEP or merits any educational benefit.

The Scoring

SERC's IEP Rubric uses an analytical rubric scoring method. A range of points are used to score each indicator: 3) promising practice, 2) progressing, 1) emerging and 0) unacceptable. Each indicator is scored and then totaled within each of the four category areas for a category score. The four category scores are then totaled for a single score.

The Training of Scorers





Using this tool with fidelity requires scorers to be trained. The training provides scorers with a working knowledge of the content of the rubric and the technical knowledge to use the instrument with reliability. The training sessions include a process for calibration of scorers that estimates their inter-rater reliability as a means to check for fidelity. For further information on the training process, contact Kimberly Mearman, Ph.D., Assistant Director for Program Development & Research/Program Evaluation, SERC, at (860) 632-1485, ext. 289 or at mearman@ctserc.org.

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Gap Analysis of Present Level of Performance

Indicator 1





The IEP uses comprehensive general education-driven assessments and benchmarks to isolate and target specially designed instruction to address missing concepts, skills, or strategies that assist students in making progress in general education.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assessments are not based on the age-appropriate grade-level general education curriculum. The assessments are not technically sound or reliable. The IEP uses a narrow scope of assessments. The assessment process uses only standardized assessments, making no reference to general education or does not use a comprehensive assessment process to determine the unique needs of the student. There is no evidence of a comparative analysis between the demands of the general education standards and the unique needs of the individual student. There are no or very vague statements of the student's present level of performance as it relates to the general education curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assessments are based on the age-appropriate grade-level general education curriculum. The assessments are technically sound and reliable. The IEP uses an assessment process mostly reliant on standardized assessments. The assessment process makes references to general education assessments, but relies on standardized assessments that determine the unique needs of the student. There is little evidence of a comparative analysis between the demands of the general education standards and the unique needs of the individual student. There are general statements of the student's present level of performance as it aligns to the general education curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assessments are based on the age-appropriate grade-level general education curriculum. The assessments are technically sound and reliable. The IEP uses a comprehensive assessment process, including general education curriculum-based assessments and standardized assessments. The assessment process uses a mix of general education assessments and standardized assessments to determine the unique needs of the student. There is some evidence of a comparative analysis between the demands of the general education standards and the unique needs of the individual student. There are specific statements of the student's present level of performance as it relates to the general education curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assessments are based on the age-appropriate grade-level general education curriculum. The assessments are technically sound and reliable and provide continuous monitoring information. The IEP uses a relevant, comprehensive assessment process driven by general education curriculum-based assessments, district-wide formative and summative assessments, and standardized assessments. The assessment process focuses on general education assessments, supplemented with additional assessments that can isolate and determine the unique needs of the student related to the disability. There is extensive evidence of a comparative analysis between the demands of the general education standards and the unique needs of the individual student. There are specific statements of the student's present level of performance as it specifically relates to the student's access to, participation in, and progress in the general education curriculum.
<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Majority of the elements = 0</p> </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Majority of the elements = 1</p> </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Majority of the elements = 2</p> </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Majority of the elements = 3</p> </div>

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Indicator 2





The IEP contains explicit statements determining the student's strengths as related to the student's progress in the general education curriculum.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no or vague, superficial statements about the student's strengths. • There are no statements about how the student can participate in the general education settings or curriculum. • The student's strengths have no relationship to the general education curriculum, instruction, or environment and are not comparative to peers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are general statements about the student's strengths related to academic learning. • There are vague statements about the student's strengths and how the student can participate in general education settings. • The student's strengths have no relationship to general education curriculum, instruction, or environment and are not comparative to peers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are general statements about the student's capacity and strengths to participate and progress in general education curriculum. • There are general statements about how the student can be successful in general education curriculum. • The student's strengths are relative to how he or she can participate in general education curriculum and are not comparative to peers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are explicit statements about the student's capacity and strengths to participate and progress in general education curriculum. • There are statements about the student's strengths that can be useful to a general education teacher in understanding how the student can progress in general education curriculum. • The student's strengths are relative to how he or she can participate in general education curriculum and are not comparative to peers.
<div style="text-align: center;">  Majority of the elements = 0 </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  Majority of the elements = 1 </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  Majority of the elements = 2 </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  Majority of the elements = 3 </div>

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Indicator 3

The IEP has an explicit statement of how the dynamic between manifestation of the student’s disability and general education curriculum, instruction, or environment affects access to, participation in, and progress in the general education curriculum.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assessment process lists concerns, but is not necessarily related to the disability. The assessment process states that the disability in and of itself affects access to, participation in, and/or progress in the general education curriculum. There is a vague statement of the impacts related to the disability itself and/or services needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assessment process determines concerns related to the disability. The assessment process states how the disability affects access to, participation in, and/or progress in the general education curriculum. There is a vague statement of how the disability impacts participation and progress in the general education curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assessment process generally lists manifestations of the disability. The assessment process states how the manifestations of the disability affect access to, participation in, and/or progress in the general education curriculum. The statement of impact connects to specially designed instruction listed in the IEP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assessment process specifically isolates the manifestations and the instructional and environmental barriers of the disability. The assessment process specifically states how the manifestations of the disability interact with environmental and instructional barriers to access, participate, and/or progress in the general education curriculum. The statement of impact explicitly leads the IEP in the determination of the specially designed instruction.
 Majority of the elements = 0	 Majority of the elements = 1	 Majority of the elements = 2	 Majority of the elements = 3

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/9 Total Score for Gap Analysis





Quality Level	Score	Interpretation
Promising Practice	8-9	The assessment process is driven by examining how the student performs within the general education curriculum. The assessment process explicitly identifies barriers that affect access to, participation in, and progress in the general education curriculum. The unique needs of the student are specifically isolated and defined. There a number of assessment tools used that can serve to continuously monitor student progress over time. The information in the IEP is recorded clearly with specific statements that are useful and explicitly lead to the development of the specially designed instruction.
Progressing	5-7	The assessment process contains a comprehensive examination of how the unique profile of the student compares to the general education curriculum. There is a mix of assessment tools and types used to determine areas of strength and need, but the recorded information can appear disjointed. The information flows logically, and it is predictable as to what the IEP goals should contained based on this information.
Emerging	2-4	The assessment process relies heavily on standardized assessments and with a focus on aspects of the disability. The assessment process references the general education curriculum or assessments, but does not provide a full picture of how well the student is performing in the general education curriculum. The information recorded provides some broad understandings, but is vague.
Unacceptable	0-1	There is one or more of the following concerns with the assessment process: the process does not use the age-appropriate assessments or curriculum; there are very little or no technically reliable assessments used; and/or the assessment process is very narrow in scope and does not meet the standards for comprehensive assessment. The assessment process is disability-driven with little to no reference to the general education curriculum. Information recorded is superficial, very vague, and maybe comparative to peers.

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Levels of Support: Supplemental Instruction, Accommodations, Modifications

Indicator 1





Based on the gap analysis and areas of need, direct supplemental instruction is designed to address missing skills, concepts, or strategies that will assist the student in participating and making progress in the general education curriculum.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The gap analysis does not list skills, concepts, and/or strategies. The IEP states instruction on skills, concepts, and/or strategies that do not align with the gap analysis or does not state any instruction on skills, concepts, and/or strategies. The IEP states instruction for skills, concepts, and/or strategies that is instead of the core general education curriculum. The IEP states supplemental instruction that is not sound. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The gap analysis vaguely lists skills, concepts, and/or strategies. The IEP states instruction on skills, concepts, and/or strategies that loosely aligns with the gap analysis. The IEP states instruction for skills, concepts, and/or strategies that is in addition to the core general education curriculum. The IEP states supplemental instruction that is sound. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The gap analysis states the student's missing skills, concepts, and/or strategies that are needed to participate or make progress in the general education curriculum. The IEP states instruction on skills, concepts, and/or strategies that aligns with the gap analysis. The IEP states instruction for skills, concepts, and/or strategies that is in addition to the core general education curriculum and expands learning for the student. The IEP states supplemental instruction that is sound, evidence-based practice and likely to result in student progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The gap analysis specifically isolates the student's missing skills, concepts, and/or strategies that are needed to participate or make progress in the general education curriculum. The IEP states explicit instruction on skills, concepts, and/or strategies that directly connect with the gap analysis. The IEP states instruction for skills, concepts, and/or strategies that expands the methods and intensity of the core general education curriculum, explicitly connected to closing the gaps, and expands the depth of instruction and learning for the student. The IEP states supplemental instruction that is sound, evidence-based practice and strongly connected to student progress in the general education curriculum.
<div style="text-align: center;">  Majority of the elements = 0 </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  Majority of the elements = 1 </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  Majority of the elements = 2 </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  Majority of the elements = 3 </div>

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Indicator 2 A

Based on the gap analysis and areas of need, accommodations are designed to assist the student in access to, participation in, and making progress in the general education curriculum.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The gap analysis does not state barriers for the student. • The IEP states accommodations that do not align with the gap analysis. • The IEP does not provide details on how, when, how often, and to what degree accommodations will be used. • The IEP does not state how the student will use the accommodations. • The IEP states accommodations that are not sound. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The gap analysis vaguely states barriers for the student. • The IEP states accommodations that loosely align with the gap analysis. • The IEP provides vague details on how, when, how often, and to what degree accommodations will be used by educators. • The IEP states how the student will use the accommodations. • The IEP states accommodations that are sound. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The gap analysis generally states barriers for the student to participate or make progress in the general education curriculum. • The IEP states accommodations that align with the gap analysis. • The IEP provides general details on how, when, how often, and to what degree accommodations and assistive technology will be used in the general education curriculum and/or settings. • The IEP states how the student will use the accommodations to participate in the general education curriculum. • The IEP states accommodations that are sound, evidence-based practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The gap analysis specifically isolates barriers for the student to participate or make progress in the general education curriculum. • The IEP states explicit accommodations that directly connect with the gap analysis. • The IEP provides specific details on how, when, how often, and to what degree accommodations and assistive technology will be used in instruction of the core general education curriculum explicitly connected to access to the general education curriculum. • The IEP states how the student will learn to use the accommodations independently to participate meaningfully in the general education curriculum. • The IEP states accommodations that are sound, evidence-based practice and strongly connected to student progress in the general education curriculum.
 Majority of the elements = 0	 Majority of the elements = 1	 Majority of the elements = 2	 Majority of the elements = 3

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Indicator 2 B

Based on the gap analysis and areas of need, assistive technology is designed to assist the student in access to, participation in, and making progress in the general education curriculum.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The gap analysis does not state barriers for the student. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The gap analysis vaguely states barriers for the student. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The gap analysis generally states barriers for the student to participate or make progress in the general education curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The gap analysis specifically isolates barriers for the student to participate or make progress in the general education curriculum.
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>The next one is marked as Not Applicable if there is assistive technology used</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP has no statements, other than the check box, that demonstrate that assistive technology was considered not necessary or that the gap analysis infers that assistive technology is needed to address the barriers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP has vague inferences that demonstrate that assistive technology was considered not necessary or that the gap analysis infers that assistive technology is not needed to address the barriers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP has general statements that demonstrate that assistive technology was considered not necessary and/or that the gap analysis demonstrates that assistive technology is not needed to address the barriers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP has specific statements that demonstrate that assistive technology was considered not necessary and that the gap analysis clearly demonstrates that assistive technology is not needed to address the barriers.
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>The next four are marked as Not Applicable if there is no assistive technology used</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP states assistive technology that does not align with the gap analysis. The IEP does not provide details on how, when, how often, and to what degree assistive technology will be used. The IEP does not state how the student will use the assistive technology. The IEP states the use of assistive technology that is not sound. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP states assistive technology that loosely aligns with the gap analysis. The IEP provides vague details on how, when, how often, and to what degree assistive technology will be used by educators. The IEP states how the student will use the assistive technology. The IEP states the use of assistive technology that is sound. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP states assistive technology that aligns with the gap analysis. The IEP provides general details on how, when, how often, and to what degree assistive technology and assistive technology will be used in the general education curriculum and/or settings. The IEP states how the student will use the assistive technology to participate in the general education curriculum. The IEP states the use of assistive technology that is sound, evidence-based practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP states explicit assistive technology that directly connects with the gap analysis. The IEP provides specific details on how, when, how often, and to what degree assistive technology will be used in instruction of the core general education curriculum explicitly connected to access to the general education curriculum. The IEP states how the student will learn to use the assistive technology independently to participate meaningfully in the general education curriculum. The IEP states the use of assistive technology that is sound, evidence-based practice and is strongly connected to student progress in the general education curriculum.
<input type="checkbox"/> Majority of the elements = 0	<input type="checkbox"/> Majority of the elements = 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Majority of the elements = 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Majority of the elements = 3

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Indicator 3





Based on the gap analysis and areas of need, modifications are designed to assist the student in access, participation, and making progress in the general education curriculum.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The gap analysis does not state areas where the general education content or standards need to be adjusted. There is no evidence that the use of supplemental instruction and accommodations are used before the need for modifications, the IEP almost exclusively relies on modifications as the specially designed instruction, and the modifications do not align with the gap analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The gap analysis vaguely states areas where the general education content or standards need to be adjusted. There is little or loose evidence that the use of supplemental instruction and accommodations are used before the need for modifications that loosely align with the gap analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The gap analysis generally states areas where the general education content or standards need to be adjusted in order for the student to participate or make progress in the general education curriculum. There is general evidence that the use of supplemental instruction and accommodations, including assistive technology, are used before the need for modifications, and modifications are few and used only because they are necessary and align with the gap analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The gap analysis specifically isolates areas where the general education content or standards need to be adjusted in order for the student to participate and make progress in the general education curriculum. There is strong evidence that the use of supplemental instruction and accommodations, including assistive technology, are used before the need for modifications, and modifications are few, targeted, and used only because they are absolutely necessary to close gaps in the general education curriculum that directly connect with the gap analysis.
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>The next two are marked as Not Applicable if there are no modifications used</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP does not state how, when, how often, and to what degree the modifications will be used. The IEP states modifications that are not sound and/or do not relate to the general education curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP provides vague details on how, when, how often, and to what degree the modifications will be used by educators. The IEP states modifications that are sound and connect with the general education curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP provides general details on how, when, how often, and to what degree the modifications will be used in the general education curriculum. The IEP states modifications that are sound, "promising practice" connected to progress in the general education curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP provides specific details on how, when, how often, and to what degree the modifications will be used in instruction of the core general education curriculum, explicitly connected to making progress in the general education curriculum. The IEP states modifications that are sound, "best practice" and are strongly connected to student progress in the general education curriculum.
<input type="checkbox"/> Majority of the elements = 0	<input type="checkbox"/> Majority of the elements = 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Majority of the elements = 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Majority of the elements = 3

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Indicator 4

The IEP states supports that are needed for school personnel to implement the supplemental instruction, accommodations, and modifications.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP does not state supports that are needed for school personnel to implement the IEP. The supports for personnel are not connected to the supplemental instruction, accommodations, and modifications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP vaguely states supports that are needed for school personnel to implement the IEP. The supports for personnel are vaguely connected to the supplemental instruction, accommodations, and modifications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP generally states supports, such as consultation, professional learning, or indirect student supports that are needed for school personnel to implement the IEP. The supports for personnel are connected to the supplemental instruction, accommodations, and modifications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP specifically states supports, such as consultation, professional learning, or indirect student supports that are needed for school personnel to implement the IEP. The supports for personnel are explicitly connected to the supplemental instruction, accommodations, and modifications with explicit connections as to how those supports provide for the student's progress in the general education curriculum.
<div style="text-align: center;">  Majority of the elements = 0 </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  Majority of the elements = 1 </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  Majority of the elements = 2 </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  Majority of the elements = 3 </div>

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/15 Total Score for Levels of Support





Quality Level	Scores	Interpretation
Promising Practice	12-15	There are explicit links between the specific barriers and gaps isolated in the gap analysis and the selected specially designed instruction. The supplemental instruction, accommodations/assistive technology are supported by solid research that indicates success in promoting progress in the general education curriculum. They are recorded with very specific details on when, how, and where they are to be implemented. The plan includes specific supports that are needed to support educators in implementing the plan with fidelity. The design of the supplemental instruction expands the core general education instruction and has the potential to close instructional gaps. The design of accommodations/assistive technology removes environmental and instructional barriers. The plan supports the student's independent use of accommodations/assistive technology. Modifications are only as necessary, if at all. The plan clearly outlines how modifications are used to close instructional gaps, rather than increase them.
Progressing	8-11	There is alignment between the gap analysis and the selected specially designed instruction. The supplemental instruction, accommodations/assistive technology are supported by research that indicates potential growth in the general education curriculum. They are recorded with general details on when, how, and where they are to be implemented. The plan includes general supports that are needed to support educators in implementation. The design of the supplemental instruction is clearly in addition to the core general education instruction and will support learning and growth for a student aligned with the general education curriculum. The design of accommodations/assistive technology supports the removal of environmental and instructional barriers. The plan supports the student's use of accommodations/assistive technology to participate in instruction and socially. Modifications are used sparingly, if at all.
Emerging	4-7	There is loose alignment between the gap analysis and specially designed instruction. The supplemental instruction, accommodations/assistive technology are logical in their use to support growth and learning. They are recorded with vague or unclear details on when, how, and where they are to be implemented. The plan includes vague description of supports that are needed to support educators in implementation. The design of the supplemental instruction is in addition to the core general education instruction. The design of accommodations/assistive technology provides some the removal of environmental and instructional barriers. The plan lists how the student can use the accommodations/assistive technology. Modifications, if listed, are throughout the plan.
Unacceptable	0-3	There is no alignment between the gap analysis and specially designed instruction. The supplemental instruction, accommodations/assistive technology tend to feel more like a checklist or a set program of items provided for many students rather than individualized to needs. They are recorded with little or no details on when, how, and where they are to be implemented. The plan includes little or no description of supports that are needed to support educators in implementation. The design of the supplemental instruction replaces the core general education instruction or is not present in the plan. The design of accommodations/assistive technology is not connected to any barriers or is not present in the plan. Modifications are relied upon heavily throughout the plan and even replace the use of supplemental instruction and accommodations.

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IEP Goals & Objectives

Indicator 1





IEP goals and objectives are: **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time Specific.**

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEP goals and objectives are not written in observable and measurable language. IEP goals and objectives do not have defined mastery of learning that encompasses a scope of growth over the course of one year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEP goals and objectives are written in observable and measurable language. IEP goals and objectives use appropriate criteria of measurement and broad methods of assessment that measure the learning as defined in the IEP goals and objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEP goals and objectives are written in observable and measurable language that defines what the student will learn and the conditions for the instruction. IEP goals and objectives use appropriate criteria of measurement and methods of assessment that specifically measure the learning as defined in the IEP goals and objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEP goals and objectives are written in observable and measurable language that explicitly defines what the student will learn and the conditions for the instruction. IEP goals and objectives use specific and appropriate criteria of measurement and methods of student progress monitoring that specifically measure the learning as defined in the IEP goals and objectives.
<div style="text-align: center;">  Majority of the elements = 0 </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  Majority of the elements = 1 </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  Majority of the elements = 2 </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  Majority of the elements = 3 </div>

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Indicator 2

IEP goals and objectives detail specific conditions for learning, a statement of how the student will demonstrate the learning, and a performance measure that is relevant to this demonstration of learning.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEP goals and objectives are not written with details as to where, when, how, how often, and to what degree the IEP goals and objectives will be implemented. IEP goals and objectives do not provide details about the conditions under which the goal and objectives will be taught and implemented. IEP goals and objectives do not provide details on how the student will perform or demonstrate the skills, concepts, or strategies. IEP goals and objectives do not use specific and appropriate criteria of measurement or define methods of assessments that measure the learning as defined in the IEP goals and objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEP goals and objectives are written with vague or missing details as to where, when, how, how often, and to what degree the IEP goals and objectives will be implemented. IEP goals and objectives provide vague details about the conditions under which the goal and objectives will be taught and implemented. IEP goals and objectives provide vague details on how the student will perform or demonstrate the skills, concepts, or strategies. IEP goals and objectives have defined mastery of learning loosely based on present level of performance and benchmarks that encompasses an achievable scope of growth over the course of one year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEP goals and objectives are written with general details as to where, when, how, how often, and to what degree the IEP goals and objectives will be implemented. IEP goals and objectives provide general details about the conditions under which the goal and objectives will be taught and implemented. IEP goals and objectives provide general details on how the student will perform or demonstrate the skills, concepts, or strategies. IEP goals and objectives have defined mastery of learning based on present level of performance and specific benchmarks that encompasses a relevant and achievable scope of growth over the course of one year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEP goals and objectives are written with explicit details as to where, when, how, how often, and to what degree the IEP goals and objectives will be implemented. IEP goals and objectives provide explicit details about the conditions under which the goal and objectives will be taught and implemented. IEP goals and objectives provide explicit details on how the student will perform or demonstrate the skills, concepts, or strategies. IEP goals and objectives have clearly defined definition of mastery of learning based on baseline assessment and targeted, well-defined, specific benchmarks that encompasses a robust, relevant, and achievable scope of growth over the course of one year.
 Majority of the elements = 0	 Majority of the elements = 1	 Majority of the elements = 2	 Majority of the elements = 3

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Indicator 3

IEP goals and objectives use specially designed instruction to directly support access to, participation in, and progress in the general education curriculum.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEP goals and objectives do not use the age-appropriate grade-level general education curriculum. The IEP goals and objectives do not connect the specially designed instruction with the gap analysis. IEP goals and objectives do not capture any clear or specific supplemental instruction. IEP goals and objectives do not capture any clear or specific accommodations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEP goals and objectives are loosely aligned with the age-appropriate grade-level general education curriculum. The IEP goals and objectives loosely connect the specially designed instruction with the gap analysis. The supplemental instruction is broadly described in the IEP goals and objectives. Accommodations loosely connect with IEP goals and objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEP goals and objectives are aligned with the age-appropriate grade-level general education curriculum. The IEP goals and objectives connect the specially designed instruction with the gap analysis and connect with the barriers, missing skills, concepts, and strategies. The supplemental instruction is described in the IEP goals and objectives. Accommodations are located in IEP goals and objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEP goals and objectives are driven by the age-appropriate grade-level general education curriculum. The IEP goals and objectives directly connect the specially designed instruction with the gap analysis by isolating the barriers, missing skills, concepts, and strategies that need to be taught in order for the student to make progress in the general education curriculum. The supplemental instruction is explicitly described in the condition for learning and/or the student's demonstration of learning. Accommodations are specifically embedded in IEP goals and objectives as conditions for learning and/or the student's demonstration of learning.
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>The next one is marked as Not Applicable if there are no modifications used</i>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEP goals and objectives do not capture any clear or specific modifications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modifications, if needed, are loosely described in the IEP goals and objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modifications, if needed, are described in the IEP goals and objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modifications, if needed, are explicitly described in the conditions for learning and/or the criteria for measurement of learning.
<input type="checkbox"/> Majority of the elements = 0	<input type="checkbox"/> Majority of the elements = 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Majority of the elements = 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Majority of the elements = 3

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/9 Total Score for IEP Goals & Objectives





Quality Level	Score	Interpretation
Promising Practice	8-9	The goals and objectives are written in specific, measurable, and observable language. There are clear and specific details as to the design and delivery of the instruction in terms of what, when, and how. There are clear, specific, and observable details of how the student will demonstrate his or her learning. There are clear measures to track growth from a baseline to a specific target. These measures use methods and tools that can track growth daily, weekly, or at least monthly using a progress monitoring graph. The goals and objectives are driven by the general education curriculum. Supplemental instruction, accommodations/assistive technology, and modifications, if used, are embedded within goals and provide explicit details of when and how they are used.
Progressing	5-7	The goals and objectives are written in specific, measurable, and observable language. There are general details as to the design and delivery of the instruction in terms of what, when, and how. There are general details of how the student will demonstrate his or her learning. There are measures to track growth to a specific target. These measures use methods and tools that can track growth at least monthly. The goals and objectives are aligned with the general education curriculum. Supplemental instruction, accommodations/assistive technology, and modifications, if used, are embedded within goals.
Emerging	2-4	The goals and objectives are written in measurable and observable language. There are vague details as to the design and delivery of the instruction in terms of what, when, and how. There are vague details on how the student will demonstrate his or her learning. There are measures that could track growth. These measures use methods and tools that can note growth at least quarterly. The goals and objectives are loosely aligned with the general education curriculum. Supplemental instruction, accommodations/assistive technology, and modifications, if used, are connected to goals.
Unacceptable	0-1	There is one or more of the following concerns with the goals and objectives: they are not written in measurable and observable language; they are vague; and/or there are no real measures that could track growth. The goals and objectives are not aligned with the general education curriculum. Supplemental instruction, accommodations/assistive technology, and modifications, if used, are not connected to goals.

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Types of Support & Placement

Indicator 1





Special education service hours and site of service delivery are designed to assist the student in making progress in the general education curriculum.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP does not provide evidence that the general education setting is considered. The IEP goals and objectives are not appropriately aligned with the service delivery. The IEP does not provide evidence that it examines the use of supports for the student in relation to the general education curriculum. There is evidence of overreliance on non-certified staff or that special education staff are to provide instruction for the IEP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP provides some evidence that the general education setting is considered. The IEP goals and objectives are appropriately aligned with the service delivery. The IEP provides some evidence that it will include supports for the student in relation to the general education curriculum. There is evidence that certified educators are used to provide instruction for the general education standards and have shared responsibility in implementing the IEP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP provides evidence that the general education setting is considered. The IEP provides evidence that the IEP goals and objectives were used to make decisions about service delivery options. The IEP provides general evidence that the focus for the IEP is to include supports for the student to be successful in the general education curriculum. There is evidence that highly qualified certified educators are used to provide instruction for the general education standards and have shared responsibility in implementing the IEP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP provides strong evidence that the general education setting is considered the first placement option. The IEP provides strong evidence that the IEP goals and objectives drive the service delivery options. The IEP provides strong evidence that the primary focus for the IEP is to provide supports for the student to achieve general education curriculum standards. There is strong evidence that highly qualified content experts and certified educators are used to provide instruction for the general education standards and have active responsibility in implementing the IEP as part of that general education instruction.
<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Majority of the elements = 0</p> </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Majority of the elements = 1</p> </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Majority of the elements = 2</p> </div>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Majority of the elements = 3</p> </div>

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Indicator 2





Supports and services are provided in a manner that focuses on authentic learning that occurs in the natural settings and under the natural conditions that are typical for any student of the same-age peer group.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP provides evidence that the goals and objectives are written to meet the elements of a "special education program." The IEP provides evidence that the focus of implementation of the IEP goals and objectives uses contrived and tightly controlled elements of learning opportunities, materials, tasks, and supports for learning or relies heavily on a program script for learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP provides evidence that the focus of services is to provide support to meet the student's IEP goals and objectives. The IEP provides evidence that the implementation of the IEP goals and objectives have few elements of authentic learning opportunities, materials, tasks, and supports for learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP provides evidence that the focus of services is to provide support in the student's general education setting and/or the natural settings or under natural conditions where the type of learning specified in the IEP typically occurs for nondisabled peers. The IEP provides evidence that the instruction and implementation of the IEP goals and objectives use some elements of authentic learning opportunities, materials, tasks, and supports for learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IEP provides strong evidence that the primary focus of services is to provide support in the student's general education setting and/or the natural settings or under natural conditions where the type of learning specified in the IEP typically occurs for nondisabled peers. The IEP provides strong evidence that the instruction and implementation of the IEP goals and objectives actively use authentic learning opportunities, materials, tasks, and supports for learning.
 Majority of the elements = 0	 Majority of the elements = 1	 Majority of the elements = 2	 Majority of the elements = 3

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Indicator 3

The IEP organizes all supports and services in a comprehensive, flexible, coherent manner that focuses on the student achieving general education standards.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IEP reflects that various types of supports and services are isolated and disjointed from one another. • IEP goals and objectives do not relate to one another. • There is evidence that the IEP provides services that support separate and isolated programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IEP reflects that various types of supports and services share common themes across IEP goals and objectives. • IEP goals and objectives relate to one another. • There is evidence that the IEP provides services that support the scope and sequence of the general education instruction, while supporting the student's unique needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IEP reflects that various types of supports and services share responsibility for implementing the same IEP goals and objectives. • IEP goals and objectives connect with one another to provide a comprehensive plan. • There is evidence that the IEP provides flexible services that mirrors the scope and sequence of the general education instruction, while providing effective responses to the student's unique needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IEP reflects that all of the determined supports and services share a sense of collective responsibility for implementing the IEP as one comprehensive plan. • IEP goals and objectives interconnect and are interdependent with one another to provide one comprehensive and coherent plan. • There is strong evidence that the IEP provides a flexible service plan that flows with the scope and sequence of the general education instruction, while providing real-time, effective responses to the student's unique needs as they could grow and change over the course of the year.
 Majority of the elements = 0	 Majority of the elements = 1	 Majority of the elements = 2	 Majority of the elements = 3

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/9 Total Score for Supports & Services

Quality Level	Scores	Interpretation
Promising Practice	8-9	The focus of the IEP is general education, even if more restrictive settings are needed. The services and supports are driven by the IEP goals. For each goal area, highly qualified certified staff are used to provide the instruction, with a strong presence of general education-certified content experts being actively involved in the implementation of the IEP. There is a sense of collective partnership among a team of educators. The tone of the IEP is the use of authentic learning occurring in the natural environments for that learning. The IEP reflects a comprehensive, flexible plan that is driven by the student's needs and promoting progress in the general education curriculum.
Progressing	5-7	General education is referenced throughout the IEP, even if more restrictive settings are needed. The services and supports are connected to the IEP goals. For each goal area, highly qualified certified staff are used to provide the instruction, which include a presence of general education certified content experts. There is evidence of a team approach to the implementation of the IEP. The IEP includes the use of authentic learning occurring in the natural environments for that learning. The IEP reflects a comprehensive plan that is driven by the student's needs.
Emerging	2-4	General education is loosely referred to in the IEP. The services and supports are aligned to the IEP goals. For each goal area, certified staff are used to provide the instruction, although there is overreliance on special education teachers and student support services professionals. The IEP uses a focus of special education programming and controlled tasks and settings for learning. The IEP reflects a plan that feels disjointed in the scope of the goals and services.
Unacceptable	0-1	The IEP is focused on segregated programming, services, and/or settings. The services and supports are not aligned to the IEP goals, and it appears that the services and special education programming are driving how the goals were written. There is overreliance on paraprofessionals, special education teachers, and student support services professionals to implement the IEP with very little if any mention of general education teachers. The IEP uses contrived tasks for learning. IEP goals and services appear isolated from one another and there is evidence they are not related or connected to one another.

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□ /42 Total Score

Quality Level	Scores	Interpretation
Promising Practice	37-42	The IEP is driven by the general education curriculum and provides only necessary specially designed instruction or services. There is a clear use of the continuum of supports and services that moves from general education to more restrictive special education. The gap analysis explicitly identifies the environmental and instructional strengths, barriers, and gaps. The flow of the IEP explicitly links the gap analysis to targeted supplemental instruction, accommodations/assistive technology, and modifications. The IEP goals and objectives are written in language that allows for clear instruction. The assessments used throughout the IEP can be used to easily track student progress at least monthly from a specific baseline to a specific set of targets. The supports and services are designed to implement the IEP with fidelity and the intentions of closing gaps and addressing barriers. The IEP is written in very clear and precise language that allows for any educator or family member to fully understand what needs to occur on a daily basis without the need for any further clarification.
Progressing	22-36	The IEP is closely aligned with the general education curriculum. There is a continuum of supports and services that moves from general education to more restrictive special education. The gap analysis identifies the environmental and instructional gaps. The flow of the IEP links the gap analysis to supplemental instruction, accommodations/assistive technology, and modifications. The IEP goals and objectives are written in language that leads instruction. The assessments used throughout the IEP can be used to track student progress at least quarterly. The supports and services are designed to implement the IEP with fidelity. The IEP is written in language that is clear enough for an educator or family member to understand what needs to occur.
Emerging	8-23	The IEP is loosely connected with the general education curriculum. It is unclear if a continuum of supports and services is used, or the IEP seems to flow from special education to general education. The gap analysis is vague and provides only broad understanding of the gaps. The flow of the IEP is disjointed and choppy from gap analysis to goals to services. The IEP goals and objectives are vague and broad. The IEP is not always clear for educators or family members.
Unacceptable	0-7	The IEP has no or very little connection with the general education curriculum. The IEP seems to focus on special education programming and services and may over-support the student. The IEP appears isolated and unconnected between gap analysis, goals, and services. Goals and objectives seem to have been written for specific special education programs versus addressing unique needs. The determination of service seems to be set for implementation of programs versus individualized supports. The IEP is written in vague and unclear language that makes it difficult to understand what needs to occur to implement the IEP.

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Student Achievement – ELA – Grades 3-11 2014-15

District	Level 1 % Not Met	Level 2 % Approaching	Level 3 % Met	Level 4 % Exceeded
Bristol - SWD	63.9%	24.6%	9.9%	1.6%
Bristol - All	21.7%	26.6%	34.4%	17.3%
Manchester - SWD	84.7%	11.8%	*	*
Manchester – All	35.0%	26.2%	26.5%	12.4%
Meriden - SWD	81.8%	14.0%	*	*
Meriden - All	34.9%	26.6%	26.4%	12.1%
Middletown-SWD	77.7%	17.0%	*	*
Middletown - All	21.8%	26.0%	31.9%	20.3%
State - SWD	62.1%	23.3%	11.6%	3.0%
State - All	22.0%	22.7%	32.0%	23.3%

*suppressed data

Student Achievement – Math – Grades 3-11
Student count/ %

District	Level 1 % Not Met	Level 2 % Approaching	Level 3 % Met	Level 4 % Exceeded
Bristol - SWD	79.5%	14.8%	4.8%	1.0%
Bristol - All	35.6%	31.7%	22.4%	10.2%
Manchester - SWD	86.5%	11.8%	1.8%	0.0%
Manchester – All	41.7%	30.6%	18.8%	8.9%
Meriden - SWD	88.0%	9.3%	*	*
Meriden - All	53.0%	29.0%	13.5%	4.5%
Middletown-SWD	86.7%	10.2%	*	*
Middletown - All	36.7%	30.0%	20.2%	13.1%
State - SWD	73.5%	18.3%	5.9%	2.3%
State - All	32.7%	28.4%	22.4%	16.5%

*suppressed data

Student Achievement – ELA – Grades 3-11 2015-16

District	Level 1 % Not Met	Level 2 % Approaching	Level 3 % Met	Level 4 % Exceeded
Bristol - SWD	64.2%	19.9%	12.9%	3.0%
Bristol - All	22.7%	23.6%	33.3%	20.3%
Manchester - SWD	85.9%	10.4%	*	*
Manchester – All	36.9%	22.7%	25.5%	14.8%

Meriden - SWD	75.8%	18.2%	5.0%	1.1%
Meriden - All	35.2%	24.7%	27.0%	13.1%
Middletown-SWD	80.7%	12.3%	*	*
Middletown - All	26.0%	22.1%	31.2%	20.7%
State - SWD	61.7%	22.6%	12.0%	3.6%
State - All	23.0%	21.4%	30.5%	25.2%

*suppressed data

Student Achievement – Math – Grades 3-11 2015-16

District	Level 1 % Not Met	Level 2 % Approaching	Level 3 % Met	Level 4 % Exceeded
Bristol - SWD	72.7%	20.4%	5.6%	1.3%
Bristol - All	28.8%	32.7%	23.9%	14.5%
Manchester - SWD	91.1%	6.8%	*	*
Manchester – All	41.3%	29.1%	19.2%	10.5%
Meriden - SWD	84.2%	11.5%	*	*
Meriden - All	43.7%	30.7%	16.9%	8.7%
Middletown-SWD	84.3%	12.4%	*	*
Middletown - All	32.9%	28.5%	22.4%	16.2%
State - SWD	69.8%	20.0%	7.1%	3.1%
State - All	28.3%	27.7%	23.4%	20.6%

*suppressed data

Source: Edsight <http://edsight.ct.gov/SASPortal/main.do>



Parent In-Depth Interview Form

<p>Compliance</p> <p>Describe the process that was used to determine if your child needed special education services.</p> <p>Once your child was identified, what opportunities have you had to provide input into the development of his/her program?</p> <p>For high school students only How has the school worked with you, your child, and other agencies to prepare him/her for school or work after graduation?</p>
<p>Positive Impact</p> <p>Please explain how the school informs you about your child's progress. Follow up question, if needed: Do you receive quarterly progress reports about your child's progress in meeting the IEP goals and objectives?</p> <p>Do you feel you have enough information to determine how your child is doing? If no, what else would you like to have?</p>
<p>Resources</p> <p>Is your child getting all the services listed on his/her IEP? If no please explain</p> <p>If you think your child needs additional services, such as speech therapy, what would you do?</p>
<p>Communication</p> <p>If you needed to speak to someone about a concern you have regarding your child's program or progress, who would you contact and how would you contact them?</p> <p>Have you had any contact with your child's teachers this year? If yes, what was the communication about and with whom?</p> <p>On a scale of 1 to 4 (1= not effective 4= very effective) how would you rate the communication about your child between the special education staff and you?</p> <p>On a scale of 1 to 4 (1= not effective 4= very effective) how would you rate the communication between Central Office Special Education and you?</p>
<p>Overall Satisfaction</p> <p>On a scale of 1 to 4 (1= not effective 4= very effective) how would you rate the effectiveness in supporting positive learning outcomes of your child's program? If it is too soon to tell this year, please respond to the effectiveness of the program last year.</p>

Student's Name: _____ Parent: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Interviewer: _____ School: _____ Grade: _____

Hello, my name is _____ from the Capitol Region Education Council. We have been hired by the Board of Education to review the special education programs and services. Your child's name was selected as part of a random sample for CREC to review. We will conduct a file review, parent and staff interviews, and observations in the school. I would like to ask you a few questions about _____'s educational program. This should only take 5-10 minutes and everything that you say to me will remain confidential and only the independent CREC review team will see your responses.

Is there additional information you would like us to know about your child's program?

Thank you for taking the time to answer questions about your child's program.



Case Manager In Depth Interview Form

Student's Name: _____ Case Manager: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Interviewer: _____ School: _____ Grade: _____

Hello, my name is _____ from the Capitol Region Education Council. We have been hired by the Board of Education to review the special education programs and services. _____ (Name of student) was selected as part of a random sample for review. We will be conducting a file review, parent and staff interviews, and observations on this child. I would like to ask you a few questions about _____'s educational program. This should only take 15-20 minutes and everything that you say to me will remain confidential and only the independent CREC review team will see your responses.

Compliance reviewer, you will need a copy of the student's schedule and the case manager's schedule

Is the student receiving the programs and services that were recommended in the IEP? If no, why not. (if you see a conflict ask the case manager about it)

As case manager how do you ensure that he/she receives all the required elements in the IEP?

For high school students only

How has the school worked with the parent and outside agencies to prepare this student for school or work after graduation? What transition service options are available to this student?

Positive Impact

What data do you use to develop and monitor goals and objectives for this student's IEP? Can you show me an example of data collection for this student?

Are you satisfied with the progress this student is making? Why? Why not? What would you do if the student were not making progress?

Resources
<p>Do you have the resources required to implement the IEP? If no what do you need and why don't you have it?</p> <p>What would you do if you needed more resources?</p> <p>What do you do to prepare the student and the receiving teacher for the following year?</p>
Communication
<p>How effective is the communication between school personnel regarding this student? How do you communicate with staff?</p> <p>Have you contacted this student's parents this year? If yes, what was the communication about?</p> <p>On a scale of 1 to 4 (1= not effective 4= very effective) how would you rate the communication between you and the parent regarding this student?</p>
Overall Satisfaction
<p>On a scale of 1 to 4 (1= not effective 4= very effective) how effective are the programs and services for this student in supporting positive student outcomes? If it is too soon to tell this year, please respond to the effectiveness of the program last year if you had this student.</p>

Is there additional information you would like to make sure we are aware of regarding this student?



Special Education Program Review- In Depth Review
In Depth Student Review Summary

Student Name and DOB: _____ Grade: _____ School: _____

Reviewer: _____ Date of Review: _____

DATA

1) Files and documents (check all documents reviewed)

- Review of student's confidential file & CREC's file review summary
Case manager schedule
List of data provided by case manager (lesson plans, progress monitoring data, check sheet, communication sheet)

All services identified on the IEP are provided Y or No Explain if no:

2) Observation (completed form attached) date, location, activity _____

Total points _____ out of _____ total applicable indicators given for observation

3) Staff Interview (2 completed forms attached)

A general education and special education teacher/case manager for an "included" student

OR

A special education teacher and a support staff (such as OT, PT, SLP, school psychologist, or paraeducator) if self-contained

Names and roles of interviewed staff

- 1. _____ 2. _____

Parent Interview (completed form attached) Name and date of interview _____

FOR REVIEWER ONLY

After reviewing all the data please rate how effective the programs and services for this student are in supporting positive learning outcomes.

- 0 = not effective
1 = not effective (ineffective in all areas)
2 = slightly effective (effective in some areas, but not most)
3 = moderately effective (effective in most areas)
4 = very effective (effective in all areas)

In Depth Review - Observation Protocol

Activity _____ Location _____ Reviewer: _____

#	Indicators	Little or No Evidence <i>Score pt. = 0</i>	Sufficient Evidence <i>Score pt. = 1</i>	Score <i>0 or 1</i>	Not Applicable (NA)
1	Location in the classroom: The student is seated within the same seating structure as the other students in the classroom.	<i>Student is in a study carrel, separate seat apart from the reg. group, or back of the room.</i>	<i>Student is seated alongside typical peers in the general seating arrangement (i.e., whole class, groups, peer pairs, etc.).</i>		
2	Instruction- Quality: A teacher (general education or special education or both) is the primary instructor for the class for the student (a paraeducator or other adult may be available to assist the student when necessary, but the student is viewed as attentive to the teacher and the teacher is attentive to the student).	<i>Student is being taught by a paraeducator or special ed teacher and is not part of the regular classroom instruction/lesson.</i>	<i>Student is receiving instruction from the teacher or there is co-teaching arrangement where shared teaching is evident.</i>		
3	Engagement- Activity: If included :Student is engaged in the same curricular activity as the other members of the class (the material/instruction may be accommodated or the content/performance accommodated or modified for students needs but these do not change the intent or nature of the activity from the grade level standard) If self-contained: Student is engaged in the specialized activity as directed by teacher lesson plan and IEP.	<i>If included: Student is engaged in a separate unrelated activity or different content area Student's activity is weakly connected to the grade level standard, more superficial in nature. If self-contained: The activity is unrelated to standards, IEP or meaningful instruction</i>	<i>Student is engaged in activity Student's activity is tied into the grade level standard but may be modified or accommodated for in accordance with his/her IEP. Student may have a reduced workload, manipulatives, simplified reading, assistive technology (AT), etc.</i>		

#	Indicators	Little or No Evidence <i>Score pt. = 0</i>	Sufficient Evidence <i>Score pt. = 1</i>	Score <i>0 or 1</i>	(NA)
4	Engagement- on task: Student is actively engaged in the activity and demonstrates some level of understanding of the concept or the application of the skill being instructed.	Student is off-task, not attending to the general ed teacher, preoccupied with something/someone, or self-stimulating behaviors are noted. Student has great difficulty answering questions or	Student answers the teacher's question(s), executes a given task, demonstrates mastery orally, in writing, with manipulatives, or with the use of AT. In a group setting, student		

		executing a given task. Part of a group, but not participating.	actively participates w/ others demonstrating mastery orally, in writing, with manipulative, or with the use of AT.		
5	IEP- Goals and objectives, lesson design: The student's IEP goals and objectives are integrated as part of the lesson design and instructional delivery.	Lesson content unrelated. Little or no evidence of scaffolding of instruction.	Lesson content is directly aligned with IEP objective(s). Or, preteaching of skills, vocab., concepts are noted.		
6	IEP- supplementary aids and services: The student's IEP supplementary aids and services, accommodations, and modifications are applied as appropriate to the curricular activity.	Absence of para support, per IEP. Lack of utilization of the instructional strategies, materials, books, equip., AT, preferred seating, etc. as outlined in IEP. Content is not modified, if applicable. There is little or no attendance to a behavior plan, if required.	Para assistance per IEP. Student utilizes AT, materials, books, equipment, etc. as depicted in IEP for the specific subject area class. Identified instructional strategies are evident. Modifications to work, tests, time, etc. are noted, as applicable. There is adherence to a behavior plan if required for the student.		
7	IEP-specialized instruction: Specialized instruction is evident embedded in the lessons. Either the general ed teacher, the special education teacher and/or paraeducator are provided the specialized instruction services	Support is provided by looking of the student's should or helping them with work.	The student is learning via <u>specific strategies aimed at promoting student independence</u> as related to the IEP goals and objectives.		
8	Paraeducator support: Paraeducator, if applicable, appropriately assists the student without interfering with appropriate peer assistance or developing an overdependence of the student on the assistance of the paraeducator.	Para is positioned directly next to the student and interferes w/ the teacher's ability to directly instruct, reclarify, question, assess or interact w/ the student. Para answers for, or provides the answer to the student. Para does not allow other students to assist or, the child to self-advocate for him/herself.	Para is positioned a comfortable distance from the child allowing for free interaction with peers and the teacher. Para allows the student to ask questions of the teacher or peers. The student is given the opportunity to learn by doing or to make a mistake and may require para assistance to clarify or correct. When not needed, the para fades from the student.		

Total points ____ out of total applicable indicators ____