Internal Special Education Review

North Shore Schools
Discovering Your Dreams

Review Process

- **Survey**
- **Teacher Interviews**
- **Parent Focus Groups**
- **Performance Data Analysis**
- **Analysis of IEP Data**
- **K-12 Learning Walks**
- **Looked for:**
  - **-Themes**
  - **-Patterns**
  - **-Challenges**
- **Suggested Action Steps**

What is special education?

Special Education includes services, programs, and specially designed instruction to meet the individual needs of a student with a disability.

4. How do you define "special education?"

More Details   ☼ Insights

337
Responses

Latest Responses

"Educational services specifically for students with learning or development...

"The education of children in the way they individually learn best. '

"Children need special care'

↻ Update

78 respondents (23%) answered services for this question.

Education for student   support for students
needs of each child   need help   Support for children   emotional needs
Students who need   special education
Education for children   special needs   services   needs of students   learning needs
                    students with disabilities   Children who may need   different needs
individual needs   help students   help my child   unique needs

Legal Foundations

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law that entitles children to special education services if disability significantly impacts access to education and a specially designed program is needed.

IDEA requires FAPE to be provided in the Least Restrictive Environment to the maximum extent possible, which creates a responsibility for schools to serve students in the general education environment, with appropriately inclusive access to grade-level learning, whenever possible.

Part 200 of the Regulations of the New York State Commissioner of Education relates to special education programs and services for students with disabilities.
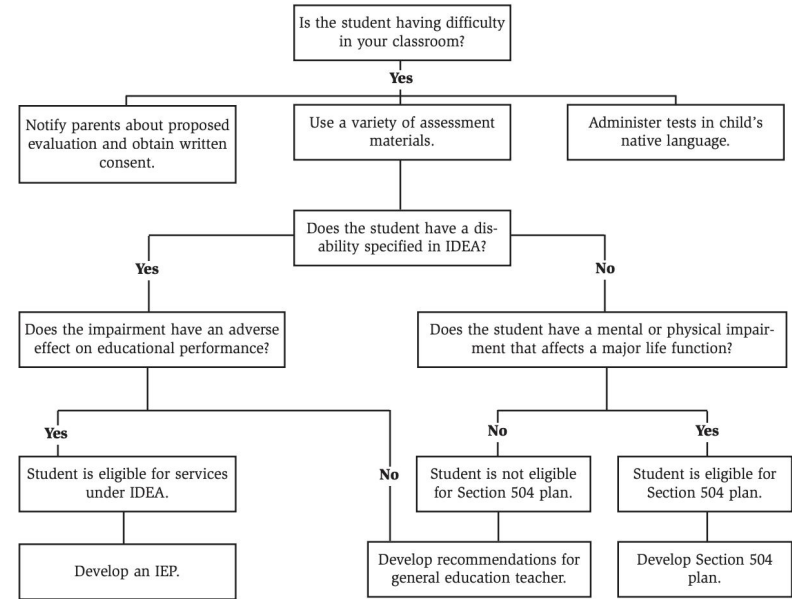
Section 504 is a civil rights statute, rather than a federal, programmatic statute; and thus, the federal government does not provide additional funding for students identified. Section 504 requires that schools, public or private, who receive federal financial assistance for educational purposes, not discriminate against children with "handicaps" (i.e., disabilities).

Schools must provide these students with reasonable accommodations comparable to those provided to their peers under the rulings of Section 504

IEP or 504

The main difference between an IEP and a 504 plan is that an IEP is for students who require special education services, while a 504 plan is for students who do not require special education services but still need accommodations to access the general education curriculum.

Figure 1. Questions to Ask When Determining Appropriate Services

Is the student having difficulty in your classroom?

Yes

Notify parents about proposed evaluation and obtain written consent.

Use a variety of assessment materials.

Administer tests in child's native language.

Does the student have a disability specified in IDEA?

Yes

No

Does the impairment have an adverse effect on educational performance?

Does the student have a mental or physical impairment that affects a major life function?

Yes

No

Yes

Student is eligible for services under IDEA.

No

Student is not eligible for Section 504 plan.

Student is eligible for Section 504 plan.

Develop an IEP.

Develop recommendations for general education teacher.

Develop Section 504 plan.

Note: IDEA = Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (amended 1997); IEP = individualized education program; Section 504 = Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
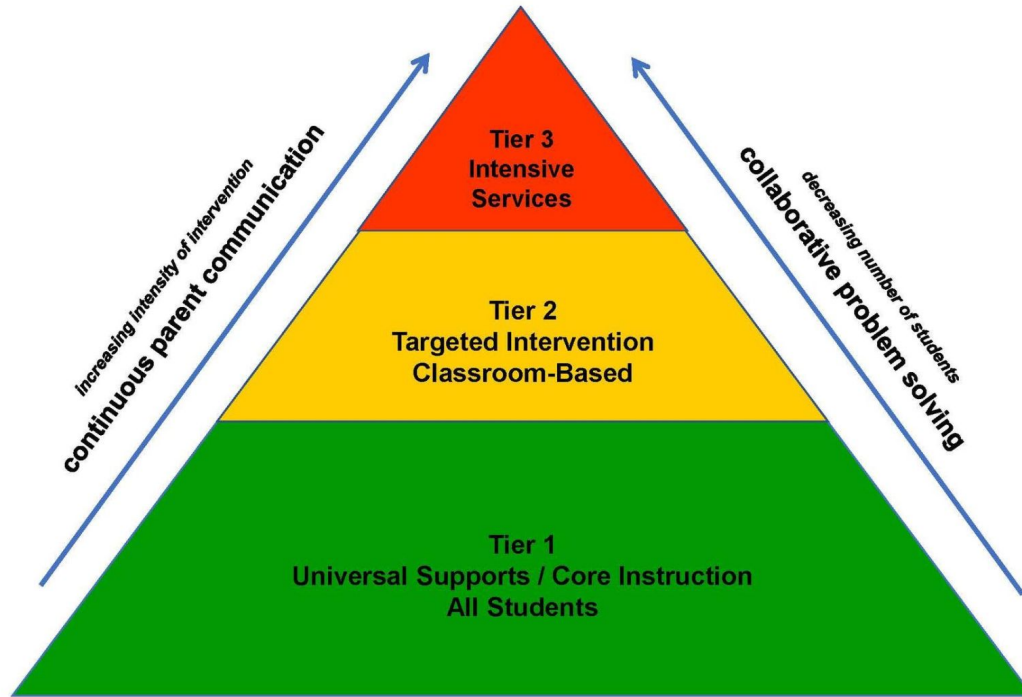
Referral to Special Education

School

- While a parent may make a referral for a special education evaluation at any time, public schools serving students in grades K-5 are required to implement RTI before making a referral.

Parent

- A parent has a right to request a special education or 504 referral at any time.

- Parents have the right to request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) if they disagree with the outcome of the evaluation or if they want to re-evaluate your child before the three-year mark.

Response to Intervention/Multi–Tiered System of Supports

Referral to Special Education

Step 1: Initial Referral for Special Education Services Students suspected of having a disability are referred to a multidisciplinary team called the Committee on Special Education (CSE) or the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE).

Step 2: Individual Evaluation Process The Committee arranges for an evaluation of the student's abilities and needs.

Step 3: Determining Eligibility for Special Education Services Based on evaluation results, the Committee decides if the student is eligible to receive special education services and programs.

Step 4: Individualized Education Program (IEP) If the child is eligible to receive special education services, the Committee develops and implements an appropriate IEP, based on evaluation results, to meet the needs of the student.

Step 5: Annual Review/Reevaluation The IEP is reviewed and, if needed, modified or revised by the Committee at least once a year (annual review).

Special Education Evaluation Process

Psychological Evaluation

An assessment to evaluate verbal and nonverbal cognitive skills, and social-emotional development. It may also include an assessment of basic achievement skills.

Educational Evaluation

An assessment in basic academic subject areas (reading, mathematics, writing) to assess a student's overall achievement and functional performance.

Classroom Observation

An observation in the learning environment or natural setting to gather information on factors that could be influencing a student's performance.

Physical Examination

An assessment of any physical or medical factors that may interfere with the learning process.

Social History

A questionnaire or interview that gathers family and student history in regard to early years of development and family environment.

Speech/Language Evaluation

An assessment for the identification of articulation, language, and communication disorders.

IEP Classification Categories

CLASSIFICATION CATEGORIES:

Part 200 Regulation recognizes 13 classification categories under IDEA. The CSE must consider how the child's educational performance is **adversely affected** due to the disability when determining the most appropriate classification category. The longitudinal data below indicates the largest # of classified students are identified in the following three categories: Learning Disability, Speech-Language Impairment, and Other Health Impairment.

Classification Category	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Autism	47	50	53	51	54
Emotional Disability	15	14	15	17	13
Learning Disability	130	118	131	128	134
Intellectual Disability	5	4	4	4	5
Deafness	0	0	0	0	0
Hearing Impairment	3	3	4	4	5
Speech-Lang. Impairment	104	114	127	109	112
Visual Impairment	0	0	0	0	0
Orthopedic Impairment	0	0	0	0	1
Other Health Impairment	107	98	113	113	129
Multiple Disabilities	7	7	8	7	9
Deaf-Blindness	0	0	0	0	0
Traumatic Brain Injury	0	0	0	0	0

North Shore CSD Special Education Classification Rates

2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
13.7%	13.7%	15.1%	17%	17.5%
418 SWD	407 SWD	454 SWD	429 SWD	462 SWD

Special Education Programs

Out of District Placement	ABA	Life Skills	ILC	ICT	Consultant Teacher	Resource Room	Related Services	Declassified Support Services

Most Restrictive ←————————————————————→ **Least Restrictive**

Special Education Programs

Declassification Support Services

Students who are declassified by the Committee on Special Education generally cease to receive the special education supports indicated on their IEPs. At times, however, the CSE can determine that the student is declassified with specific support services for a time of no more than one school year (typically provided at a reduced rate and frequency). These services may consist of but not limited to consultative supports, speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, counseling, and behavior consultation. In addition, a student may continue to require Testing Accommodations even though the student is declassified. These students would then be eligible to receive their Testing Accommodations through the end of high school. A new IEP is NOT developed every year; rather, the Declassification Document that was first created follows the student through the end of high school.

Most Restrictive

Least Restrictive

Special Education Programs

Related Services
Related services mean developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a student with a disability. Related services include, but are not limited to speech-language pathology, audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, physical therapy, occupational therapy, counseling services.

Most Restrictive ⟵————————————⟶ **Least Restrictive**

Special Education Programs

ICT	Consultant Teacher	Resource Room
Students are intentionally grouped together based on similarity of need for the purpose of receiving specially designed instruction in a general education class, usually daily for the identified class.	Direct CT services is defined as specially designed instruction designed to support a student with a disability or to group of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. The Indirect CT model allows the special education teacher to consult with the general education teacher to assist in adjusting the learning environment and/or modifying their instructional methodology	Specialized supplementary instruction in an individual or small group setting for a portion of the school day.

Most Restrictive ←——————————————→ **Least Restrictive**

Special Education Programs

| Out of District Placement	ABA	Life Skills	ILC
Placement in a specialized setting located outside of the North Shore Schools.	Our intensive special class program is comprised of an 8:1:3 student to teacher ratio.The program incorporates an array of research-based approaches for students with autism spectrum disorders as well as those individuals with multiple disabilities. The program utilizes a multi-disciplinary team approach consisting of a special education teacher, speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, psychologist, behavior consultant, and teacher assistants.	The Life Skills program at the secondary level is intended to meet the needs of some students who are assessed with the New York State Alternate Assessment for Students(NYSAA) for Students with Severe Disabilities. This program provides two main components: ● Special Class (Life Skills) at a staffing ratio of 12:1 for a part of the school day ● a 1:1 aide who accompanies the student throughout the school day. Individuals in the program may be enrolled in a half-day program at Barry Tech Career & Technical School.	This program provides a full-day special education learning environment at a staffing ratio of 15:1 (i.e., a maximum of 15 students to one special education teacher) and a classroom teaching assistant. Students in this program may benefit from spending part of the school day within a regular education classroom.

Most Restrictive ⟵⟶ **Least Restrictive**

Survey Data

1. Which best describes your role in the North Shore Central School District? You may choose more than one role.

More Details

🔵	Parent	249
🟠	Classroom Teacher	52
🟢	Special Education Teacher	28
🔴	Related Service Professional (Ps...	19
🟣	Teaching Assistant	4
🟤	Teaching Aide	4
🟣	Administrator	3
⚫	Parent Member (For CSE Meetin...	3
🟡	Other	1
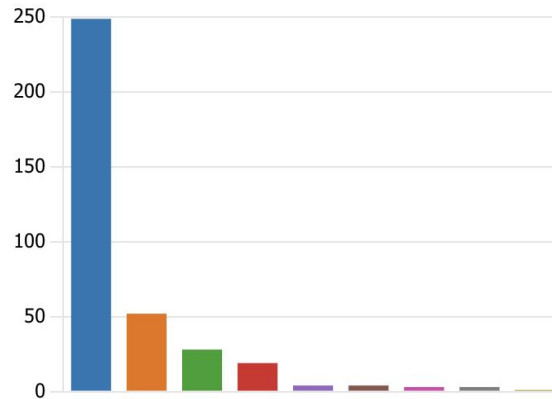
North Shore Students –Statistics by Setting

Setting	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Participation in general education more than 80% of the day	60%	79.4%	79%	90%	91%
Participation in general education less than 40% of the day	<18%	4.7%	3.3%	4.0%	4.8%
In separate schools	<5%	5.7%	5.3%	5.1%	6.0%*

Survey Data

2. Which of the following applies to you? You may choose more than one answer.

More Details

- 🔵 My child receives special educat... 141
- 🟠 My child has a Section 504 plan ... 47
- 🟢 My child does not receive speci... 89
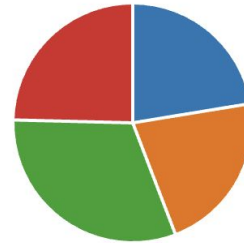- 🔴 I provide special education servi... 88
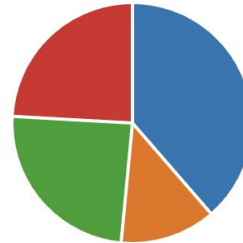
Survey Data

3. What grade levels are you most connected to? You may choose more than one grade level range.

More Details

- 🔵 K-2   102
- 🟠 3-5   99
- 🟢 6-8   142
- 🔴 9-12   112

Survey Data

Survey Data

6. How effective are the following programs related to special education in the North Shore CSD?

More Details

■ Extremely ineffective ■ Somewhat ineffective ■ Neutral ■ Somewhat effective ■ Extremely effective

■ Doesn't Apply to Me

Other related services (occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech language therapy, counseling)

Integrated Co-Teaching

Integrated Co-Teaching

Extremely ineffec...: 3.8%

Somewhat ineffective: 3.6%

Neutral: 10.9%

Somewhat effective: 16.3%

Extremely effective: 42.6%

Doesn't Apply to Me: 22.8%

ILC (special class)

Life Skills

Out of District Placement

Resource Room

100%   0%   100%
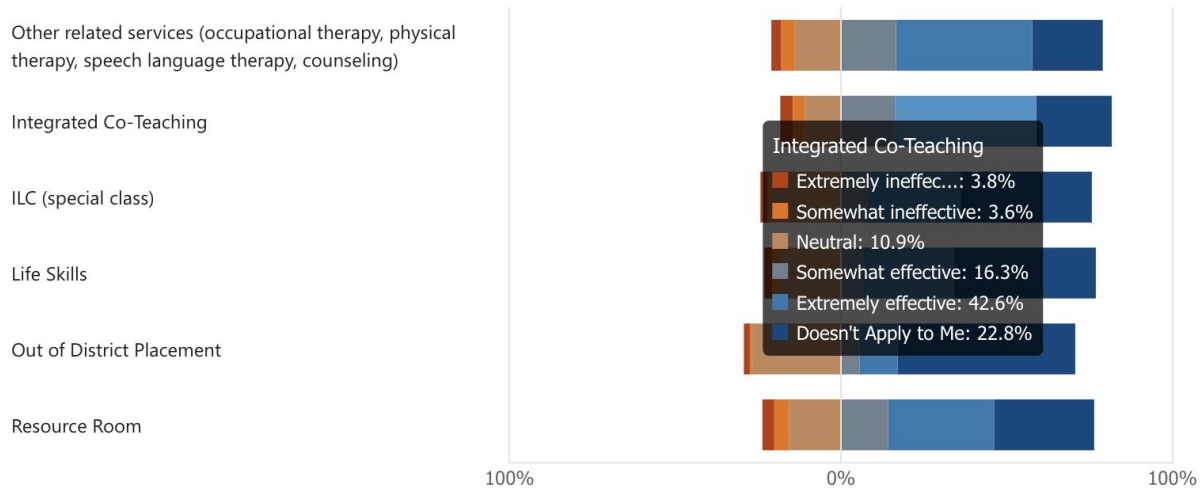
Survey Data

7. How effective were the following aspects in regards to your experience in special education in the North Shore CSD?

More Details

■ Extremely ineffective ■ Somewhat ineffective ■ Neutral ■ Somewhat effective ■ Extremely effective
■ Doesn't Apply to Me

Instructional materials used

Learning activities used

Use of technologies

Ongoing monitoring of student progress

Student movement towards independence

Preventing conflicts between special education services and electives or extracurriculars

Use of technologies
Extremely ineffec...: 3.6%
Somewhat ineffective: 5.9%
Neutral: 18.6%
Somewhat effective: 20.4%
Extremely effective: 30.8%
Doesn't Apply to Me: 20.7%

100%   0%   100%
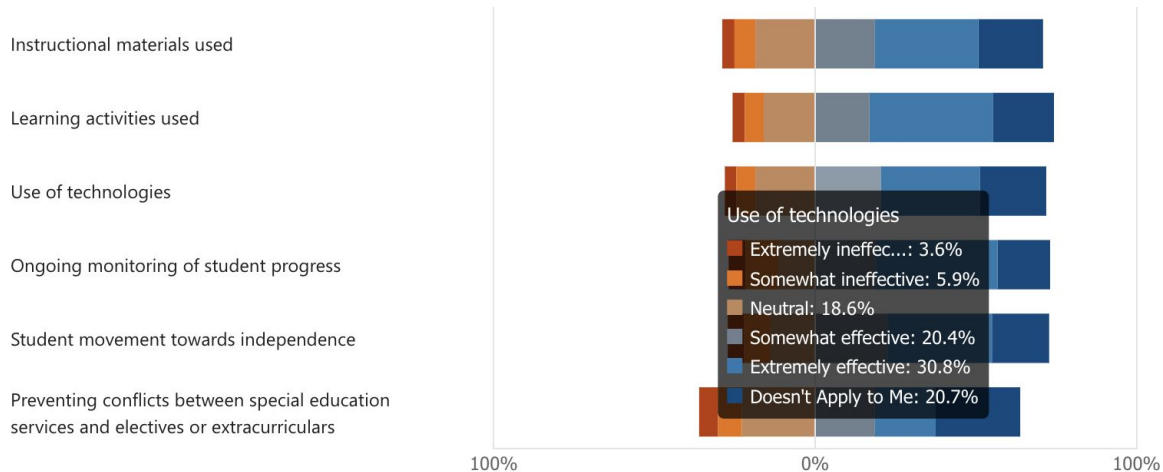
Survey Data

8. What are the strongest aspects of the North Shore CSD special education program?

More Details   Insights

337
Responses

Latest Responses

"The teachers and service providers in this school district are very compete...

"There seems to be a clear line of communication between NS and NS Sept...

"instructional supports and services designed to meet the individual needs "

In terms of elementary schools - that most of the staff and providers are very caring, and that most grades (k-5) have ICT in each school. The district also does a fairly good job in making sure that children with disabilities feel included.

The services available, the qualified providers

The care and support of all teachers. Everyone working towards the betterment of my son. All aspects documented and evaluated when needed.

Survey Data

How we help students with behavioral needs that do not have IEP's

Forced advancement and it's impact on classifying students that would otherwise be making adequate progress.

Educating non-special ed teachers about how to work with special-ed students in regular educational classrooms (beyond what is provided in IEP).

Transitions between schools and practitioners. The handoff needs to be reviewed.

9. What aspects of the North Shore CSD special education program warrant further review, reflection and improvement?

More Details   💡 Insights

336
Responses

Latest Responses

"I would love it if a copy of my child's IEP were sent to me and parents were...

"The level of integration between special education students and their neur...

"not sure"

↻ Update

86 respondents (**25%**) answered **students** for this question.

students into programs   opportunities for students
students what they need   education students   number of students
education teachers   **students**   child   students in their class
students in ICT   special Ed   student is not
Teachers   ed students
child really needs   special education   need for more services
needs of the students   students per IEP
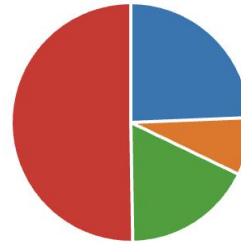communication about the student

Survey Data

10. If you have referred your child for a special education evaluation, who provided you with guidance to make that decision? You may choose more than one answer.

More Details

- 🔵 Educator within the North Shore...   94
- 🟠 Another parent   30
- 🟢 Professional working outside of ...   68
- 🔴 Does not apply to me   194

Survey Data

11. What questions do you have about the North Shore CSD special education program?

More Details   💡 Insights

337
Responses

Latest Responses

"I am interested in understanding more about the programs available to m...

"What are you doing to increase the integration and awareness of this form...

"none"

↻ Update

109 respondents (**32**%) answered **None** for this question.

education teachers · education program · services for students · student body · parent · school · education services · education students · child · **None** · student · district · services available · student IEP · services · special education · education department · special ed · special needs · ICT classes

How does a student get referred if not by the parent

How can we better support students with significant gaps in foundational skills?

Need to understand programming at the secondary level.

What is the district's vision for their special education program and how is it monitored to ensure that vision is being met?

Survey Data

I would offer instruction to regular ed teachers so they could gain perspective on the challenges special ed students face and how best to address those challenges in our classrooms.

More options and pathways in high school, or better communication about diverse pathways.

More consistency in the expectations around communication so it is more streamlined and teachers know what to expect and who to expect that information from.

12. If you could change anything about the North Shore CSD special education program, what would it be?

More Details   ☼ Insights

336
Responses

Latest Responses

"I am very satisfied with the program and grateful for the amazing progress…

"To understand that special education students and families get to be a par…

"none"

↻ Update

65 respondents (**19**%) answered **student** for this question.

students and have experience
ICT for those students   child's needs   grade level   students with the same needs
special needs   children
time **student**   services   parents and student
classified students   special ed   teachers   support for students
students and families   school   special education
program and its students   education students

IEP Review

| Area	Recommendation
Present Levels of Performance and Individual Needs Statements	❖ **Present levels of performance need to be written with greater specificity as it relates to the academic or functional skill to be addressed in the annual goal.** ❖ **Parental concerns and input in relation to the student's needs across all domains (including academic, social-emotional and physical development) should be clearly stated or indicated in this section of the IEP.**
Annual Goals	❖ **Annual Goals should be clearly aligned to the present levels of performance statements** ❖ **Annual goals need to include measurable language that easily interpreted by the teachers and parent**
Special Education Programs and Services	❖ **Develop group size criteria for related services based on the student's identified needs and proposed annual goals.** ❖ **Program modifications need to be written in measurable language that is universally understood by teachers and parents including measurable frequency and duration intervals.**

IEP Review (Continued)

Area	Recommendation
Measurable Postsecondary Goals and Transition Needs	❖ **Increase student voice by including comprehensive information related to their course of study specific to those activities that will better prepare them for post-secondary education or employment**
Coordinated Set of Transition Activities	❖ **The specific team members (teacher, guidance counselor, related service provider, etc.) and their role in the child's transition planning and process should be clearly delineated.**

IEP

- Support a student to participate in the general education curriculum
- Incrementally prepares the student for adult living
- Identifies how the resources of school need to be configured to support the student's needs
- Provides an important accountability tool
- Guides the provision of specially designed instruction
- Ensure a strategic and coordinated approach to address a student's needs

Learning Walks

- Well planned and intentional instruction
- Models of co-teaching being used
- Variety in student engagement, behaviors and independence
- Powerful differentiation in ABA & ILC classes
- Teachers highly knowledgeable of students
- Variety in expectations and content of focus across the same program
- Tremendous variety of students within the same program within a school
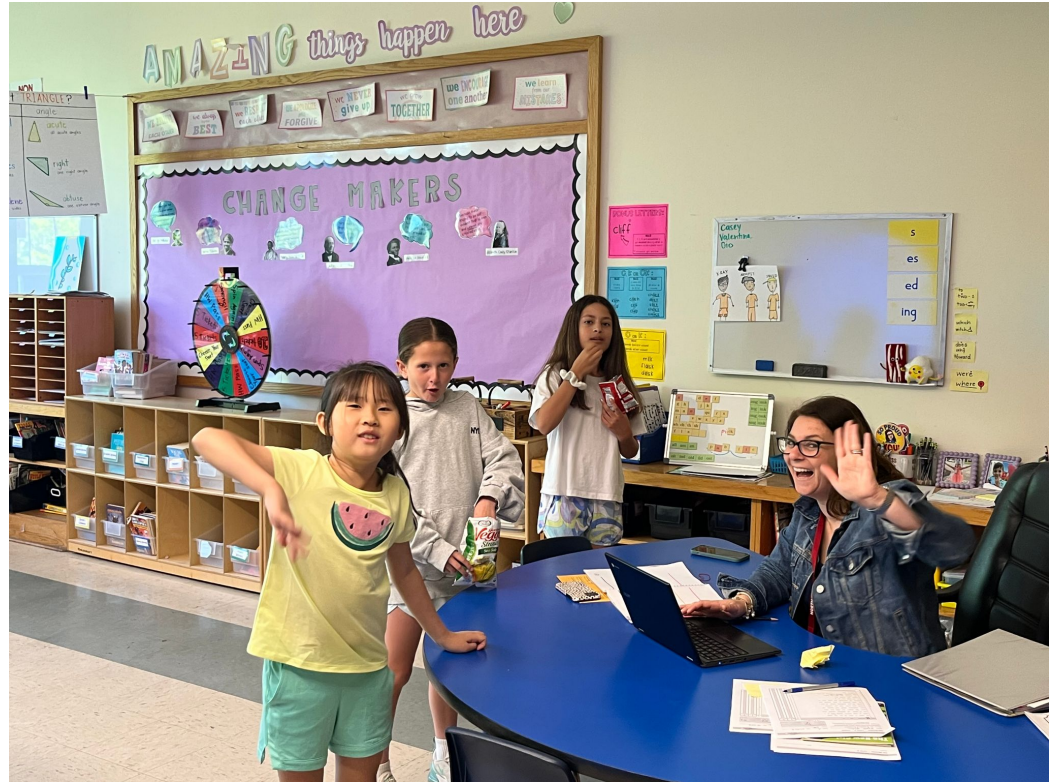
Performance Data

School Year	# of SWD*	Graduation %	Advanced Reg.	Regents	Local	Non-Diploma
2019-2020	34	79%	(10) 29%	(17) 50%	0	0
2020-2021	23	83%	(15) 65%	(4) 17%	0	0
2021-2022	36	92%	(14) 39%	(19) 53%	0	0
2022-2023	28	96%	(14) 50%	(13) 46%	0	0

Performance Data (2023)

Assessment	Students with an IEP	All Students
ELA 3	44%	79%
ELA 4	60%	88%
ELA 5	40%	88%
ELA 6	46%	79%
ELA 7	33%	84%
ELA 8	64%	89%

Performance Data (2023)

Assessment	Students with an IEP	All Students
Math 3	64%	83%
Math 4	62%	91%
Math 5	71%	94%
Math 6	57%	88%
Math 7	47%	89%
Math 8	100%	79%

Performance Data (2023)

Assessment (Regents Exams)	Students with an IEP	All Students
Algebra	100%	100%
Living Environment	73%	93%
Geometry	74%	89%
Earth Science	85%	97%
Global History	76%	97%
Algebra 2	100%	99%
US History	100%	100%
English	100%	99%
Chemistry	44%	92%
Physics	56%	55%

Interview & Focus Group Data Themes

- Communication
- Clarity
- Early Intervention
- Consistency
- Progress Reporting/Monitoring
- Foundational Skills
- Training

Interview & Focus Group Data Themes

- ## Communication
  - Caring and knowledgeable teachers, staff and administrators

  - Some delayed responses to requests

  - Reports and draft IEPs vary in return time and timeline before meetings

  - Inconsistent progress reporting (amount and style) on IEP goals and general education course performance

  - Need for more opportunities for providers and parents to communicate across team and between buildings
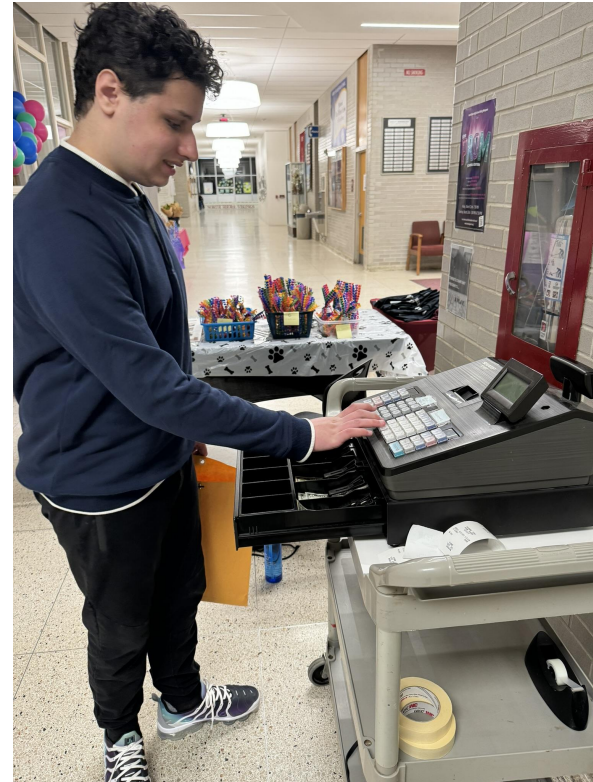
Interview & Focus Group Data Themes

- Clarity
  - Clarity and knowledge of processes and programs and the path forward (UPK-12)
  - Clarity on pre-referral services
  - Some delayed responses to requests
  - Reports and draft IEPs vary in return time and timeline before CSE meetings
  - Inconsistent progress reporting on IEP goals and general education course performance
  - Options for different course/graduation pathways

Interview & Focus Group Data Themes

- ## Early Intervention
  - Students are well known and have a rich experience

  - Challenges with CPSE services through Nassau County

  - Need to use more data in CPSE to CSE (and Pre-K to K transitions)

  - Need for more related services (BLS)push- in supports in Kindergarten

  - Explore the elementary schedule to look for more consistency and unstructured time
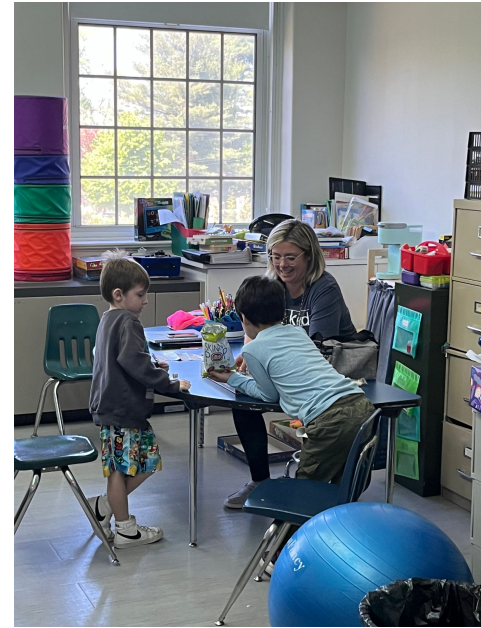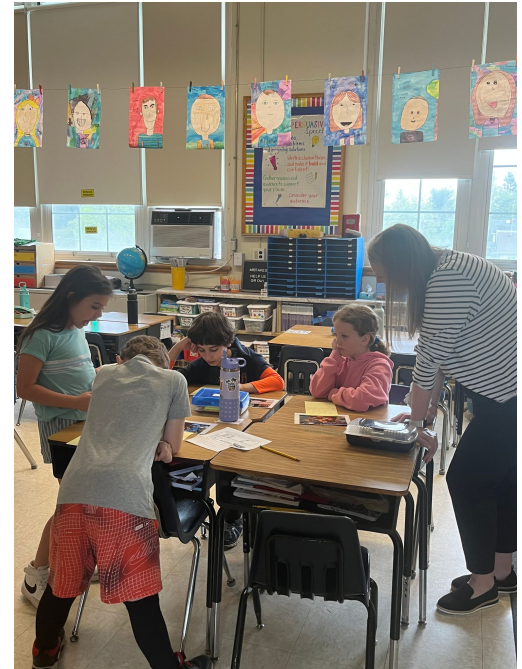
Interview & Focus Group Data Themes

- **Consistency**
  - Offerings and services are generous and the District is consistently willing to identify students and customize programs

  - Lack of consistency in approach within the same program (i.e. resource room, ICT)

  - Full day ICT does not exist in every elementary grade in every school

  - Desire for a profile of a student for each program (e.g. ILC, ICT)

  - Many different approaches to (and expectations for) reading, writing and foundational skills creates confusion for students

  - Need for co-teachers to stay in the same content area or course

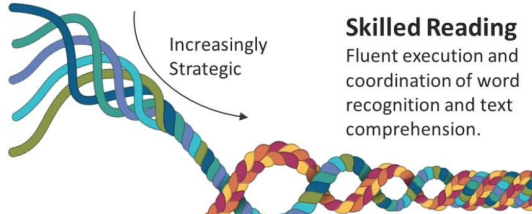# Interview & Focus Group Data Themes

- Progress Monitoring/Reporting

  - Desire for the use of more actionable data that is shared amongst a team of teachers and with parents

  - Proactive sharing of shorter team goals based on data

  - Data tends to be vague and not always helpful

  - Need for regular meetings to prevent surprises with student performance

Interview & Focus Group Data Themes

Language Comprehension
- Background Knowledge
- Vocabulary Knowledge
- Language Structures
- Verbal Reasoning
- Literacy Knowledge

Word Recognition
- Phonological Awareness
- Decoding (and Spelling)
- Sight Recognition

Increasingly Strategic

Increasingly Automatic

Skilled Reading
Fluent execution and coordination of word recognition and text comprehension.

Scarborough, 2011

- Foundational Skills
  - Desire for more available executive functioning and study skills
  - Clear and consistent pathways for literacy and math skills to make transitions to secondary school more successful

Interview & Focus Group Data Themes

- Training
  - Professional learning in differentiation and models of co-teaching for all teachers

  - Training needed on how to handle behavioral and emotional needs

  - Training on District's approach and policies to progress monitoring, reporting, timelines for sending information, and IEP writing.

  - Training for all support staff

  - Training in specialized disabilities

  - Parent training and education on all items

Overarching Goals (Precision)

- Proactive Communication
- Profile and Process Clarity
- Primary Interventions
- Program Consistency
- Progress Reporting/Monitoring
- Promoting Foundational Skills
- Professional Learning

Our Strengths

- The tremendous care, concern and knowledge of our teachers

- The ability to tailor programs and services to each individual student

- The willingness to classify and provide any resource needed for students

- The professionalism of our teachers, staff and administration to innovate and think outside of the box and constantly reinvent programs and approaches

- The collaboration of our faculty with one another

- Our inclusive spirit with all opportunities at North Shore (electives, extracurriculars, athletics, the arts)

Suggested Actions

1. Create a map of all special education programs and procedures that is easy to understand

2. Convene (and tape record) a special education parent university that explains all processes and procedures as well as programs available and post this to the North Shore website.

3. Design (and hold training in) communication protocols (with timelines) for the following:
   a. Progress Monitoring and Proactive Feedback
   b. Pre-Meeting Communication
   c. Transition Periods
   d. Written Precision (IEPs, Goals, Progress)

4. Create profiles of a student in each program (and common goals for each program) offered by the District

5. Create precise entry and exit criteria for each special education program or service

Suggested Actions

6. Develop a professional learning and supervision plan that includes the following:
   - Differentiating and Universal Design for Learning (All Teachers)
   - Co-Teaching Models
   - Best practices for specific disabilities
   - IEP Goal Writing
   - English Language Learners and Special Education
   - Training for paraprofessionals
   - Behavior and social-emotional learning training

7. Design a plan to bring more resources to the youngest Vikings to enhance early intervention and obtain feedback from students at all ages about the Special Education program.

8. Create a curriculum framework for foundational skills and expectations (UPK-5) vertically and approaches to reading and writing 6-12

9. Use the new MTSS (RtI) Plan to create a consistent approach to pre-referral intervention across the District and a consistent IST Meeting Protocol

10. Examine existing programs to see if there is a need for additional special education programs within the North Shore Schools
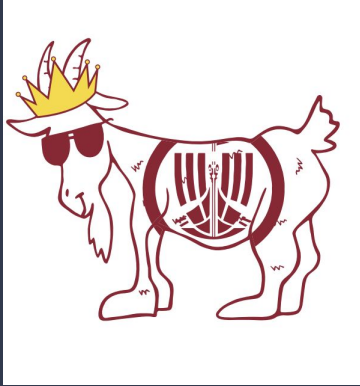
Suggested Actions

11. Consider and clarify different options for graduation pathways

12. Redesign the existing workflow and responsibility patterns in the Special Education Department

13. Hire outside consultants to train/teach on specific actions listed above

14. Explore possible new tools for universal screening

15. Create a bank of diverse (but research based) interventions that can be used when progress monitoring shows a lack of growth

16. Develop an annual self assessment plan

17. Forge a strong parent, teacher, admin collaboration

Resources

North Shore Special Education Department
https://northshoreschools.org/ed-programs/special-education.html

North Shore SEPTA
https://northshoreschools.org/23Oct/SEPTA-Webpage-with-2023-24-Executive-Board-10-23.pdf

NYS Education Department
https://www.nysed.gov/special-education

Understood
https://www.understood.org/en

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https://ldaamerica.org/disability_type/learning-disabilities/