

TASK FORCE REPORT

prepared for

Greenwich Public Schools



prepared by



December 4, 2019

Task Force Process

INTRODUCTION

Below are the notes from the Task Force meeting of Nov 18, 2019. Thank you all for your hard work, your concentration, and your attention to the task. The notes are organized according to the three major areas of concern on which the Task Force concentrated their energy:

- Interventions
- Assessment/evaluation & the PPT Meeting Process
- IEP Implementation

The group offered strengths and challenges in each of these areas of concerns as they might be the source of conflict or disputes in the District.

For each of these areas of concern, the Facilitators from Key2Ed have first simply written out the notes from the Group Memory that the Task Force generated. No changes were made except for a few spots where there were some misspellings. Below those notes, Key2Ed Facilitators have organized the comments in a chart under the categories of Results, Process, and Relationships, and then we have combined some of the items we felt were redundant and/or related to each other.

Please read through the charts, and compare these with the original notes to ensure the charts capture the issues accurately and efficiently. Please let us know anything we didn't capture accurately.

IMPRESSIONS

A theme throughout the comments provided by the Task Force members is that there appear to be pockets of strengths and excellence, and pockets of challenges where there are areas that need some improvement.

The Task Force members offered comments across the three areas of concern regarding the competence of staff.

In the area of concern regarding Interventions (RTI/MTSS), there were many more comments offered that identified strengths in the category of Process, and interestingly, there were many more issues identified under the category of Process that were seen as challenges.

In reviewing the charts for comments regarding the strengths of Evaluations/Assessment & the PPT Meeting, there were more strengths identified in the Process category, followed closely by the number of strengths under the Relationships category. When the Task Force identified challenges in the area of Evaluations/Assessment & the PPT Meeting, there were many more challenges in the category of Process, with Relationships and Results virtually tied for items identified.

In looking at the charts containing the information generated by the Task Force, it appears that the major area of concern where Results posed challenges was in Implementing the IEP. Under the area of concern for Implementing the IEP, there appeared to be an equal number of challenges under Results, Process, and Relationships. Under strengths for implementing the IEP, it appears that there were clearly many strengths in the Process category.

In looking at the Relationships challenges in all areas of concerns, it appears that the issues stem largely from communication, both miscommunication and lack of communication between and among school and District staff and parents and families. These communication issues appear to lead to misunderstandings and lack of understanding between and among school and District staff and parents and families.

Task Force Minutes

Task Force Meeting: **November 11, 2019 6:00pm – 9:00pm**

INTERVENTIONS (RTI/MTTS)

Pockets of Strengths

- All schools have been trained in PBIS - P
- Timeline of the process of interventions - P
- Positive school culture - L
- Accountability for general education teachers/differentiation - R
- Data collection during intervention - P
- Analyze and identify students who need intervention - P
- Promotes shared responsibility and resources and collaboration - P
- Collaboration with external partners - P
- Parents get affirmation and support- L
- Reading screening interventions/process are improving – P

Strengths: Interventions (RTI/MTSS)		
Results	Process	Relationships
Accountability for general education teachers/ differentiation of instruction	All schools have been trained in PBIS	Positive school culture
	Timeline and data collection regarding the process of interventions	Parents get affirmation and support
	Analyze and identify students who need intervention	
	Promotes shared responsibility and resources, as well as collaboration with external partners	
	Reading screening interventions/ process are improving	

Pockets of Challenges

- Length of Interventions - P
- Type of Interventions tried does not change - P
- Parent lack of understanding of tiers of intervention - P
- Parent lack of understanding of navigating the system - P
- Behavior goes unaddressed - R
- Shortage of staff to address interventions - P
- Math interventions - R
- Lack of understanding between interventions and the special-ed process - P
- Consistency across the district - P
- Unsure of who is in charge of interventions - P
- Inconsistent process across the district – P

Challenges: Interventions (RTI/MTTS)		
Results	Process	Relationships
Behavior goes unaddressed	Length of Interventions	
Math interventions	Type of Interventions tried does not change	
	Parents lack understanding about tiers of intervention and how to navigate the system/intervention process	
	Shortage of staff to address interventions	
	Lack of understanding between interventions and the special-ed process	
	Inconsistent process across the district	
	Unsure of who is in charge of interventions	

INITIAL EVALUATIONS/ASSESSMENT/PPT MEETING

Pockets of Strengths

- Competent evaluation team – R
- Quality communication before results and with results – L
- Use of laymen’s terms – P
- Highly specialized – R
- Thorough evaluations – R
- Personalized evaluations – L
- Good communication among PPT team members (Professional and Respectful) – L
- Communication before PPT meetings – ongoing – school staff not limiting time to discuss the child – L
- Parent attendance and child attendance at meetings – P
- Active student participation as appropriate – P
- Triennial evaluations – school-based teams are thorough and confident – specific with assessment tools – R
- Professional development re: assessment tools – P
- Bi-lingual evaluations internally (Spanish/Portuguese) – P
- Translation is provided at PPT – P
- Transition meetings between schools – P

Strengths: Initial Evaluations/Assessment/PPT Meeting		
Results	Process	Relationships
Highly specialized, competent, thorough & confident evaluation teams	Use of laymen’s terms	Personalized evaluations
	Parent attendance and child attendance and participation at meetings as appropriate	Good communication among PPT team members characterized by professionalism and respect throughout the evaluation process (before, during & after), and with no time limits on child-centered discussions
	Professional development re: assessment tools	
	Translation provided at PPT and bilingual evaluations done internally	
	Transition meetings between schools	

Pockets of Challenges

- Inconsistencies among schools regarding the PPT process - P
- Inconsistencies among schools regarding the knowledge of administration - P
- Some school administration lack of understanding of special education law - P
- Lack of knowledge of child needs at middle school - R
- Lack of parent understanding of PPT process and document – not well explained - P
- Inconsistencies of team process to meet specific needs of the child - P
- Time - P
- Sharing evaluation results in a timely manner - P
- Recommendations to be included in evaluation report - R
- Evaluators not a part of PPT team in making recommendations - P
- In PPT, nothing changes from draft – parents feel pre-determination - L
- Lack of collaboration - L
- Translation in PPT meetings - P
- IEP is not individualized - R
- Scheduling for evaluations/assessments/PPT meetings - P
- Different levels with different schedule options - P
- Language vague in IEP – P

Challenges: Initial Evaluations/Assessment/PPT Meeting		
Results	Process	Relationships
Lack of knowledge of student needs at middle school	Inconsistencies among schools regarding the PPT process, and the knowledge of administration regarding special education	In PPT, nothing changes from draft – parents feel pre-determination
Recommendations to be included in evaluation report	Lack of parent understanding of PPT process and the IEP document	Lack of collaboration
IEP is not individualized	Time and scheduling issues for evaluations/ assessments & PPT meetings at the different levels	Parents feel the IEP document isn't well explained
	Vague Language in IEP	
	Evaluators not a part of PPT team in making recommendations	
	Sharing evaluation results in a timely manner	
	Translation in PPT meetings	

IMPLEMENTING IEP DOCUMENT

Pockets of Strengths

- Program options and resources - P
- Adequate system for sharing IEP document for people that are implementing - P
- Knowledgeable staff - R
- Flexibility in revising IEP's as necessary - P
- Comments added to progress reports – informs parents and staff – helps with accountability - P
- Partnership with community providers - L
- Inclusion/flexibility re: push in services - P
- Teachers are flexible in trying new strategies - P
- Communication fluid – L

Strengths: Implementing IEP Document		
Results	Process	Relationships
Knowledgeable staff	Program options and resources	Partnership with community providers
	Adequate system for sharing IEP document for staff that are implementing	Communication fluid
	Flexibility in revising IEPs as necessary and for teachers trying new strategies	
	Comments added to progress reports – informs parents and staff – helps with accountability	
	Inclusion/ flexibility re: push in services	

Pockets of Challenges

- Accommodations for district or statewide assessment - P
- Lack of understanding of goals progress and district testing and state testing – R
- Parent confusion re: results of state testing - L
- Growth vs scores - R
- Self-contained programs for children with autism - R
- Lack of addressing sensory and social skills issues of students with autism - R
- Lack of understanding re students with special needs - L
- Transition from a self-contained class to not a class not self-contained (ex: Pre-k to k) - P
- Lack of training for those working with kids with autism - P
- Space and setting issues in schools - P
- Meeting specific student needs re: timing/needs/schedule - R
- Lack of understanding from staff and parents re: homogeneous vs heterogeneous grouping/push in vs pull out options/inclusion vs self-contained - L
- Social implications of child's program – L

Challenges: Implementing IEP Document		
Results	Process	Relationships
Lack of understanding of goals progress and district testing and state testing	Accommodations for district or statewide assessment	Parent confusion re: results of state testing
Growth vs scores	Lack of training for those working with kids with autism	Lack of understanding re students with special needs
Limited and/or lack of self-contained programs for children with autism	Transition from a self-contained class to less restrictive environment (from a self-contained class to a class that isn't a self-contained program, ex: Pre-k to k)	Lack of understanding from staff and parents re: homogeneous vs heterogeneous grouping/push in vs pull out options/inclusion vs self-contained
Lack of addressing sensory and social skills issues for students with autism	Space and setting issues in schools	Social implications of student's program
Meeting specific student needs re: timing/ needs/ schedule		