

# Princeton Public Schools

Presentation to the Board of Education

Princeton Board of Education

*June 15, 2021*

# Agenda

## Introductions

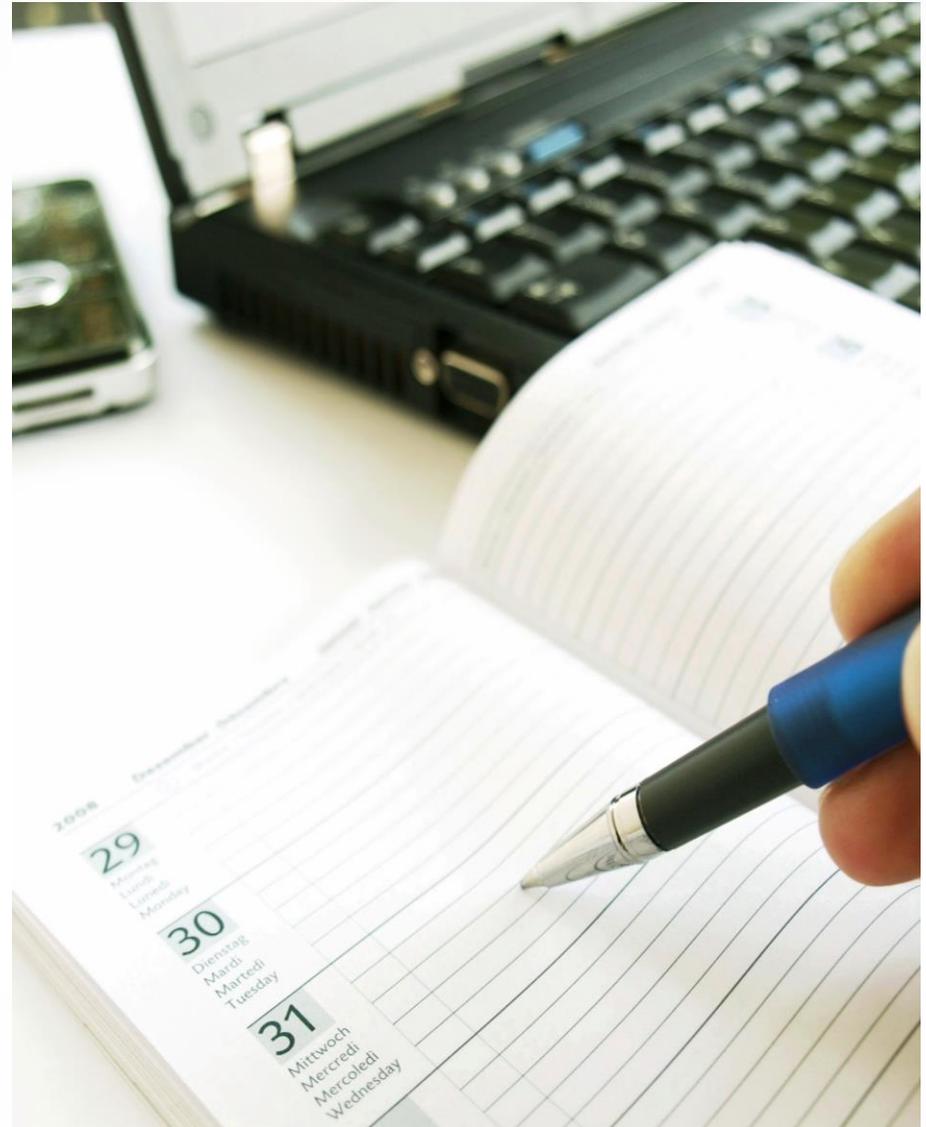
Welcome

PCG Overview—Subject Matter  
Expertise Plus Processes

## PCG Process

Guiding Questions, Practices, and  
Approach

Strengths, Opportunities, and  
Recommendations



# Introduction of Core Project Team

## Matthew Korobkin, Project Director

**Background** – Former Special Education Officer for Strategic Planning and Evaluation, Office of the Secretary of Education, Delaware Department of Education; former special education teacher.

**Expertise** – Special Education strategic planning, policy creation, and implementation; organizational leadership and design; creation of accountability systems; stakeholder engagement

**Project Roles** – Project oversight; Facilitation; Stakeholder outreach



## Jennifer Meller, Ed.D., Associate Manager, Subject Matter Expert

**Background** – Former Special Education Operations Director, School District of Philadelphia, Special Education Subject Matter Expert. National lead for PCG's special education consulting services.

**Expertise** – Special Education policies and procedures, research design, business process mapping, facilitation, stakeholder engagement, data analysis and use, special education program evaluation

**Project Roles** – Project oversight; Facilitation; Stakeholder outreach



# Introduction of Core Project Team - continued

## Jerry Petroff, Ph.D, Subject Matter Expert

**Background** – Professor and Executive Director at the Center on Sensory and Complex Needs, The College of New Jersey (TCNJ); former administrator at the New Jersey Department of Education.

**Expertise** – Virtual classroom observations, assessment and evaluation, data analysis, client engagement.

**Project Roles** – Conducting and providing interrater reliability on classroom observations.



## Matthew Scott, Project Support

**Background** – Education management experience specializing in accreditation, strategic planning, program quality review, learning assessment processes, and education policy

**Expertise** – Project management, data analysis, client engagement

**Project Roles** – Project coordination, research, and data analysis for program reviews



# About Public Consulting Group (PCG)

- Founded in 1986 with a mission-driven focus to provide **solutions that matter**
- Focus exclusively on improving the impact of human services, health, and education agencies at the local, state and federal level
- Employ over 2,500 fulltime staff members, over 50 US offices, and 9 offices across Canada and UK
- Extensive experience transforming cultures and delivering outcomes in the areas of mental health and education
- Current and recent clients include 21 state education agencies plus the District of Columbia, 18 of the 25 largest urban U.S. school districts



# Providing Special Education Solutions that Matter

## PCG supports over 5,600 school districts across the country:

### National Solutions:

- Los Angeles Public Schools
- Chicago Public Schools
- Detroit Public Schools
- Baltimore County Public Schools
- Arlington Public Schools, VA
- Prince William County Public Schools, VA
- Boston Public Schools
- Massachusetts Department of Education
- Indiana Department of Education

### Local Solutions:

- Chappaqua Central School District
- West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District
- Newark Public Schools
- Trenton Public Schools
- Monroe Township Public Schools
- Rockaway Township School District
- Waterford Township School District
- Northern Valley Regional School District

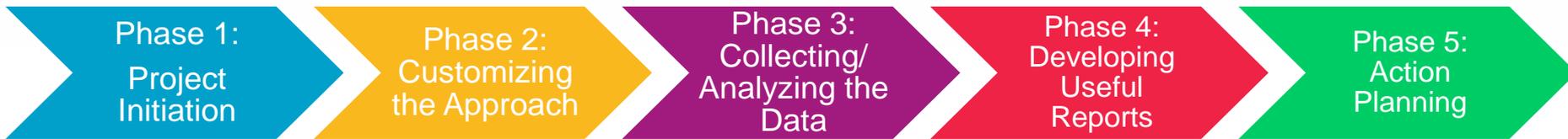


# A Collaborative Approach to Program Reviews

- Our reviews are **collaborative** by design, and we work side-by-side with districts to help define the challenges, specify goals and develop effective, outcome-driven strategies.
- We help answer **essential questions** about student progress and program effectiveness, pinpoint specific areas of strength, and identify improvement targets.
- Our review approach is **multidimensional**, emphasizes the participation of multiple stakeholders, and includes both quantitative and qualitative data collection. It is grounded in our experience and research in best practices.



# Building the Foundations for Change



Our approach helps to build the foundations for the desired change by:

- Answering the guiding questions
- Activating a structured engagement process with leadership and key stakeholders
- Conducting extensive research and data collection to determine the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities for improvement
- Creating useful reports - document current state and inventory promising best practices
- Facilitating action planning
- Providing implementation guidance
- Scheduling periodic check-in to monitor progress and providing subject matter expertise consulting and coaching support to guide practice and implementation

# Guiding Questions

Guiding Questions	PPS RFP Specifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How does the district's continuum of special education services and general education experiences support a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are inclusive practices employed, and do these practices support students throughout their school day and lead to access to higher level and college prep courses?</li> <li>• How does PPS support students throughout transition planning for post-secondary education and employment?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Offerings/Continuum of Services</li> <li>• Supports and Resources That Ensure Inclusive Programming</li> <li>• Special Education Code N.J.A.C. 6A:14 (Monitoring and Compliance)</li> <li>• Professional Development for Staff</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How are funds budgeted, and what are the major cost drivers?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does PPS special education spending compare to peer districts?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budgetary Analysis and Benchmarking</li> </ul>



# Guiding Questions

Guiding Questions	PPS RFP Specifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How does PPS measure effectiveness using qualitative and quantitative data about students, from families, and from educators to make long term and systematic improvements?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does PPS school and District administration foster a culture that is focused on improving outcomes?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistency in Procedure, Process, and Programming, and Articulation Between Schools</li> <li>• Professional Development for Staff</li> <li>• Parent Relations</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>To what extent is PPS effective in implementation of co-teaching models and efforts to meet the needs of students in the least restrictive environment?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What factors are considered and implemented to support inclusive programming?</li> <li>• Is effectiveness consistent across varying sub-groups?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Education Code N.J.A.C 6A;14 (Monitoring and Compliance)</li> <li>• Professional Development for Staff</li> </ul>



# Triangulated Approach



## Outcome Analysis

- *Student Population and Program Placement Trends*
- *Student Achievement Trends*

## Organizational & Program Analysis

- *Data, Policy & Practice Review*
- *Program Analysis*
- *Staffing Analysis*

## Research & Practice Literature

- *Findings and recommendations grounded in current literature and aligned to evidence-based, industry best practices*

# Data Collection Methods

The following methods will be used to collect data on the district’s identified focus areas. Protocols will be aligned to the subcategories within each section.

Data Collection Categories	Interviews, Focus Groups, and Classroom Walkthroughs	Student File Review Case Studies	Data, Policy, and Practices Review
1) Staffing and Organization	X		X
2) Quality and Effectiveness of Special Education Teacher Pedagogy and Support	X		X
3) Results Driven Accountability – Review of Outcomes for Students with Disabilities	X	X	X
4) Review of the Provision of FAPE in the Special Education Program	X	X	X
6) Review of Operating Procedures	X	X	X



# **Pre-referral, Referral, Eligibility, and Child Find**

# Strengths and Opportunities

## Strengths

- The district has attempted to further study the root causes for its prior disproportionality finding
- District created I&RS for the high school
- District has site leaders responsible for I&RS
- ICR courses offered in all grades at the middle school

## Opportunities

- Need for a consistent, districtwide MTSS
- Need for a consistent, districtwide I&RS
- Need for a consistently aligned MTSS, I&RS, and AIS to support struggling students
- Need for ownership of pre-referral initiatives within offices outside of special education
- Students can receive AIS services and have an Individualized Student Acceleration Plan -- this could potentially be confusing for student who may need IEPs
- No districtwide positive behavior system
- ICR only offered in courses "required to graduate" at the HS
- IEP PLAAFP statements, IEP goals, accommodations, and progress reports need attention.
- Disproportionality

# Recommendations

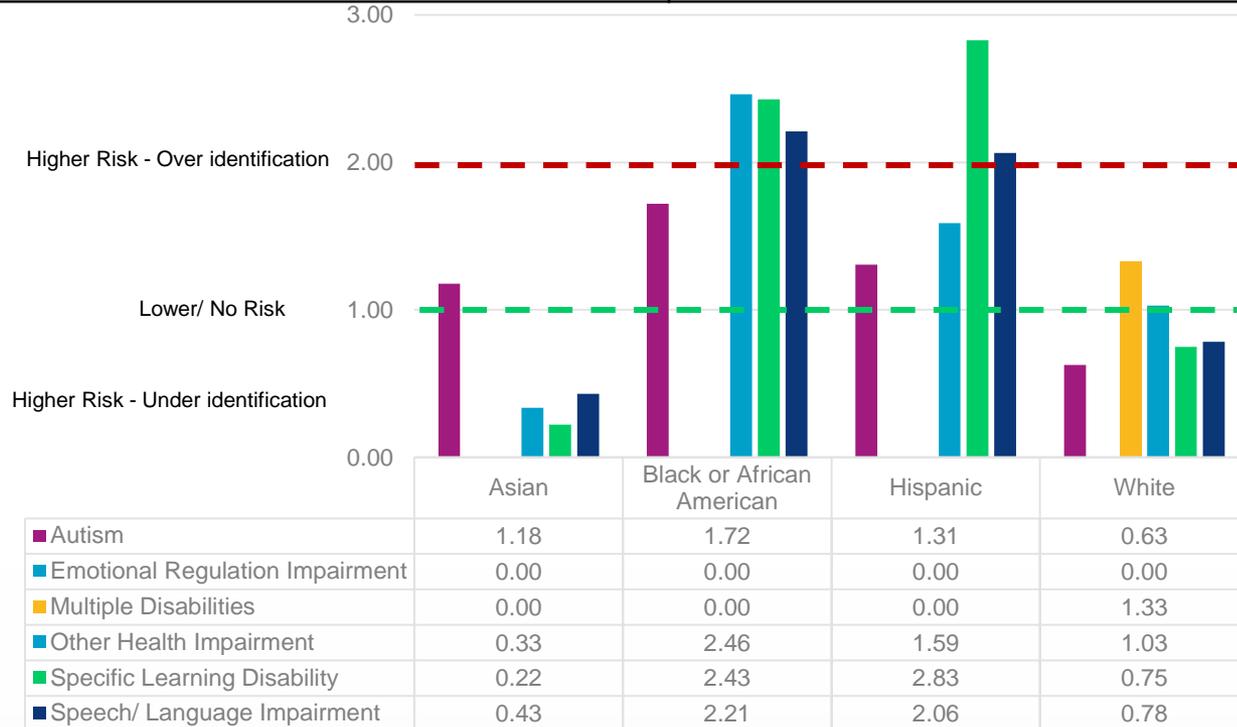
<b>Intervention and Referral Services (I&amp;RS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Develop districtwide standard operating procedures in writing.</li><li>✓ Clearly define, from Central Office and downward, who has direct oversight and is accountable for I&amp;RS, acknowledging this is not a special education initiative but has significant ramifications on special education referrals.</li><li>✓ Continue I&amp;RS referral data collection for internal review among district and building leadership.</li></ul>
<b>Multi-Tiered System of Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Develop districtwide standard operating procedures in writing.</li><li>✓ Clearly define, from Central Office and downward, who has direct oversight and is accountable for MTSS, acknowledging this is not a special education initiative but has significant ramifications on special education referrals.</li></ul>



# Recommendations

## Disproportionality

✓ Conduct quarterly internal assessment of district's risk ratio with specific focus on Hispanic students classified with SLD and Speech; and Black/African American Students who are classified as OHI, SLD, or Speech.



# Recommendations

<b>Positive Behavioral Supports</b>	✓ Infuse a Positive Behavior Support system into the district's MTSS.
<b>English Learners with a Suspected Disability</b>	✓ Engage CST in professional development to increase understanding of the impact of 2nd language acquisition on achievement and methods to understand the impact when determining the presence of a disability.
<b>Placement and Continuum of Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Continue expansion of In Class Resource support districtwide.</li> <li>✓ Expand ICR into non "required" courses at high school to expand supports for students with IEPs, specifically at the high school.</li> </ul>
<b>Accelerated Intervention Services (AIS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Envelop AIS into MTSS, clearly delineating what Tier II and Tier III AIS interventions and supports are.</li> <li>✓ Clearly define, from Central Office and downward, who has direct oversight and is accountable for AIS, acknowledging this is not a special education initiative but has significant ramifications on special education referrals.</li> </ul>



# Recommendations

## High Quality IEPs to Support a Student's Individualized Program

- ✓ Engage case managers in intensive, ongoing training on IEP writing with specific focus on IEP goal writing and SMART goals, and quantitative progress reporting.
- ✓ Engage in monitoring student accommodations at elementary schools and the middle school similarly to system at high school.
- ✓ Engage case managers in accommodation monitoring process at high school.



# Teaching, Learning, and Special Education Support

# Strengths and Opportunities

## Strengths

- District has expanded its In Class Resource (ICR) programming

## Opportunities

- Middle school and high school need leadership to support a climate and culture of shared responsibility on co-teaching
- Middle and high school need job embedded professional development on co-teaching
- Special and general education teachers need to be held accountable when they do not support IEPs in a timely manner.
- District needs to create a clear delineation of hierarchy of responsibilities such that when a teacher does not comply with an IEP request in a timely manner, they are held accountable by building administrator as well as Special Education Director.



# Recommendations

<b>Achievement of Students with Disabilities</b>	✓ Further study NJSLA drop in grade 3 mathematics for students with disabilities who were meeting exceeding expectations.
<b>Co-teaching</b>	✓ Middle and high schools need ongoing, job embedded professional development to support robust co-teaching where both teachers are instructional partners. ✓ Provide professional development to principals and assistant principals of middle and high school on how they, as instructional leaders, can enhance the culture and climate of share responsibility and support effective co-teaching. ✓ Add co-planning time to the days of general and special education teachers who co-teach.
<b>Use of Para-educators</b>	✓ Engage CSTs and case managers in determining best practices around data collection to support paraprofessional fading when it is determined appropriate.



# Recommendations

<b>Access to Advanced Placement, and Extra Curricular Activities</b>	✓ Ensure that if a qualified student with a disability requires related aids and services to participate in a regular education class or program, as determined by IEP teams, the school supports related aids and services in an accelerated class or program.
<b>Professional Development</b>	✓ Expand job embedded, ongoing coaching and professional development for all teachers and administrators on special education matters on topics that include but are not limited to culture/climate of shared responsibility; co-teaching; and IEP writing. ✓ Expand job embedded, ongoing coaching and professional development on I&RS and MTSS, providing specific focus on administration from Central Office to building administrators.



# **Social Emotional Support for Students with Disabilities**

# Strengths and Opportunities

## Strengths

- PPS' behaviorist plays an active role in the Functional Behavior Assessments Behavioral Interventions of students with disabilities

## Opportunities

- PPS does not have a formalized tiered behavioral support structure for students with disabilities



# Recommendations

<b>Specialized Behavior Support for Students with Disabilities</b>	✓ Formalize a tiered positive behavior support model for students with disabilities, districtwide.
--	--



# Organization and Leadership

# Organization and Leadership

## Strengths

- Incoming leadership (Superintendent and permanent Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction) have an important responsibility to direct and re-calibrate general education initiatives that have a significant impact on special education referrals

## Opportunities

- Lack of clarity on ownership of MTSS, I&RS, PBIS at Central Office Level.
- No formal special education standard operating practices.
- Lack of clear delineation of hierarchy of responsibilities causing oversight challenges in ensuring that general and special education teachers engage in IEP process in a timely manner.



# Recommendations

<p><b>Addressing Key Challenges that Impact Special Education but Are Outside of Department Purview</b></p>	<p>✓ Urgently address –at the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, and principal levels – the cultural and structural barriers to owning, overseeing, and being held accountable for programs that have a direct impact on special education on initiatives such as MTSS, I&amp;RS, AIS, Professional Development, Co-Teaching, and Differentiating Instruction; thus ensuring a clear delineation of the hierarchy of responsibilities of these roles.</p>
<p><b>Accountability for Teachers Who Are Not Compliant with Requests from IEP Teams</b></p>	<p>✓ Address teacher non-compliance of timely response for information on IEPs; building level leaders (or direct supervisors) should hold teachers accountable for timely responses, submission, and participation.</p>
<p><b>Special Education Department Standard Operating Procedures</b></p>	<p>✓ Develop written standard operating procedures for special education department.</p>



# Parent Engagement

# Strengths and Opportunities

## Strengths

- PPS has an engaged parent community; surveys indicate parents are satisfied with many aspects of their child's special education programming

## Opportunities

- PPS parents views around building culture, expectations, and instruction were validated by many PCG observations; an opportunity exists to work with parents in remedying these issues



# Recommendations

<b>Parent Issues</b>	✓ PPS parents views around building culture, expectations, and instruction were validated by many PCG observations; an opportunity exists to work with parents in remedying these issues.
----------------------	---



# Budget and Finance

# Strengths and Opportunities

## Strengths

- According to district-provided data, PPS has kept special education instruction costs stable.

## Opportunities

- Thoroughly review the special education budget to assure that the public is seeing accurate data on the *New Jersey User Friendly Budgets* specifically related to special education expenditures.



# Recommendations

<b>Costs in Comparison to Peer Districts</b>	✓ Ensure all special line-items are accurately reported to the public in the New Jersey User Friendly Budget.
--	---



# **Special Education Compliance with State and Federal Regulations**

# Strengths and Opportunities

## Strengths

- Aside from Indicator 3, in areas where PPS does not meet state targets, it is often close to the state target.

## Opportunities

- PPS is not meeting any of the Indicator 3 Performance metrics; however, its proficiency rate in HS Math is 16%



# Recommendations

- None – addressed in other recommendations.





**Questions from Board?**



**Solutions that Matter**