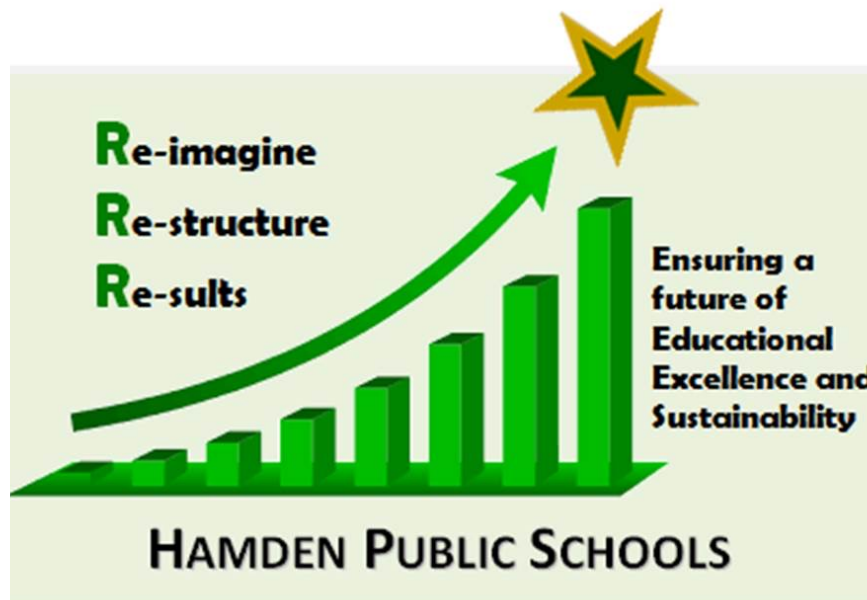


IIC's (Instructional Intervention Centers) and Hamden's 3R Initiative

A long-range plan for equitable education in Hamden

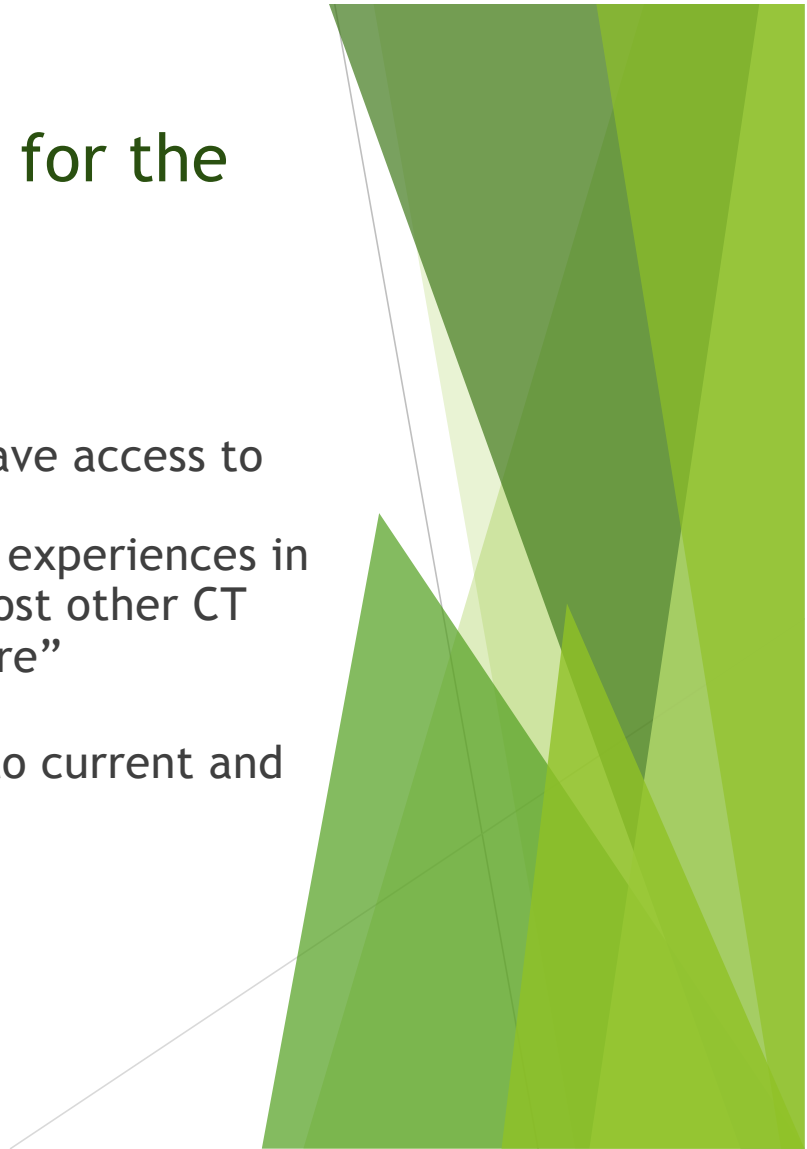
Considerations Update regarding Special Education Services

January 24, 2022



Quick Review: What are the reasons for the development of the 3R plan?

- ▶ Need to racially balance elementary schools
- ▶ Need for all four-year-old Hamden residents to have access to quality, affordable preschool experiences
- ▶ Need for Hamden 6th graders to have comparable experiences in world language, science, and other subjects as most other CT students; Need to maintain critical “team structure”
- ▶ Need for long-term financial sustainability
- ▶ Need for Hamden to be educationally attractive to current and potential families



How did the BOE make the decisions reflected in the 3R plan?

- ▶ Listened to community input through multiple public hearings, meetings and online surveys
- ▶ Consulted with demographic and school construction experts
- ▶ Examined research for best-practices related to middle school students and early childhood learning
- ▶ Considered physical and curricular structures and programming that would optimize student learning opportunities as well as provide attractive educational options for families

Review of potential 3R plan solutions

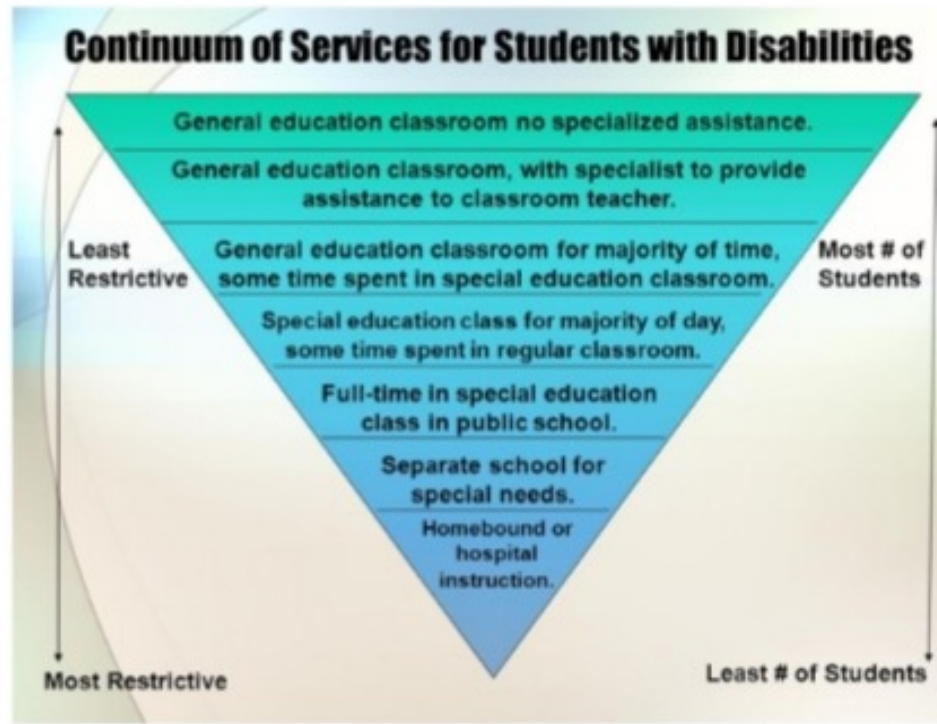
- ▶ Discussion/Vote to Close and repurpose Church Street and Shepherd Glen Elementary Schools
- ▶ Create a 6th-8th grade middle school
- ▶ Discussion of the Wintergreen building
 - ▶ When the 3R plan was being developed, the current Wintergreen Program was non-existent.
 - ▶ Initial 2-3 IIC classrooms were located at Alice Peck
 - ▶ Addressed the needs of IIC students during the COVID pandemic (opportunity for in-person education in a safe manner)
 - ▶ Within the past 3-4 years the number of students with significant needs who either moved into Hamden or who were now school-aged increased.
 - ▶ For Example: In the 2020-21 school year we had 18 students enter our IIC's or Wintergreen program, who moved into district with an IEP indicating a self-contained program.
 - ▶ *This does not include students who moved into district already outplaced.
 - ▶ Wintergreen Program exists to address these needs while keeping students within their home community of Hamden
- ▶ Maximize state funds to provide needed building improvements
- ▶ Make preschool available for all Hamden 4-year olds

Special Education Considerations

- ▶ **IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)**- Federal Special Education law which states services must be provided a) for the unique needs of the individual student and b) to help children with disabilities meet educational standards that apply to all children in general education.
- ▶ There are six principles of IDEA; we will focus on two of them-crucial to children's education
 - ▶ **FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education)**- Hamden Public Schools must provide appropriate IEP services for free. We must also provide these services in the **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** that meets the students needs to ensure that student's progress towards the same educational standards as all children.
 - ▶ Students with IEP's should have **access to the same** elementary school for their entire elementary school years, similar to their general education peers.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)-Students with IEP's are General Education students first

Special Education Is a Service Not a Place



What is an IIC and where do IIC's fall on the LRE continuum?

- ▶ IIC's are Instructional Intervention Centers designed to meet the unique needs of students with significant needs based on IEP's (Adaptive, Cognitive, Social/Emotional, Language)
- ▶ IIC's that are in the elementary schools currently fall about half way through the continuum (Special Education class for the majority of the day, some time spent in the general classroom)
 - ▶ There are also IIC Programs at the Secondary Level called ALSCs (Academic Life Skills Classrooms)
- ▶ The Wintergreen Program is considered even more restrictive and falls in the section on the continuum as "full time in special education classroom"
 - ▶ The Wintergreen Program currently serves students PreK-4 through High School
- ▶ The next step on the continuum would be outplacement or "separate school for special needs"

Special Education Implications - IIC's currently in Elementary Schools

Currently we have 11 IIC classrooms that service approximately 90 students grades K-6

Functional Academic IIC Classrooms	Helen Street Grades 1-3	Helen Street Grades 3-5	Church Street 5-6
ASD IIC Classrooms	Bear Path Grade 1-2 Bear Path Grade 5-6	Ridge Hill Grade 2-3	Dunbar Hill Grade 4
Intensive Academics IIC Classrooms	Ridge Hill K-1	West Woods Grade 2-3	West Woods Grade 4-6 Bear Path Grades 4-6

Number & Type of IIC Classrooms is dependent on number of students and their needs.

Proposed IIC Locations Under the DRAFT 3R Plan**

	Grade K	Grades 1-3	Grades 4-5
Functional Academic IIC Classrooms	Ridge Hill	Ridge Hill	Ridge Hill
ASD IIC Classrooms	West Woods	West Woods	West Woods
Intensive Academics IIC Classrooms	Spring Glen	Spring Glen	Spring Glen

Through this proposal students within an IIC will continue to have access to general education curriculum and time with non-disabled peers. This will also provide them the continuity of staying in the same elementary school for the duration of their elementary years, as their general education peers.

Ideally, when a student is ready to transition out of an IIC to a less restrictive program, the PPT will have the option to recommend continued placement in that elementary school, with transportation.

**Locations listed are suggestions only and subject to change

Wintergreen Program-Relocation Considerations

Proposal: *relocate all classes in Wintergreen Program to one of the elementary schools (ie: Bear Path) when 6th grade relocates to HMS*

- ▶ Space in the same area of the school for all classrooms, including secondary classes.
- ▶ Accessible entrance & ability to be separated from the general milieu of the school
- ▶ Space for sensory room and related services
- ▶ ADL (Activities of Daily Living) space
- ▶ Administrator/Office space
- ▶ Easier Access to General Education

Other Considerations with Wintergreen:

- ▶ The Wintergreen building also houses 2 other programs:
 - ▶ HCLC
 - ▶ High Road Partnership- Intensive Support Classroom (grades 7-8)



Moving Forward- IIC Program

Our on-going Goals--

- Build continuity of each IIC Program- have K-5 IIC programs in the same buildings.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

- Students are able to build lasting relationships with peers and staff.
- Students and families develop a greater sense of community and belonging.
- Opportunities for general education staff to develop a deeper understanding of instructional needs, strategies, and differentiation leading to greater inclusion opportunities for students.
- Research shows that with less transition comes improved academic, social/emotional outcomes.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Classroom Space. Classrooms would have to be dedicated to the IIC Program and not moved/changed.
- Related Service Staffing.
 - In concentrating higher needs students in one building, the need for additional related service providers within that building also increases.
 - Not just the addition of MORE providers, but reallocating what we currently have.
 - Office and/or Service Space (i.e. OT/PT) for these additional staff members
- Changing Student Needs.
 - IIC Classrooms are fluid and depend on the number of students and their IEP needs.
 - There is a potential for adjustment.

Moving Forward- Wintergreen Program

Our on-going goals

- To provide a centralized, highly specialized program for Hamden students with significant Autism/ Developmental challenges within their home town.
 - Providing another option within the continuum of services prior to seeking an outplacement

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

- Access to general education/inclusion/community activities within their school and home town.
- Students are provided a sensory friendly environment, increasing their availability for learning.
- Higher level of collaboration and specialized training of staff (certified & non-certified) leading to improved outcomes.
- Access to more intensive related services both in and out of the classroom creating a cohesive experience.
- Access to alternative learning spaces such as Sensory Rooms, ADL (activities of daily living) spaces, and smaller gym space.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Consistent opportunities for students to access the community and other inclusion opportunities.
- Space. In order for this program to be successful, it requires a dedicated space along with general education access that is able to accommodate all facets of the program.
- On-going Professional Development and Staff Collaboration time

Next Steps

- ▶ On-going collaboration with District & School Administrators, and School Staff
- ▶ On-going collaboration with parents, guardians, families, agencies, and SEPTA
- ▶ On-going collaboration with Board of Education members
- ▶ Professional/Technical Services for General & Special Education Staff, and para professionals in the following areas but not limited to: LRE, Inclusive practices, Co-Teaching, Effective De Escalation strategies
- ▶ Sensory Rooms in all Hamden Public schools
- ▶ Special Education Instructional Coaches for Elementary and Secondary schools
- ▶ Board Certified Behavior Analysts/Behavior Technicians to support all schools with priority given to the schools with IIC's