

Hamden Collaborative Learning Center

Brief History of HCLC

- Began as two smaller programs in the same location servicing only special education students. STEPS included grades 10-12, REACH grades 7-9.
- 2011-12 Programs merged to form Hamden Collaborative Learning Center (HCLC) and expanded to include regular education and 504 students.
- 2016-17 Due to the formation of alternative programming models at HMS (7-8) and HHS (9), HCLC moved to a grades 10-12 program including 9th grade students in their second year of high school.
- 2016-17 To fulfill graduation requirements, students began shuttling to HHS for elective classes no longer offered at HCLC.
- Changes and adjustments are not new to HCLC. In November 2019 HCLC was asked to present a proposal for expansion. The proposal:
 - included grades 7-12. Grades 7-8 would incorporate 25 students, Grade 9 25 students and 10-12 60 students.
 - incorporated the Homebound tutoring program into HCLC in order to provide more direct instruction with certified subject area teachers and to manage their PPTs, referrals, etc.
 - discussions continued but ultimately the expansion did not move forward. Covid hit in March.

Who We Are:

Staff (16.6)

- 1 Administrator
- 1 Social Worker, 1 School Psychologist
- 3 Special Education Teachers
- 3 General Education Teachers
- 1 .6 PE Teacher
- 4 Paraprofessionals
- 1 Crisis Interventionist
- 1 nurse (shared with other Wintergreen programs)
- 1 Clerk (shared with other Wintergreen programs)

Students

- Currently: 61 students in grades 9R-12
- 40% of our students are general education/504

Our Day:

8:00-1:45

- Allows time for students to take a first period class at HHS and get back to HCLC for 2nd period. 1:45 dismissal allows students to fully participate in after school sports, clubs, and activities at HHS. Each year we have a number of students that are active participants in clubs and athletics at HHS.
- HCLC students have the opportunity to begin and/or end their day at HHS to take classes of their choice. This year we had 15 students first semester and 10 students second semester at HHS. (The number declined after the threats at the High School and a rise in anxiety.)
- HCLC students have the opportunity to complete Internships with the other programs at Wintergreen School. Students not only earn credit towards graduation but also use the experience to bolster their resume. Historically we have worked with the Alice Peck program to offer internship opportunities.

Our Day cont.

- We offer a 7 period academic school day: All classes are in person and meet 5 days a week in order to meet state credit requirements for graduation. We only offer study halls for students to complete Credit Recovery and they also receive an Academic Success credit for participation.
- We service a range of academic abilities based on the needs of the current students. We build our schedule each year to take into account what the student population needs to fulfill graduation requirements. Our courses range from Special Education Math/English to Anatomy and Physiology (an advanced Science course.)
- Our teachers are active members of their Departments at the High School and work with Directors to mirror the HHS curriculum.

What We Provide:

- Social-Emotional Learning
- Restorative Practices - Social Worker is Trainer of Trainers certified
- Peer Mediation
- Individualized Learning
- Trauma Informed Practices
- School-Based Diversion Initiative run by Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut
- Counseling Services
- Credit Recovery online learning through Edmentum
- Connections to Community Services
- A Home/School Community
- After school clubs/groups
- Access to Clifford Beers programs through services they are providing at the secondary level

Attendance

- **Daily phone calls/text messages:** Direct to students as well as their parents if they are not in attendance. This takes place during first and second periods by the Crisis Interventionist, Social Worker, Psychologist and Administrator.
- **Weekly attendance committee meetings:** We look at the attendance data and as a group develop plans for intervention. These interventions range from reward systems to academic intervention to sessions with support staff, family meetings and referrals to outside agencies if appropriate.
- **Support Staff:** Maintains regular contact with students and families who are still having difficulty attending on a regular basis to continue to address the barriers. These barriers are often related to Mental Health challenges which have been exacerbated by the isolation of the pandemic.
- **Partnership with outside providers:** As we know virtual learning presented a great number of challenges but especially for those students who suffer from anxiety and self-isolation. We work in to develop plans to overcome these challenges.

Attendance Continued

- Of the 47 referrals we received this past year over 20 of them were related to lack of regular school attendance due to issues ranging from severe anxiety to lack of school engagement.
- There are 16 students who were not attending HHS or their previous school on a regular basis who now are attending school regularly and engaging in their learning.
- Attendance not only means attending school everyday, it also means attending classes everyday. Many of the students referred to HCLC attend the high school but they do not attend class. This can lead to conflict with Security and Administration and potential referrals for discipline. At HCLC we are able to work with students individually and in the moment when they are struggling to get to class. Individual sessions occur with a member of the support staff and plans are developed for them to return to class.

Referral Process

- Referrals are made from HHS House Teams, Parents, Students, Central Office
- Application is submitted and coordination is done with the HHS House Team for background information and current functioning
- Tour is Scheduled
- Shadow Day is completed and HCLC team meet with students and parents/guardians and decision is made for student to attend or not

2021-2022 Referrals:

Summer - 32 referrals were made, 12 chose to attend, 4 moved, two students were new to district and direct referrals to HCLC

Sept - 5 referrals, 3 chose to attend - 1 direct referral from Central Office, 1 refusal - multiple shadow days but chose not to attend, 1 refusal returned to Home District

Oct - 4 referral, 2 chose to attend - multiple shadow days student refusal - parent engaged, 1 in referral process then expelled and placed on Homebound, 1 attended Shadow Day despite multiple meetings and interventions with family and support staff refused to attend

Nov - 5 referrals, 5 chose to attend

Dec - 1 referral - straight 9th grader - they will refer for 22-23 school year,

Jan - 1 referral, 1 chose to attend

Feb - 19 referrals, 13 chose to attend, 2 attended Shadow Days and chose not to attend, 2 had multiple PPT meetings and chose not to engage in a tour or shadow day, 1 was hospitalized and would be re-referred, 1 - straight 9th grader

March - 4 referred, 2 chose to attend, 2 refused after tour and shadow day

April - 5 referred, 5 chose to attend

May - 3 - 1 chose to attend, 1 in process awaiting medical clearance - attended Shadow Day, 1 - Shadow day scheduled

Outcomes/Successes:

- **Fewer Outplacements to higher Least Restrictive Environments (LREs).** At times there are requests for Outplacement and HCLC is used as an opportunity to provide a higher level of support before that step is taken.
- **Increased Attendance** due to daily connection with students and families around attending school regularly, identifying barriers to attendance and developing solutions to those barriers.
- **Individual Graduation Plans** are developed and monitored for each student in their Senior Year. Students are promoted to their next grade level when they obtain the required number of credits at any point throughout the school year.
- **Transitions Services** are provided to all Special Education students through their IEP goals and objectives.

**Typically students are able to gain credits to attain their diploma in their expected graduation year or within one semester of their expected graduation year. This is due to the fact that they are enrolled in 7 academic credits a semester, work experience credits, community service credits and Credit Recovery during both the Summer and school year.

New IEP

- There is a new, mandated IEP being launched by the CSDE on July 1st.
- Currently HCLC Special Education Teachers and PPT Coordinators (Social Worker and Psychologist) are participating in training on the new IEP and will continue that training with the rest of the secondary staff from our current Director of Pupil Services.
- On average 40 special education students are enrolled at HCLC and all PPT meetings and IEPs are managed by the HCLC staff. HPS also provides the Special Education and related services staff as well as any ancillary services determined at the PPT meetings.
- When a student attends an outplacement, then the PPT meetings are coordinated by either Central Office Pupil Services Administrators or the PPS Specialists.

School Counseling Position

HCLC had a School Counselor from September 2015-June 2018 when the position was cut from the budget. The following school year a School Counselor from HHS was at HCLC one day a week and all HCLC students were assigned to that Counselor. The year after that all HCLC students were assigned by alphabet to their School Counselor. There were visits from the Counselors but not on a regular basis and most contact was done through email. During 20-21 due to Covid contact was via Zoom on an as needed basis. After coordination with Mr. Cochoilla and then Ms. Felton there are now monthly visits with School Counselors that center around progress towards graduation.

- Taught Career class with Doreen Fox (SPED) which met goals and objectives on IEPs
- Attended PPT's
- 504 coordinator
- Speakers, field trips around post-secondary exploration
- Worked with CT agencies like BRS, and DCF to push into HCLC and provide transition services to students
- Testing coordinator for SAT school day, SBAC, NGSS, ASVAB
- Worked with local businesses to provide internships for students interested in various trades
- College tours to SSCU, Albertus Magnus, and Gateway Community College
- Provided social-emotional and crisis counseling.
- Group counseling
- Completed master schedule and credits towards graduation
- College counseling, letter of recommendation

Needs in order to Meet New State Graduation Requirements:

- *1-2 sections of foreign language per semester per year
- 1 section of Health per semester per year
- Capstone Advisor

*Prior to March 2020, it was arranged that Sign Language would be offered two periods a day by High School staff for the 20-21 school year, due to Covid this was done via Zoom. In 21-22 it was not possible due to the demands of the increased population at HHS.

What would get us to the next level supporting students:

- Reinstatement of School Counselor Position
- Reinstatement of Two periods of a CTE course that was provided by High School staff prior to the closure in March 2020. It was not reinstated after we returned in 20-21 school year.
- Security Guard - not just for security but for relationship building with different types of authority. When we had a guard present they were integral in early intervention with conflicts that might arise and were able to provide support for de-escalation.

