

Educational Services Commission of New Jersey



Bridgewater-Raritan Regional School District



Special Services Department Review

March – August 2022

The Educational Services Commission of New Jersey

The Educational Services Commission of New Jersey (ESCNJ) is the state's largest Educational Services Commission, providing statewide shared services to schools, municipalities, county governments, universities, housing authorities, fire districts, and other public entities in all 21 counties. The ESCNJ includes seven schools for students with autism, multiple disabilities, and at-risk behaviors, including two with on-site clinical support.

The ESCNJ's Collaborative Educational Services (CES) program is an alternative to costly private special education schools, serving students with disabilities in their home district. Specialized, auxiliary, and remedial Chapter 192 and 193 services are also provided through ESCNJ's Department of Non-public and Charter School Services.

The ESCNJ manages the state's largest Co-op Pricing System with over 1,100 members, saving taxpayers millions of dollars through collective purchasing on equipment and services including: technology products, maintenance equipment, office supplies, security systems, electricity and natural gas. The Tax Exempt Lease Purchase Financing program provides public agencies with a cost saving alternative to vendor financing for purchases from \$2,500 to over \$100,000. The Coordinated Transportation System offers safe, efficient transportation statewide for approximately 14,000 students, and the Technology Consulting Service provides public agencies impartial recommendations on hardware, software, security equipment, record management, and other technology related needs.

Founded in 1977 as the Middlesex County Educational Services Commission to provide services to a few Middlesex County school districts, the State Board of Education unanimously approved a name change request to the Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission in 2005 based on its expansion to serving 75 school districts in 11 counties. In 2016, further growth to all 21 counties prompted the State Board of Education to unanimously approve a name change request to the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey.

Scope of the Review

The Special Services Department Review consisted of the following:

1. Special Services Department
 - a. Student Record Review/Examination
 - b. Placement Data Review
 - c. Document Review
 - d. CST, Building Administrator, Special Education Teacher, Parent, Student Surveys
 - e. CST Interviews
 - f. Central Office and Building Administrator Interviews
 - g. Related Services Review
 - h. Special Education Data Review
2. Special Class Program
 - a. Observation of Selected Special Class Programs
 - b. Interview of Selected Special Classroom Faculty

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Special Class Program Observations

A total of eleven (11) classrooms were observed across the elementary, intermediate, middle, and high schools. Classroom types included self-contained, pull-out resource, and in-class resource. Classroom teachers were interviewed following the observation to gather additional information.

Comments:

- In general, teachers were well prepared for the day's lesson. They created an environment that promotes learning. They created a safe environment where students felt very comfortable sharing their ideas. Teachers incorporated various best practice strategies such as activating prior knowledge, highlighting major ideas, guiding information processing, and providing opportunities for making connections and generalization, to improve students' comprehension skills.
- The preschool teacher demonstrated a strong understanding of preschoolers and early childhood development.
- Teachers provided positive reinforcement in the form of verbal praise, high fives, and smiles to encourage and motivate students.
- Where appropriate, students were given a choice of activities for independent work.
- Overall, teachers demonstrate knowledge of individual student needs and provide individualized support to help them be successful.
- Daily schedules, calendar, class rules, word wall, subject-area posters etc. were displayed in classrooms.
- Tasks presented were aligned with Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals. The teachers and paraprofessionals gathered data on skills addressed and student performance. Technology was used effectively to promote student participation and learning.
- Overall, the teachers had excellent rapport with the students. This came across clearly through their interactions.

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- Teacher demonstrated knowledge and successful implementation of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) principles (e.g., clear delivery of instruction, prompts as needed, reinforcement principles). Communication skills were set as a high priority and infused throughout the observation. student specific modes of communication (tablet/communication app, student uses Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) were readily available. The district has incorporated assessments such as the Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP) in the ABA-based classrooms.
 - Classrooms maintain specified staff/student ratio. Students remained engaged and on-task throughout the lesson.
 - Housing six preschool classes within the same school allows for integrated opportunities and flexibility in classroom assignment.
 - Special education supervisor and Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) meet regularly with the Behavioral Disabilities (BD) program teachers and provide necessary support to meet crisis situations. The BCBA also supports the general education teacher of students who are mainstreamed.

- The general education teachers working with the BD students are cooperative and welcoming to the BD students.
- The district has recently adjusted staffing to develop a more therapeutic approach to working with BD students.
- Throughout the year, in-service days provided professional development (PD) during staff meetings primarily on SEL instruction and general subjects.
- Teachers from the Autism classrooms work collaboratively to meet the needs of all students in the program. Students in the self-contained classroom have opportunities for being included with their general education peers through the peer-buddy program.
- Teachers and students have access to technology. It is reported that the Central Administrators are proactive in securing updated technology.
- School culture is positive and supportive at Hamilton elementary. School climate is warm with exceptional teaching staff.
- Collaboration with related service providers is a strength. Integrated Therapy Model is adopted with speech therapists, Occupational Therapists (OT) and classroom teachers planning and implementing group lessons together. If assistance is needed with a select student, teachers are comfortable reaching out to the school Literacy Coach and/or collaborating with co-teachers of other grade-level classes.
- With the use of Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI), the wide range of learners perform well in small group instruction with the general and special education teachers team teaching/developing lessons together.
- Classroom provided flexible seating options including chairs to address students with sensory/movement needs (e.g., scoop chair; wiggly seat). Students were also provided movement opportunities to meet individual needs.
- Behavior specific praise was frequent, given by both instructors (e.g., “I like the way you are listening”).
- Collaboration with colleagues occurs at each grade level, for example, curriculum meetings are held 1 time per week, and grade-level meetings are held 1 time per week. The in-class support (ICS) staff collaborate with resource room staff if behavior issues occur. ICS They request support from behaviorist and Child Study Team (CST) members if needed.
- Staff report that the core team looks at each student and cares about the services each one needs to receive to strengthen skills. The district creates programs for students if it doesn’t exist within the district. A veteran teacher continues to receive a tremendous amount of support from the team, including the assistant superintendent.
- PD opportunities are offered every couple of months. The Learning and/or Language Disabilities (LLD) program receives training from the 5th – 8th grade supervisor. Other supervisors and the Education Teaching Specialist (ETS) provide PD as well. Training is provided to aides working towards their Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) certification by the BCBA. The district has improved in keeping teams together which enhances continuity of services.
- Social skills lessons are incorporated into the natural environment (e.g., peers participating and collaborating on a Spring scavenger hunt, or learning how to play kickball. The district also purchased the Social Thinking Curriculum which the classroom teacher utilizes.
- Curriculum used in elementary LLD program includes Literature Guided Reading, Framing Your Thoughts, EPIC (web-based resources/materials for Language Arts/Literacy (LAL), independent reading etc.), Explicit phonics which may include activities using

rhythm. Teacher is Orton-Gillingham trained and is familiar with Wilson Reading. Touch Math (supplemental) and the district curriculum, Math in Focus, are used. All subjects are individualized and adapted, as needed, by the classroom teacher.

Intermediate

- The classroom teacher made good use of the classroom wide behavior system, which was individualized to each student's behavioral needs. (e.g., on task, waiting, etc.).
- Teacher works collaboratively with the speech therapist to develop and implement lessons. Both speech therapist and classroom teacher work on students' Social Emotional Learning (SEL) goals. Video clip from a Speech Language website (slp.everydayspeech.com) was utilized during the lesson.
- Curricula resources for reading and math are appropriate, such as Edmark Sight Word Reading Program, Levels 1 and 2, Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) program and materials, Touch math used for all math skills (Money, addition/subtraction etc.). Teachers make appropriate accommodations to the district math curriculum, Math in Focus.
- PD opportunities include Handle with Care and weekly staff meetings.
- Life skills for classified students include participation in running an in-house cafe. Field trips involving shopping 4 x per year.
- Social Skills Training includes "SuperFlex a Social Thinking Curriculum."
- Teacher demonstrated great rapport with the students. They were familiar with students' individual needs and provided differentiated supports to help them respond successfully.
- Special education supervisor seeks feedback from teachers before making changes to co-teaching teams.

Middle School

- Staff describe the building administrator and special education supervisor for middle school, as very supportive. (e.g., encouraging the special education teachers to run a cafe, offering buddy basketball which general education teachers volunteer to staff, along with the special educators, offering a social skills meeting 1 time per month to include resource room students)
- Given the combined classroom construct Multiple Disabilities (MD)/LLD), collaboration is excellent between co-teachers and Cycle Class Instructors (music, art, gym etc.).
- The inclusion opportunities are plentiful and well supported by the building administrator/s and special education supervisor. There are two peer programs integrated over two full periods with select general education students (e.g., Collaboration among students on developing a video during Video Innovations/Design Class with a follow up field trip to an arcade).
- Community-based Instruction (CBI) is provided 2 – 3 times per month for exposure to leisure and functional life skills in the community, e.g., Wegmans to support food prep program, shopping at Target with pre-teaching skills related to spending, calculating taxes, comparison shopping, eating at a restaurant-ordering from a menu, calculating tax/tips. Every student has a wallet with cash that parents send in.
- Assessments available to the MD teacher are Edmark Reading and Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) for the LLD teacher/s. LLD students participate in the MAP testing

assessment 2 – 3 times per year. Information from formal and informal assessments is used for moving students to a less restrictive setting.

- The MD classroom teacher designed many of the behavior strategies used in the combined classroom.
- The physical classroom environment is conducive to learning academics/life skills. Bouncy Ball chairs are utilized by students needing that type of support and desks provided that are appropriate to the size of each student.

High School

- The building-level team is highly responsive to needs of the students as evidenced by transitioning students from one classroom to the next, providing the exposure so students will not be surprised the following year when they change rooms.
- The classroom teacher is commended for creating her own data sheets to assess community/job skills. Once data is collected, Google sheets are used for graphing the information. The teacher uses the graph to help make program decisions and track progress.
- As reported by certified staff, the Special Education Supervisor is supportive, e.g. teacher requesting to conduct a home visit and getting it approved. The Transition Coordinator is a good resource for the staff and assists, as needed.
- Curriculum is accessible through the Reading A – Z Program; News2You is used for science and social studies.
- Teacher researches PD opportunities and attends multiple trainings that the teacher pays for. The Boggs Center training has also been available to the teacher which does not charge a fee. All special educators are trained in Handle with Care.
- Inclusion opportunities are available to the students daily through Physical education classes (PE Partners). General education students who participate in the Service Learning Program Option receive two (2) credits to assist and model for students in special education classrooms. Council for Exceptional Children Club (CEC) is held 1 time per month during seasonal events (e.g., Autism Acceptance Party, End of Year Party). Another good example of inclusion includes a student who loves yoga attending an after school yoga club. A student participates fully in the choir with general education students and also is a member of the dance club.
- CBI incorporates students accessing jobs within the school campus. Students also attend weekly trips to Wegmans. Other weekly community integration/instruction opportunities include restaurant, retail, and recreation trips. These trips are funded by staff Fundraisers and when needed, parent payment.



Interview & Survey Information

CST Interview Responses and Survey Review (n= 32)

Overall Impressions of Student Services

- The CST conveyed collegial relationships were found throughout the department and described the relationships as collaborative and supportive. The CST works together in a cohesive manner.
- The CST feels they advocate for student needs, assisting in the development of district programs to meet the student needs.
- The CST feels BRRSD offers a wide variety of programs and services.
- The CST feels all students are provided services tailored to meet their individualized needs.
- The CST shared that the students are accepted in the community and are provided services in the Least Restrictive Environment. They try to keep students in the general education setting as much as possible, however, some CST members felt that general education teachers are not very knowledgeable in supporting students with special needs.
- Some CST felt there can be an increase in inclusive practices. The buddy system that is in place can do more to include students from the Autism programs. Others felt that Specific Learning Disability (SLD) classes are more isolated.
- The CST conveyed they have complete support, receive immediate feedback, and they are provided with mandated policy updates regularly from the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services.
- There are inconsistencies between buildings across all levels as support for general education is not uniform across schools, referrals coming in from some schools have more severe needs than those coming from other schools, students who are classified in one school may not be if coming from another school.
- The CST works closely with counselors at the middle school. Team members work together as a cohesive team and everyone is on the same page. The CST think their supervisors are phenomenal.
- More than one CST team reports Communication as being an issue across buildings across levels. Communication from guidance counselors and administration is an issue, they do not always reach out, not always collaborative. Some CST also reported that guidance counselors are mostly hands-off, they get involved only with respect to conduct.
- The CST feels that resources are not distributed equitably across schools, especially how behaviorists are assigned across schools.
- Transition planning and process is well established and working for transitions across all levels, starting from Early Intervention to preschool all the way up to high school. Supervisors schedule time for CST to meet during the summer to coordinate transition.
- District provides CBI opportunities through career exploration, work study class, and job sampling. Students are hooked up with Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS), where appropriate.
- Many general education teachers provide instruction “right down the middle” with little differentiation to address the needs of all students.

Climate & Culture for Special Education Students

- Positive perceptions related to inclusion. Special education students are a big part of the school community, they are included wherever possible (e.g., PE Partner program, cycle partners, peer buddy). There is reverse inclusion where general education students are brought into self-contained classrooms.
- Students generally feel accepted and are treated with respect. CST feel that the degree to which special education students are welcome in their school placements varies across schools. In schools where special education students are not 100% welcome, it has been growing recently.
- All students are valued and students with special education services are part of the overall community. They are not singled out.
- Many special education students are “mainstreamed” and most teachers have an inclusive mindset. Some CST feel that culture needs to shift. While some general education teachers are naturally welcoming, others are not as accepting. Teachers are heard saying, “we don’t do behaviors.”

Administration of Student Services

- While some CST felt that their Supervisor gave clear and useful feedback, they felt that not all CST members had the same information. Some other CST felt that they do not receive clear feedback, there are unspoken expectations.
- The CST values the regularly held department meetings and email updates throughout the year. Some CST indicated they rarely receive updates on case law, updates shared are mostly procedural.
- All CST and related service providers feel empowered to make decisions and every attempt is made to ensure the parent is a partner in the process. May take more than one meeting, depending on parental concerns and requests. The CST keeps the Assistant Superintendent/Supervisors informed should there be an anticipated concern or one that comes up at the meeting.
- The CST and related service providers always have data to back decisions. Where applicable, they recommend evaluations in native language to delineate Communication Impairment from ELL.
- The CST uses feedback from teachers, behaviorists, related services providers, transition coordinator, and parents, functional assessments, and records review to determine which evaluations are needed during re-evaluation. The CST also works 1:1 with students to determine needs.
- The CST indicated they are familiar with Special Education Code, timelines, compliance, etc., and refer to code frequently.
- The CST reports being familiar and comfortable using Frontline IEP. Recently hired staff indicated they are able to get support from colleagues and administration if they have questions. The CST uses the document repository within Frontline for saving reports and other documents.
- Some CST members feel that their supervisor understands and values experience, the supervisor listens to CST and implements suggestions.
- The CST feels there should be more professional development for general education teachers with regard to differentiation, modifications, and accommodations.

- The CST feels that Counseling services and access to counseling lack consistency from building to building.
- The CST feels there should be a clear continuum of placement options across all schools within the district.
- The CST feels there should be more resources made available to the district's Autism program with additional oversight.
- The CST feels that there are no clear procedures for functioning as a member of the CST, forms available on Google drive may not be always updated. They also indicated that there are inconsistencies across schools.

IEP Team Decision Making Process

- Data is collected via testing and evaluation, student observations, classroom teacher input, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) data review, parental input, functional assessments, behavioral data, etc.
- The CST considers regression and recoupment data in determination of ESY services.
- CST indicated they make data-based decisions when determining the need for 1:1 aide. They review the supports that have been put in place. They felt that it was not easy to get approval for 1:1 aide, requests have been denied.
- Some CST feel that decisions are based more on judgment, not data. Students from self-contained classes typically get Extended School Year (ESY).
- ESY program decisions are decided by the IEP team taking into account data on student regression. Typically, LLD students receive ESY while In-Class Resource (ICR) students do not.

Communication

- The CST relies on email, phone calls, Google Meet, and parental letters for their main modes of communication.

Professional Development

- The CST feels there is a lack of training and Professional Development opportunities in the district, requests for outside Professional Development are denied, and they are given a very small budget (i.e., \$75). SEL training provided is often very basic. Supervisor meetings held at building level 1x month are not always meeting their professional needs.
- The CST indicated that training on various programs (e.g., multi-sensory reading program, literacy instruction, Frontline IEP, etc.) do not keep up over time, especially with new faculty.
- The CST feels that professional development programs provided in-house are not very relevant.
- District provided pop-up professional development have been related to technology of late.

504 Process

- The CST members attend 504 meetings occasionally and the process differs across grade levels.
- The CST felt that adequate behavioral supports are not provided, and many students with 504 plans are subsequently classified Eligible for Special Education and Related Services (ESERS).

Overall Improvements for Special Services

The CST recommend the following improvements:

- Additional trainings for Resource Room teachers and general education teachers.
- Enhance training for new CST members.
- Provide an increase in Mental Health supports for students, especially at primary and intermediate levels. Reallocation of existing personnel (e.g., Students Assistance Counselor) towards mental health services, the need for which has increased with COVID.
- Additional mental health support for students needed in the areas of coping strategies, social skills, executive functioning, etc.
- Enhancement of collaboration and communication between school counselors and CST. Suggestion of regular meetings together and for counselors to attend IEP meetings to the greatest extent possible.
- Enhancement of the MTSS process to include more intervention resources and the tools needed to track the implementation data.
- Expansion of the Handle with Care training, especially in the area of de-escalation.
- Enhancement of professional development opportunities for classroom aides.
- Increase consistency in procedures and practices across buildings and levels.
- Explore programs to bridge the gap between general education and special education.
- Appropriate and adequate behavioral supports provided early may help prevent escalation in student behaviors.
- Allocate additional resources and provide training for teachers to increase mainstreaming students.
- Examine the high school scheduling process for students with IEPs to ensure there are no “August surprises” with student schedules.

CST Survey Responses

Total number of responses – 32

Response Rate – 91%

Percentage of respondents who “Strongly Agreed” or “Agreed” to questions on identified topics:

94% - IEP team members have an opportunity to contribute equally in decision making regarding evaluations, placement, accommodations.

97% - Parental concerns and suggestions are considered at each student's IEP meeting.

100% - Parents/guardians feel comfortable contacting me with questions and concerns regarding their child.

34% - Receive adequate professional development opportunities to remain up-to-date in the field (38% Disagree or Strongly Disagree).

78% - satisfied with the support I receive from district-level Special Services administrators.

63% - satisfied with the support the CST receives from building administrators.

Recommendations:

- The Special Services department should develop a CST Procedures Manual which provides clear and consistent guidance to the CST throughout the district.
 - Provide relevant professional development for CST to remain up-to-date on best practices in their field.
 - The CST members should be given the opportunity to participate in a district-level professional development committee to recommend and design appropriate Professional Development that will meet the needs of CST and other stakeholders with regard to the provision of instructional and therapeutic services to students with special needs.
 - There appears to be inconsistencies on inclusive practices across schools. Consider increasing opportunities or increased observations and collaborations across schools to improve practices so all schools are equally inclusive.
 - Improve behavioral and mental health supports for general education students with intent to decrease the number of referrals.
 - Increase opportunities for better coordination and collaboration between building administrators and the special education supervisor assigned to a building.
 - Implement uniform record keeping and filing processes to ensure all student records are sent to the central office in a timely manner and student files are kept up to date.
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District Administrators Interview Responses Review

Overall Impressions of Student Services

- District does a good job delivering the instructional programming the students need.
- Special education faculty & staff are good at meeting students where they are, they are good at delivery of IEP Goals & Objectives. The teams go above and beyond to meet student needs. Special Education administrative team advocates for students. Building administrators support the special education team in their respective schools.
- Special education students are considered part of the school community.
- The district has great special class programs.
- Classroom aides go above and beyond on a regular basis.

Climate & Culture for Special Education Students

- Special education students are included through various programs such as PE Partners, Peer-Mentor system, ICR cycle program/classes, and Buddy Ball.
- The proposed expansion of the Unified Sports program and special education student participation has been anticipated with excitement, especially to enhance LRE.
- District could do more to include special education students, however, efforts have been hindered by COVID.

Curricula Access & Professional Development

- Some faculty are better than others at differentiated instruction. Due to limited resources, there is a lack of oversight to ensure all faculty differentiate instruction.
- Literacy Coach services have been a great benefit with the coach modeling lessons for teachers as well as providing 1:1 support for students.
- Adopted Orton-Gillingham for literacy and Math in Focus for mathematics.
- Supports for low-average performing students in general education classes is not sufficient, especially in accessing math curricula.

Overall Improvements for Student Services

- Increase targeted and ongoing Professional development on special education topics including co-teaching, UDL, behavior management, etc.
- Increase opportunities for inclusion.
- Review disproportionate representation of student demographics in resource rooms at the intermediate and middle schools.
- Turnover of special education supervisors has posed many challenges to consistent program implementation.
- There is a lack of consistency across schools in processes and implementation of programs.
- Role of supervisor of special education is not consistent across the different schools they serve.
- Increase parent involvement through SEPAG, especially among parents of older students.

Commendations:

- Programs such as PE Partners, Buddy Ball, and Partner Program have helped create an inclusive culture throughout the district.

- Excellent communication and the overall collaborative nature between administrators, CST, and faculty in all schools.
- Strong CST teams who work collaboratively and are student-centered.
- The High School CBI program is robust.
- The proposed enhancement of the Unified Sports program is to be commended.

Recommendations:

- The district should enhance their Multi-Tiered System of Supports to support students across all levels.
 - Examine the current use of the behaviorists and the time spent at each of the schools to optimize the services received in-district. Consider utilizing behaviorists for providing structured training to teachers and paraprofessionals.
 - Continue to work on improving and streamlining the MTSS process.
 - Improve consistency of MTSS process throughout the district.
 - Increase professional development opportunities in the following areas:
 - Tier 1 & Tier 2 interventions
 - Special education topics for general education teachers
 - MTSS process for interventionists and other members of MTSS team
 - Best practices in co-teaching
 - Universal Design for Learning
 - Multisensory instructional methodologies
 - Examine the level of parent involvement across grade levels and implement programs to increase involvement where lacking.
 - Seek to bridge the gap between the HS Guidance department and CST. Guidance counselors could provide more “counseling” support in the areas of social skills and executive functioning.
 - With declining enrollment district-wide over the next several years, the Special Services department should examine overall staffing levels going forward.
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Building Administrators Interview & Survey Responses

Overall Impressions of Special Services

- Administrators work closely with the Assistant Superintendent and assigned Supervisor of Special Services, and feel it is a partnership with good communication.
- Special education services focus on students and how they can best be supported. There is a strong individualized approach for all students with their needs coming first.
- The special education team goes above and beyond. It is a great team and they work very hard.
- Administrators are very proud of the continuum of services offered. They commend the degree of inclusion provided in the district.
- The district is reluctant to send students out unless absolutely necessary for the benefit of the student. Teams involved in decision-making, based on data, make every effort to ensure an inclusive classroom/school environment as possible.
- Administrators indicated that it has been a challenge to form and maintain effective co-teaching partnerships. They also shared that it has been difficult for resource room teachers to collaborate with other teachers due to scheduling difficulties.
- Administrators would like general education teachers to be more proactive in providing accommodations before the student fails. They indicated that co-teachers should be used in a more proactive way.
- Administrators indicated that since CST members are located in a school but report to the assigned Special Services Supervisor, it makes it challenging to address an issue when a CST member does not perform well. Although the supervisor agrees with the principal, nothing is done to address specific CST member's performance concerns.
- Administrator felt that "Different sections of special services work in isolation at the building level and across programs."
- Administrators mostly responded that they regarded special education as a service. Some perceived it as a little of both a service and placement where general education and special education teachers work together for an inclusive environment, and no student is singled-out. Staff consistently work towards placing students in the Least Restrictive Environment.
- An administrator identified the constant change in supervisory leadership as a big challenge for providing consistent programming.
- Administrators indicated that finding teaching assistants during the middle of the school year was a challenge. Staffing concerns in general.

Climate & Culture for Special Education Students

- Administrators overall responded positively that special education students are considered part of the school community. Some felt that general education teachers tend to be less inclusive of special education students, though this would not be evident from observing. Efforts are taken to educate general education teachers, including special areas teachers, about inclusive practices.
- Principals arrange school schedules by first taking into consideration the needs of the special education program.
- In ICR classrooms, it is difficult to decipher who is the general education teacher and special education teacher.

- At the elementary level, general and special education students are strongly connected with the homeroom. Special education students are included for morning meeting, recess, field trips, assemblies, physical education, art, library, and technology. Activities in which students from self-contained classes are included varies across schools. The team works collaboratively to increase opportunities for inclusion.
- At the intermediate level, special education students participate in regular cycle classes for art, cooking, etc. Classified and general education students go on field trips together, Buddy Ball is offered, Partner Program is successful in pairing general education students with classified students for inclusion, after school programs are also offered.
- Peer-buddy system brings general education students into self-contained classrooms and provides opportunities for interactions. Students feel they are part of a bigger picture.
- Inclusive Cycles for part of the schedule for students in self-contained classes.
- Special education students are considered as part of the school community. They refer to the students as “Our students, everyone is included.” In schools where this is not universal, progress is being made in changing the culture.
- The school culture is such that special education students are included and have access to curriculum, specials, and opportunities to socialize. The expectation is that all students succeed.
- Inclusivity is district-wide, and general education students take special education students with higher needs under their wing.
- Schools prioritize the needs of special education students, scheduling starts with special education. Culture that special education students are important prevails.
- Some administrators indicated that not all teachers have the mindset that every student can succeed. Teachers should be supported so they can change the mindset.
- The proposed Unified sports programs offer opportunities for inclusive activities.
- High school has a Peers/Partners program for students in self-contained classes. Students are paired with their peer/partner during physical education classes. Peers/Partner program offers a Prom. Students from self-contained classes are encouraged to try out for various sports.

MTSS Process

(While the MTSS process is not under the purview of the Student Services Department, the manner in which the process is implemented at each school directly impacts potential referrals to Student Services.)

- The administrators feel that there is a need to streamline and standardize the process. Frequent changes to documentation made the MTSS process challenging.
- Universal screening is administered to identify the students needing support. Formative and summative assessments are conducted to make determinations. All possible strategies/accommodations are used prior to suggesting a Tier 3 service.
- Collaboration is strong, leaving no surprises for the staff, service providers and parents.
- The administrator and team do everything in their power for students to be successful in general education.
- A core team MTSS team is set up to which student-specific staff are added. Teachers need help with implementing MTSS. The team understands that MTSS is not a gateway to CST referrals. Once interventions are implemented, student progress is monitored and evaluated before referring for higher level interventions.

- Administrators at the elementary schools indicated that the MTSS process is working well in identifying and meeting student needs. The process can be improved by implementing consistently with fidelity.
- Administrators feel that new members of the MTSS team must be provided a refresher of the process to ensure that the team is reviewing and collecting the data with the same philosophy. Students would benefit from teachers receiving continued support in understanding the Tier 1 accommodations, using differentiated instruction, prior to recommending a student to Tier 2.
- At the intermediate schools, administrators indicated that MTSS is a work in progress. The administrator indicated that the process is data-informed, the right set of people are involved in the team which meets regularly. MTSS has many great components but implementation has been difficult, especially due to challenges posed by COVID. Some indicated that the process is cumbersome and not very clear.

Administration of Student Services

- Generally, district administrators do not refer parents directly to the CST. Rarely, and in extreme cases, has this occurred when student health and safety concerns warranted. Students go through the MTSS process, supports are put in place, and data collected.
- Conversations occur on occasion between the Principal and the parents/guardians of the student who is demonstrating challenges. This is following a review of the data and input from the core team, as well as the Supervisor of Special Services. The parents are provided options after the data has been reviewed.
- The administrators work to minimize the instructional impact of students being pulled from class for therapy and/or other related services.
 - Special education classes drive development of the school's master schedule.
 - Staff is provided a master schedule over the summer to assist them in building their own schedules. Related service providers are empowered to work with classroom teachers to minimize the impact on instructional time.
 - The principal gives the reigns to the teachers and therapists.
 - Enrichment and intervention period allows for therapists to plan during that time.
 - Teachers and therapists work together to schedule pull-out therapy sessions, and the CST may get involved.
 - For students who do not take a world language, they may be pulled out of that designated time for Speech. Speech therapists may push into English classes.
- All administrators are involved in the Danielson model observation/evaluation process. Annual evaluation schedule is built at the district level, building administrators request changes if needed.
- Most administrators do not attend IEP meetings but have done so when requested by staff or parents. When they attend an IEP meeting, the administrator's role is supportive in nature or to ensure compliance for select students such as ensuring attendance issues are addressed.
- The administrators feel that advocating for out-of-district placement occurs infrequently, only in exceptional cases such as when the student was a harm to self or others, or had medical needs that could not be met, and there was no appropriate placement within the

district. The team will go to great lengths to keep the student in their least restrictive environment (LRE). When recommendation for Out-of-District placement is made, it is a data-based, team decision.

- Administrators reported awareness of special education disciplinary procedures and ramifications for classified students.
- Administrators involve the CST and they consult with the assigned Supervisor and Assistant Superintendent of Special Services as needed.
- All administrators have access to NJAC 6A:14, but reach out to Supervisor or Assistant Superintendent when they need assistance.
- Communication among administrators, teachers, and Child Study Team members. The Child Study Team members are key to implementation of the IEP and programs in general education classes. They follow up with teachers to ensure services are received.

Professional Development and Other Support for Faculty

- At the start of the school year, time is allotted for teachers to interact with Child Study Team members. The case manager, nurse, and counselor attend meetings during the first two (2) weeks of school to assist the general education teachers in implementation of the IEP/or behavior plan. General education teachers review IEPs/504 plans and discuss the recommended accommodations at these meetings.
- For staff working with students who have behavior plans, Handle with Care training is provided.
- Co-teachers, ETS, counselor, CST, related service providers/BCBA assist in supporting the general education teachers.
- Some administrators expressed concern about the lack of access to a behaviorist as being an impediment to providing teachers the necessary support for managing challenging student behaviors.
- Counselors, case managers, CST members, and special education teachers meet with general education teachers to provide support. Teachers receive insights from all stakeholders.
- Administrator has created more Common Planning Time which was previously not there. They complete spot checks and provide feedback.
- RUBICON available to grades K – 4 allows for students/staff to create a customized learning environment to foster active participation in the educational process.
- Grade level meetings are utilized for discussing curriculum and available resources. Grade level meetings may be used as a way to train teachers in phonics, grammar, math. Assigned Supervisor of Special Services may be invited to grade level meetings which are held 2 times per month.
- ETS runs grade level meetings and they help with curriculum. Based on classroom /student observations the ETS will make recommendations.
- If the special education teacher finds a new resource, they just need to ask if it can be made available to them.

- Curriculum guides are provided through supervisors. One administrator indicated that they are lacking a curriculum guide for self-contained classes to help students access general education curriculum.
- District provided three (3) PD days during the 2021 – 2022 school year. Faculty were able to select workshops from a Choice Board. Administrators from different schools presented at these workshops. Number of PD days is being increased to five (5) for the 2022 – 2023 school year.
- A small percentage of faculty go out for workshops and pay for them. District provides PD through guest speakers on topics such as Creative Curriculum,
- An administrator felt that BRRSD could do better in the area of PD for general education and special areas teachers in building teaching skills related to differentiated instruction.
- Administrators work with content area supervisors on staff development, content areas, and general instruction. Opportunities such as monthly Turnkey Tuesday are used for providing PD on use of technology tools, working with behavior problems, etc. The principal, supervisors, or teachers may present the training.
- Special education supervisors provide training on topics such as dyslexia and Orton-Gillingham.
- Administrators lean more on the supervisors to make sure the supports are in place. The content area supervisors communicate well with the special education supervisor to ensure the supports are appropriate.
- General education teachers will benefit from additional face-to-face meetings with the student’s CST to unpack and understand the IEP and accommodations/modifications.
- On a grade level basis, communication is encouraged between the general education and special education teachers.
- Administrator tries to ask some reflective questions of the general education teacher with regard to the special education students.
- Administrators felt supported with annual training on changes in special education code and best practices. However, professional development offered for administrators and faculty working with special education students is more general and offered at the start of the school year, such as Handle with Care training.
- District could do better with PD opportunities. It would be the behaviorist, educating all teachers, when they see a child having a behavior, looking at the function of the behavior. Use the expertise of the behaviorist team or other in-house experts to train on implementing various programs.

General Concerns and Overall Improvements for Special Services

- An administration would like to strengthen the mindset in the school community that the students are all of “our students” and the staff team is there to tease out the best way to support student learning.
- Need for better coordination and communication among special education supervisors across all school buildings.
- Provide more PD on differentiated instruction to general education teachers which would assist in working towards reduction of the number of students with IEP and/or 504 plans.

- Increase PD in best practices for general education and special education teachers and supervisors. The need for more cohesive and targeted PD.
- Provision of bathroom inside the classroom for preschoolers and young elementary aged students.
- Additional time allocated for faculty to collaborate. Clearer and consistent integration with assigned behaviorists to address needs of students engaging in challenging behaviors.
- The need for an increase in paraprofessional support as more students with special needs move into the district for the quality of services provided.
- More assistance when students go to cycle classes (e.g., Art, Cooking, etc.) would be helpful to transition classified students. Either having an aide or an ICS teacher travel with the student to the class to ease the transition by providing the support that the general education/special area teacher is unable to provide.
- It would be beneficial to increase time in the school building for the BCBA to support teachers, and ultimately the student/s which may require more in-depth consultations.
- Administrators would like to see the development of a vision/proactive plan for the special needs programs by reducing reactionary measures and moving towards more coordinated planning for the future.
- Increase inclusion opportunities and/or keeping as many students in a general education classroom as appropriate.
- Improve access to curriculum and transition for students in the BD program.
- Improve the process for transitioning of students to middle school to ensure student success. Provide more staff training to help students who are transitioning.
- Improve co-teaching models, young teachers need training to develop their knowledge in this area and increase buy-in. There should be dedicated time for co-planning.
- Provide necessary training when new initiatives are taken (e.g., LLI training has not been given to literacy intervention specialists, hence they are not able to effectively use LLI material to move students along in reading).
- Administrators think more timely responses from Special Services 1:1 aide requests will be helpful to address student needs and maintain safety.
- Limit turnover of special education supervisors to improve consistency in delivery of services. Supervisors are also spread thin across the district.
- Increase CST members' time in the classroom in order to effectively evaluate the accommodations, behavior plans, etc.
- Increase time and opportunities for communication among teachers, case managers, and parents at the high school level. While there are more meetings held at elementary and intermediate levels, there is no time for this at the high school.
- Improve consistency in staffing administrative assignments, e.g., retain chairperson of 504 Committee in the position for more than one year.



Student Records Review Summary Information

(Please refer to Appendix A for summary information and charts on the 130 student records that were reviewed)

Compliance Notes (Systemic):

(Please note the compliance citations below are deemed de minimis due to COVID and the remote nature of last school year impacting typical school and office operations.)

- Evidence of evaluation reports being mailed to parents not consistent. It is not possible to determine if the evaluation reports were sent to the parents/guardians 10 calendar days prior to the meeting as per NJAC 6A:14-3.5(a).
- Meeting signature page not documented consistently.
- Parental consent to implement IEP was missing in several files.
- Concerns of parents in Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) need to be more specific. Certainly more than “no” or “none.”
- Modifications and Accommodations should be separated within the IEP.
- Supports for School Personnel should include frequency.
- Supplementary Aids and Services should have frequency.
- ESY decisions should include evidence for the decision and not routinely “deferred.”
- PLAAFP should consider data to support statements for all IEPs
- Parent Notification/Invite to IEP meetings may be missing due to COVID. Many Notification/Invitations appear to be in records from 2019 and prior.
- Need consistency in the district for documentation of parent/student participation. Some records have a formal signature sheet, some have a zoom sign-in documentation. Some complete the second page of the IEP (IEP Participants Section), but it doesn’t necessarily match the signature sheets. The zoom sign-in documentation should have the title of the participant. Some records only show a call in number on the zoom form without documenting who it is or what their role is at the IEP meeting (assuming it is the parent and/or student). ALL sign-in sheets should have a title next to the individual participants.
- All Sections of IEP that are not applicable should be noted as N/A or “Considered but N/A.” (including the Statewide, Districtwide and Standardized Test Results sections)
- Need to date stamp when referral is received by CST.
- Consider using Frontline’s “Standards Based” format to identify the NJLS associated with the Goals in the IEP. Usually prints out as a sheet than can be attached.
- In Out-of-District files the IEP’s appear to be incomplete. Perhaps the CST awaiting the OOD program PLAAFP and goals and objectives.
- Invitations to meetings should be placed in all files consistently.
- Several Annual Review notice letters have a different date than the meeting date on the IEP.
- Email or phone calls are not officially documented in the file. If there is a letter and the date of the meeting on the IEP is within a reasonable timeframe of the notice of the meeting.
- Several IEPs have several goals with only one objective for each goal. Consider overarching goals with benchmark objectives that can be scaffolded and measured.
- Eighth grade IEPs - inconsistent information in Transition Planning for 14 year olds. All IEPs where the student turns 14 within the year of the IEP need to have a statement of the student’s strengths, interests, and preferences. Most IEPs listed that it will be considered

during a discussion at a later time. For example, “Student will meet with Guidance and CST to determine educational and vocational interests through Middle and High School.” That statement does not describe student strengths, interests, and preferences as required in code.

- If Limited English is indicated, it should be addressed in the IEP.
- This statement is in several IEPs under Parental Concerns: “Any parental concerns regarding this IEP plan will be noted in this portion of the document prior to it being finalized as the official IEP of record”. It is difficult to determine if parental concerns were ever put into a finalized document or not as the documents being reviewed are considered the finalized copy in the official student record.
- Student Strengths: Comments are often related to student’s characteristics and work compliance. Rarely specific to academic strengths. PLAAFP statements should be based on a student's strengths and not what they are lacking.
- It is best practice for identified needs and goals/objectives to align. When a goal is developed for a student, it should be based on the identified need.
- Parental consent for amendment not included in file.
- Student Record Sign-in/Sign-out Sheet should have the student's name indicated.
- Statewide and Districtwide Assessment Results and Standardized Test Results Sections of the IEP are inconsistently included.
- Goals and Objectives do not have who is responsible for implementation.
- When a student receives related services, PLAAFP and Needs sections should include statements from the relevant related services provider. Speech therapists did not attend meetings when students had speech goals.
- Consider specifying mastery criteria of 85% or higher
- If needs related to study skills are identified, relevant goals should be included.
- Loose sheets in accordion folder, perhaps a binder will be better.
- If a parent is the referring individual for CST evaluation or ESLS Evaluation, the parent concerns section of the IEP should reflect the concerns of the parent that lead to the referral.

- Evidence of Parental Notice of Planning Meeting could not be located for nineteen (19) of the forty-one (41) eligible records (Initials and Re-evaluations).
- Planning meetings for Initials were completed within 20-days of referral for ten (10) of the thirteen (13) records reviewed.
- Consent to evaluate could not be located for eight (8) of the thirty-four (34) records which included evaluations. Five (5) of these records were initials and three (3) were Re-evaluations.
- Where evaluation reports were to have been mailed to the parents 10-days prior to the meeting, twelve (12) were compliant, ten (10) were non-compliant, and documentation could not be located for twelve (12) records.
- Parental notice of eligibility conference was included for nineteen (19) of the forty (40) records.
- Nine (9) of the thirteen (13) initials were completed within 90-days.
- 100% of the re-evaluations were completed within the three-year requirement.
- Reevaluations were completed within the 60-day timeframe for all but four re-evaluations, documentation not included for one (1) record.

- Parental notice of annual review/amendment meeting could not be located for forty-eight (48) of the one hundred and thirty (130) records reviewed.
- Parental consent for amendment was received for 100% of applicable records.
- Annual Review was completed within one (1) year for one hundred and twenty-six (126) of the one hundred and thirty (130) records reviewed. The previous IEP were not included in the file for two records, hence compliance could not be determined.
- Meeting signature page was included for one hundred and nine (109) of the one hundred and thirty (130) records reviewed.
- ESY program decision deferred in eight (8) records.
- Thirty-nine (39) of the fifty-three (53) students from the middle school and high school participated in their meeting.
- General education teacher participated in the meeting for one hundred and sixteen (116) of the one hundred and thirty (130) records reviewed. Compliance could not be determined for two records due to lack of documentation.
- Parental consent to implement IEP was included for one hundred and eleven (111) of the one hundred and thirty (130) records reviewed.

Commendations:

- Initials were completed within 90-days despite the many challenges posed by the COVID pandemic.
- Planning meetings were scheduled within 20-days of receiving a referral.
- Despite challenges posed by the COVID pandemic and virtual meetings, annual reviews were completed in a timely manner.
- The Child Study Team completes thorough reports and evaluations.
- All files had a sign-in sheet.
- Goals are consistently aligned with needs identified in the IEP.
- LRE statements tend to be well written.
- Compensatory services are outlined in most IEPs if needed.
- Counselors generally attend Middle School IEP meetings which is key to successful transition planning for the High School.
- SMART goals and objectives in IEPs for student in special class programs.
- Compensatory Services are documented in many IEPs.

Recommendations:

- All PLAAFP statements should be data-based in nature. While parent concerns were noted in the PLAAFP, most statements lacked specific information. Consider providing more detailed information regarding the parental statement rather than simply “no concerns.” For example, indicate the parent was asked about concerns and responded that they were satisfied with the program and/or student progress.
- Accommodations are included in the Modifications section of the IEP. Professional Development should be considered to review the difference between an accommodation and a modification.
- Some IEPs have Mastery Criteria of 70% for certain objectives, which is low. Consider a minimum of 85% mastery criteria. Give careful consideration to whether the mastery criteria may realistically measure progress towards the Goals & Objectives.

- All Goals & Objectives should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-Bound).
- Goals & Objectives must match a student's identified needs as stated in the PLAAFP.
- Best practice would indicate that a general education teacher should not be excused from attending the meeting, especially an Initial Eligibility meeting.
- When there is an amendment to an IEP, there needs to be a detailed explanation of the reason for the change. This is the case when changing from ICR to Pull-out Replacement and vice versa, especially if the goals/objectives are not changed or modified in any way. In general, it is best practice not to use the amendment process to make significant changes to an IEP (e.g., adding or eliminating related services, moving a student to a more restrictive setting, etc.)
- Some IEP's do not include information in the "Statewide and Districtwide Assessments Results" and "Standardized Test Results". This section should not be left blank. Sources of information used to develop the IEP must be listed, minimally N/A should be indicated.
- Include information on frequency of the support in the "Supports for School Personnel" section of IEP; for example, "Consultation with Case Manager – as needed, minimally 3 times per year."
- Speech groups should indicate 5 or less, as permitted by NJAC 6A:14, in the IEP to allow for maximum flexibility in the scheduling process.
- Sign in sheets for meetings should always be maintained.
- Student strengths should pertain to the student's academic/behavioral skills rather than simply stating that the "student is lovely and a joy to have in class."
- Where appropriate, a student should attend their IEP meeting, especially middle school and high school age students.
- The Special Services Department should continue the provision of appropriate Professional Development. The following Professional Development topics are recommended:
 - Best practices in IEP development
 - Accommodations vs. Modifications in the IEP
 - Writing objective and data-based PLAAFP statements
 - Developing SMART goals & objectives
 - Appropriate Mastery Criteria for goals & objectives
 - Differentiation of Instruction in the General Education Setting
 - Overview of Assessment Tools to inform Goal Development, Progress Monitoring, and Program Efficacy
 - Data Collection Methods and Uses in the Classroom (e.g., academic and behavioral)



Special Education Teacher Survey Results

The summary charts for Special Education Teacher Survey items are found in Appendix c.

Total number of responses – 90

Response Rate – 55%

Percentage of respondents who “Strongly Agreed” or “Agreed” to questions on identified topics:

67% - IEP team members have an opportunity to contribute equally in making decisions regarding evaluations, placement, accommodations

92% - Parental concerns and suggestions are considered at each student's IEP meeting

93% - Parents/guardians feel comfortable contacting me with questions and concerns regarding their child

96% - have a firm understanding of the IEP development and implementation process

56% - receive adequate professional development opportunities to remain up-to-date in my field. (32% disagree or strongly disagree)

57% - satisfied with the level of collaboration between special education and general education teachers

80% - treated as a peer when working in collaboration with general education teachers

66% - satisfied with the feedback and guidance I receive from school administrators

67% - satisfied with the support I receive from district-level Special Services administrators.

33% - receive adequate planning time to develop effective programs and lessons for my students (41% disagree or strongly disagree)

92% - able to differentiate my instruction to make the lesson accessible for my students

42% - receive adequate instructional supplies to implement my lesson plans (32% disagree or strongly disagree)

62% - receive adequate instructional technology to engage my students and implement my lesson plans

59% - satisfied with the climate and culture of my school (20% disagree or strongly disagree)

Commendations:

- Use of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices across settings within the classroom.
- Expanded CBI programs and opportunities.
- Flexibility in grouping students has enabled the preschool teachers to make better informed decisions about classroom placement and recommendations to the CST. Students gain skills with input from the classroom teachers, therapists, CST members, and the Elementary Teaching Specialist
- Special education students are included in special activities, trips, assemblies, special area subjects etc. They are included with general education students for subject areas when deemed appropriate.

- The district is commended on providing the BCBA an opportunity to observe another program which services students with BD (private school). This helped the behaviorist understand additional strategies, and in turn provide the teachers and aides with strategies on dealing with conflict.
- The district is responsive to the needs of the teachers in the BD classrooms evidenced by the approval for the BD teachers and BCBA to redesign the SEL curriculum for the next school year.
- Teachers systematically work on transitioning students from self-contained to ICR setting where and when appropriate.
- Effective transition plan is in place for students transitioning from primary to intermediate to Middle school to High school.
- The classroom team is commended on seamlessly running an inclusion program where it is difficult to differentiate who the classified students are and which teacher functions as the general or special educator.
- The Preschool Team is commended for developing a Student Skills Assessment that is more appropriate than the standard curriculum assessment. It displays a more accurate picture of students' strengths and weaknesses at the preschool level.
- The classroom teacher and staff are commended on the ease in which they deliver differentiated instruction (e.g., use of student-specific materials, adaptation of curriculum, etc.).
- Inclusion opportunities for students with an IEP are robust with general education teachers receptive and welcoming to the classified students. Below is a list of some ways inclusion is addressed.
 - Students are assigned a general education homeroom, where applicable.
 - Classified students are assigned peer buddies who are interested in partnering throughout the school year with these students.
 - Buddy Ball and Special Olympics in Track and Field are offered
 - Classified students, along with peer buddy, attend field trips such as shopping 4 times per year and school events such as "Field Day" include all students.
 - PE Partners
- Special Education administrators are recognized as being very supportive.

Recommendations:

- General education and special education teachers should continue to collaborate to address students' IEP goals and make curricula accessible to all students.
- Offer common planning time for special education and general education teams on a consistent basis in order to strengthen the in-class partnership. This would provide teachers with ample time to plan for scaffolding, coaching, making accommodations for assignments and assessments, and modeling in order to support special education students as they learn new skills/concepts.
- Continue to practice Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework to help meet diverse learning needs, improve accessibility to learning opportunities, and increase student success.
- Support staff is encouraged to avoid providing verbal directives at the same time the classroom teacher is speaking.

- Continue to provide professional development to faculty/staff on improving students' reading skills through explicit, multisensory reading instruction.
- Students with Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) devices should be given opportunities throughout the school day and encouraged to use their device in all settings.
- Classroom faculty/staff and speech therapists should continue to collaborate on carrying over skills from therapy sessions into the classroom. Where possible, push-in rather than pull-out speech therapy should be considered to help generalize skills learned during individual therapy.
- Continue providing instruction using a multi-sensory approach such as Orton-Gillingham and consider expanding training in a variety of other multi-sensory programs to ensure teachers have the tools to meet the individual needs of each student.
- Creating opportunities to observe each other in their classrooms may also increase teacher skills. If observing each other is not possible due to staffing issues, video recording teachers with select students for the purposes of teacher training (and with informed consent from the parent/guardian) is also a valuable strategy in teacher learning.
- The district provides the preschool classroom teachers with Re-Think to better track student progress when inputting data. The Creative Curriculum is used by all teachers, general and special education. While this curriculum may be appropriate for the general education students, the special education students may not be benefiting from it as much. When teachers work on the curriculum writing committee during the upcoming summer it may be beneficial to create a supplementary curriculum that aligns with the lessons laid out in the Creative Curriculum.
- The district provides a once a year training on Handle with Care. It is recommended that the district add refresher training for select staff that may require from this training throughout the year. This can be done in small groups with staff identified as needing a refresher, particularly on de-escalation strategies.
- Consider increasing the number of behaviorists within the school district, which is sizable, as this will ultimately benefit the students. Adding behaviorists will likely positively impact student growth, emotionally and academically. Training within classrooms by the BCBA demonstrating de-escalation procedures and proactive strategies to prevent a crisis, will continue the path of LRE that this district already does well.
- Consider utilizing BCBA's for systematic training of paraprofessionals, e.g., Behavior Skills Training, in implementation of ABA strategies. In addition to providing supports for reducing problem behaviors, BCBA's should also be involved in improving implementation of skill acquisition programs.
- Consider establishing scheduled time for Autism program (special education) teachers to collaborate with general education teachers. This may provide additional opportunities for adapting general education curricula to meet the needs of Autism program students.
- Provide additional training on accessing general education curriculum to meet needs of students in the Autism program.
- Some teachers indicated that they would benefit from increased involvement and responsiveness from the case manager assigned to their students.
- Explore additional opportunities for including Autism program students with their general education peers.

- As a district, increasing administrative support for new teachers in the Fall would be beneficial. For example: Providing teacher orientation to learn Frontline, standard policies and procedures specific to the district.
- It may be helpful to offer staff PD that addresses best “How to” practices given that students are on varied levels within the classroom. For example; offer a “Journal Club” as a PLC. A point person may identify a current journal article shared with appropriate staff (e.g., teaching reading to a diverse group of students and then discuss the article).
- Increase time for novice teachers to learn the district curriculum throughout the school year.
- Increase time to meet with colleagues and troubleshoot with speech and OT therapists. It is viewed that behaviorists are difficult to reach out to, due to their high caseload since the full return to school from the pandemic. If possible, increase the number of available behaviorists, ideally, one per school.
- Some district assessments are applicable such as the “District Fact Assessment”. It may be beneficial for special education teachers in the district to have access to the Slosson Diagnostic Screening assessments for Reading, Math, and Spelling. Using these assessments may provide the teacher with more meaningful data about students’ strengths and weaknesses.
- Consider providing a Functional Life Skills program that includes a comprehensive assessment such as the Assessment of Functional Living Skills (AFLS). It is extensive/comprehensive with skills broken down into small components, making it easy to assess small gains that are typical for some of our students.
- Co-teaching teams will benefit from scheduled time for collaboration and planning. This is especially critical for newly formed co-teaching teams. Teachers sometimes use their lunch period for collaboration.
- Teachers who are required to teach multiple subjects find it a challenge to access appropriate professional development in all relevant areas. Consider increasing professional development opportunities outside of department meetings or cross-departmental sessions.
- PD days that are built into the district schedule tend to focus on mental health issues and mandated topics. Teachers often research PD opportunities relevant to their specific discipline and age group, which may get approved.
- Consider increasing PD days/time for instructional aides and teachers with topics relevant to their classroom population of students. Consider providing in-district PD appropriate for different grade-level teachers and/or increasing budgetary support for teachers attending outside PD on following topics:
 - Elementary grades:
 - Behavior strategies
 - Language development and how to encourage pragmatic language
 - Scope and sequence for developing student programs based on VB-MAPP assessments
 - Multisensory instructional methodologies
 - Intermediate, Middle, and High School:
 - Curriculum training on SEL/Social Skills training

- Identifying Reading and math programs that may be available within the district and helpful to the HS teaching community
- Consider providing PD opportunities as it relates to Life Skills Curriculum such as assigning the BCBA to turn-key administration of the Assessment of Functional Living Skill (AFLS). This may help to free up the assigned BCBA to visit classrooms with more frequency.
- See suggestions below:
<https://essentialforliving.com/>
<https://partingtonbehavioranalysts.com/pages/afls>
- All grade levels:
 - Training on programming communication apps such as Proloquo2Go or TouchChat so classroom teachers can begin programming and adding to the vocabulary rather than relying solely on the speech therapist.
 - PD suggestions for the school could include ways to work with different types of special needs students and how to differentiate for these students in the general education setting.
 - Trauma-informed Behavior Analysis
- PD recommendations based on Special Education Teacher Survey Results:
 - Multisensory reading, writing, and mathematics
 - Best practices in adapting current curricula to meet needs of students in resource and self-contained classes
 - Hands-on training on program implementation and behavior management utilizing the expertise of BCBA
 - Best practices in developing IEP goals, data collection, and progress monitoring
- Research Social Skills Curriculum appropriate for the middle/HS student population. Currently there are no specific social skills training programs that teachers have been trained to use.

Special Services Relevant Document Review

Bridgewater-Raritan School District, Department of Special Services should be commended for the demonstrated completion of all necessary requirements from NJDOE Monitoring and Targeted Reviews. In addition, there is a thorough system in place to continuously monitor special education enrollment, placements, workflow and timely completion of mandated tasks. Given the additional challenges presented by the Pandemic over the past two years, it is commendable to note the maintenance and monitoring of the needs of students and program requirements for Special Education and Related Services was a priority. The District is also commended for meeting Student with Disabilities accountability targets for English Language Arts and Math, Student Growth Standards as indicated in NJ School Performance Report 2018-19. (Statewide Testing Data was not available for 2019-20 or 2020-21 due the impact of COVID-19). NJ Start Strong Assessments were administered in Fall 2021 and indicated the potential level of support students may need. Students with Disabilities demonstrated the most significant level of need in the area of Mathematics. *(Please note that the student performance data review was limited due to the suspension of the NJSLA administration during COVID).*

District Monitoring, DOE Targeted Reviews and NJDOE Special Education Public Report

- **Indicator 13: Secondary Transition - (*Transition to Adult Life – Targeted Review*)**
100% compliance (DOE Letter dated November 9, 2021)
- **Indicator 12: Targeted Review - Early Childhood Transition - Data Year 2019-2020.**
District demonstrated correction of delays in implementing initial IEPs for students transitioning from Early Intervention. (Please note: Most districts in NJ received Child Find Targeted Reviews as the Pandemic created extraordinary challenges to complete CST Evaluations within the limits of a virtual school setting throughout NJ.)

2021-2022 Fall Start Strong Performance Data (Source: [BRRSD Website](#))

Overall Results for Students with Special Education Needs

Subject	Percentage Scoring Level 1	Percentage Scoring Level 2	Percentage Scoring Level 3
ELA	51%	25%	24%
Math	68%	23%	9%
Science	65%	24%	11%

Start Strong Grade Level Assessments: Comparison of BRRSD and State Level Scores

Source: NJDOE Website - 2021 ESSA Accountability

Start Strong Assessments 2020 – 2021: State Levels and BRRSD Comparisons by Grade Level Assessment					
Test Code	Subgroup	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	
Start Strong Assessments 2021	Students with Disabilities	Strong Support May Be Needed	Some Support May Be Needed	Less Support May Be Needed	
ALG01	State Level	83.9	12.4	3.7	
	BRRSD	68.9	27.4	<10	
ALG02	State Level	64.2	24.3	11.5	
	BRRSD	55.4	26.5	18.1	
ELA04	State Level	64.8	16.5	18.6	
	BRRSD	50.5	18.3	31.2	
ELA05	State Level	50.8	23.9	25.3	
	BRRSD	31.3	29.3	39.4	
ELA06	State Level	58.7	22.5	18.8	
	BRRSD	41.5	29.3	29.3	
ELA07	State Level	53.7	24.8	21.5	
	BRRSD	42.7	31.3	26	
ELA08	State Level	61.3	18.2	20.6	
	BRRSD	54.7	24.2	21.1	
ELA09	State Level	59.8	14.6	25.6	
	BRRSD	53.1	18.8	28.1	
ELA10	State Level	54.9	20.8	24.3	
	BRRSD	54.3	25.5	20.2	
GEO01	State Level	79.5	13.1	7.4	
	BRRSD	72.4	20.7	<10	

MAT04	State Level	68.2	17.2	14.6	
	BRRSD	59.4	22.9	17.7	
MAT05	State Level	75.3	14.4	10.2	
	BRRSD	67.5	15.6	16.9	
MAT06	State Level	77.3	15.5	7.2	
	BRRSD	66.2	24.3	<10	
MAT07	State Level	73.6	19.8	6.7	
	BRRSD	74.1	22.2	<10	
MAT08	State Level	71.6	21.8	6.6	
	BRRSD	67.9	27.2	<10	
SC06	State Level	73.3	18.7	7.9	
	BRRSD	63	21.9	15.1	
SC09	State Level	71.1	24.7	4.2	
	BRRSD	56.7	38.9	<10	
SC12	State Level	79.6	13.2	7.2	
	BRRSD	71.3	15.7	13	

SPECIAL EDUCATION REFERRAL/CLASSIFICATION TRENDS

Academic Year July-June	Total Referrals	CST Referrals	Speech Referrals	Percentage of Students with Disabilities*		
2021/2022	273	212	52	16.7%		
Students Referred between 7/1/2021 and 6/30/2022 and Service Status						
<i>Referred For</i>	Exited	Not Receiving Services	Pending	Receiving Services	Referral Process Terminated	Total
CST Eval	4	1	1	110	96	212
Speech/Language	1			42	9	52
Unknown				3	6	9
Totals	5	1	1	155	111	273

Academic Year July-June	Total Referrals	CST Referrals	Speech Referrals	Percentage of Students with Disabilities*		
2020/2021	207	169	32	16.7%		

Students Referred between 7/1/2020 and 6/30/2021 and Service Status

<i>Referred For</i>	Exited	Not Receiving Services	Pending	Receiving Services	Referral Process Terminated	Total
CST Eval		2	2	89	76	169
Speech/Language			1	23	8	32
Unknown				1	5	6
Totals	N/A	2	3	113	89	207

Academic Year July-June	Total Referrals	CST Referrals	Speech Referrals	Percentage of Students with Disabilities*		
2019/2020	235	176	43	16.9%		

Students Referred between 7/1/2019 and 6/30/2020 and Service Status

<i>Referred For</i>	Exited	Not Receiving Services	Pending	Receiving Services	Referral Process Terminated	Total
CST Evaluation	4	1	1	95	75	176
Speech/Language Eval		1	1	34	7	43
Unknown				7	9	16
Totals	4	2	2	136	91	235

ENROLLMENT

Special Education Enrollment	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20
Total Student Enrollment	8157	8200	8526
Total Receiving Services	1355	1368	1438
% Receiving Services	16.7%	16.7%	16.9%
In-district	1288	1303	1369
Out-of-District	67	65	69

REFERRAL TRENDS

Request for CST Evaluation	2021-22	2020/21	2019/20
Parent Request	54%	55%	57%
School Request	32%	25%	31%
EI	13%	16%	7.6%
Other/Unknown	1%	4%	4.4%

* Percentage of Students with Disabilities NJ State Average ~17%

High parent referral rates may be related to 1) the need for a consistent best practice and data-driven MTSS supports and services for academic, social-emotional, and mental health and, 2) students struggling as a result of remote/hybrid learning during the pandemic. Recommendations from the NJDOE Guidance: The Road Forward: Engage Recover and Reimagine Education in New Jersey should be considered for all students. This is a system wide approach to addressing the needs of all students following pandemic impact on learning. In addition, the NJDOE subsequently published an Accelerated Learning Guide as an additional resource to address instructional/academic, social, emotional and behavioral needs of students following the pandemic.

Commendations:

- District’s classification rate (students with disabilities) is similar to NJ Average classification rate (17%).
- District is commended for meeting NJDOE requirements to serve student’s in the least restrictive environment (LRE) for grades K-12. (Source: *Local District Special Education Public Report for 2020 – 2021*)
- District demonstrated compliance as required by Targeted Review of Preschool LRE (Indicator 12).

Recommendations:

- District-wide strategies and targeted instructional, and social-emotional interventions should be considered and implemented with fidelity prior to referral to the Child Study Team. This is necessary to rule out the effects of pandemic instructional gaps and obtain valid and reliable data with regard to the existence of a disability that impacts learning and requires special education services.
- An analysis of the parent referrals for CST Evaluations should be considered in context with the impact of interrupted, hybrid and virtual instruction throughout the phases of the Pandemic. Prior to CST Evaluation, a student should be provided with appropriate accelerated instruction and data-driven targeted general education interventions that are implemented with fidelity over a reasonable amount of time. Progress monitoring should be ongoing. Through this process, should progress be minimal over time and a disability is suspected, a CST Evaluation would be warranted.
- Review the most recent Start Strong Participation and Performance Assessment Data available to the district as a tool to assist in compensatory and/or accelerated learning needs of students with disabilities. Findings of the CST record reviews indicated many IEP meetings were held to determine if a student required Compensatory Education due to learning impacted by the pandemic (as required by A-1281/S-905 (P.L.2022, c.2). However, specific data to support the decision as to the provision of compensatory services was rarely noted.



Parent Survey Results

An email invitation was sent to parents/guardians of 1,145 special education students during the month of June 2022. One hundred fifty-eight (158) parents completed the survey for a response rate of 14%. The following data is based on those responses.

The summary charts Parent/Guardian Survey items are found in Appendix D.

Percentage of respondents who “Strongly Agreed” or “Agreed” to questions on identified topics:

IEP

- 81% - parents’ ideas and concerns are considered at Annual Review meetings.
- 85% - parents understand their child’s IEP
- 80% - parents are treated as an equal partner in the IEP process
- 80% - felt they were a valued member in the IEP process
- 75% - child's IEP was implemented as written
- 72% - child’s individual needs are met by their IEP
- 64% - felt faculty/staff are well trained and equipped to meet child’s need and implement IEP
- 69% - of those receiving services satisfied with participation in related services (20% neutral)

Communication

- 90% - know who to contact at their child’s school with concerns/questions
- 77% - communication they received regarding their special education program is communicated in an understandable and clear manner.
- 65% - receive effective communication from teacher & school
- 58% - receive communication regarding progress on their child’s IEP goals and objectives. (21% were neutral)

Parent Training

- 76% - aware of rights and procedural safeguards
- 44% - receive information and training that will assist them to participate fully in implementation of their child's IEP. (28% neutral)
- 32% - satisfied with availability of parent training/support groups. (35% neutral)

Availability/Accessibility of school personnel

- 76% - teachers are available to meet/speak with parents
- 82% - CST members are available to meet/speak with parents (14% neutral)
- 72% - parents who contacted district Student Services administrators- receive response in timely manner (14% neutral)

Transition

- 57% - satisfied with child's participation in Community-based Instruction (CBI) (25% neutral)
- 58% - of those for whom transition is applicable, adequate preparation for transition to the next level (23% neutral)
- 52% - high school respondents - school and/or Child Study Team provides information on agencies that may assist their child in the transition from school to adult life. (12% neutral)

Overall Impression

82% - child is an accepted member of school community

55% - satisfied with the support they receive from district Special Services administration (27% neutral)

69% - overall satisfaction with child's progress in their IEP (15% neutral)

Commendations:

- Based on survey responses:
 - Parents' ideas and concerns are considered at IEP team meetings. Parents are treated as equal partners and feel valued in the IEP process. They have a good understanding of their child's IEP.
 - Parents know who to contact when there is a need. Teachers and CST members are available to meet/speak with parents whenever there is a need.
 - Parents who contact the district Student Services Administration receive responses in a timely manner.
 - Special education students are accepted members of the school community.

Recommendations:

- Communication with parents should be consistent from teacher-to-teacher and CST case managers. The 24-hour rule should be followed at a minimum.
- CST and teachers should discuss with the parents the data that is being collected to determine student progress on goal and objective achievement, as these goals are perceived as boilerplate and irrelevant. Communications regarding student progress on IEP goals and objectives should be regular and consistent.
- There seems to be a perceived gap between faculty/administration and parents on the level and quality of transition services/supports offered. Parental involvement in the transition process and effective communication of the process may help reduce the gap.
- Parental input should be included in the development of student's individual programs. Where and when it is not possible to incorporate parents' requests, an explanation should be given to parents.
- Consider allocating more resources to enhance the community-based instruction and life skills program to create a robust program that can meet the needs of students with a variety of needs.
- Parent workshops and training should be held on a regular basis. These meetings may be organized by topic and the age/grade level of the students. Some topics to consider;
 - Parental Rights in Special Education
 - Least Restrictive Environment
 - Progress Reporting & Data-based Measures
 - All Things Behavior or Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) for Parents
 - Implementing ABA-based Interventions in the Home/Community Settings
 - Understanding Disabilities
 - Coping Skills
 - Sibling Support
 - How to Support Student Learning Needs

- Stigma of Special Education
- Transition to Adulthood and Post-21 Options
- Implementing IEP goals in the Home/Community Settings (small group or individualized training).



Student Survey Results

Number of high school students surveyed – 446

Response rate – 9%

64% - satisfied with school program

49% - satisfied with the concern teachers show about student's progress in school (15% dissatisfied)

58% - satisfied with the progress made in school (15% dissatisfied)

61% - satisfied are with the technology available in school

76% - satisfied with counselors or case managers in school

63% - satisfied with personal safety in school

78% - satisfied with access to extra-curricular activities in school

48% - satisfied with the Community-based Instructional program in school (40% neutral)

Key Takeaways

1. What BRRSD is doing well:
 - a. Continuum of Special Class Programs and placement options
 - b. Inclusion of special education students
 - c. Mental Health supports at the BRRHS
 - d. Multisensory instructional methodologies with Orton-Gillingham programming
 - e. Teachers systematically work on transitioning students from self-contained to ICR setting where and when appropriate.
 - f. Special education students are integrated into each school and well accepted in the school community. Partner Program, Buddy Ball, Peer-mentor programs have created many opportunities for inclusion.
 - g. District has adopted Multisensory programs such as Orton-Gillingham and Math in Focus, however, the need for ongoing professional development in this area is key to implementation with fidelity across the district.
 - h. Professional collaboration between multi-disciplinary team members to best meet student needs.
 - i. Teachers and students have access to appropriate and updated instructional technology. Central Administrators are proactive in securing updated technology.

2. Professional Development
 - a. Increase in-house and outside professional development opportunities targeting specific needs of faculty and staff.
 - b. Multisensory reading training for special education teachers targeted primarily at the elementary and intermediate levels is required.
 - c. Training to specifically target executive functioning for students.
 - d. Ongoing training and professional development on the MTSS process, especially for new team members, for consistent implementation and effectiveness.
 - e. More CST related programs (e.g., Developing Informative, Compliant, and Defensible IEPs, PLAAFP development, Accommodations and modifications, etc.)
 - f. General Education Professional Development
 - i. Instructional Differentiation and Implementation of Multi-Tiered System of Supports
 - ii. Behavioral and Social/Emotional Learning Strategies
 - iii. Trauma-informed Instructional Approaches
 - iv. Basics of Special Education Process and Procedures
 - v. Inclusive Practices and Effective Co-Teaching Models

3. Recruitment and retention of faculty and staff is critical, specifically:
 - a. LDT/C
 - b. BCBA
 - c. Related Services providers
 - d. Paraprofessionals
 - e. Additional Supervisor of Student Services

4. Continue to invest in and improve the Tiered System of Supports to ensure all students receive the support they need to be successful.
5. Expand and enhance the BRRSD Unified Sports programs to afford meaningful inclusion of students with disabilities in all aspects of their school's programs, (i.e., Basketball).
6. Increase the availability of extracurricular opportunities for students with disabilities and the meaningful and natural supports needed for the students to access these activities.
7. Special Education Parent Advisory Group (SEPAG) – “Each district board of education shall ensure that a special education parent advisory group is in place in the district to provide input to the district on issues concerning students with disabilities.” NJAC 6A:14-1.2(h)
 - a. Minimally functioning
 - b. The SEPAG is to be an advisory, parent-led group consisting of “Parent Advisors” who bring insight, suggestions, and constructive recommendations for systemic change from a parent’s perspective.
 - c. The structure and process of the SEPAG allows all stakeholders, especially parents, to collaborate and share information with school district leaders.
 - d. Examine the level of parent involvement/participation across grade levels and implement programs to increase involvement where lacking.



Appendix A

Student Records Review Summary

Student Records Review Summary

District:	Bridgewater-Raritan School District
Total Number of ESERS Records:	116
Initial:	14
Annual Review:	73
Amendment:	13
Assess Progress and Review IEP	2
Re-Evaluation:	28
Total Number of ESLs Records:	14
Grand Total Records Reviewed:	130

Select Individual Student Record Discrepancies:

- **Student (1)**, Most goals only have one objective. Unable to determine what was added/deleted or changed through the Amendment without a meeting as it is not stated in the IEP. The reason was stated in the Notice Request to Amend and IEP without a Meeting. The need for Compensatory was addressed at the IEP meeting and determined to not be necessary.
- **Student (2)**, There were 2 Amendment Agreements without a meeting. Could not determine who the participants were at the Annual Review and this was not carried over into the Amended IEP on file. Compensatory services were addressed in PLAAFP.
- **Student (3)**, Transition Age 14 section should have been completed as the student will turn 14 within the duration of the IEP.
- **Student (4)**, Classroom goals all have 80% mastery criteria; OT/PT have 4/5 trials; Behavioral supports included under supplementary aids but no behavioral interventions included.
- **Student (5)**, PLAAFP statements contain no data or detail; all classroom goals have 80% mastery; OT goals and classroom writing goals are inconsistent; Speech group not to exceed 2.
- **Student (6)**, Parent notification of IEP meeting missing from file.
- **Student (7)**, Several goals have only one objective, consider a broader goal with benchmark objectives.
- **Student (8)**, File Incomplete for this Out-of-District placement. Could not determine participants at meeting or the Goals/Objective and PLAAFP compliance as the Out-of-District paperwork was not attached to the current IEP.

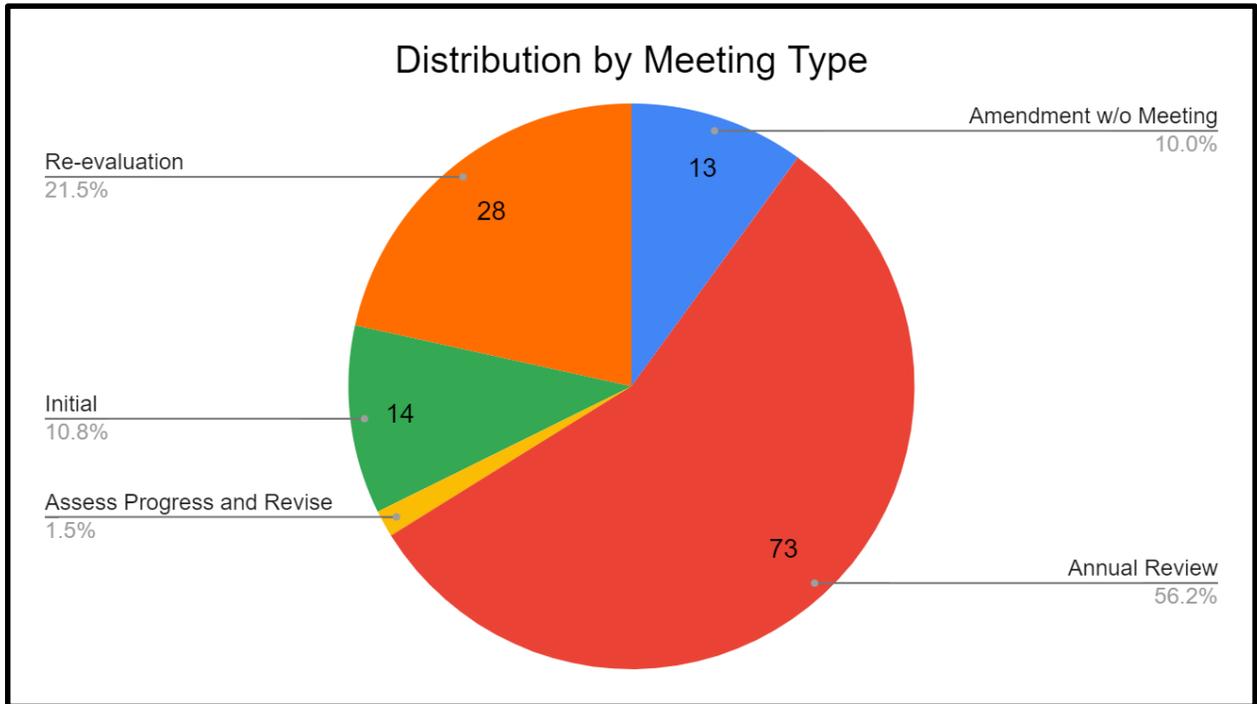
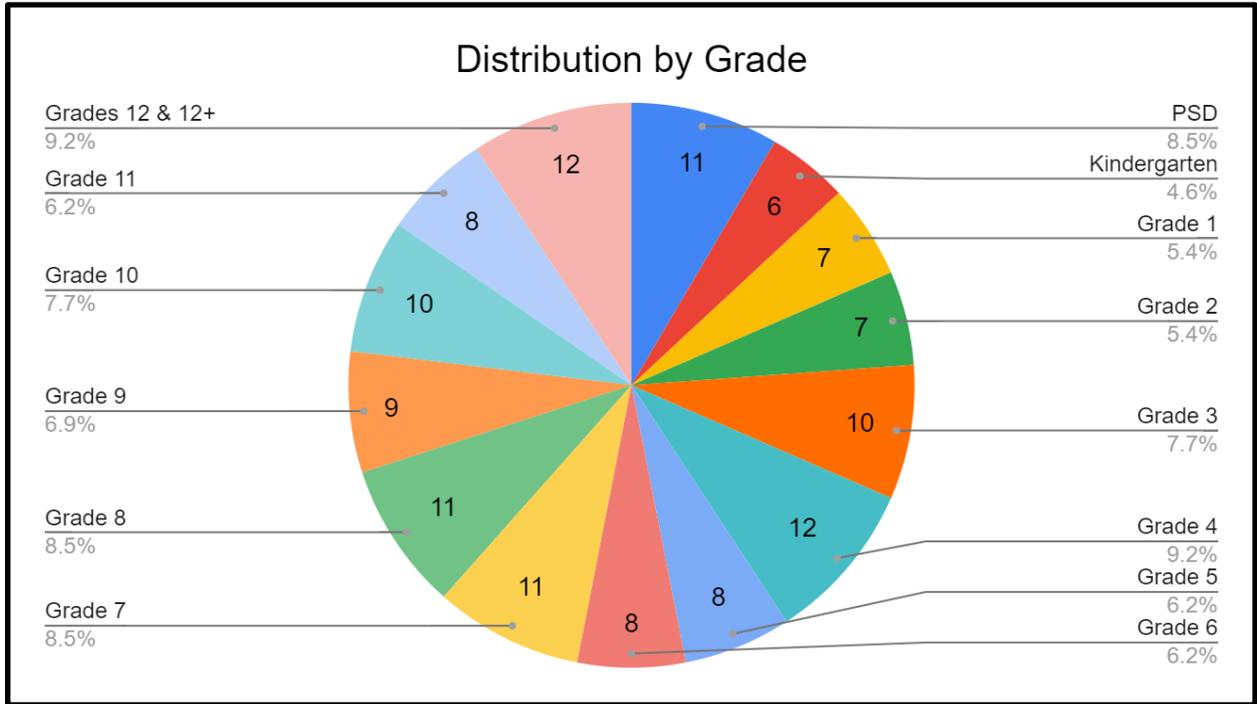
- **Student (9)**, No signature page for participants at the meeting. IEP went into effect in one day - no signature of parent to implement prior to 15 days.
- **Student (10)**, List of Modifications is excessive making it difficult to implement in a meaningful manner.
- **Student (11)**, PLAAFP information from teachers is written more about what the student is lacking and is unable to do rather than what they are able to do.
- **Student (12)**, No documentation of parental consent prior to implementation before 15 days. Student is 13.8 and will turn 14 within the duration of the IEP. The transition plan for 14 should have been completed. It was marked N/A on the IEP.
- **Student (13)**, No Signature/Attendance sheet. Participants were listed on page 2 of IEP, but no other attendance/signature form was attached.
- **Student (14)**, Objectives are minimal. Difficult to measure benchmark data.
- **Student (15)**, Student is 14 therefore Transition information should be addressed more specifically.
- **Student (16)**, Student was on the Participants list in the IEP, but there was no signature to indicate participation in the IEP.
- **Student (17)**, Not all areas identified as needs were addressed in the Goals
- **Student (18)**, Parental Concerns are indicated with a "no."
- **Student (19)**, Out-of-District placed student, PLAAFP indicated student is not attending classes consistently, however, there are no ongoing strategies to address attendance. There were no goals and objectives in the current IEP, although it was noted they were attached to the IEP.
- **Student (20)**, Goals do not fully address areas of weakness noted in PLAAFP.
- **Student (21)**, Inconsistency between needs and the goals to address the needs.
- **Student (22)**, Unable to determine from the signature sheet if the General Education Teacher was excused from the meeting.
- **Student (23)**, Group Speech "not to exceed 3."
- **Student (24)**, Previous year's IEP not in file. No Annual Review meeting invitation. No consent page for current IEP.
- **Student (25)**, Age 14 Transition statement did not include student strengths, Interests, and preferences.
- **Student (26)**, It appears while the student was invited to the IEP meeting, the student did not participate in the meeting as there is no signature on the signature page of IEP. The student strengths section of IEP lacked specificity. Parent concerns was a simple "no."
- **Student (27)**, Student Strengths statement very weak. Goals & Objectives are weak and do not make sense.
- **Student (28)**, Supplementary Aids specifies the name of an individual who needs to be present with the student, better to be more generic and indicate just the position/job title.

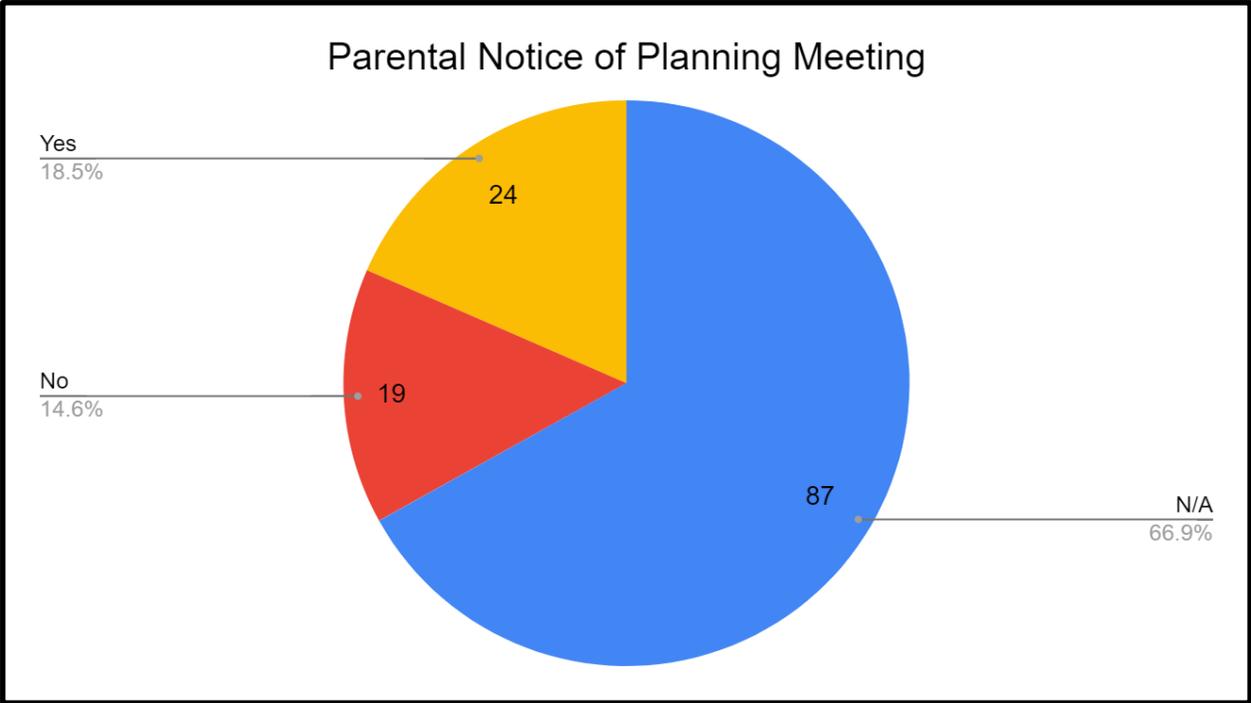
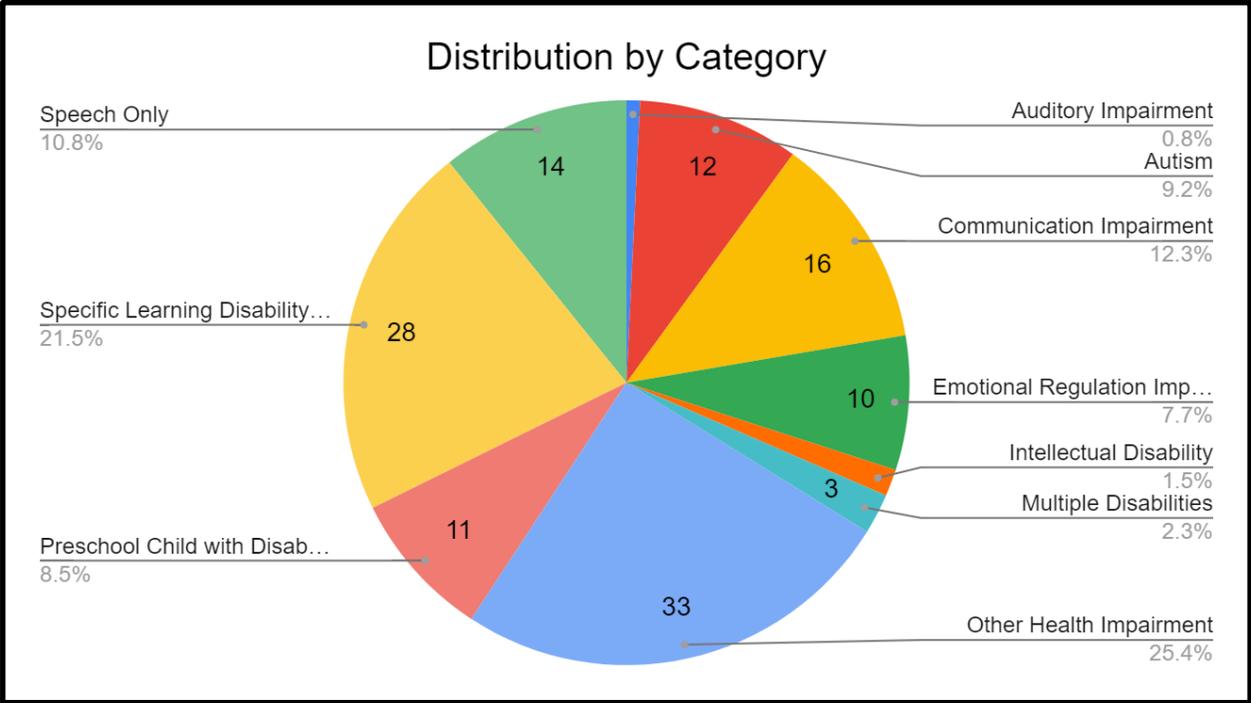
- **Student (29)**, Sticky note left on letter from parent requesting evaluation; Goals/objectives are well written; accommodations listed under modifications; Pull-out speech group not to exceed 3.
- **Student (30)**, PLAAFP statements should be strengths based and not needs-based; parental notification of meeting not included in file; Social, Emotional, Behavioral difficulties are identified in PLAAFP statement but not addressed in needs, Social, Emotional, Behavioral goals do not address the many issues listed in PLAAFP statement.
- **Student (31)**, 70% success for criteria across the board.
- **Student (32)**, Indicates ESY not needed but no explanation of how it was determined or why.
- **Student (33)**, Needs and goals do not match; strengths and preferences not included under transition planning.
- **Student (34)**, Meeting Invitation, sign-in meeting form and parental consent to implement prior to 15 days missing.
- **Student (35)**, PLAAFP does not contain teacher input in either the Review and Revise IEP or the Initial AR IEP. Detailed CST testing is listed. (Review and Revise IEP was to consider OT Eval, services were not recommended. Should have been documented under "Options Considered and reasons rejected" section on page 11).
- **Student (36)**, No accommodations listed for NJSLA, but has IEP accommodations for daily use.
- **Student (37)**, No consent to evaluate found in file. No way to determine whether reports sent to parents 10-days prior. The student did not participate in the IEP meeting. Parent concerns statement in PLAAFP a simple "No."
- **Student (38)**, Evaluation reports referenced in the IEP are not included in the student folder.
- **Student (39)**, Meeting notifications not included, hence unable to establish if timelines as indicated in the IEP were met; Evaluation reports not included in the file.
- **Student (40)**, No sign in sheet therefore could not determine meeting participants.
- **Student (41)**, Speech group size not to exceed 4.
- **Student (42)**, Re-Eval reports were not in the file. No invitation/notice of Re-Eval Planning meeting, eligibility meeting or Annual Review meeting.
- **Student (43)**, Parent signature is non-compliant. There is a signature sheet included with the printed name of the parent, but no signature.
- **Student (44)**, Parental input in PLAAFP - "No". No NJSLA Accommodations, however, student has many modifications listed in the IEP for daily classwork. There is no signature page - but parent electronic signature appears on second to last page of IEP and is written over on draft notes page. IEP implementation date is the same date as the meeting - needs to start next day with parental consent or 15 days later.
- **Student (45)**, Consent to Evaluate for the Re-evaluation was not in the file, however, the CST conducted Evaluations. Parent concerns listed as "no." Most goals only have one

objective - need to consider scaffolded objectives - all academics were "3 out of 5" trials with the exception of one Mathematics goal that was 70% success. Speech-Language goals/objectives were appropriate.

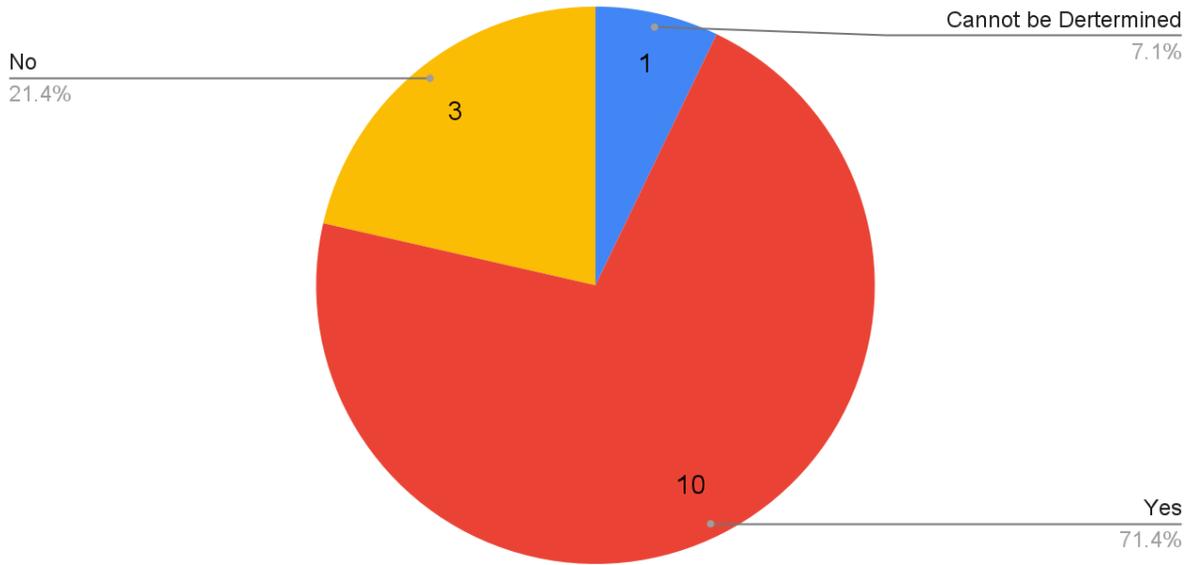
- **Student (46)**, The Out-of-District IEP PLAAPF describes more of the curriculum components that will be covered rather than student present levels, needs, and strengths.
- **Student (47)**, Parental input was listed as “no.” Needs listed in IEP are not addressed in the goals. Subject area knowledge and skills are addressed.
- **Student (48)**, Speech and Language Evaluation was completed as part of the Re-evaluation but this was not listed on the consent form. Concerns of parent listed as “no.”
- **Student (49)**, Student strengths statements in PLAAPF subjective and not academically based. One group speech session listed at 25-minutes and another group speech session at 20-minutes.
- **Student (50)**, Psychological evaluation report sent 10-days prior, Social evaluation report not sent 10-days prior to eligibility meeting. Since there was no signature page, it cannot be determined who the meeting participants were.
- **Student (51)**, No documentation included regarding completion of evaluations or mailing reports to parents. The school counselor attended the meeting.
- **Student (52)**, Student receives speech as related service, however, speech evaluation information is not included in the document. No PLAAPF statement or needs from Speech therapist. Accommodations were listed under modifications. Concerns of parents states “There are parent concerns at this time,” but no specifics included. The Speech therapist did not attend the meeting when the student has speech goals.
- **Student (53)**, No documentation of parental consent prior to 15-day implementation. No Signature/Attendance sheet. Participants were listed on page 2 of IEP, but no other attendance/signature form was attached.

Student Record Review Summary

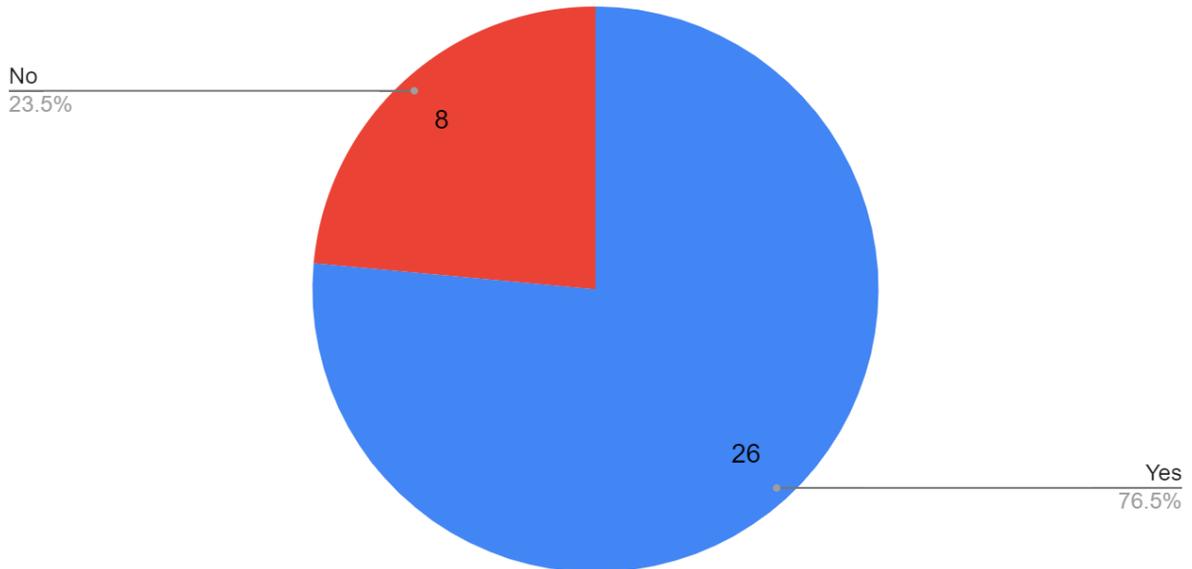




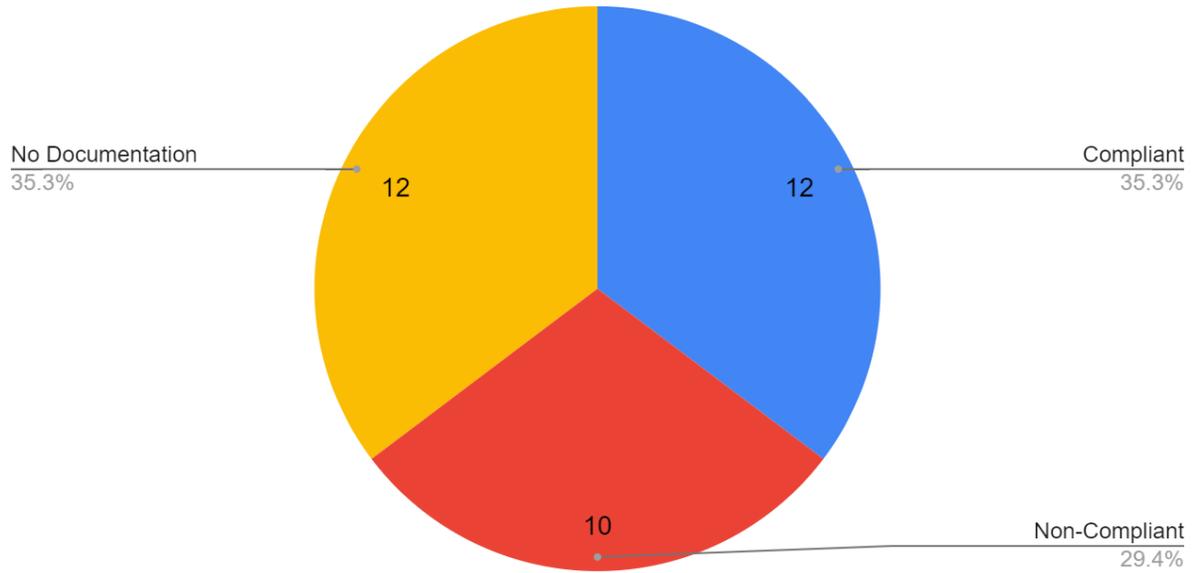
Planning Meeting within 20 days of Referral (Initials)



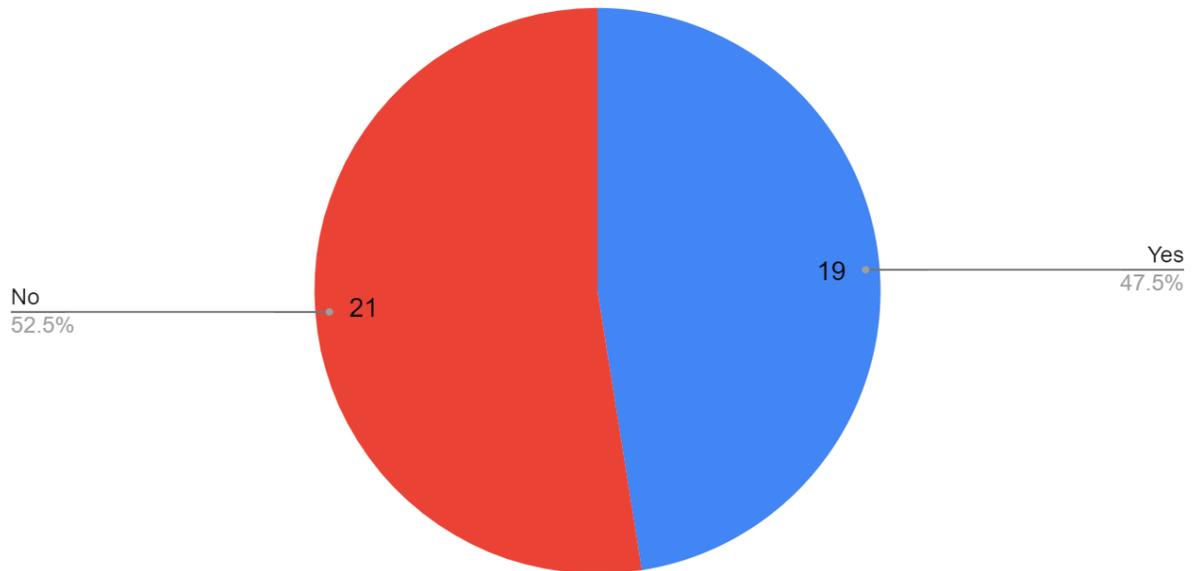
Consent to Evaluate Received



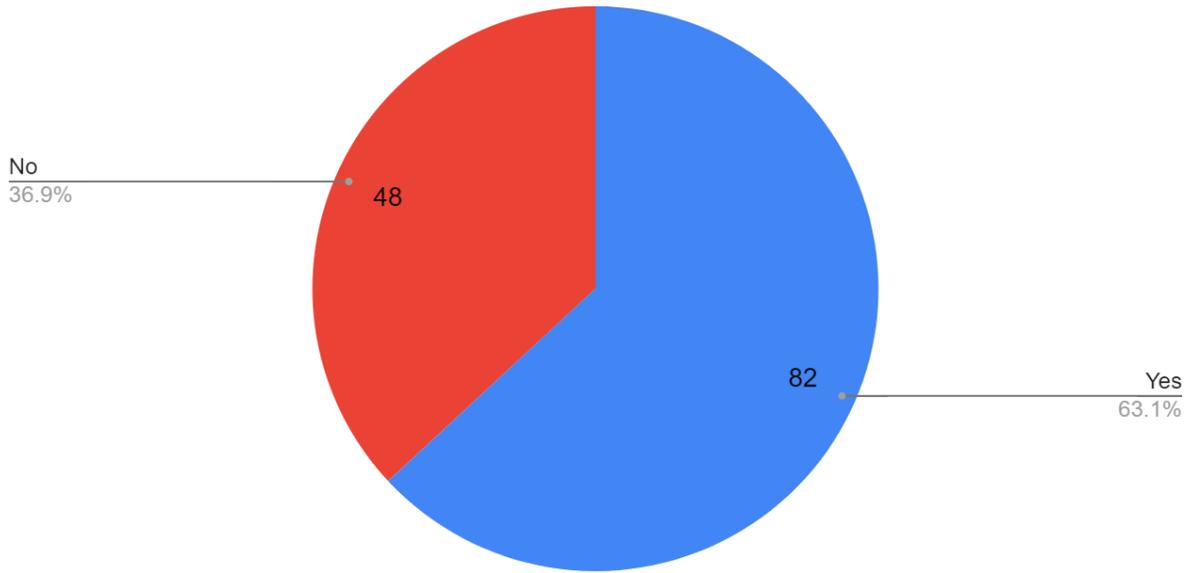
Evaluation Reports Mailed to Parents 10 Days Prior to Meeting



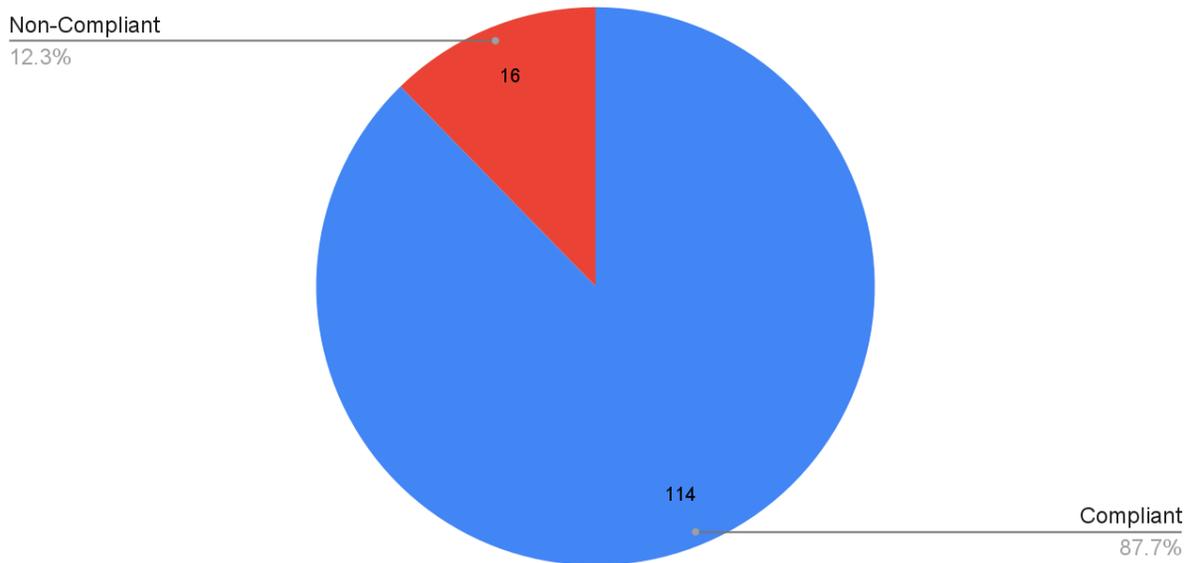
Parental Notice of Eligibility Conference



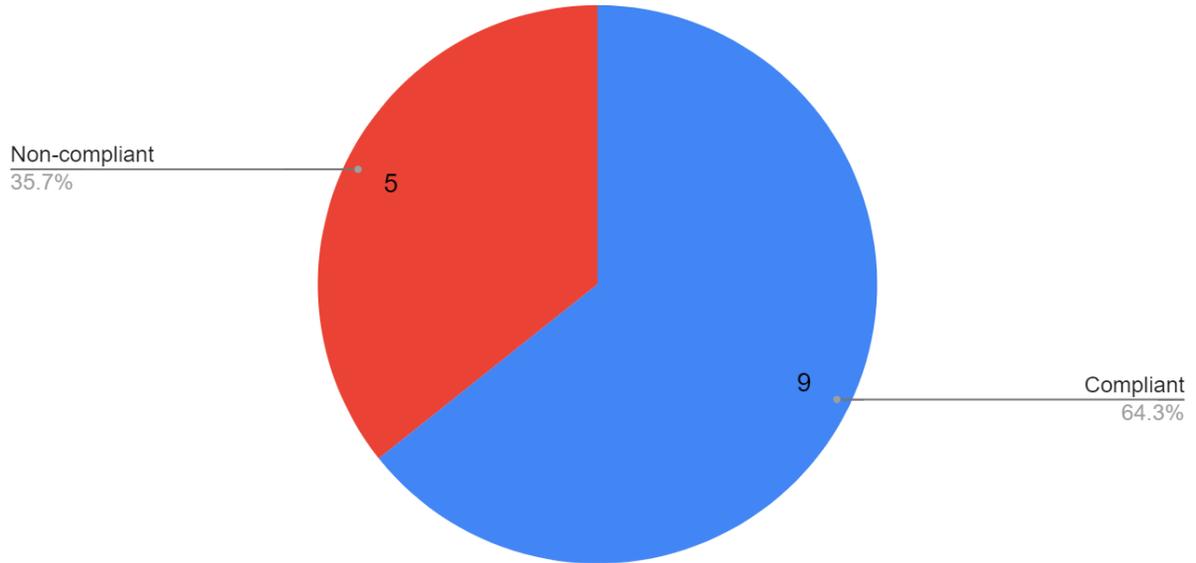
Parental Notification of Annual Review/Amendment



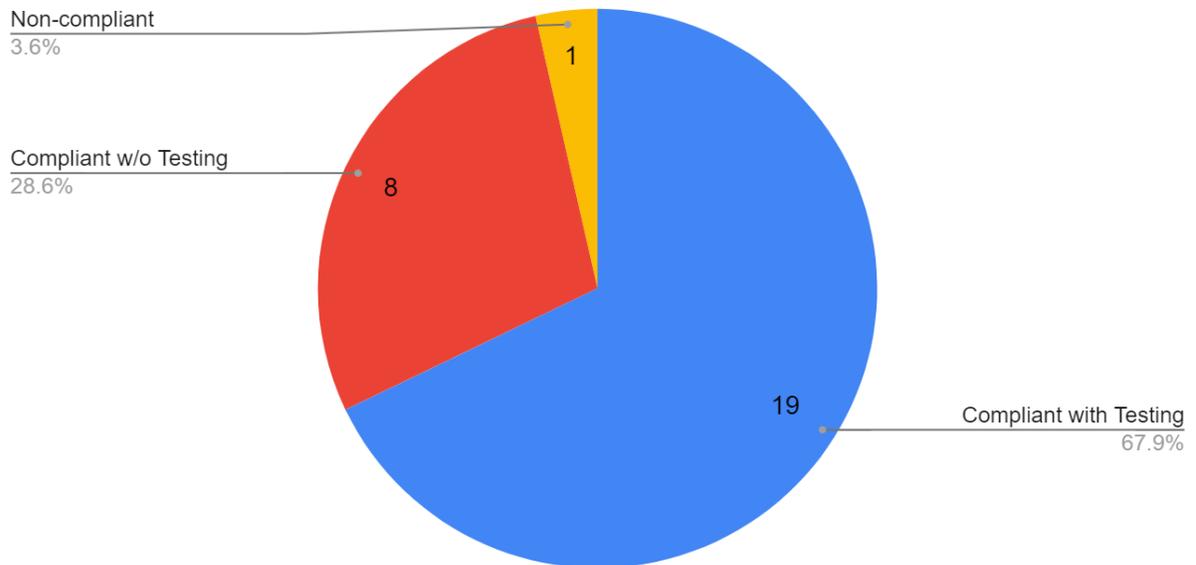
Annual Review Parental Consent to Implement Received



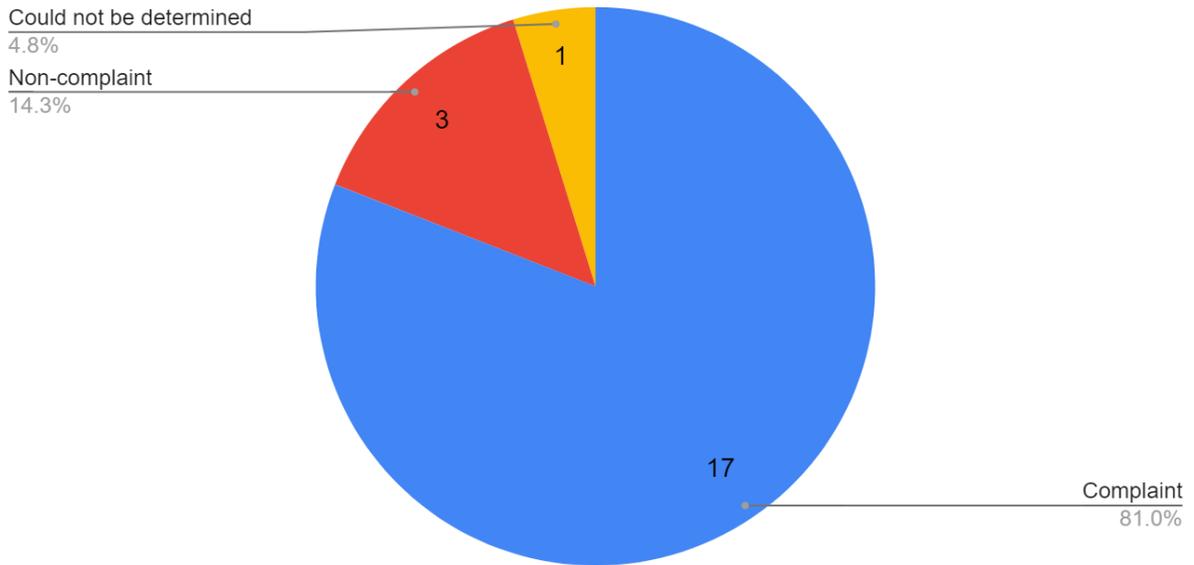
Initial Completed Within 90 Days



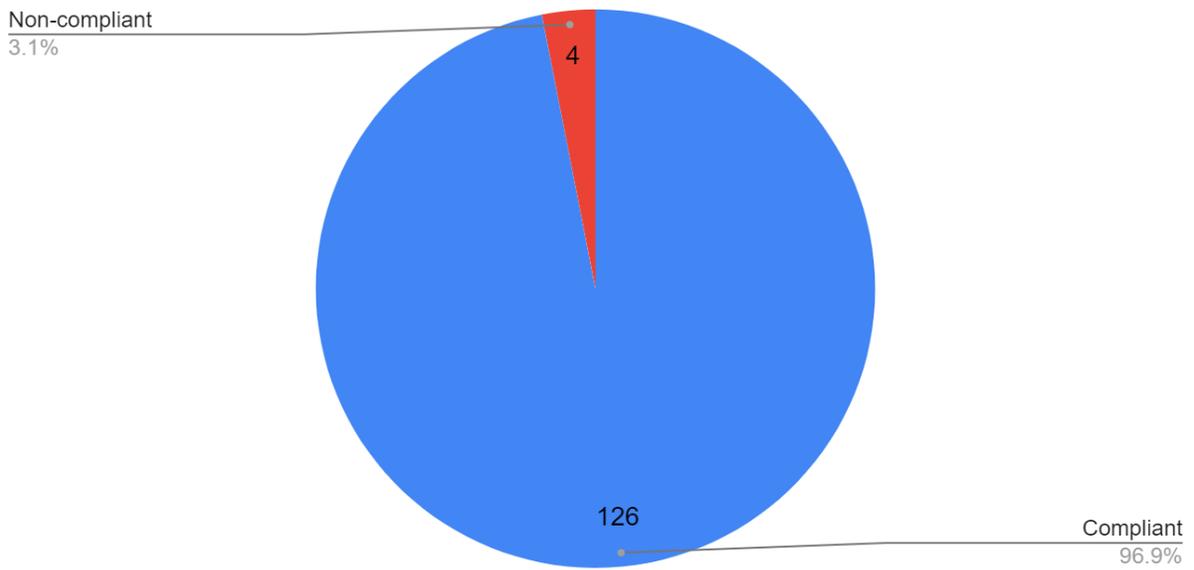
Reevaluation within 3 Years

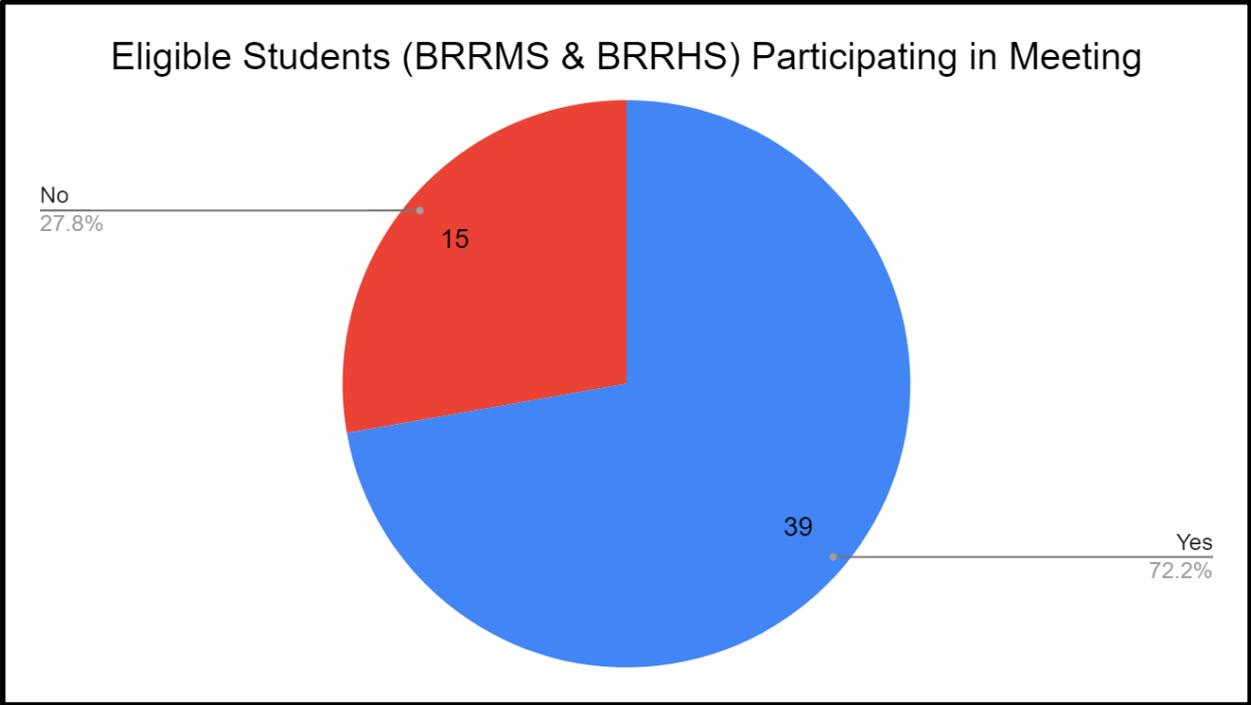
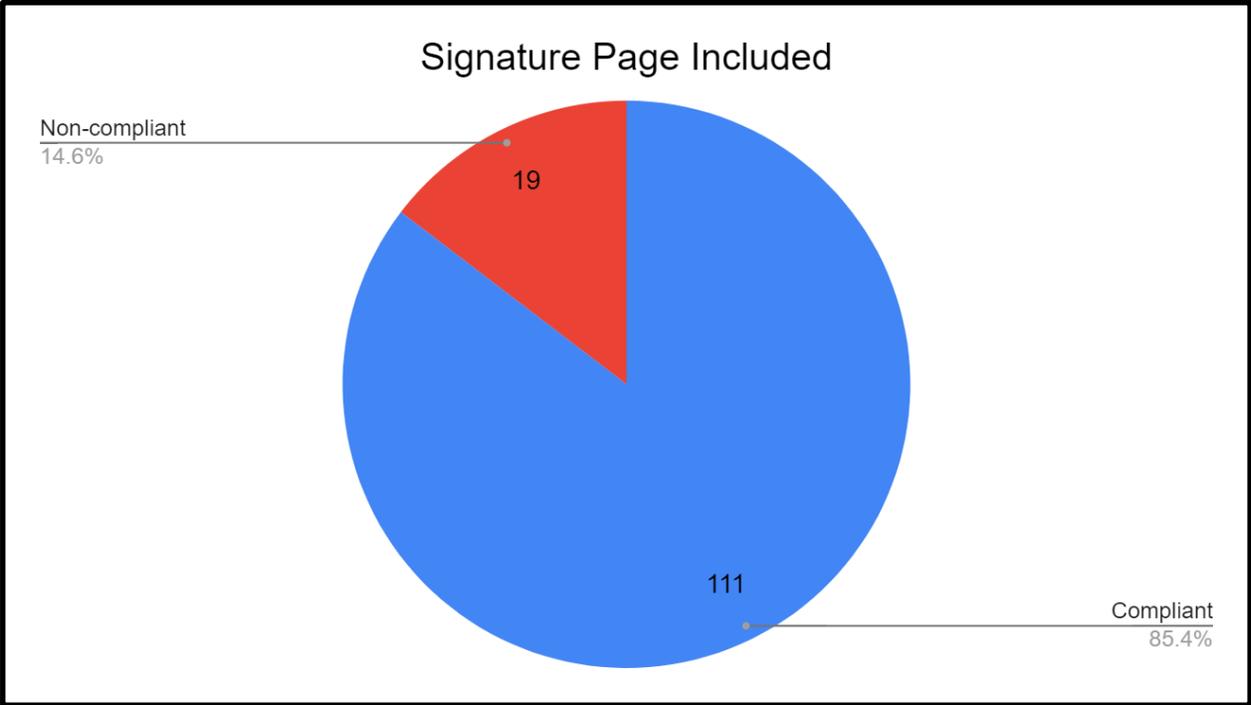


Reevaluation Completed within 60 Days of Consent to Evaluate

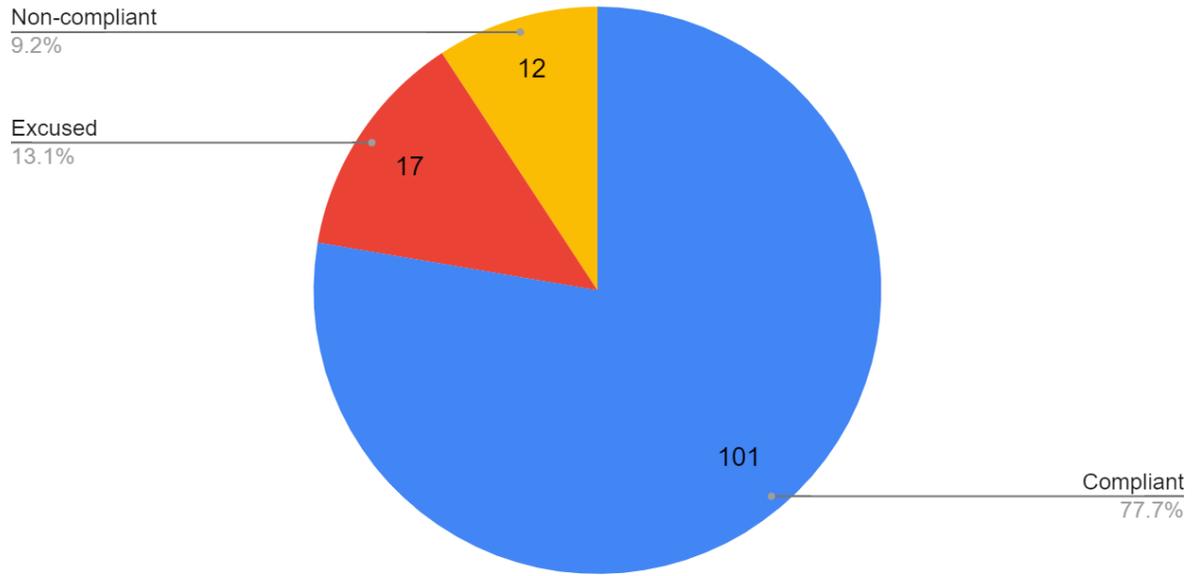


Annual Review Completed Within 1 Year





General Education Teacher Participating in Meeting



Appendix B

Special Services Relevant Document Review

Monitoring Reports Review:

Indicator 13: Secondary Transition – *100% compliance* for administrative oversight of the implementation of requirements regarding students with disabilities, ages 16 and above, to ensure ongoing compliance and successful transition to adult life for students with disabilities. (DOE Letter, November 9 2021)

Indicator 12: (July 2021) Targeted Review – **Early Childhood Transition (Based on NJSMART Data 2020)**

- Delays in implementing initial IEPs for students’ transition from the Early Intervention system for the 2019-2020 school year deeming a correction for noncompliance. NJDOE recognized timelines may have been impacted by the global pandemic beginning in March 2020, but required timelines continued to be in effect.
- Targeted review requirement: Demonstrate that the district is correctly implementing specific regulatory timeline requirements.

Outcome: BRRSD submitted all required data and upon review, NJDOE Office of Special Education determined the district demonstrated correction of noncompliance concerning delays in implementing initial IEPs for students transitioning from Early Intervention Services. (NJDOE Letter, November 10, 2021)

Child Find Entitlement Letters (IDEA-B): Sent to local preschools 10/21/21

Child Find Letters: Sent to 48 Businesses public and private. 10/22/21

Local District Special Education Public Report for 2020 – 2021

<https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/monitor/spp/2021/reports/Somerset/0555.pdf>

- ***All NJDOE Indicators were met except for:***
 - ***Child Find and Early Childhood Transition – Mandated Evaluation and Placement timelines for school age and EI Transition did not meet NJDOE standard (Indicator 11 and 12)*** (Note: Most districts in NJ received Child Find Targeted Reviews as the Pandemic created extraordinary challenges to complete CST Evaluations within the limits of a virtual and hybrid school setting throughout NJ.) NJDOE State Targets are set at 100%. BRRSD reached 98.32% (Indicator 11) and 90.91% for Indicator 12 (Part C early intervention referrals)
 - ***Preschool LRE – Percent of Preschool students with disabilities educated general education setting did not meet NJDOE standard (Indicator 6)***

The District exceeded State Targets for Children with IEPs served in regular classrooms (Indicator 5A, 5B, 5C). The district was not cited for disproportionality and met IEP Transition Criteria (100% Indicator 13). The students with IEPs ages 14 – 21 who graduated from High School with a regular diploma in 2019-20 (99.07%) exceeded the state target (91.50%).

Appendix C

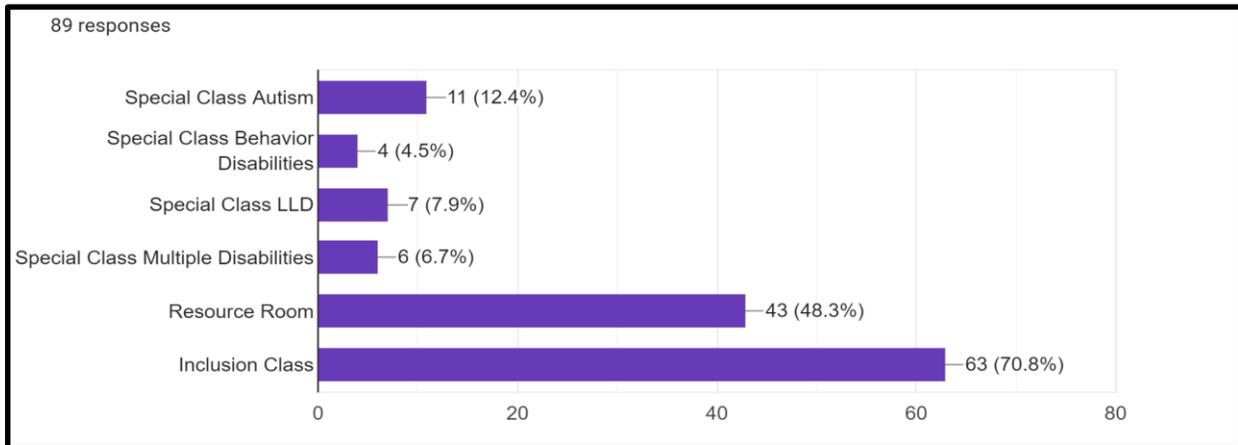
Special Education Teacher Survey Summary

Special Education Teachers Survey Summary Charts Bridgewater-Raritan School District

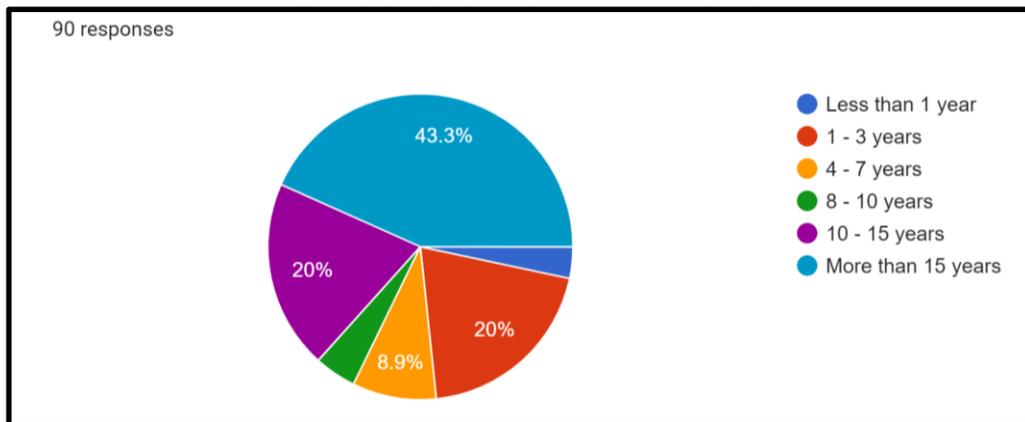
The following data is based on the ninety (90) responses to the online special education teacher survey during the month of June 2022. Surveys was emailed to one hundred sixty-four (164) special education teachers, for a response rate of 55%.

Total Number of Responses: 90

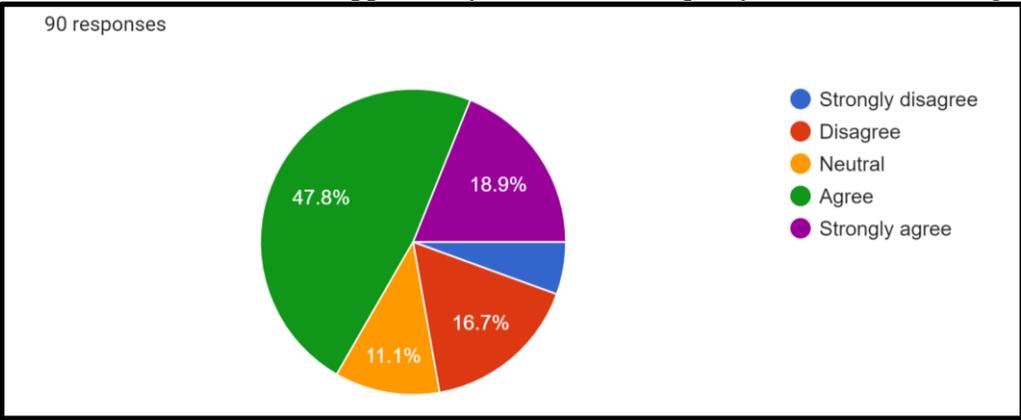
Type of Classroom/Program



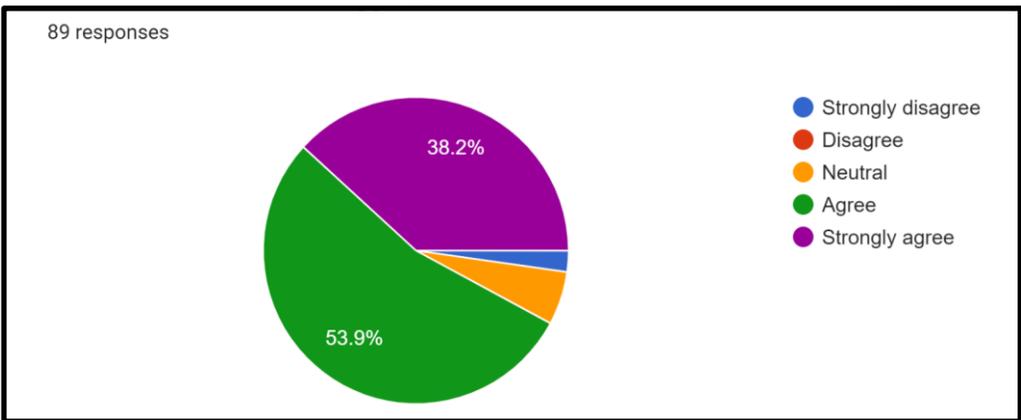
Number of Years Worked at BRRSD



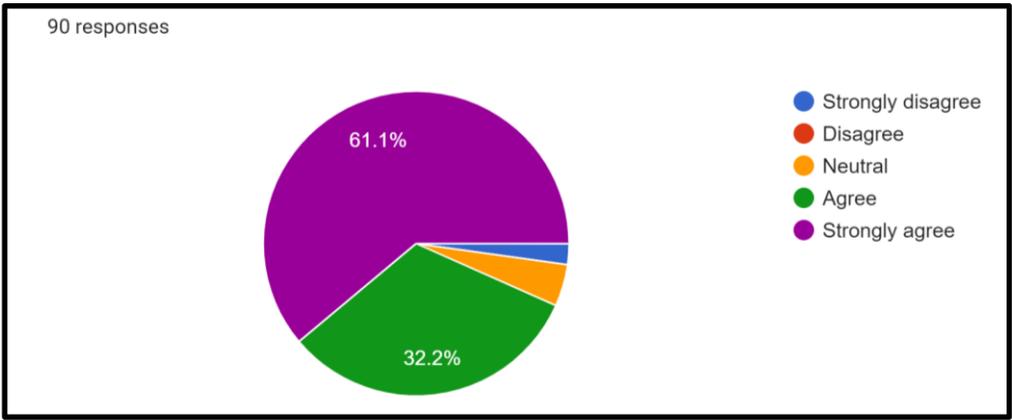
IEP team members have opportunity to contribute equally to decision making



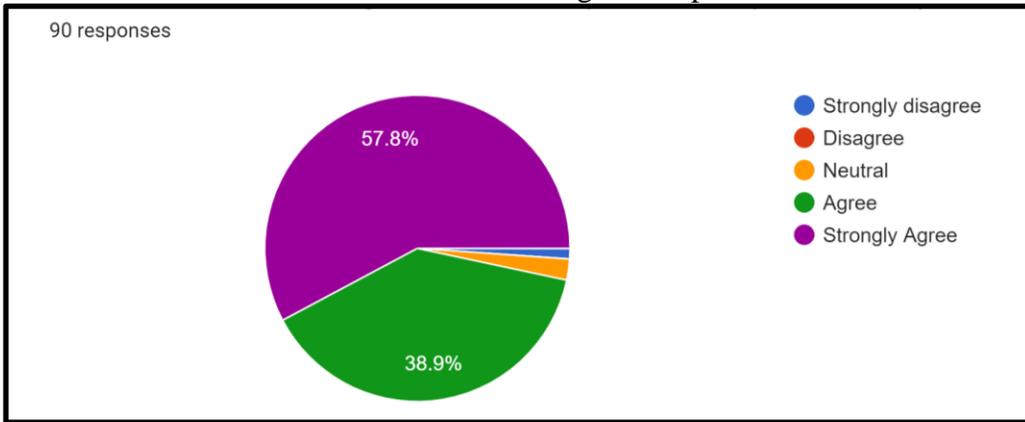
Parental concerns and suggestions are considered at IEP meetings



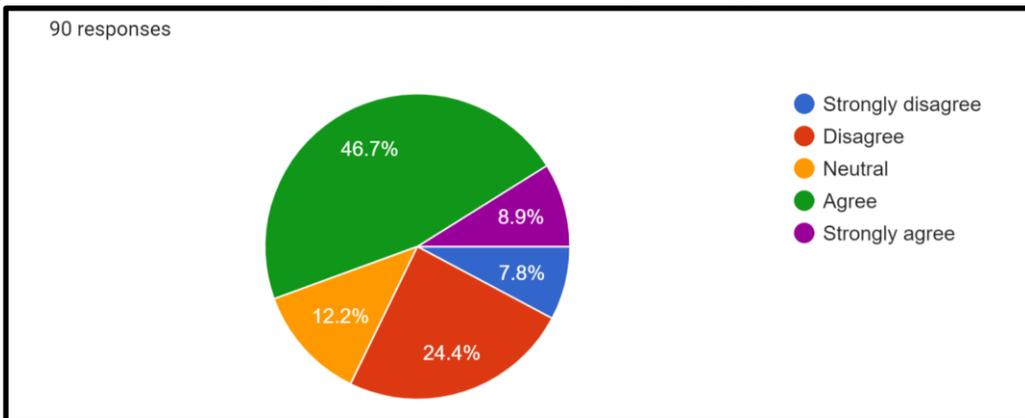
Parents/guardians feel comfortable contacting teacher with questions and concerns



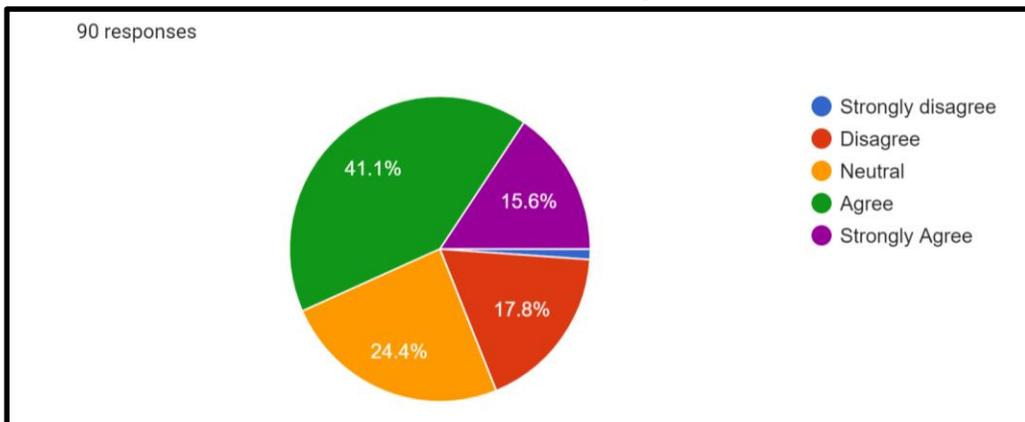
Have a firm understanding of IEP process



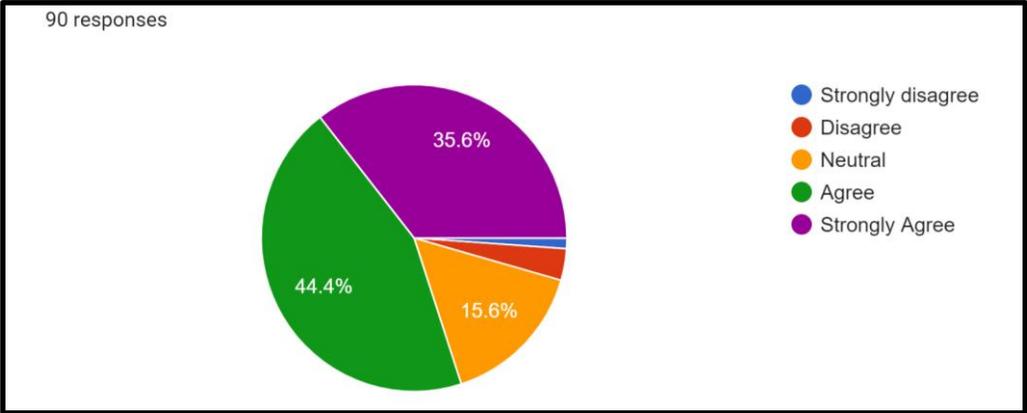
Receive adequate professional development opportunities



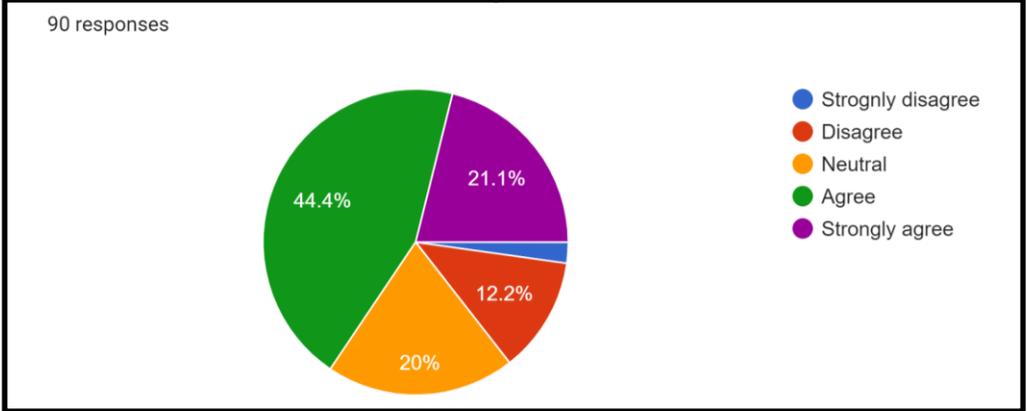
Satisfied with the level of collaboration with general education teachers



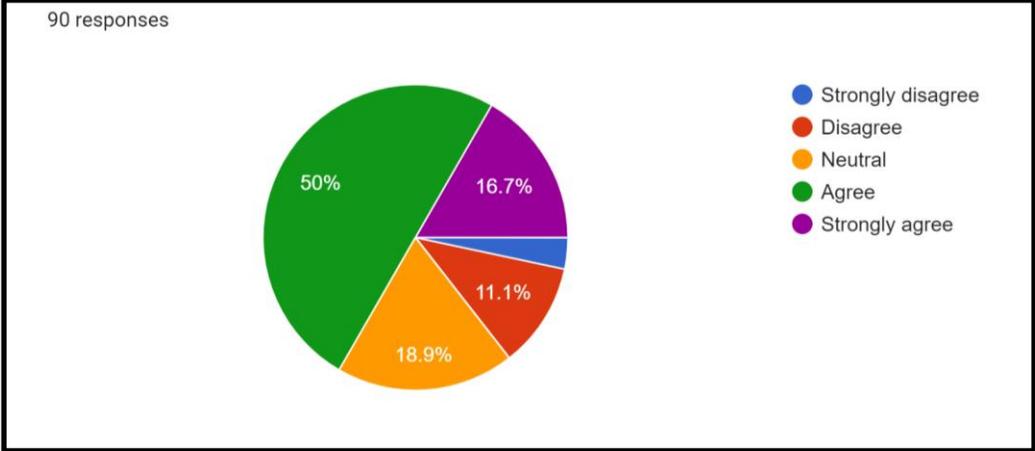
Treated as a peer when working in collaboration with general education teachers



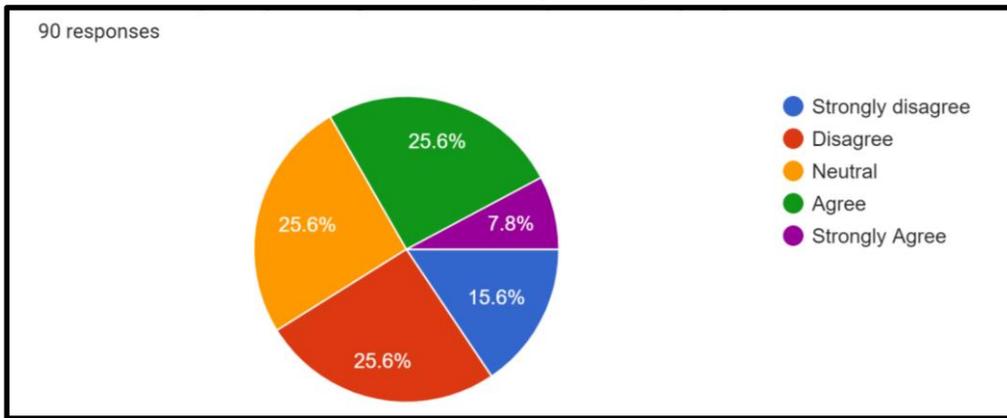
Satisfied with the feedback and guidance received from school administrators



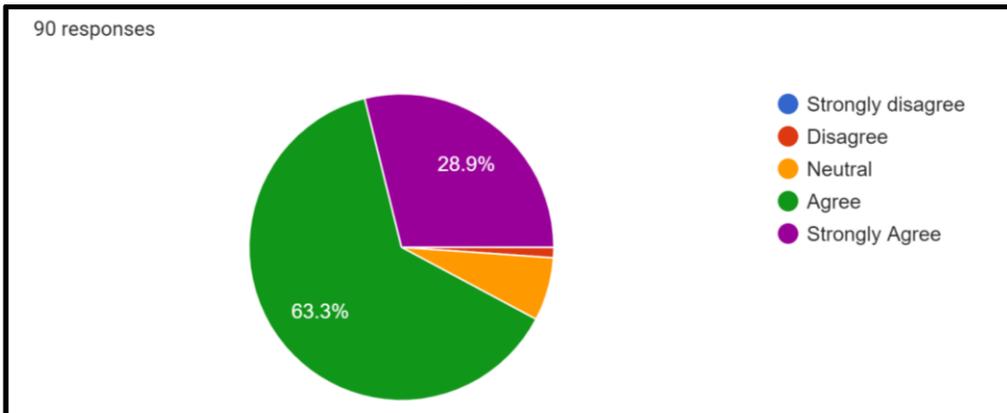
Satisfied with support received from district-level Student Services administrators



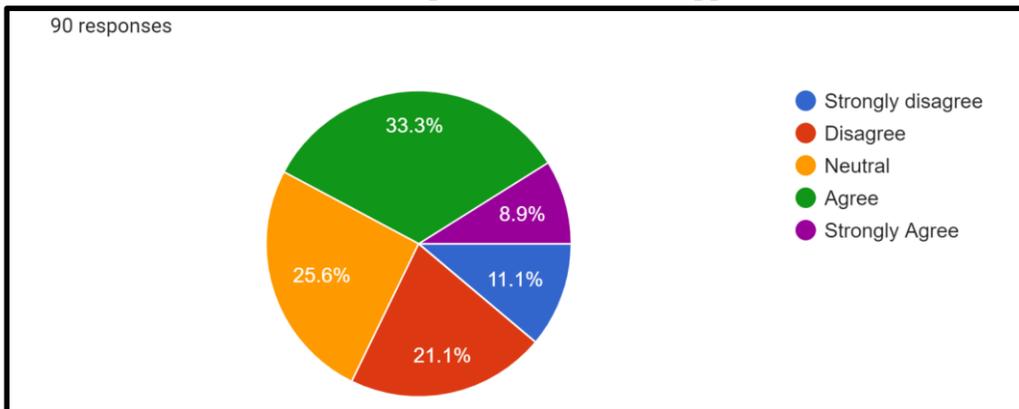
Receive adequate planning time



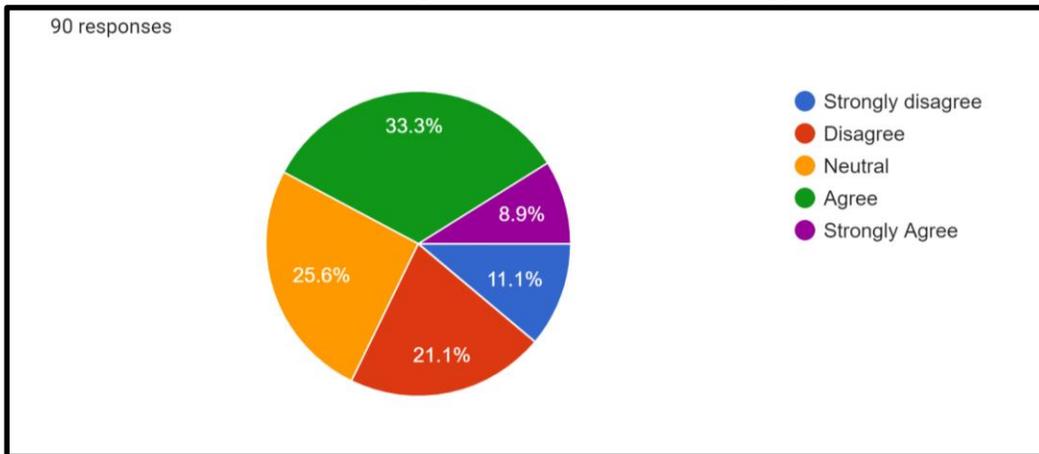
Able to effectively differentiate instruction



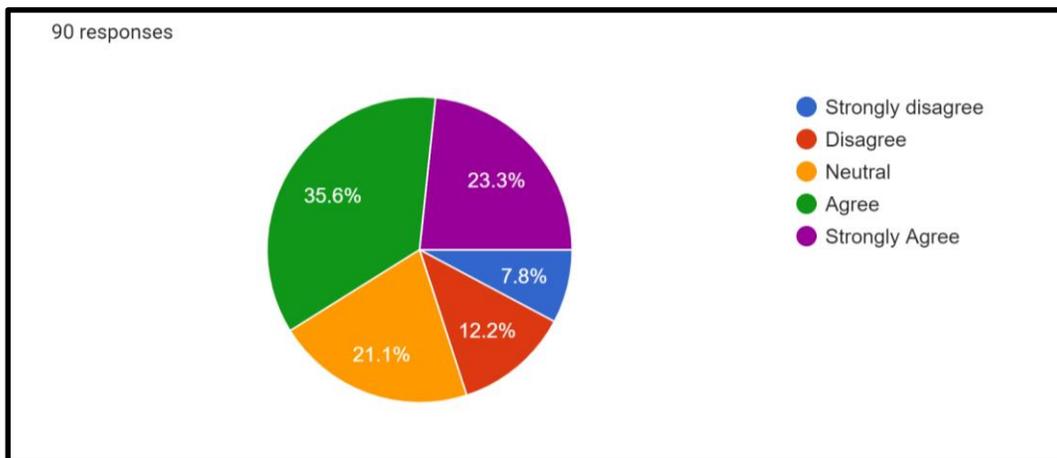
Receive adequate instructional supplies



Receive adequate instructional technology



Satisfied with the climate and culture in school



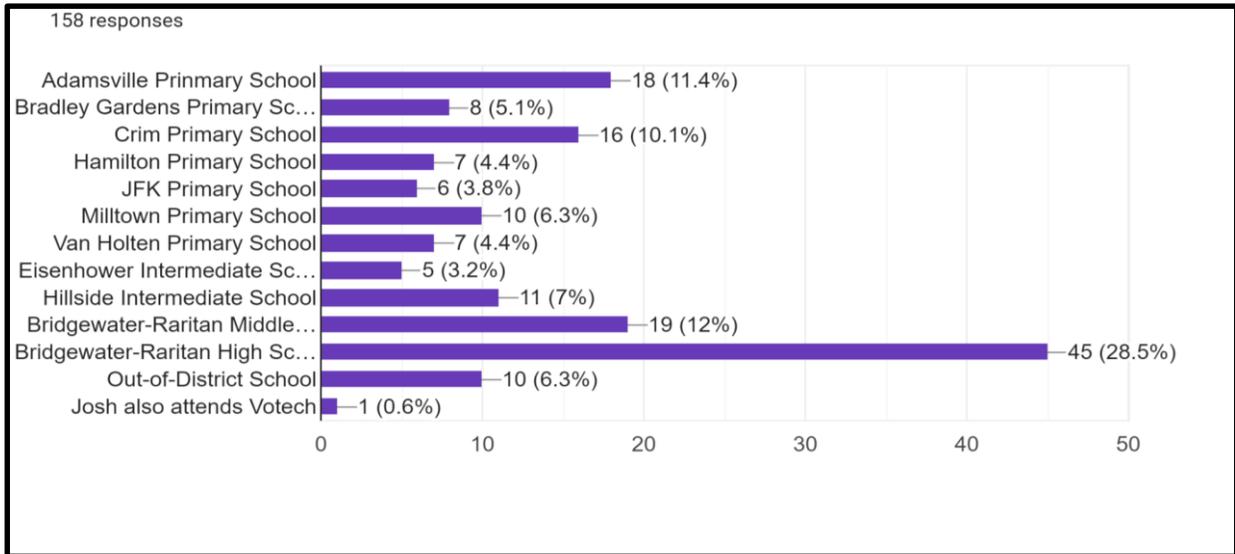
Appendix D

Parent(s) Survey Summary

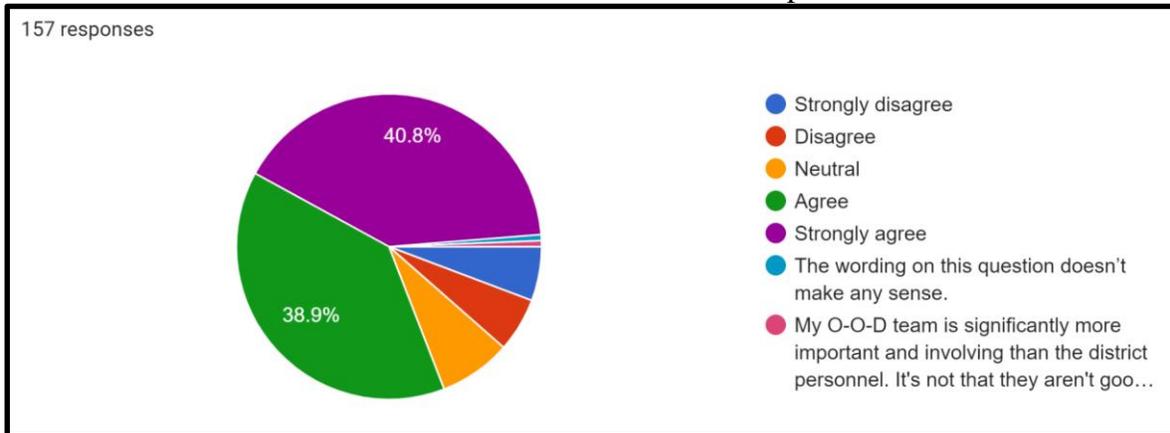
Parent Survey Summary Charts Bridgewater-Raritan School District

The following data is based on the one hundred and fifty-eight (158) responses to the online parent survey during the month of June 2022. Survey was emailed to 1,145 parents, for a response rate of 14%.

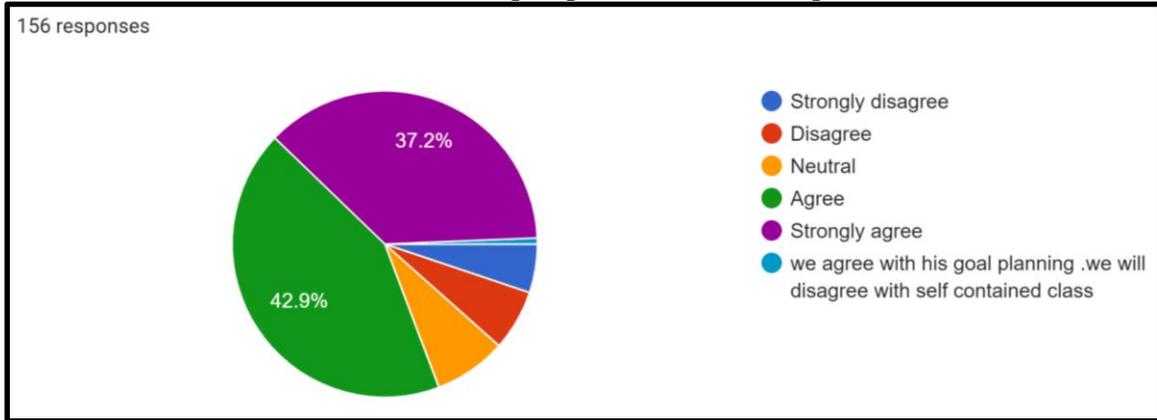
School Child Attends



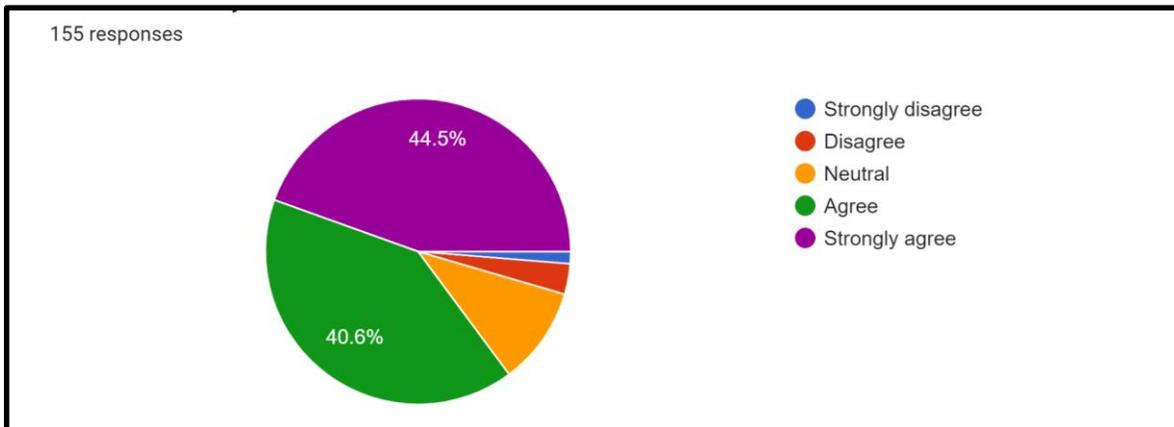
Parent as a valued member in the IEP process



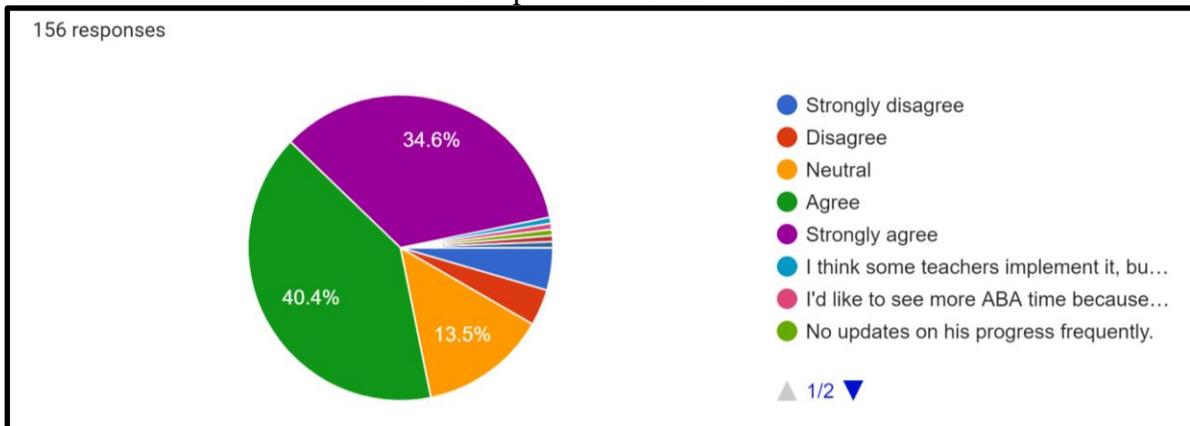
Parents treated as equal partners in the IEP process



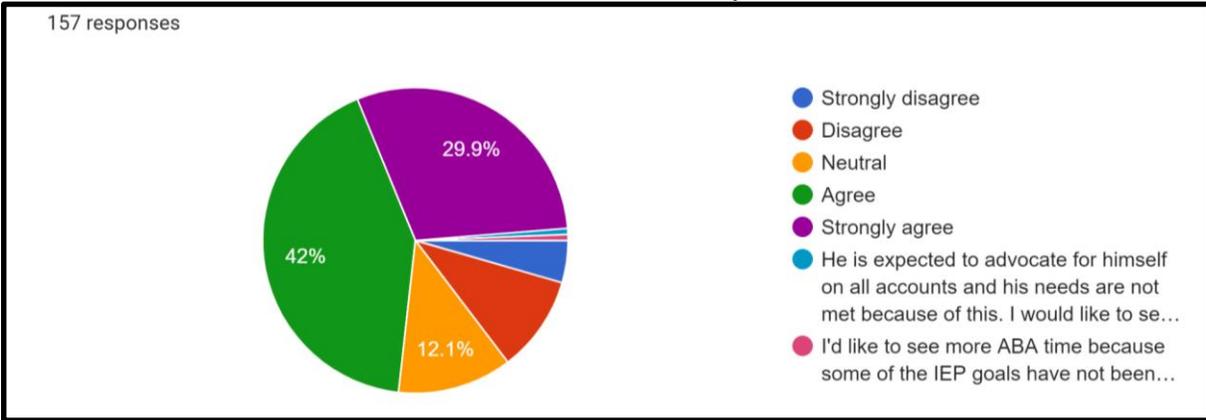
Parents understand their child's IEP



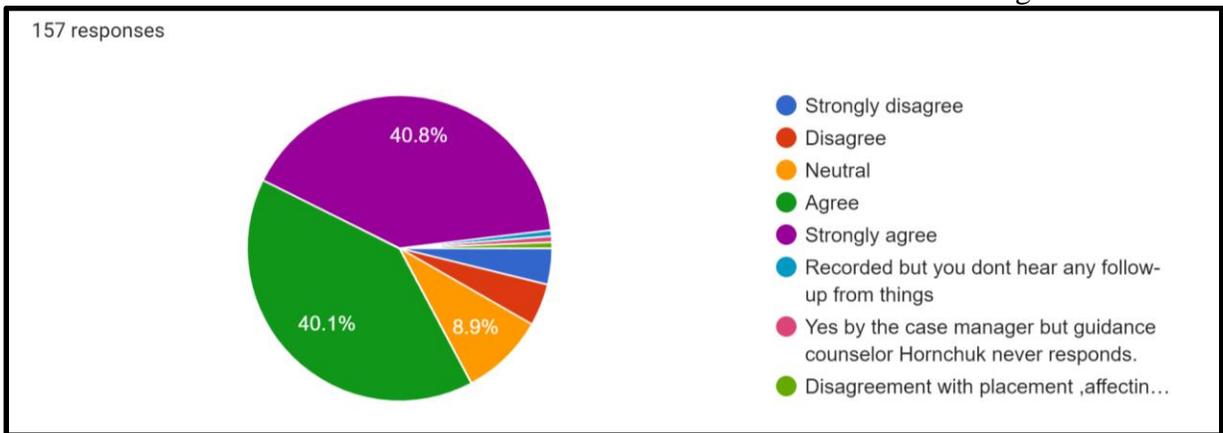
IEP implemented as written



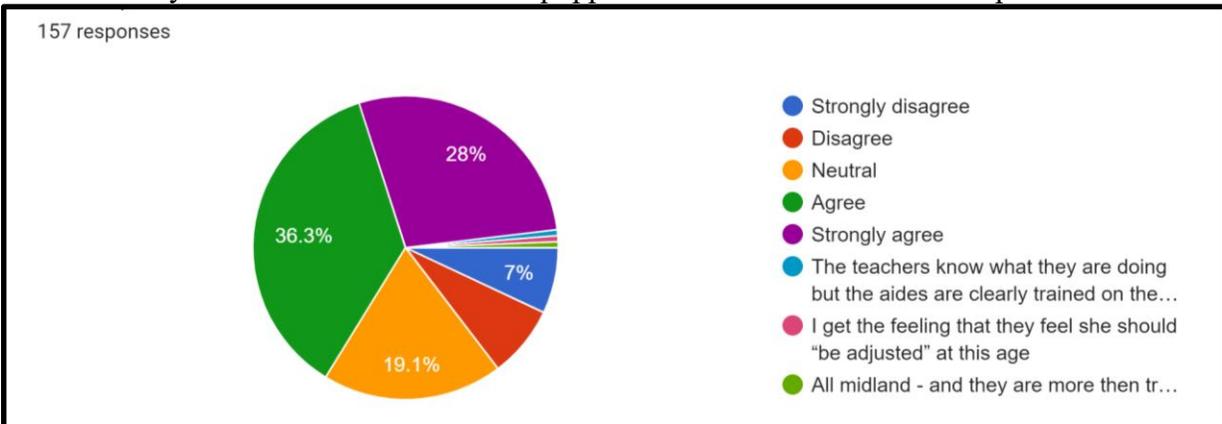
Individual needs are met by the IEP



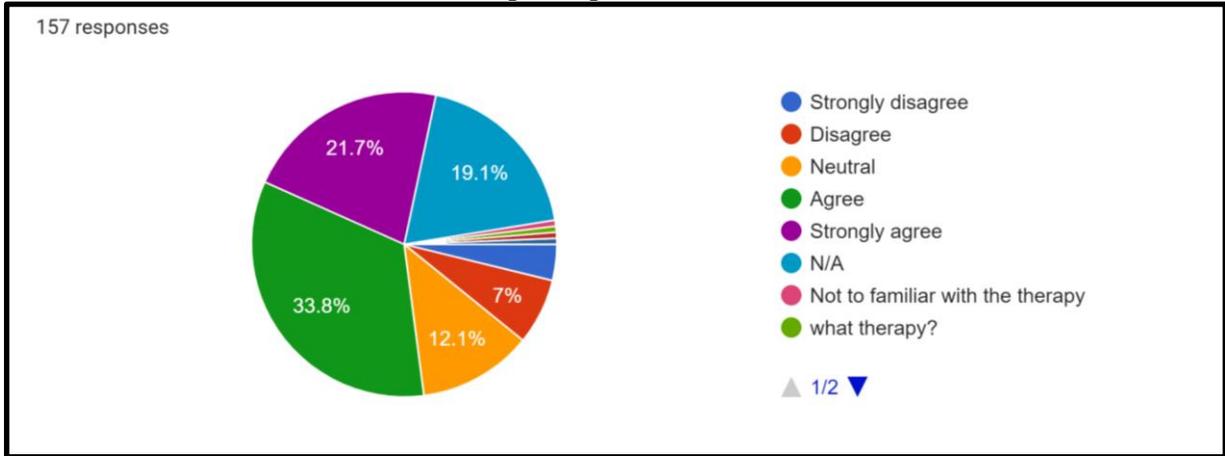
Parents' ideas and concerns considered at Annual Review meetings



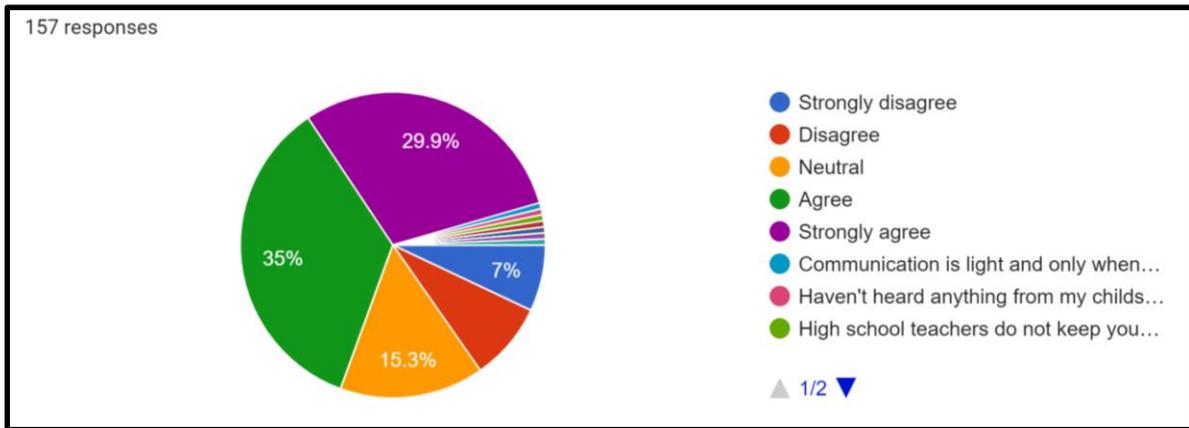
Faculty/staff are well trained and equipped to meet child's need and implement IEP



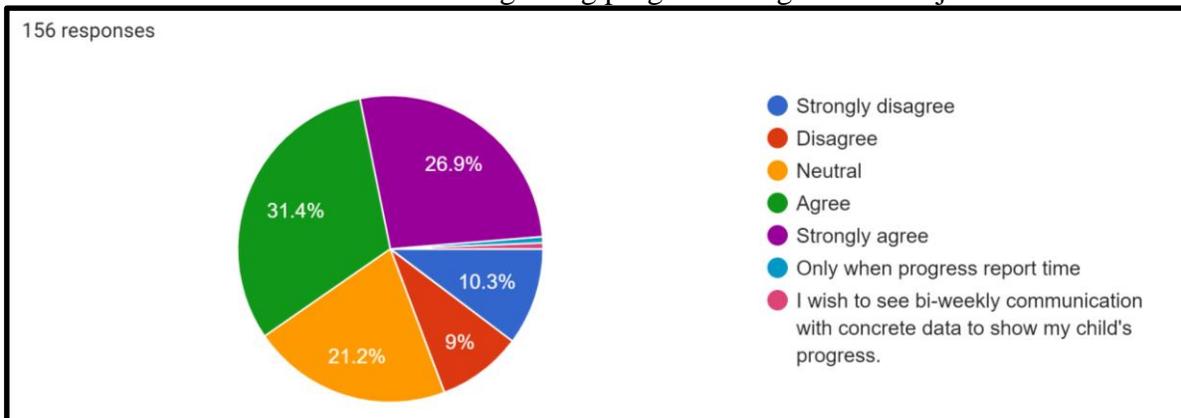
Satisfied with participation in related services



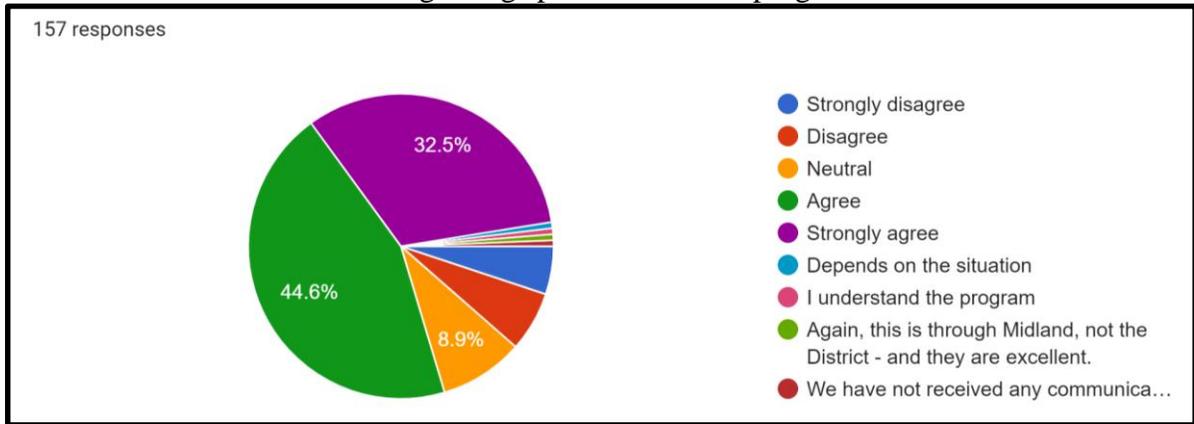
Receive effective communication from teacher & school



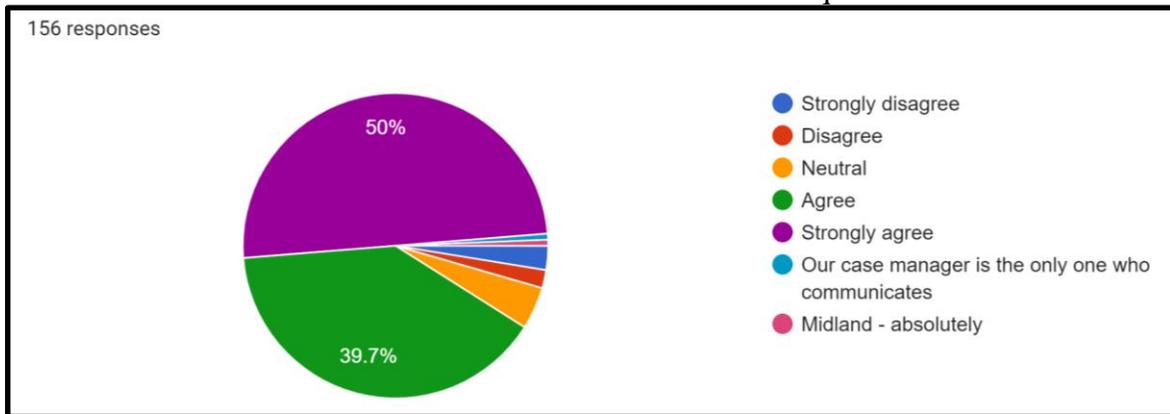
Receive communication regarding progress IEP goals and objectives



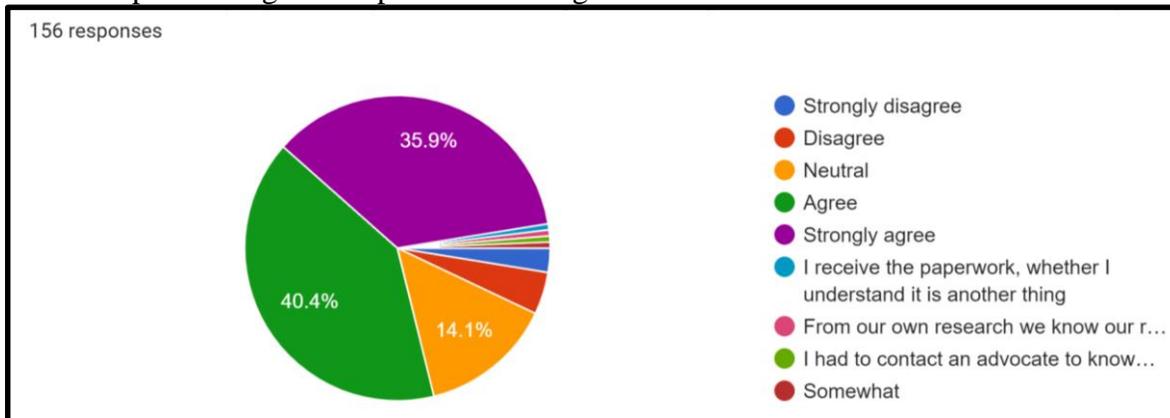
Communication received regarding special education program understandable and clear



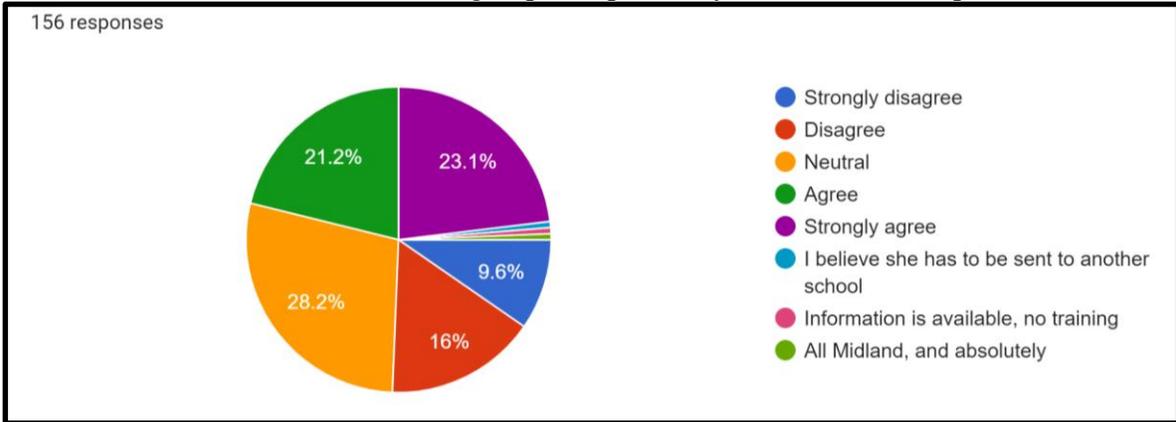
Know who to contact at with concerns/questions



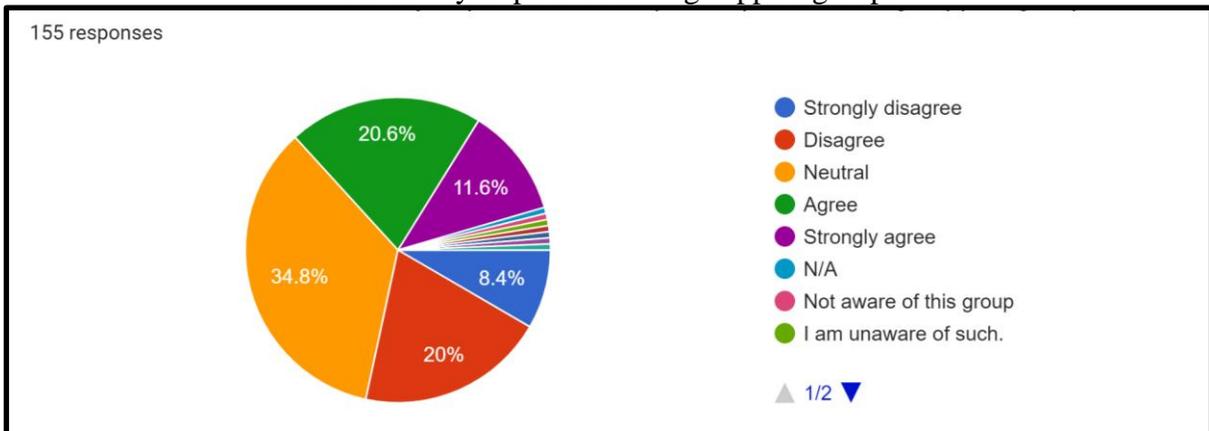
Aware of parental rights and procedural safeguards



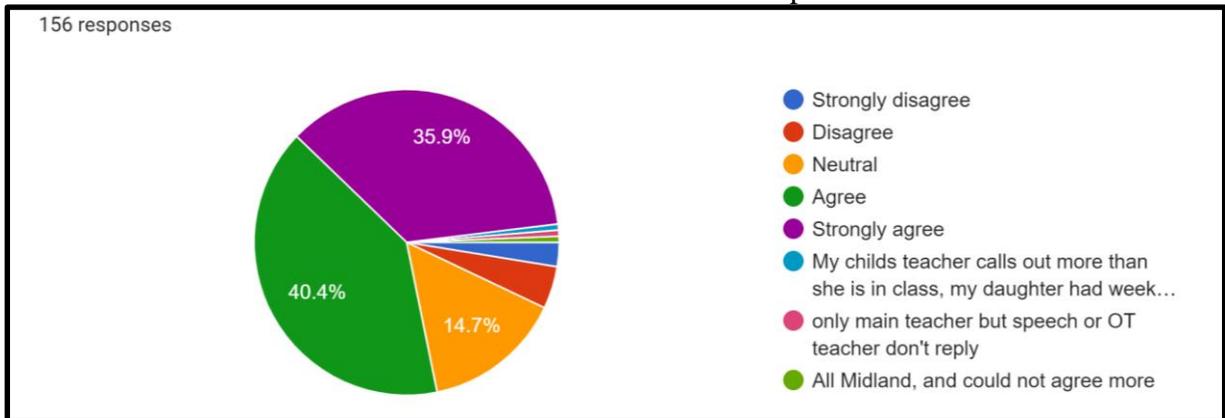
Receive information and training to participate fully in child's IEP implementation



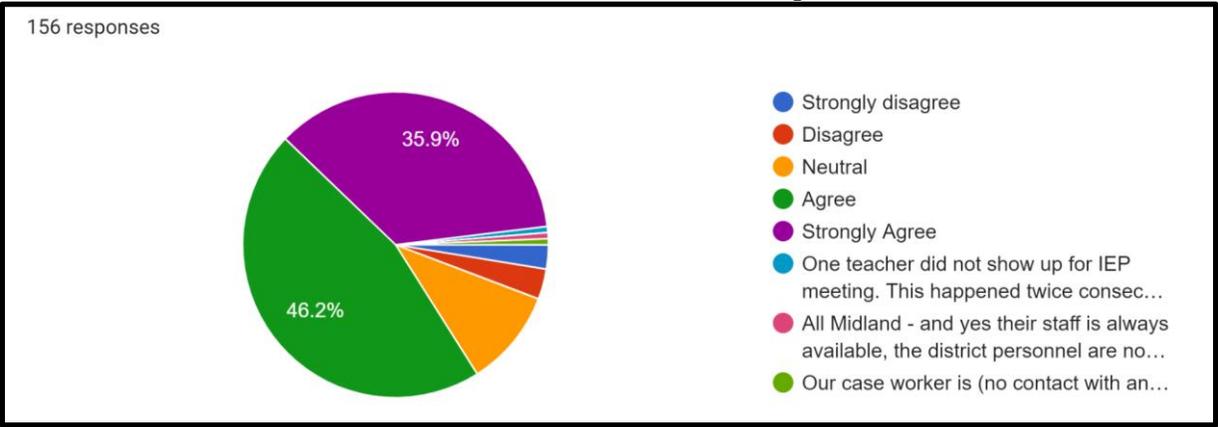
Availability of parent training/support groups



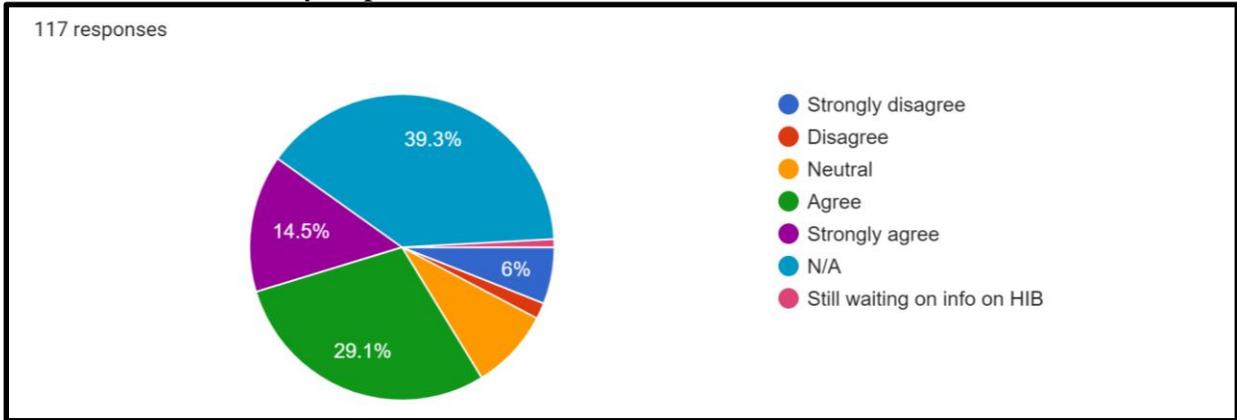
Teachers are available to meet/speak



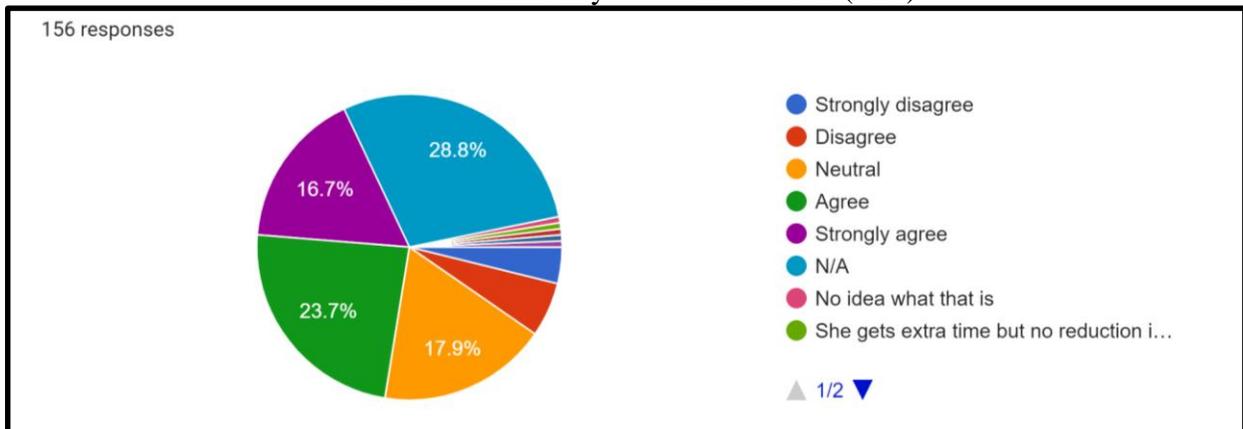
CST members available to meet/speak



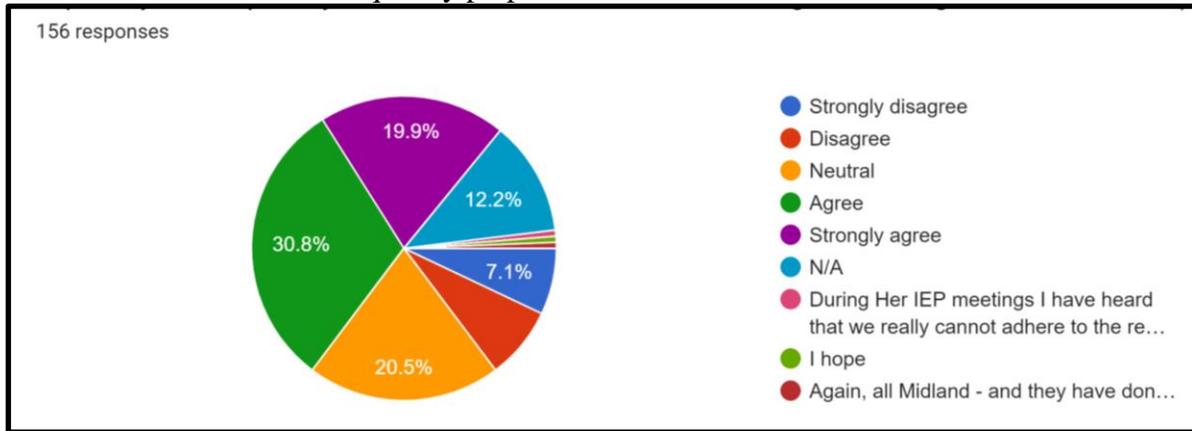
Timely response from district Student Services administrators



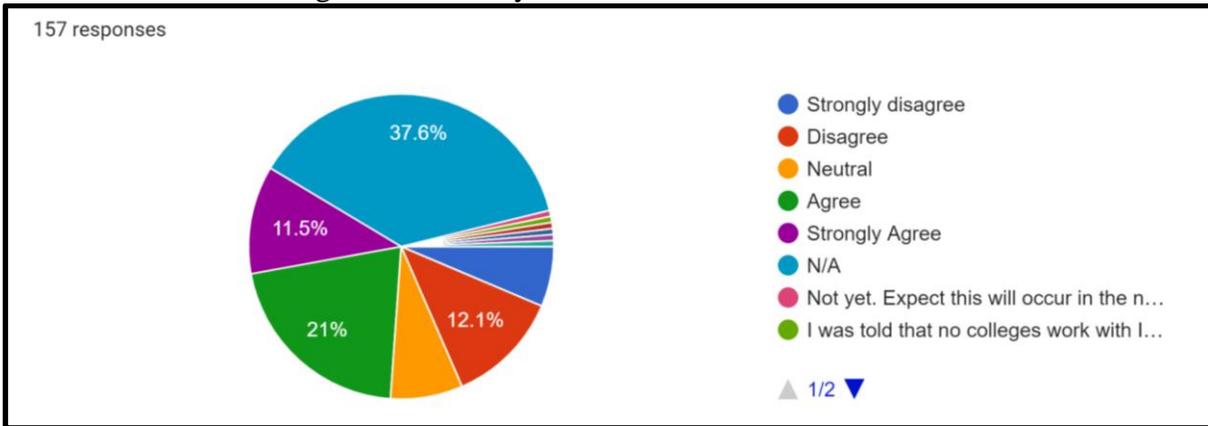
Satisfied Community-based Instruction (CBI)



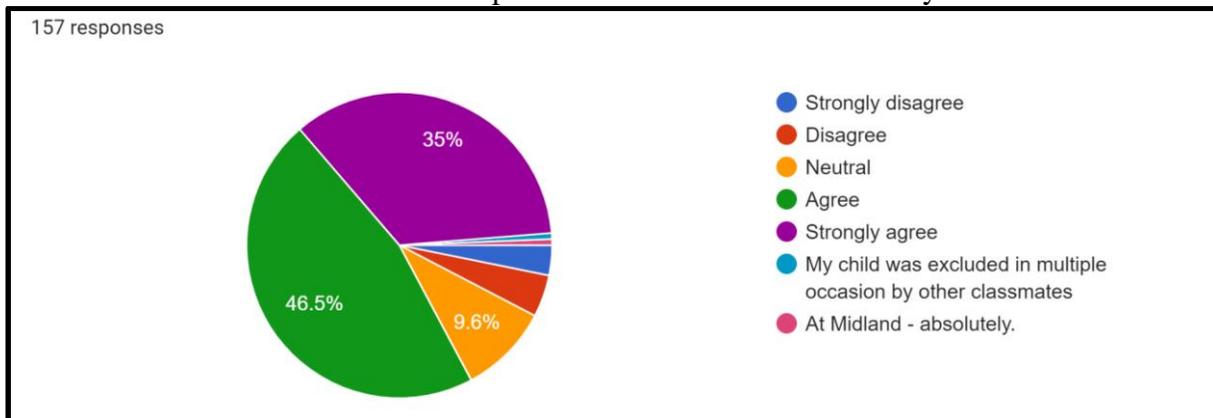
Child adequately prepared for transition to the next level



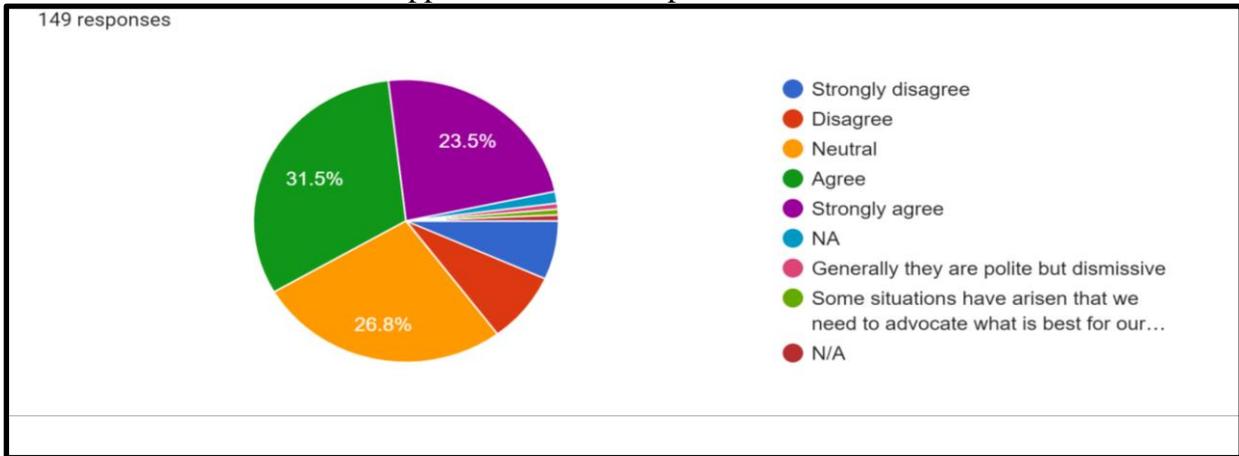
Information on agencies that may assist with transition from school to adult life



Child is an accepted member of school community



Satisfied with support from district Special Services administration



Overall satisfaction child's progress

