



Mercer Island School District



HiCap and Elementary Special Education Review

A commitment to continuous quality improvement



Highly Capable Review

2017-2018

Why

Mercer Island School District initiated review for the following reasons:

- Gather perception of all district stakeholders regarding the Highly Capable program
- Is the district equitably serving all students?
- Assure alignment with National and State Standards
 - *2010 Pre-K to Grade 12 Gifted Programming Standards, National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)*

What Did We Learn

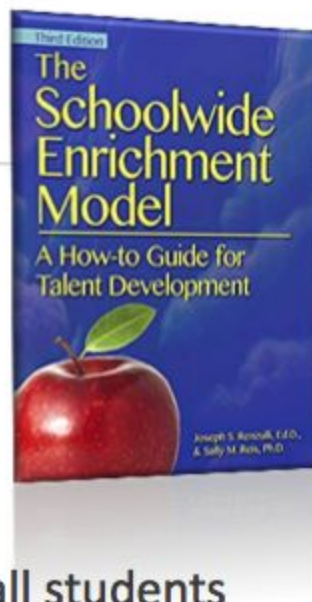
Major Areas of Focus

- Program Design
- Collaboration
- Professional Development
- Differentiating for Social and Emotional Health
- Equity and Access



Program Design

- Use additional data sources
 - Achievement, behavior, teacher observation
 - Schoolwide Enrichment Model
- Consider other program configurations
 - Enable students to be chronological aged peers
- Research programming options that would include all students
 - Schoolwide Enrichment Model
 - Project Based Learning
- Identify non-negotiable parts of the program to be implemented with fidelity in both elementary programs under the current model while program is in transition



Collaboration

- Provide time for staff to collaborate:
 - Building
 - Level (Elementary and Secondary)
 - Vertical (K-12)
- Create an advisory group to include all stakeholders from both HiCap and General Education (parents, students, staff, administrators)



Professional Development

Provide ongoing professional development for all staff in the following:

- Differentiation for all students
- Unique needs of true HiCap students
- Partner with a consultant to provide on-going job embedded professional development for students
- Create opportunities for students to work and interact with students of all abilities

Differentiation for Social/Emotional Success

- Review homework requirements for students
- Create opportunities for age group peers to interact
- Include additional data points that reflect behavioral characteristics of students
- Review program expectations to ensure they are age appropriate

Equity and Access

Recommendations from previous focus areas will assist in improving this area.

Additionally:

- Review proportionality reports to see where program is disproportionate.



Elementary Special Education Review

2017-2018

PROGRAM REVIEW PURPOSE

1. Identify the extent to which Evidence Based Practices and *High Leverage Practices in Special Education* are implemented and utilized across the elementary resource room services.
2. Determine if the current staffing model, continuum of services, and staffing guidelines are sufficient to meet the needs of the students receiving resource room services.
3. Identify similarities and differences in the elementary resource room programs in the Mercer Island School District and the districts identified as comparison districts for the purpose of this program review.

PROGRAM REVIEW ACTIVITIES

Data review and analysis for Mercer Island and the comparison districts

- *Bainbridge School District*
- *Issaquah School District*
- *Snoqualmie Valley School District*
- *University Place School District*

Special Education File Review using OSPI Consistency Index File Protocol (10 files)

Survey regarding the implementation of elementary resource room services and staff roles and responsibilities

Onsite classroom observations and interviews at each elementary building

Onsite focus groups

- *ESA Providers*
- *Elementary Building Administration*
- *Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSAs) supporting special education*

Onsite Interview with district special education director

Recommendations

- A. Conduct an internal review of the students receiving elementary resource room services and their identified disability; adjust evaluations practices and procedures to reduce occurrences of misidentification

Recommendations continued

- As a district, Mercer Island should continue to expand their use resources and guidance to recruit and retain qualified special educators. Some possible resources can be found at:
 - <https://www.pesb.wa.gov/workforce-development/>
 - <https://specialedshortages.org/take-action/>
- With a view on providing equitable services to students with disabilities, Mercer Island needs to expand the ways in which specially designed instruction is provided to students with disabilities by certificated staff and decrease the reliance for this instruction to be provided by para-educators.
 - *Students without disabilities receive the majority, if not all, of their instruction from certificated staff, and the goal should be for the same to be true for students with disabilities.*

Redesign Elementary Resource Room Services with stakeholder input

Focus on providing resource room services that are closely integrated with core instruction and tiered level of services (possibly renaming “resource room”)

Recommendations continued

- Develop a multi-year plan that will result in the consistent implementation of High Leverage Practices in Special Education across all services provided by the elementary resource room programs.
 - *This will require skill development for those implementing the practices as well as those supervising and supporting the staff.*
- Provide opportunities for building leadership to gain a deeper understanding along with increasing their skill and knowledge related to Promoting Principal Leadership for the Success for Students with Disabilities.

Recommendations continued

- Provide special education and general education teachers with information and strategies that will increase their ability to utilize assessment data in order to
- Resources to help staff increase their efficient and effective use of student assessment data can be found at:

Recommendations continued

- Establish structures and systems within buildings to ensure regular opportunities for collaboration:
- Establish structures and systems across the district for elementary resource room teachers to collaborate about using High Leverage Practices in Special Education
 - Collaboration
 - Instruction
 - Assessment
 - Social/emotional/behavioral services

Recommendations continued

- Define and implement a districtwide and consistent structure of elementary resource room services, which is designed to address the diversity of learning needs of identified students.
- Provide professional learning opportunities, where general education and resource room teachers learn with and from each other, on topics related to improving instruction for students with disabilities.
- Provide increased clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the Special Education Coaching staff, and effectively communicate these roles and responsibilities to all stakeholders.