



WCS Teaching & Learning

WCS Mission Statement: *Our mission is to prepare students to contribute to the competitive and changing world in which we live.*

WCS Vision Statement: *Our vision is to be the benchmark of educational excellence.*

Special Education Department

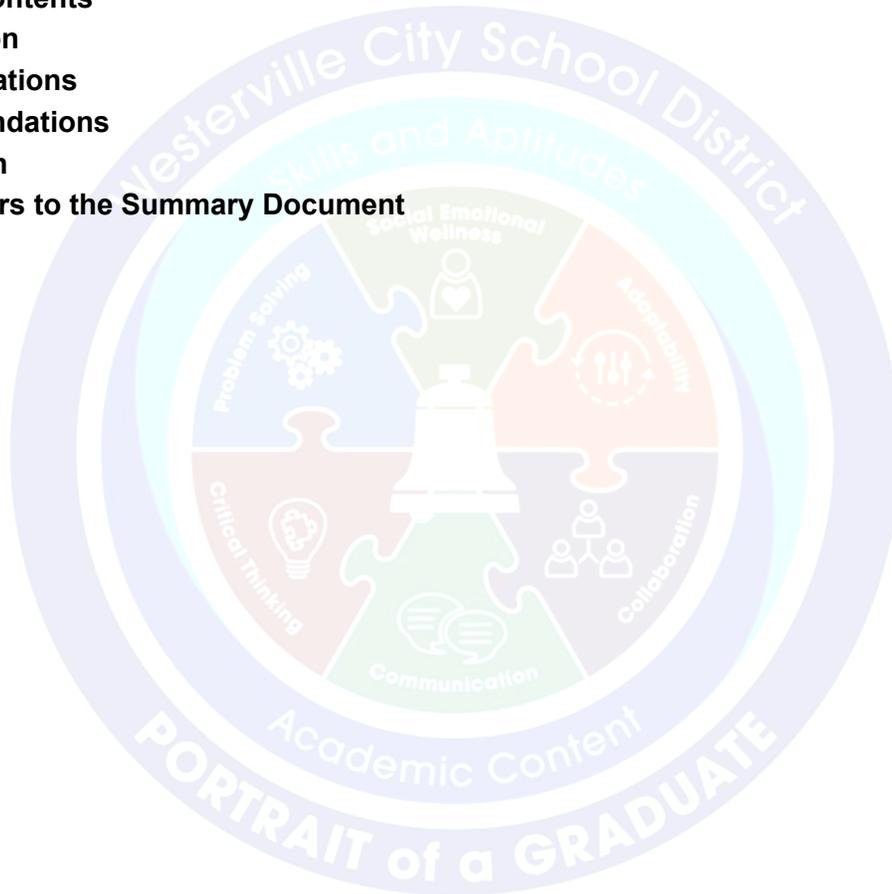
Gibson Consulting Group Final Report
Summary 2023

Updated January 2024



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Where You Belong



Introduction

After the 2020-2021 school year, Westerville City Schools contracted with Gibson Consulting Group to examine all aspects of the WCS Special Education Department operations. From July 2021 to June 2022, Gibson reviewed data and documents, completed staff surveys, individual and group interviews, and made observations of over 40 classrooms in 9 school buildings. In August 2022, Gibson provided WCS with a comprehensive 108-page report of their review. The review contains 10 commendations of processes and practices that the Special Education administrator, teachers, and aids do well, and 19 recommendations for adjustments, improvements, and changes to current practices.

Gibson first shared the document with the district's former superintendent, Dr. John Kellogg, and members of the Executive Leadership Team. After reviewing and discussing the document internally, Assistant Superintendent Scott Reeves shared the report with the Board of Education, the Special Education Administrative Team, and the Teaching & Learning Department's administrative leaders. Scott Reeves then convened a Special Education Core Team to meet regularly in 2022-2023 to review the Gibson report, prioritize recommendations, and monitor ongoing corrective actions. Members of the Special Education Core Team included Board of Education President Tracy Davidson, former Westerville Education Association President Rhonda Gilpin, Assistant Superintendent Scott Reeves, Executive Director - Elementary Cheryl Relford, Executive Director - Secondary Anne Baldwin, Director of Special Education Guerdie Glass, Special Education Coordinator Adam Flugge, Special Education Coordinator Jennifer Winters, and Transition Coordinator Sarah Painter.

This document summarizing the more detailed and extensive report will share the 10 Commendations, 19 Recommendations, the status of each recommendation, and a summary of completed, ongoing or work yet underway for each recommendation. The complete Special Education Review Final Report can be found [here](#).

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Commendations

1. **Average Medicaid revenue per Medicaid-eligible student increased 25% over the last five years.**
2. **WCSD utilizes several universal screeners to identify students who are at risk of learning difficulties.**
3. **A high percentage of staff perceive that IEP teams are collaborative and consistently use data to make decisions regarding student goals, services, and least restrictive environment (LRE).**
4. **Program Coordinators facilitate transition meetings as SWDs matriculate school levels.**
5. **The percentage of SWD in more inclusive settings has increased.**
6. **The district has implemented process changes to better determine when a student is most appropriately assessed using an alternative assessment.**
7. **WCSD has shown a commitment to improving students' social-emotional health by investing in the PATHS curriculum at the elementary level and Naviance and Panorama at the secondary level.**
8. **Classroom walkthrough rubrics have been developed for all specialized learning classrooms.**
9. **Conflict prevention and dispute resolution practices appear to be effective, evidenced by a low number of administrative reviews and due process hearings.**
10. **The Special Education Family Engagement Forum provides an opportunity to engage and support parents of students with disabilities.**

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Recommendations

1. Develop a multi-year plan for sustained improvement for students with disabilities.

Status: ONGOING

Summary:

The Special Education Department continues to support designing a multi-year professional development plan that encompasses all stakeholders within the school system. This work started during the 2022-2023 school year and will continue for several years. Ongoing development of a comprehensive library of curriculum resources, including analysis of the District's current Special Education curriculum and ongoing research into possible future curriculums to meet student needs. The District is working toward increasing educational outcomes for students with disabilities by reviewing current practices that affect student growth. The District continues to reflect on the student population and their needs to support the continuum of services offered by the District effectively. The Special Education Department works to maintain a high level of Special Education compliance by upholding state and federal requirements through ongoing training. In collaboration with the Westerville Education Association, the District will re-establish the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Advisory Committee to discuss the current continuum of services and service delivery as requested by Association stakeholders.

Update September 2023:

Professional Development: Since this summer, we have provided a total of four training sessions to all administrators in the district. Our fifth administrator training session will take place on our November We Day. We provided diverse sessions for the August WE Day and continue to do so for November WE Day so that sessions are meaningful and intentional for all of our staff. We continue to provide PD during monthly special education meetings that cover compliance, WCS practices and procedures, as well as behavioral support and strategies such as Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBAs) and Behavioral Intervention Plans (BIPs).

Curriculum Resources: During the 2022-2023 school year, course of study was completed for Life Skills courses for High School. English Language Arts completed 2022-2023. Math course of study will be completed during the 2023-2024 school year. Courses of study will continue to be developed into the following school year.

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Workload/Caseload: The Special Education Department is working with the assistant superintendent's offices on this project.

Create SEPAC: The Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is in the process of being developed and the first parent engagement forum will be held on October 17th. During this forum, the SEPAC will be explained and opened to parent volunteers in order to hold core team meetings to occur outside of the parent engagement forums to include parents representing all grade levels. The SEPAC meetings and family engagement forums will occur regularly throughout the school year.

Continuum of Services: The district continues to closely look at caseloads and staffing to look at current and project needs.

Maintaining Special Education Compliance: Procedures for IEP compliance have been instituted at the district level in addition to the Administrator training for checking IEP/ETR compliance as District Representatives. We continue to update the district special education resource manual with information available during PD opportunities so that all staff have access.

Special Education Department secretarial staff person is supporting and implementing a compliance procedure process to facilitate application of trained knowledge from back to school training and previous meetings. This person helps check the documents and notifies the appropriate parties to make necessary compliance updates to identified documents.

Update January 2024:

Professional Development: As of the November 2023 WE Day, all Administrators have completed 18 hours of Special Education training. We will continue to update Administrators throughout the year and plan for additional trainings for the 2024-2025 school year. We continue to provide PD during monthly special education meetings that cover compliance, WCS practices and procedures, as well as behavioral support and strategies such as Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBAs) and Behavioral Intervention Plans (BIPs).

Curriculum Resources: During the 2022-2023 school year, course of study was completed for Life Skills courses for High School (Financial Literacy and Adaptive Math 9/10 and 11/12). Math course of study will be completed during the 2023-2024 school year. Courses of study will continue to be developed into the following school year.

Workload/Caseload: The Special Education Department is working with the assistant superintendent's offices on this project. As of January 2024, a request for staff members in the special education department have volunteered to participate in a caseload/workload study to be completed by the end of the 2023-2024 school year.

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Create SEPAC: The Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) held their first and second meeting as of January 2024. The Advisory Council will continue to schedule monthly meeting times in order to discuss concerns, commendations, and meet other families with students with disabilities in the community.

Continuum of Services: The district continues to closely look at caseloads and staffing to look at current and projected needs. Transition plans for students transitioning to different grade bands have begun to be held as well as plans moving forward to support our students who access District Level Specialized Learning Classrooms. Families will be informed of the program locations and student placements in the springtime.

Maintaining Special Education Compliance: Procedures for IEP compliance have been instituted at the district level in addition to the Administrator training for checking IEP/ETR compliance as District Representatives. We continue to update the district special education resource manual with information available during PD opportunities so that all staff have access as well as have held random IEP spot checks to ensure compliance continues.

2. **Reorganize the Department of Teaching & Learning to reduce the span of control of the Assistant Superintendent and provide better oversight and accountability for specialized learning programs.**

Status: COMPLETED

Summary:

The Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and Board of Education completed an examination and analysis of the district administrative team's structure to maximize efficiency, accountability, and support for all facets of the district's operations. As a result, adjustments were made to various administrative positions to better align the services and flow of support to the Teaching & Learning and Operations departments of Westerville City Schools. On April 10, 2023, the WCS Board of Education approved multiple changes of assignments and contract changes to align to the updated administrative organizational chart.

3. **Restructure the Special Education Coordinator's responsibilities to increase program accountability and improve instructional supports.**

Status: COMPLETED

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Summary:

Due to the restructuring of the administrative Special Education Department, the Special Education Coordinator's responsibilities will focus heavily on providing training and ongoing support to all building administrators for the department to remain compliant with the law and for building administrators to understand better Special Education practices and procedures to increase program accountability and improve instructional practices. This training will begin during July 2023 and continue throughout the 23-24 school year.

Update October 2023:

Summer training was provided to current building administrators (total of 4 trainings with two more trainings this school year). Additionally, monthly department meetings continue to be led by Special Education Coordinators with special education staff, related services and behavior specialists.

4. **Review and update job descriptions to ensure they accurately reflect assigned roles, responsibilities, reporting relationships, and position qualifications.**

Status: COMPLETED

Summary:

During the spring of the 22-23 school year, the Special Education administrative team reviewed all Special Education-related job descriptions and input/feedback from all departments. These revised job descriptions were then shared with the Human Resources Department for final approval during the summer of 2023.

5. **Determine an appropriate methodology for calculating workloads and caseloads when recommending staffing allocations for licensed service providers.**

Status: IN PROCESS

Summary:

The District, along with the Westerville Education Association, are working in collaboration to determine best workload practices. The District is currently communicating with multiple districts around central Ohio to review the methodologies other districts presently utilize. The Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Advisory Committee is beginning during the 2023-2024 school year to review the findings of the

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other districts and the current caseload projections. The District monitors the caseloads of individual teachers and schools to make data-based recommendations.

Update October 2023: The Special Education Department is working with the assistant superintendent's offices on this project.

District Administrators met with WEA and OEA on 10/16 and will meet again on 10/20.

Update January 2024: As of January 2024, a request for staff members in the special education department have volunteered to participate in a caseload/workload study to be completed by the end of the 2023-2024 school year.

6. Implement a data management system that allows for real-time access and analysis of student data across multiple systems.

Status: IN PROCESS

Summary:

Over the 2022-2023 school year, the Teaching & Learning Department researched and met with companies that offer real-time data dashboard products catering to K-12 school systems. In the spring of 2023, the team decided on the product "Tableau" as our data dashboard tool. South-Western City Schools is one of several area districts using Tableau and their team gave us an outstanding reference regarding the product. The dashboards provide an attractive, user-friendly visual representation of real-time student data. The intention is to reduce or eliminate the need for downloading and exporting massive amounts of data into cumbersome spreadsheets that don't adjust as the data changes. In August 2023, Tableau's partner company Plante Moran provided intensive training to those who will build and manage the data imported into the dashboards we create. The 2023-2024 school year plan is for the Teaching & Learning Department to develop and utilize this product, allowing for regular monitoring and use of real-time student data in decision-making. The goal is that by the end of 2023-2024, or by the start of the 2024-2025 school year at the latest, WCS will train principals to use the dashboards to analyze and monitor those critical student data points in their buildings. By the end of 2024-2025, the goal is to have the appropriate working dashboards available for staff to view and utilize at their discretion.

Update October 2023: The identified tool is being trialed and will be faded into the district for full implementation across departments.

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7. Provide campuses with adequate resources and supports to implement Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) with fidelity.

Status: IN PROCESS

Summary:

Over the course of the 2022-2023 school year, the Teaching & Learning Department worked to build an effective, efficient, and consistent structure of student support throughout the district. Each school building has established support systems for unsuccessful students in a Tier 1 environment. However, the T&L Department is working to create a system with consistent processes and supports that don't have the variances in structure that exist in 2023. In 2022-2023 Westerville City School invested in hiring four multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) Coaches at the elementary level. Those coaches served four of our Title 1 elementary schools: Hawthorne, Huber Ridge, Minerva France, and Pointview. The MTSS Coaches worked with the principals, staff, and instructional coaches to design and implement evidence-based Tier 2 and Tier 3 support strategies. The coaches began a draft of an MTSS Guidebook, complete with a common vocabulary, identification of screeners, and flow charts of processes.

The goal is that a complete K-12 draft of the WCS MTSS Guidebook will be completed and ready for final editing at the end of the 2023-2024 school year and distribution to staff in the 2024-2025 school year. During the 2022-2023 school year, WCS contracted with the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio to support the T&L administrators at the onset of this work. In the 2023-2024 school year, the role of the MTSS Coaches will expand to include all of our Title 1 buildings, and Full-Time Equivalent staff time will be devoted to providing MTSS support at each of our middle schools. Lastly, the district will provide consistent support as buildings develop their state-required Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). We will ensure that each building's PBIS plan has all the essential components, and with tools such as the Tableau data dashboard, help them monitor the success of their plan.

Update October 2023:

The Elementary MTSS District team was established this school year and is representative of all elementaries and includes other key stakeholders from our Special Education Department, Mental Health Department, MTSS Coaches, Administrators, Psychologists and Curriculum Specialists. This team meets regularly and is working to develop and clarify the Westerville City

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Schools Elementary MTSS Processes. Each building representative leaves every meeting with clear tasks and act as a liaison between these meetings and our teaching staff. The progress from each meeting is reviewed at Elementary Principal meetings to ensure a consistent message. In addition we keep a running agenda and slide deck that is able to be shared with all stakeholders. Our three goals for this school year include:

1. Common language and definitions for MTSS including Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III
 2. Regular data review and common data analysis
 3. High Quality Tier I instruction in Academics, Behavior, and Social Emotional Learning
- During planning for the 2023-2024 school year and reviewing the needs of all of our buildings we were unable to expand the role of the MTSS Coaches to all of our Title 1 buildings.

Update January 2024: At the most recent MTSS meeting held in January 2024, a draft of MTSS processes and procedures was reviewed with the district team. This included updated Academic flowcharts and potential meeting schedules. After the group reviewed the presentation, they had time to discuss in small groups what questions still need to be answered along with what works and what doesn't in the draft. This work will also be shared with other important stakeholder groups in the coming months to get more feedback. An MTSS problem solving meeting will occur this May to share the work so far and get feedback. Also, summer opportunities are being developed for teachers to get their hands on the draft protocols to give feedback and brainstorm ideas and solutions. At the next scheduled meeting, draft ideas will be considered for how SPED, EL, and GIFTED fit within the MTSS process.

The Secondary Administrative Team is also working to develop and clarify the Westerville City Schools Secondary MTSS Processes, primarily through Secondary Principal Meetings and monthly meetings that are starting in February. Our three goals mirror the goals set for the elementary team as well and we are benefiting from learning from the elementary team's work. Our team is refining a data analysis protocol and will be utilizing it each month at principal meetings. We determined as a secondary team common data we would like to review on a quarterly basis and had that first review at our January Principal's meeting. We will continue to review that data at our monthly MTSS meetings. A MTSS roadmap for secondary schools will be completed by the end of the school year.

Staff designated to support MTSS at our middle schools, along with building leaders, met during November's Westerville Educator Day to review strategies that we can leverage across our middle schools. The MTSS teachers and our Curriculum and Instruction have also started to meet after school to review the district guidebook and examine common data sets to share ways in which to most effectively support our students.

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8. Design a system for delivering Tier 2 and 3 interventions for behavior at each school level.

Status: IN PROGRESS

Summary:

See Summary for Recommendation #7

Update October 2023:

At the Elementary MTSS District team meeting, we further reviewed our MTSS systems of support, we identified that we needed to create a Behavior and SEL subcommittee to dig in further to Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III in these areas. In July, Elementary Principals reviewed the PBIS Fidelity Inventory and began initial reflections on our current status across buildings. With our Elementary MTSS District team, we collected baseline data from the fidelity inventory for every building and began the work of examining artifacts that represent our Elementary PBIS systems. PBIS serves as our Tier 1 behavior portion of the MTSS process. Our Behavior and SEL subcommittee will meet regularly to focus specifically on these areas to ensure that Tier 1 is solid by the end of the school year.

Update January 2024: The SEL subcommittee has since been created where they have regularly met to discuss and work through social/emotional/behavioral supports through the MTSS process. This subcommittee will continue to meet throughout this school year.

9. Implement a two-pronged diversity and cultural awareness training program and classroom management strategies for all teachers and campus administrators.

Status: IN PROGRESS

Summary:

As a function of the Board-approved administrative and organizational changes, the newly created Student Services Department now houses the Educational Equity Department. Each school building developed an equity goal during the 2021-2022 school year, which included training modules provided by Ohio State University's Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity. Westerville City Schools also invested in an Equity Facilitator in each building, which is a stipend position to work directly with buildings and the Educational Equity Department to support building equity goals. The Educational Equity Department will also support the PBIS work to ensure our behavioral support plans are equitable for all students.

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Update October 2023: A discipline committee is being created and the first meeting was held October 18th.

Update from Anitra: Each building has an equity facilitator that supports the work at the building level. Buildings have developed SMART goals in the areas of discipline, student achievement, access, and sense of belonging that are progress monitored through data analysis. Several schools focused on analyzing their discipline data and how to best support students in this area. Based on the goals selected by the buildings, targeted professional development was provided to support the work.

Update January 2024: Buildings have been progressing in meeting the goals that they set for their buildings. The Educational Equity department provided training through Wellity to assist with restorative strategies as an alternative approach to discipline. The training was open to all Equity Facilitators and a member of their equity team to support the work. One building is going forward with a building wide PD in this area later this year. During the PD, buildings were asked to develop strategies to figure out how to implement the strategies in their building. Buildings that were trained this summer have started to look at whether or not the strategies are making a difference in student behavior.

10. Include in the IEP the total number of minutes a student is to receive

Status: COMPLETED

Summary:

The recommendation was to include the total minutes a student is outside of the general education setting in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) services; however, this needs to reflect the guidance from the Ohio Department of Education. The District will continue to develop and implement the IEP to be compliant and provide the student with a specific amount of specially designed instruction and time within the resource setting as determined by the IEP team.

Update October 2023: All administrators have been trained to check IEPs for compliance before and during IEP meetings in which they participate.

11. The practice of referencing Team Teach in IEPs should be replaced with “general education with support.”

Status: COMPLETED

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Summary:

The District provided training to the Intervention Specialists regarding how to reflect the needs and services of the students. The Intervention Specialists should use the terminology of “general education with support” for the ELA and Math courses if the student requires additional adult support. In the IEP services section, the intervention specialist will continue to provide specialized instruction since Team Taught is not a specific teaching methodology to deliver instruction.

Update October 2023: All administrators have been trained to check IEPs for compliance before and during IEP meetings in which they participate.

- 12. Train staff to develop behavior goals for any behavior that impedes a student’s learning; if goals are not mastered after a reasonable amount of time, amend the IEP to include a Behavior Intervention Plan based on an Functional Behavioral Assessment.**

Status: ONGOING

Summary:

Ongoing training is being developed for the 2023-2024 school year to continue to teach and implement best practices regarding student behavior. During the professional development, WCS will communicate the support layers for Intervention Specialists to access when teaching a student replacement behaviors. Also, the Behavior Team and Special Education Coordinators will be available to assist with developing best instructional practices that support student replacement behavior, data collection, and progress monitoring to make the best divisions to support student success.

Update October 2023: The district is providing ongoing training to staff regarding Behavior Improvement Plans and Functional Behavior Assessments. In August, we provided PD on managing behavior through learning how to create and implement informal behavior plans as well as knowing when and how to complete FBAs and BIPs.

Additional information regarding FBAs and BIPs is being shared at monthly special education department meetings for ongoing learning opportunities.

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Update January 2024: The Behavior team continues to support Specialized Learning Classrooms, Intervention Specialists, and General Education teachers to provide them training, guidance and data collection strategies in order to best support students.

13. Examine Section 504 case management responsibility at the secondary level.

Status: ONGOING

Summary:

Civil Rights Officer and Special Education Coordinator Dr. Elizabeth Jelkin will assume a more significant role in overseeing the 504 systems and processes throughout the district. During the 2023-2024 school year, Dr. Jelkin will conduct an internal 504 audit of each building to determine current practices regarding determining and monitoring students on a 504 plan. By the end of the 2023-2024 school year, Dr. Jelkin will provide any appropriate recommendations that may improve the efficiency and delivery of services to students on a 504. In the 2021-2022 school year, Westerville City Schools invested in hiring secretaries at the secondary level to support school counselors and 504 plans by assuming the managerial duties of emails and other necessary paperwork, which allows counselors and administration more time to focus on direct 504 student support. In partnership with WEA leadership, WCS will examine recommendations from Dr. Jelkin and work to provide agreed-upon solutions to identified deficiencies.

Update October 2023: Research has been initiated and surrounding districts have been contacted to gather further information to inform procedures and practices.

Update January 2024: Dr. Jelkin has met with the school counseling teams in six of the eight secondary buildings to review their building's 504 systems and processes, especially as it relates to initial 504 evaluations. She has gathered information about how the 504 secretaries support the counselors throughout the 504 process, and is also in the process of collecting and analyzing data on the number of initial 504 evaluations in each building and grade level to determine if there are patterns or trends in identifying 504 students.

14. Encourage and support the routine development of unit and lesson plans to support improved instructional practices and higher student achievement levels.

Status: ONGOING

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Summary:

While WCS does not currently require teachers to submit to their administrator unit and lesson plans, it is supported and encouraged to do so by the district. The Curriculum & Instruction departments and the Special Education Department regularly provide teachers with tools and professional development opportunities to enhance their instructional practice. Through Instructional Rounds, Walk-Throughs, and the more formal OhioES rubric, leaders observe the instructional practices of staff, review, and discuss their observations with them to optimize student achievement.

Update October 2023: The Special Education Department staff have and will continue to respond to staff that have requested additional assistance in instructional strategies. This support is being utilized through department instructional coaches as well as special education coordinators. Instructional Coaches also serve in the capacity of supporting students with reading differences by providing OG instruction. Additionally, this entity supports staff in their personal professional development and reading instruction knowledge, as well as math intervention and written expression.

Update January 2024: The Special Education Department staff continue to work with individual teachers and building staff to support students. The department continues to look at areas where the District can improve and are starting to identify professional development opportunities for WE Day April 2024.

- 15. Reconstitute the Team Teach instructional model to focus on the core content areas of ELA and Math and support campuses and teacher teams in the implementation fidelity.**

Status: ONGOING

Summary:

During the 2023-2024 school year, the District will develop professional development opportunities for Secondary Teachers to understand the expectations and focus of Team Taught classes in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. The District will provide a guidance document to refer to during IEP meetings to collaborate with families. The District will also work toward supporting Universal Design for Learning and other best practices to support students in science and social studies courses. In the years beyond the 2023-2024 school year, the District will continue to provide training and guidance to teachers and families while systematically reducing the Team Taught science and social studies courses to maximize support for ELA and Math.

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Update October 2023: The district is implementing a scaffolded timeline to phase out Science and Social Studies in Middle School, beginning with current 8th graders. The outcome of this shift will allow for increased sections of ELA and Math sections. Additionally, this will reduce the number of students sitting in these current sections that are identified for special education services.

For the 2023--2024 school year additional training will be provided to the impacted class (next year's 9th graders). This will address the shift in resources and how to differently support and train the general education teachers as a result of this shift.

During the 2022-2023 school year, the Special Education department implemented SORA, an audio library. Since it has been implemented, communication with teachers (both general education and special education teachers) has provided suggested titles for our library. The department also reviewed courses of studies and board adopted books and added those texts to our library when an audio or an ebook was available. A google form has been shared with staff and students to request books throughout the school year.

WE day sessions have also been hosted to share out information with instructors across the district focusing on accessibility, accommodations and common resources available for K-12 students. This practice will continue for future PD and WE day opportunities. During the month of October CAST workshops will be shared, as well as follow up virtual events for teachers will be available to problem solve with on various instructional strategies that may apply to their specific subject matter. An ongoing partnership between instructional departments will facilitate and share instructional practices to assist teachers and support students in their learning.

Update January 2024: The District has communicated the change in the continuum of services for high school co-taught courses for science and social studies. The Special Education Department is working in collaboration with the Curriculum Department to develop professional development opportunities to assist our teachers with strategies to support all students in their classrooms. These trainings will be provided before the end of the 2023-2024 school year and continue as the co-taught model for science and social studies is phased out through the 2027-2028 school year.

- 16. Redesign and rename all classes that currently have a disability category designation to reflect the level of supplementary aids and services that will be provided in the class.**

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Status: COMPLETED

Summary:

During the start of the 2022-2023 school year, the Specialized Learning Classroom titled “Intensive Autism” and “Multiple Disabilities” were renamed to “Life Skills” classrooms. The renaming of the classes defines the services that the specialized learning classrooms focus on and the level of needs of the students.

Update October 2023: We are continuing to analyze the makeup of our SLCs and classroom needs to further inform SLC descriptions, identified focus, and supports.

17. Eliminate practices that preclude some SWD from participating in Career Technical Education courses.

Status: COMPLETED

Summary:

In the 2022-2023 school year, the selection of students into Career Technical Centers was determined by lottery. Columbus City Schools is the WCS Career Technical Planning District (CTPD). Westerville students, therefore, can access Fort Hayes Career Center and the Downtown High School. Additionally, as our CTPD, Columbus City provides additional support to Westerville utilizing federal Perkins funds. WCS also has an open enrollment agreement with Delaware Area Career Center, allowing our students to access programming there. Since a lottery makes the selection, students denied access are not done so based on any existing disability. The assessments to determine industry credentials are determined by state and national organizations and are not within the purview of WCS to change. Due to the 7:30 AM start time of the Columbus City Career Centers, our buses must pick students up from designated locations in the community to transport them to Columbus. Our transportation department reviews the enrollment of those students annually to determine the most appropriate and convenient place to pick up students. Therefore, we are confident that our practices do not impede Students with Disabilities (SWD) from accessing career technical programs.

Update October 2023: The Special Education Department and Transportation Department have been working to address known areas of need. Since this update, a lottery system for student acceptance into career centers has been put into place. There have been added means of transportation for students with specific needs as outlined in

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their specialized documents. The Special Education and Transportation Departments will continue to explore future options as student populations shift and grow.

- 18. Develop a comprehensive professional learning plan based on disaggregated student data and align resources and guide the ongoing professional learning for all educators in the District.**

Status: ONGOING

Summary:

In collaboration with the Curriculum Department, the Special Education Department is aligning training opportunities based on the needs of the students in the district and the continuum of services provided by the district. Multi-year plans are being developed based on a review of current and possible future curriculums, data from benchmark assessments, state testing data, and feedback from staff.

Update October 2023: The Special Education Department will continue to meet with our instructional program teachers to focus on utilizing curriculum resources and addressing student deficits. After the first professional development day, the team sought and analyzed feedback from staff regarding sessions, which has helped inform PD session for November that will continue to focus on utilizing curriculum resources and addressing student deficits.

Update January 2024: The Special Education Department continues to develop ongoing professional development opportunities for the WE Day in April 2024 as well as beginning to look at plans for the 2024-2025 school year.

- 19. Expand parent engagement programs to sustain local participation in WCSD's Special Education program.**

Status: ONGOING

Summary:

Parent engagement forums have been implemented quarterly since the 2021-2022 school year. These quarterly virtual meetings include parent training on various topics by bringing outside agencies and local community resources that meet the needs of our diverse student population. This forum will continue to be developed and include a parent survey to determine what is most relevant to our parents and create a Special

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Education Parent Advisory Committee to obtain further input to increase engagement with our parents.

Update October 2023: The Special Education Department has sent out communication to families with students with disabilities to gain input and suggestions to further inform parent engagement events. Most recently, an email and survey were sent to families for input on topics and 159 responses were obtained. Information was gathered from preschool, elementary and secondary students' families. An additional invite was sent to families as of 10/5 to help gauge attendance. At that time, 35 families had confirmed they would be in attendance and 27 responded "maybe".

Update January 2024: The Special Education Department has continued to provide the quarterly virtual and in person parent professional development nights that focus on areas to help support families with children with disabilities.

The Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) held their first and second meeting as of January 2024. The Advisory Council will continue to schedule monthly meeting times in order to discuss concerns, commendations, and meet other families with students with disabilities in the community.

Conclusion

As highlighted throughout this summary document, various departments have done significant work around several recommendations for improvement or change. The scope of the work for some recommendations is ongoing or just starting and may take multiple school years to complete. Many of the recommendations involve areas of the Teaching & Learning Department beyond the Special Education Department. The Elementary and Secondary Curriculum & Instruction Departments, English Learners Department, and Educational Equity Departments are all heavily involved as the recommendations include materials and professional development and touch many students identified in more than one of these areas. WCS also engaged in activities beyond the identified recommendations. In addition to creating a Special Education Core Team to respond to the recommendations, the administration and Westerville Education Association leadership collaborated to renew the Least Restrictive Environment committee to continue discussions and planning to improve the services to students with disabilities. Members from the Special Education Department presented to the Board of Education on April 24, 2023, summarizing their progress. That presentation can be accessed by reviewing our Board meetings on our website.

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The Special Education Department will update this document each semester to reflect any additional progress for recommendations not indicated as Completed. WCS would like to thank all teachers and administrators who participated with Gibson in completing their Final Report. Finally, an extra special thank you to all Westerville City Schools staff, licensed and classified, who are committed daily to providing a world-class educational experience to all our students.

Contributors to the Summary Document

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Where You Belong