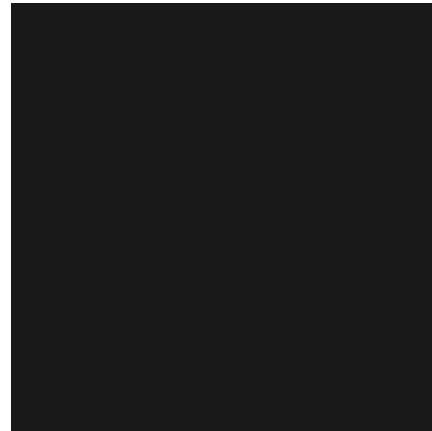




Learning Inclusively For Everyone (L.I.F.E.)

November 14, 2017



SCSD Mission



As a school district, why do we exist?

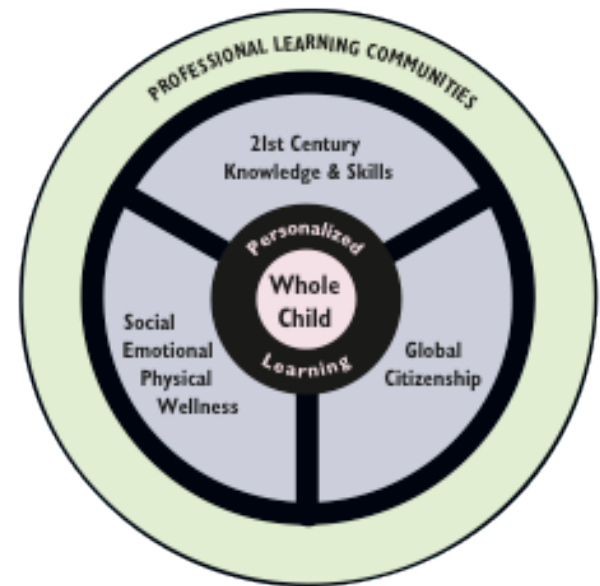
Somers Central School District will ignite a passion in each student by engaging students at a personal level to ensure success in a global society.

+ Vision

How do we want to fulfill this mission?

The vision for SCSD encompasses three fundamental areas, each an important component of the Whole Child —

- 21st Century Knowledge & Skills
- Social-Emotional-Physical Wellness
- Global Citizenship



+ Values

What are our values and collective commitments?

- *Somers School District values diversity, equity, and inclusion across all schools.*
- To this end we desire to ensure **Educational Equity**.
- Educational Equity is achieved when **all** students receive the resources they need so they graduate prepared for success after high school.
- All means All
 - Ability – Culture – Gender – Intellect – Nation of origin – Race – Religion



How will we complete our work?

Inclusive Teaching

- The Center for Teaching Excellence at Cornell University defines inclusive teaching as "any number of teaching approaches that address the needs of students with a variety of backgrounds, learning styles, and abilities. These strategies contribute to an overall inclusive learning environment, in which students feel equally valued."



Why inclusion?

- There is a clear and consistent evidence that inclusive educational settings can confer substantial short and long-term benefits for students with and without disabilities. (A Summary of the Evidence on Inclusive Education, Abt Associates, August 2016)
- McGregor and Vogelsberg (1998) found inclusion does not compromise general education students' outcomes, typical peers benefit from involvement and relationships with students who have disabilities in inclusive settings, and the presence of students with disabilities in general education classrooms leads to new learning opportunities for typical students. (McGregor, G., & Vogelsberg, R. T. (1998). *Inclusive schooling practices: Pedagogical and Research Foundations. A synthesis of the literature that informs best practices about inclusive schooling*. University of Montana, Rural Institute on Disabilities.)
- Falvey (2004) notes that “no studies conducted since the late 1970’s have shown an academic advantage for students with intellectual and other developmental disabilities educated in separate settings.” Falvey, Mary A. (Spring 2004) toward realization of the least restrictive educational environments for severely handicapped students. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 29(1), 9-10.





David Nurenberg discussed in his publication on honoring all learners the research answering the question on who benefits and who suffers from heterogeneous grouping (English Education, October 2016).

1. There was little consistent evidence that the learning of high achievers benefited from a homogeneous group. (Oakes, J. (1985) *Keeping track: How schools structure inequality*. Birmingham, NY: Vail-Ballou Press.)
2. There was substantial evidence that the learning of students at lower readiness levels was negatively affected by homogeneous placements. (Oakes, J. (1985). *Keeping track: How schools structure inequality*. Birmingham, NY: Vail-Ballou Press.)
3. Subsequent studies also found that stigmatization can create a negative impact on students' academic performance in lower level classes. (Hallinan, M. (1994). Tracking: From theory to practice. *Sociology of Education*, 67(2), 79–84.)
4. Gamoran found evidence that tracking can retard student learning, particularly with students at the low end of readiness level. (Gamoran, A. (1992). The variable effects of high school tracking. *American Sociological Review*, 57(6), 812–828.)



5. Negative socio-emotional effects were observed as well. According to survey responses, students placed in lower-level classes did not develop positive attitudes about their classmates or about their own agency in learning and school achievement, and that the grouping—coupled with teachers' and peers' attitudes—reinforced their self-perceptions as “average” or “low.” In addition, lower-tracked students tended to have lower aspirations and feel frustrated about plans for the future. Subsequent research supported this finding as well (Heck, R. H., Price, C. L., & Thomas, S. L. (2004). Tracks as emergent structures: A network analysis of student differentiation in a high school. *American Journal of Education*, 110(4), 321–353. Hertberg-Davis, H. (2009). Myth 7: Differentiation in the regular classroom is equivalent to gifted programs and is sufficient. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 53, 251–253.)

6. Reported behavior problems increased in low-tracked classes, even among students who were not exhibiting behavior problems in their higher or non-tracked classes in other subjects. This phenomenon was also found in both previous and subsequent research (Ball, 1981; Kellam, 1994; Schwartz, 1981; Van Houtte & Stevens, 2008; Willis, 1981).

7. Poor and minority students were largely overrepresented in low ability tracks, and underrepresented in programs for the gifted and talented. The correlation between placement, social class and ethnicity is present regardless of the basis for placement (test scores, counselor and teacher recommendations, or student and parent choice). This, too, was supported by subsequent studies (Gamoran, A. (1992). The variable effects of high school tracking. *American Sociological Review*, 57(6), 812–828.).

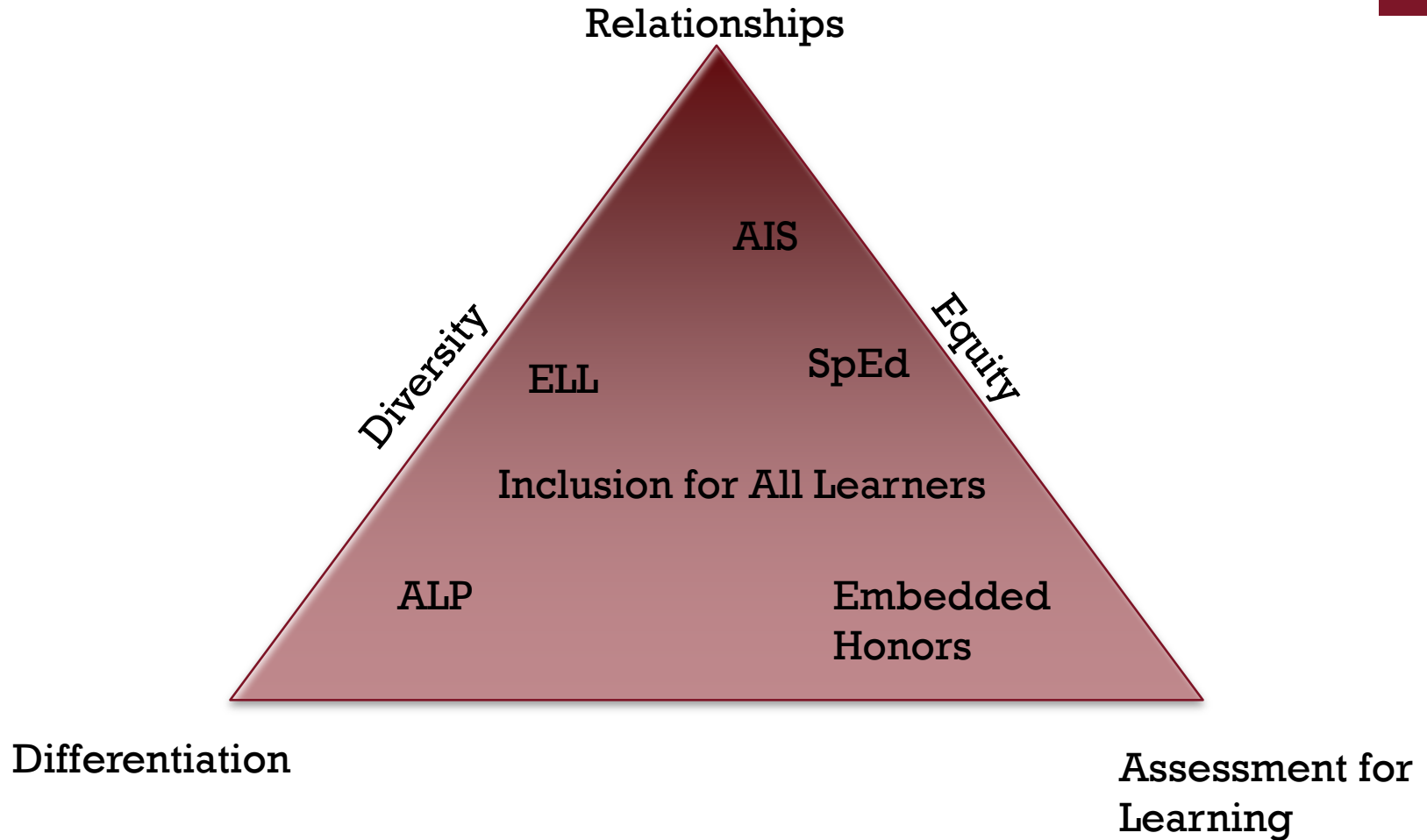


8. The only consistent, statistically significant benefit of leveling Oakes found was that teachers reported enjoying teaching honors classes more than they reported enjoying teaching non-honors classes. A follow-up study found that the very label “advanced” or “remedial” affects teachers’ treatment of students as well as students’ images of themselves. (Oakes, J., & Lipton, M. (1990). Tracking and ability grouping. In G. Keating (Ed.), *Access to knowledge* (pp. 187–204). New York: College Board.)





Instructional Practices





Our Team



- Candice Lee – (ENL Program Coordinator)
- Kevin Guidotti – (Director of Innovation in Learning)
- Anna Maggio – (Director of Special Services)
- Claire Comerford (Project Lead for Embedded Honors)
- Stacey Elconin (Administrator of Advanced Learner Program)
- Meg Benedetto (Project Lead for Diversity and Equity Awareness)



What skills do we need?



- Ability to provide high-quality differentiated learning opportunities for ALL learners.
- Ability to develop assessment that allows students to demonstrate what they do know and not catch them on what they don't know.
- Love for children and embrace the power of relationships with our students. (Done! 😊)



What resources do we need?



- Professional learning opportunities to ensure faculty and staff create equitable learning opportunities for ALL of our children.

We wonder....

- Do we need more direct professional learning opportunities for our faculty to ensure classrooms and schools of equity.

+ Our emphasis...



Excellence through Equity