



September 24, 2024

**PaTTAN Informational Meeting**

**Newtown Middle School**

**7:00 PM**

**Questions Submitted by Parents/Guardians**

Responses are in Italics

1. Can you provide an overview of the resources allocated specifically for improving special education within the District (asked on two separate cards)?

***In terms of services, we are expanding our already robust continuum of services by providing new research-based interventions to our identified students. In terms of improving the special education department, we have brought in the Bucks County IU and PaTTAN to support new initiatives.***

2. Can you provide information on any recent initiatives or changes aimed at improving special education services within the District?

***Some of the recent initiatives include the following: We have expanded the use of the Read 180/The Code (formerly known as System 44) in the elementary school level. This research-based program is based on structured literacy and has been found to be highly effective with students who have not responded to other programs, as it utilizes a multi-sensory portion of the program that targets the specific skills that our students are struggling with. The special education department has also identified teachers with additional certifications in our elementary buildings. To address weaknesses in oral reading fluency, the district has adopted the Read Naturally Live program which has been effective in increasing fluency.***

***As professional development is an important part of introducing and expanding the use of research-based interventions, we have provided professional development for Read180/The Code. In addition, our technology specialists and supervisors are available to our case managers to support implementation of interventions. Also, all special education teachers are in their first or second year of the two-year training in LETRS. Lexia LETRS® (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) is a comprehensive professional learning designed to***



***provide educators and administrators with knowledge to be literacy and language experts in the science of reading. LETRS is not a prescribed program, however, it teaches the skills needed to master the foundational and fundamentals of reading and writing instruction—phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and written language.***

3. How does the district plan to address the urgent need for quality professional development for both special education and general education staff?
  - A. ***Professional development continues to meet the needs of ACT 48. The district continues to bring professionals in to help with professional development. We also use the expertise of the professionals within the district.***
  - B. ***Examples of the latest Professional Development***
    1. ***Over the summer months and this fall, we offered the Horizons Elevate program training to both regular education and special education teachers.***
    2. ***This Fall we are offering Read180/The Code training to special education staff with training provided the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) company***
    3. ***This Fall, we continue to expand the Read180/The Code working again with trainers from the HMH company***
    4. ***In the area of UDL training, we have worked with the BCIU and PATTAN and then used some of our seasoned teachers to expand training for all staff during school staff meetings,***
    5. ***LETRS training was continued in the Fall of 2024 with a second cohort of teachers added.***
    6. ***Supervisors are working with the district curriculum coordinators in the other content areas to strengthen and develop areas of opportunity for our special educational teachers.***
    7. ***Several speciality areas are working on PLC's with the regular education teachers to help create positive specially designed instruction.***
  
4. Why does the state not collect data on 41 - 79 % for indicator # 5? That leaves out the entire Intensive Learning Support Program in Council Rock SD!



***This is how the data is collected, organized, and presented at the state level. The district has access to the same data as the community.***

Why would parents continue to come to these meetings if you will not address any questions or entertain any discussion? You take questions on cards every time AND NEVER ANSWER THEM!

***Thank you for your feedback. We are working to improve our communication and open dialogue with the community.***

a) Why is data from 2018 & 2019? Where is the current data?

***This is how the data is collected, organized, and presented at the state level. The district has access to the same data as the community.***

b) What are the benefits to our students and teachers in waiting for the Department of Education to force the district into corrective action via cyclical monitoring as opposed to proactively creating an improvement plan?

***There are no benefits to this. The district's goal is to be proactive. For example, we are continually strengthening the interventions that are available to support our students. The district has also been proactive by hiring the Curriculum Supervisor of Special Education.***

c) How does the school district currently assess the effectiveness of its special education services?

***The most valid way to monitor the effectiveness of our special education services is through the success of our students. We closely monitor student progress through individual student goal progress monitoring.***

d) Why were we not allowed to ask questions?

***Under the guidance of PDE, PATTAN, and the Bucks County IU, it was recommended that audience members provide written feedback and questions.***



e) Why does our school district not have Wilson or Orton-Gillingham reading training! My son only gets extra time for reading in IEP class for Ela - he needs to learn how to decode with special education teachers that are trained in Wilson or Orton-Gillingham.

***We have a continuum of services to address foundational reading skills needs. We work to identify the specific area(s) of reading deficit and target with appropriate, research based interventions including Wilson and other Orton-Gillingham based programs. Please contact your child's case manager and or special education supervisor to schedule an IEP meeting to discuss your concerns.***

f) Why are some kids getting more services than my children with the same diagnosis? There are children receiving daily M-F, one hr., in school during the school day with Wilson Tutor brought in from outside the district. Ironically was my children's tutor - who I had to pay for and send my kids after school for the same services students are getting in class during school hours & paid by the district! My kids were exhausted after school and this is discrimination!

***Services are determined by the IEP Team on an individualized basis. Needs are determined through data collected during the ER/RR process and the IEP year. Please contact your child's case manager and/or special education supervisor to schedule an IEP meeting to discuss your concerns.***

6. You mentioned evaluations are reported. Are denials of an evaluation reported?

***Throughout Pennsylvania, districts do not report denials of evaluations to the State.***

7. a) Will this presentation/slides be available to the public?

***Unfortunately, PDE, PATTAN, and the Bucks County IU requested we not distribute the presentation due to the proprietary nature as they created the presentation. However, the district is currently working on a more user friendly and understandable presentation of the data that applies directly to the district.***

b) What are the areas where CR needs the most improvement?



***That is a subjective question that is not easily answered. One stakeholder might have a different opinion from another stakeholder.***

c) Regarding classroom inclusion, if a student attends a private school due to their needs - how does that affect the calculated rates?

***It only affects the data if the school district placed them in the private school.***

8. a) Why is Indicator 11 evaluation data so behind if it has been monitored past 2018-2019.

***This is how the data is collected, organized, and presented at the state level. The district has access to the same data as the community.***

b) What strategies are being implemented to enhance collaboration between general and special education?

***Co-planning periods, grade level and/or content meetings, co-teaching models enhance collaboration.***

9. a) With such a significant population what are thoughts for additional summer support?

***Our ESY program is robust, supporting many CRSD students. If you have a concern regarding your child's summer programming, please contact your child's case manager and/or special education supervisor.***

b) If I waive my child out of any assessments, will this impact her services? Her condition obviously will not change nor will her needs.

***No, the parent's choice to waive a state assessment will not impact services.***

c) How do you get a case manager for a school-aged child? This was never provided or offered?



***The family must apply through the County office of Mental Health/Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. These services are eligibility based and not entitlement.***

10. Question: What steps are being taken to ensure that individualized education plans (IEP) are effectively provided, implemented and monitored?

***Through program supervision with the supervisory team and teacher supervision by building principals. Additionally, the IEP Team communicates and collaborates at IEP meetings.***

11. What mechanisms are in place in Council Rock for addressing complaints/grievances regarding special education services?

***Please see the link below for the contacting information and procedures of CRSD. We recommend starting with the classroom teacher and/or case manager, then following the attached protocols.***

***<https://www.crsd.org/parents/how-to-contact-cr>***

12, a) Do they calculate the length of time between written parental requests for evaluation and when PTE is issued? Should be 10 days but is often much more than that (30) - delays evaluations, delays start and completion of evaluation.

***When a parent expresses concern and questions the possibility of conducting an evaluation, the district provides the family with the Permission to Evaluate/Reevaluate - Oral Request Form so that they can share their exact concerns within ten days of the request in accordance with regulations. Once the Oral Request Form is returned, the information is reviewed by the Child Study Team/Problem Solving Team or the IEP team (in the case of a reevaluation request) along with pertinent school data (ie. screeners, classroom based performance, and observations) within a reasonable timeframe. There is no time requirement for this second step. Once the determination of next steps is made, parents are notified in writing as to the decision.***



b) How is the national shortage of school psychologists impacting evaluation compliance timelines?

***With the assistance of the Bucks County Intermediate Unit, we are currently fully staffed, and our evaluations are issued within compliance timelines unless extenuating circumstances are present.***

c) Is there any tracking of outcomes for students with 504 plans? These are students with disabilities too.

***The state does not formally monitor this subgroup. ADA provides accommodations for students with “mental or physical handicaps” as opposed to students identified with disabilities as defined by IDEA.***

d) Is there any monitoring of over-reliance on the discrepancy model on SLD Determination?

***The state does not monitor this. The discrepancy model is the only model approved for the identification of a specific learning disability in our district. Very few districts in the state use other models of identifying learning disabilities, as there are drawbacks to their use that must be considered by each district.***

e) Is there any follow up on changes related to ODR decisions not in favor of the district? Eg. District should not recommend LRE at parent request when IEP team does not feel an appropriate placement to meet needs.

***The district reviews all decisions and determines whether any adjustments should be made. In terms of LRE recommendations, decisions are specific to the individual child, and are made by the IEP team which includes the parents. It should be noted that there are parents who would like a less restrictive placement and parents who want a more restrictive environment. The district cannot take the stand of one size fits all. It must be based on the specific needs of every student.***