



Special Education Board Update

Dr. Becky Clifford, Mrs. Kayla Phillips
November 19, 2025



Board Goals

Goal 2: Emphasize brevity of Communication and focus on student outcomes.

- a. Engage with teachers and students in buildings or at events, then report back to board on what was learned
- b. Engage with presenters on student outcome data
- c. Empower student board representatives
- d. Board members use the 🙌 symbol (reminder for brevity) to hold each other accountable during meetings, when appropriate

District Goals

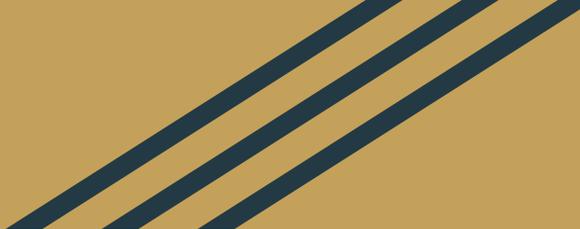
- **Goal 1: Social-Emotional Learning** We will deepen our school culture of care and belonging with particular attention to systems, practices, and staff intra- and interpersonal capacities.
- **Goal 2: Academic Growth** We will expand and hone our use of best practices that nurture and create innovative learning environments supportive of every student's resilience and success in the future they choose.
- **Goal 3: Logistics** Mission-aligned and discerning stewardship and use of district assets (land, facilities, people, money, institutional knowledge, and time) in this time of transitions to facilitate long-term district success.

Goal and Purpose

Goal: Gain a high level overview and a Special Education At-A-Glance, not a time to work out specific student issues = Parking Lot

The purpose of this session is to review:

- Demographics
- Department and Program Overview
- Process and Timelines
- Current Work and Next Steps
- Notice and Wonderings



Demographics

Enrollment Trends

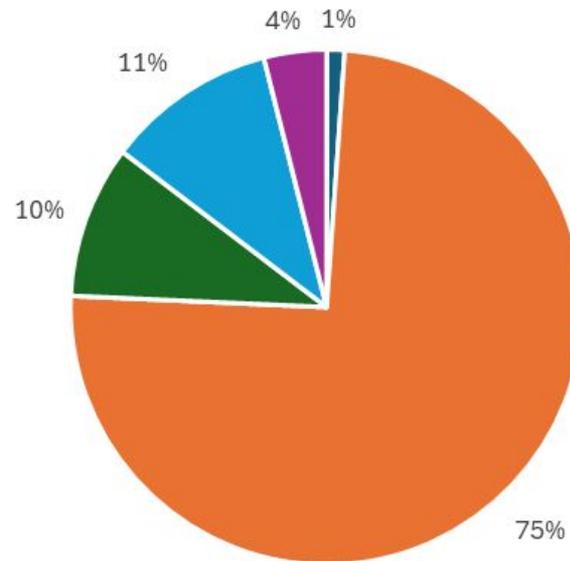
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	Oct 1, 2025	Oct 1, 2024	Oct 1, 2023	Oct 1, 2022	Oct 1, 2021
Preschool/ITK	2	6	10	10	5
K-12	175	181	168	166	173
Total	177	187	178	176	178
SWSD Total	1249	1177	1153	1189	1197
% SpEd	14%	16%	15%	15%	15%

Program Enrollment

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Enrollment October, 2025

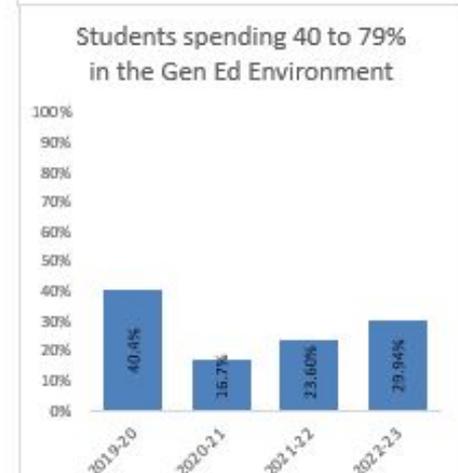
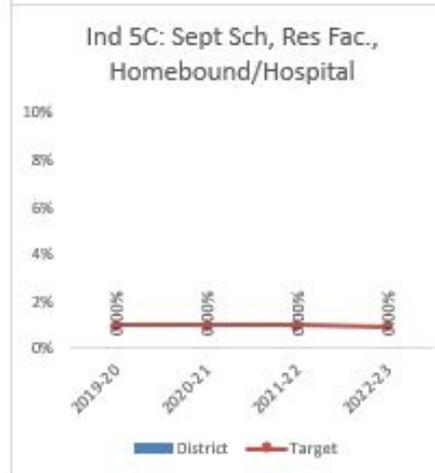
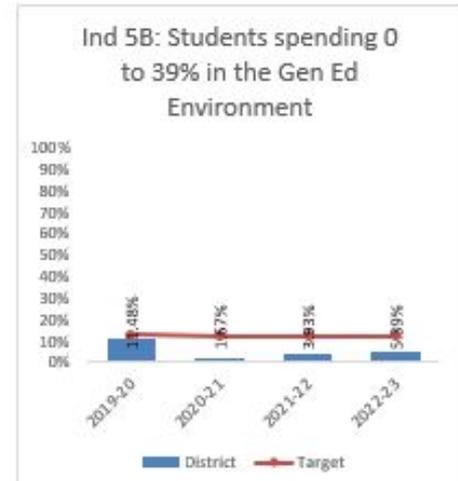
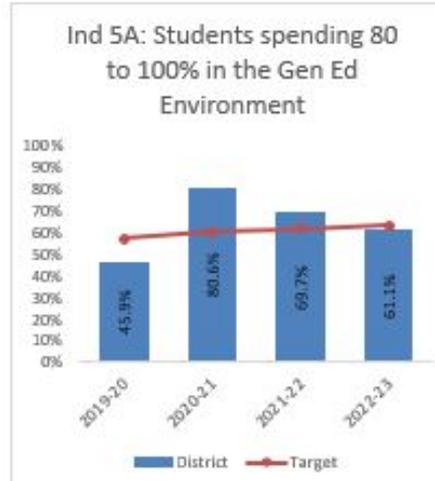


■ Preschool/ITK ■ Resource ■ Intensive Services ■ Communication/Motor only ■ 18-22

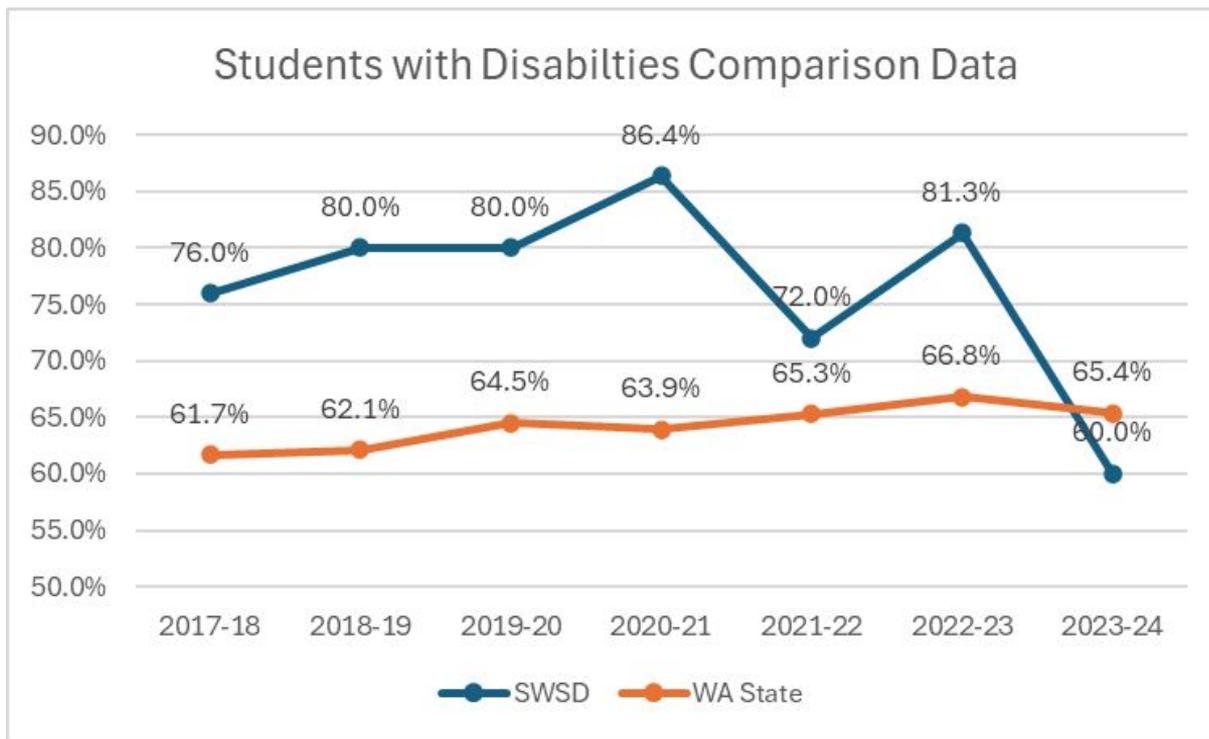
Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Percentage of time spent general education classroom

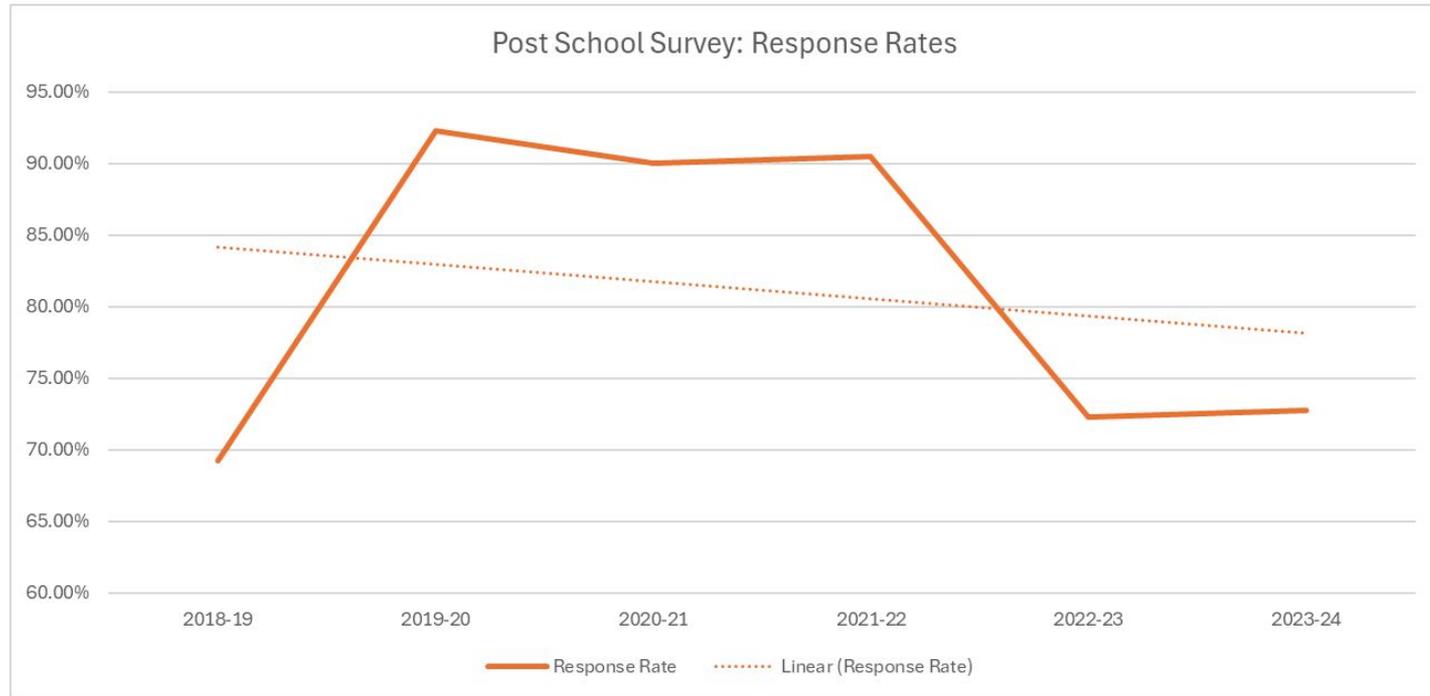
- 80-100%: above the Target
- 0-39%: below the Target
- Separate School: below the Target



Special Education 4-Year Graduation Rates

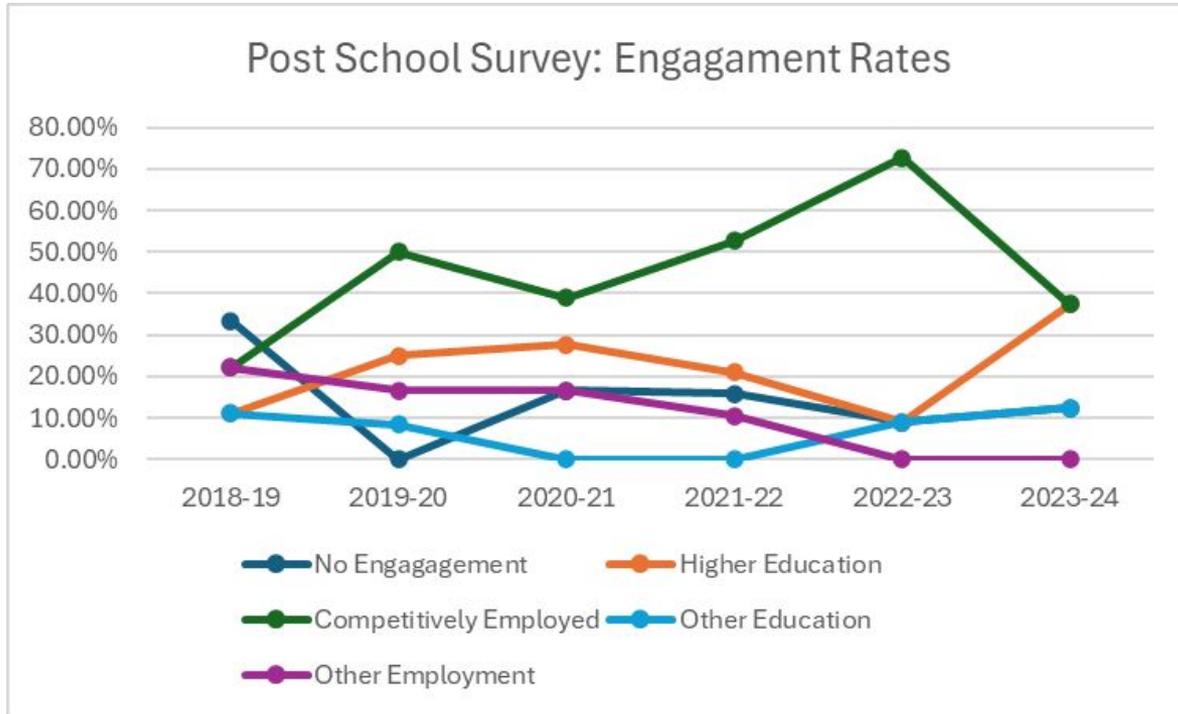


Post-School Outcomes



Post-School Outcomes

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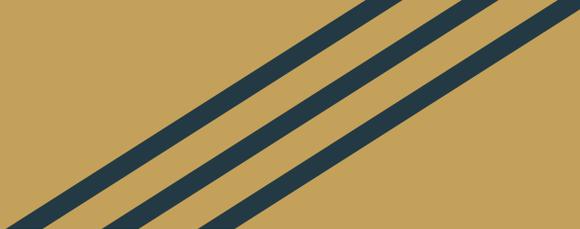
Determination Level

CCDDD: **15206** LEA: **South Whidbey** LEA Determination Level: **1 Meets Requirements**
 ESD: **189**

LEA Summary:

CRITERIA	LEA RESULTS	(1) MEETS REQUIREMENTS	(2) NEEDS ASSISTANCE	(3) NEEDS INTERVENTION	(4) NEEDS SUBSTANTIAL INTERVENTION
1. Did the LEA resolve all special education audit findings (if any)? [Source - OSPI Audit Resolution]	Yes	X			
2. Were all identified issues of non-compliance corrected by the LEA, including verification and validation by the ESD and OSPI, as soon as possible but no later than one year from identification? [Source - OSPI general supervision, including program reviews, dispute resolution, and LEA-reported data, etc.] (Note: This includes information from ongoing monitoring activities & other public information related to LEA compliance with IDEA 2004.)	Yes	X			
3. Did the LEA submit timely, complete, and accurate data? [Source - LEA-submitted data reports, see rubric] See also the Important Notes section on the "Instructions & Notes" tab.	100.0%	X			
4.1 Did the LEA demonstrate substantial compliance (on SPP Indicators B-11, B-12, and B-13)? [Source - LEA-submitted reports - see rubric] See also the Important Notes section on the "Instructions & Notes" tab. ("n < reqd" means the LEA did not meet the "n" size for that indicator)	B-11: 96.7%	X			
	B-12: 100.0%				
	B-13: 90.0%				
4.2 Is disproportionate representation (if any) the result of inappropriate identification (Indicators B-9 and B-10)? [Source - OSPI Monitoring and Program Review]	No	X			
4.3 Is the LEA's suspension/expulsion rate difference 2.0 or greater, AND is the data the result of non-compliant policies, procedures, or practices (Indicator B-4B)? [Source - OSPI Monitoring and Program Review]	No	X			
5. Did the LEA demonstrate substantial performance on SPP Indicator B-14C (Postsecondary Engagement Rates) that is based on a valid and reliable response rate (RR)? [Source - LEA-submitted report (Ind. B-14 - see rubric)] (For LEAs with fewer than 10 leavers, a 3-year trend was used to determine current status, see summary beginning on row 44 below)	14C: 90.9%	X			
	RR: 91.7%				
6. Did the LEA receive a designation of Significant Disproportionality? [Source - LEA-submitted reports (Special Education Students Suspend/Expelled, Federal Special Education Child Count/LRE, and October Total Enrollment report)]	No	X			
Does the LEA have any identified non-compliance that must be corrected no later than March 2, 2026?					YES

If yes, refer to the *Correction of Non-Compliance Workbook* emailed to your LEA on 9/19/25 or your LEA's Special Education Program Review (form package 442) in EGMS.

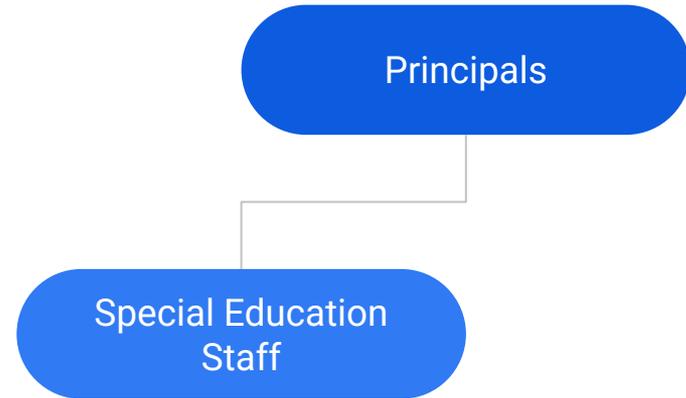
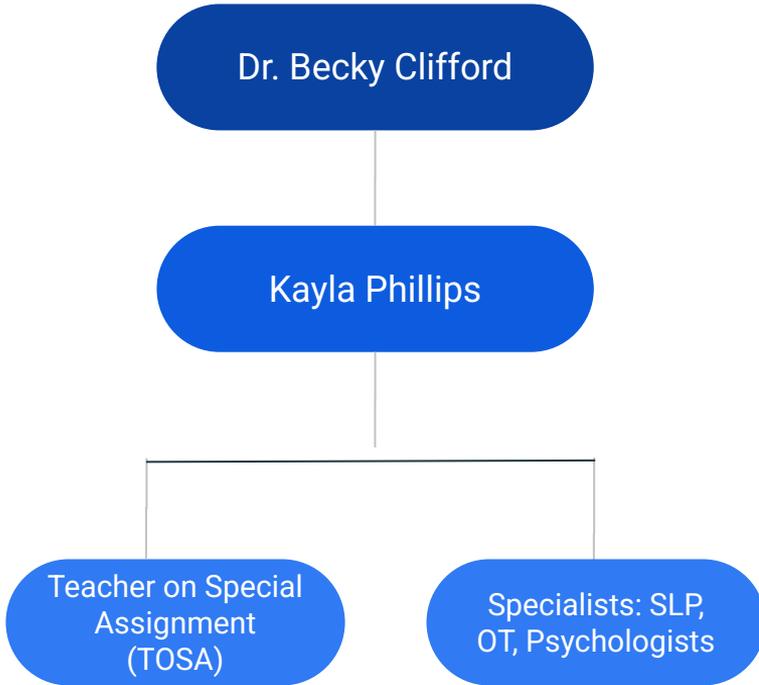


Department and Program Overview



Staff Program Overview

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Special Education Staff includes: certified special education teachers, specialists (OT, SLP, School Psychologist), paraeducators

SWES Programmatic Overview

CERTIFIED TEACHERS:

TK-2nd grade- Savannah Young

2nd-5th grade- Missy Pritchett

3rd-5th grade-Will Henderson

Speech Language Pathologist- Jeremy Frye

Occupational Therapist- Michael Swenson

School Psychologist- Erin Gutzmer

Board Certified Behavioral Analyst- Manya Ralkowski

Behavior Technician- Dana Whitney, Karlie Hutson

ITK - This program serves three to five year olds with a wide range of developmental delays. Communication, adaptive and social skills development are an integral part of the curriculum in providing early intervention and preparing students for kindergarten.

RESOURCE MODEL- Resource Model is a service delivery model that serves identified special education students. Specially designed instruction may be provided in the general education classroom or in a specialized setting. Students in this classroom are served in specially designed instruction in the areas of reading, written language, math, and social/emotional needs.

Intensive Support -Our Intensive Support Program provides individualized, high-quality instruction and services for students whose IEPs indicate a need for more comprehensive and sustained support. This model focuses on helping students build essential academic, communication, functional, and independence skills so they can participate meaningfully in school, community, and daily life.

SWMS Programmatic Overview

CERTIFIED TEACHERS:

6th-8th grade- Mandy Jones- Intensive Support

6th-8th grade-Patty Maddux - Resource Room

Speech Language Pathologist- Melanie Readshaw

Occupational Therapist- Michael Swenson

Psychologist- Sonja Ringsrud (Middle/High)

Manya Ralkowski- Board Certified Behavioral Analyst

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SWHS Programmatic Overview

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CERTIFIED TEACHERS

9th-10th grade: Tyler Hehn, Resource Room

11th-12th grade: Rachelle Bennett, Resource Room

9th-Transition: Luke Hodson, Intensive Support

Speech Language Pathologist- Melanie Readshaw

Occupational Therapist- Michael Swenson

Psychologist- Sonja Ringsrud (Middle/High)

Manya Ralkowski- Board Certified Behavioral Analyst

RESOURCE MODEL- same as K-8 and additional focus on post-secondary individual pathways as well.

Intensive Support/Life Skills/Transition -Our Intensive Support Program provides individualized, high-quality instruction and services for students whose IEPs indicate a need for more comprehensive and sustained support. This model focuses on helping students build essential academic, communication, functional, and independence skills so they can participate meaningfully in school, community, and daily life.

The transition program helps students move successfully from school to adulthood by building the skills, experiences, and supports they need for work, independent living, and community participation.



Process and Timelines

Compliance and legal timelines



Referral steps

- Invitation
 - Parent (family) and student
 - Administrator or designee
 - General and special educator
 - Related service providers
 - District administrator
 - Interpreter
- Draft referral report
- Draft assessment plan/consent
- Prior written notice
- Procedural safeguards

Considerations

- Pre-referral intervention (general education teacher, number, type, length, fidelity)
- Student background (academic, behavioral, medical)
- Cultural factors
- Suspected disability
- Decision to evaluate or not
- Schedule a follow-up meeting or create an assessment plan
- Consent to assessment plan

Compliance and legal timelines



Evaluation steps

- Invitation
 - Parent (family) and student
 - Administrator or designee
 - General and special educator
 - Related service providers
 - School psychologist
 - District administrator
 - Interpreter
- Draft evaluation report
- Prior written notice
- Procedural safeguards

Considerations

- Adverse educational impact X
- Eligibility
- Disability category X
- Background information
- Areas of assessment(s), types of assessment(s) and summary of assessment(s)
- Recommendations for specially designed instruction services, specific areas and accommodations /modifications X

Triennial

Compliance and legal timelines



Individual Education Program (IEP) steps

- Invitation
 - Parent (family) and student X
 - Administrator or designee X
 - General and special educator X
 - Related service providers X
 - District administrator
 - Interpreter
- Draft IEP
- Prior Written Notice
- Procedural Safeguards

Considerations

- Adverse education impact
- Present Levels of Performance
- Annual measurable goals & progress monitoring
- Accommodations/ modifications
- Transition Plan (16 and older)
- Test participation
- Service matrix minutes
- Supplementary aides & services
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), amount of time spent with non-disabled peers
- Transportation / Extended School Year Services (ESY)
- Initial consent for services

Annual



Current Work and Next Steps

Professional Development

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-Life Skills Crisis Intervention (LSCI)

- 3 cohorts of SWSD staff members certified in their Tier 3 Interventions
- 2nd year of all ITK-12th grade staff member training in Tier 1 support

-Right Response training- required training that teaches staff how to safely prevent, de-escalate, and respond to challenging behaviors using proactive, trauma-informed strategies.

-Standards Based IEPs training with over half SWSD case managers -offered through ESD

-mClass - Year 2 initial training and rollout. This is Amplify's Tier 3 intervention program to support students ELA, Reading and Writing skill development

-Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) para focused behavior training- ongoing training to support implementation of BIPs, student needs and continuous improvement for safer student outcomes

Reducing Restraint and Eliminating Isolation (RREI) Grant

The goals of the Legislature to eliminate student isolation and track and reduce the use of restraint.

SWSD qualified as a Pilot Site District: to engage in targeted professional development through the learning experiences offered by demonstration sites and contracted providers. Pilot sites serve as “test flight” examples that allow OSPI and partners to understand what practices can support schools best.

- Professional development
- District-wide consultation and support

November 4 Family Night

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Roughly 30 participants representing ~15 families attended

Student Privacy and Compliance

Strengths Teachers do a great job keeping private.	Opportunities - Do parents have enough education around history of compliance time line? * Right for Parents who are new to special ed. * Clear sheets - Education around privacy from volunteers. * If a concern is brought up, have district representative to come to explain a violation. * Ability to come to the school. - Question compliance & process - Is the annual training for parents & staff? * Importance of compliance
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Early Identification and Intervention Gaps

Strengths Child identified quickly SEARCH Since Do I inform the staff level	Opportunities child find process and who is informed. - Feed back - community events -> Took too long for services to follow through. KEY - education, communication, implementation, quality * No letter about redaction, focus on all needs - ? about recording? Too long for ID of needs Explain of concerns deeper when meet w/ to see services given
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Equity in Access

Strengths Providing support in gen ed classes. Good balance	Opportunities Took kids about 4 yr for OT services Not enough support staffs. Educating support staffs - Personal approach to change, not necessary to make more the difference in * No more of experience of transitioning - shared resources * IAB on website
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Communication Breakdown

Follow Through

STRENGTHS Parents are open to communication * Family coming in help	OPPORTUNITIES - Info to communicate with - Labels responsibilities - Design / flow sheets at open meeting - Understanding IEP looking at your student - General communication around meetings - If needed for all communications eg. point speaker only - Specific introduction at your start up in person meeting - Don't restrict ourselves to technology of their understanding - More frequent parent communication on all students * Important
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Communication breakdown not just to address any family of process

Federal Uncertainty / Funding Instability

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES - Do parents know what's happening in funding? - How about know what's happening in funding? - Are we monitoring community about how to help out?
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Inconsistent Service Delivery

STRENGTHS * If it has increased, some consistency in funding	OPPORTUNITIES - Service delivery not individualized to student - Clearly provide consistency in language - * Need to make it clear proper name - provide info to staff across units * How to share the info (technology, etc)
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Staffing: Capacity, Appreciation, Support

Strengths - large classrooms - lunch time (busy) - overwhelming # of kids on caseload - staff overwhelm -> not strong comm in the beginning - share a list of who works in which room / student - Gen Ed -> Gen Ed + special transition (consider case management training)	Opportunities - once on IEP -> + help - availability - great people who care - responsive
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Function vs. Real
Eva. Follow up
Personal + Training

Accommodations Implementation

Strengths - when "spelled out" how to specify needed / student - partnership makes implementation better	Opportunities - Families checking in on accommodations - consistency (between special comms) * compliance w/ LEE (how to communicate to families)
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Inclusive School Culture and Collaboration

Strengths - This community highlights what students don't feel "strong" / "colored" - celebrate differences (nonverbal, cerebral, sensory) - kindness (pointing, SEE, conviction) (w/ Tier 1)	Opportunities - keeping a "hand" on how things are going - friendship bench
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Engagement Protocol

- Review notes and discuss noticings and wonderings.

Copies printed and handed out to board members (Kayla printed)

Special Education Advisory Council

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Purpose

South Whidbey School District Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) will serve as a platform for families, students, staff, and community members who are dedicated to the success of students with disabilities and who wish to collaborate with district staff to provide input and perspectives as it relates to special education services, programs, and policies.

Participants

The council will be composed of individuals who have a genuine interest in special education and who are committed to constructive collaboration to ensure the needs of students with disabilities are at the forefront of educational planning and decision making

Commitment.

The council will meet at least four times during a typical school year. Since this is the inaugural year and we're launching in January, we will hold two meetings this year. Consistent attendance and active participation from all members are essential to achieving our goals and outcomes. We will work with council members to identify dates and times that work best for everyone.

Program Review

Outside consultant to complete a program review to outline current landscape and recommendations for next steps.

- Comparison to similar-sized districts, gather and unpack SWSD data and programs to inform
 - Systems and infrastructure: special education roles and responsibilities
 - Programming and Services: identify strengths and opportunities for programming and continuum of services, professional development
 - Inclusion: explore inclusive practices across grade spans
- Mix of quantitative, qualitative data, interviews, and site visits: collaborating with staff, families, and Special Education Advisory Council

Recommendations

- Provide a report to inform work and tangible next steps over the next 3 years

Closing

Notice and Wonderings