

Educating the Exceptional Child Every Day

An Overview of Nyack Public Schools Special Education Department

Presented by: Leonardo Macias, Director of Special Education

Date: March 4, 2025



Our Mission Statement



WE, the students, parents, community and staff of the Nyack School District **VALUE:**

the pursuit of scholastic excellence; the richness of our diverse community; harmonious relationships among individuals and groups; partnerships among students, staff, parents, and community; respect for self, and others; responsible ethical behavior that engenders trust; individuals who think critically and creatively; ongoing involvement in local and global issues; development of essential skills and attitudes for a productive life; a safe and nurturing environment.

Our Vision



WE are building bridges for today's students to cross into tomorrow's world with equity, innovation and optimism.

Embedded into the Profile of a Graduate of Nyack Public Schools are seven core competencies: Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, Communication, Compassion, Content Mastery and Cultural Awareness.

Nurturing these competencies in each student begins at birth, extends into each classroom, and prepares students for success and wellness beyond graduation onto a global platform.

In This Presentation:

- **Special Education Process Overview**
- **CSE Eligibility**
- **CSE Classifications Defined**
- **Special Education Services**
- **Out of District Placement**
- **Instructional Programs**
- **Staffing & Professional Development**
- **Enrollment & Demographics**
- **Student Performance & Progress**
- **Challenges & Next Steps**



Special Education Process Overview

- ❑ **Step-by-Step Referral and Evaluation Process**
- ❑ **Referral:** Initiated by parents, teachers, or support staff based on concerns regarding academic performance, behavior, or medical conditions.
- ❑ **Evaluation:** Conducted by a multidisciplinary team (psychologists, special educators, service providers) to assess the student's needs.
- ❑ **Recommendation:** The Committee on Special Education (CSE) determines appropriate programs and services based on evaluation results.
- ❑ **Implementation:** Services are initiated after parental approval, with progress monitored regularly.
- ❑ **Annual Review & Triennial Reevaluation:** IEPs are reviewed annually and reevaluations occur every three years to ensure continued eligibility.





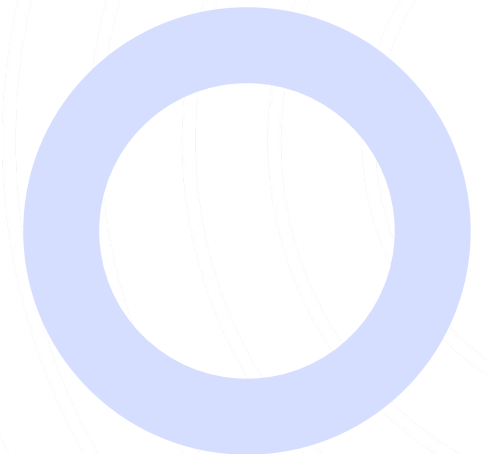
How does the CSE determine eligibility?

The student must meet the qualifications for at least one of the 13 classifications

- Autism (AU)
- Deafness (DF)
- Deaf/Blindness (DB)
- Emotional Disability (EDis)
- Hearing Impairment (HI)
- Intellectual Disability (ID)
- Multiple Disabilities (MD)
- Orthopedic Impairment (OI)
- Other Health Impairment (OHI)
- Speech or Language Impairment
- Speech or Language Impairment (SLI)
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- Visual Impairment including Blindness (VI)

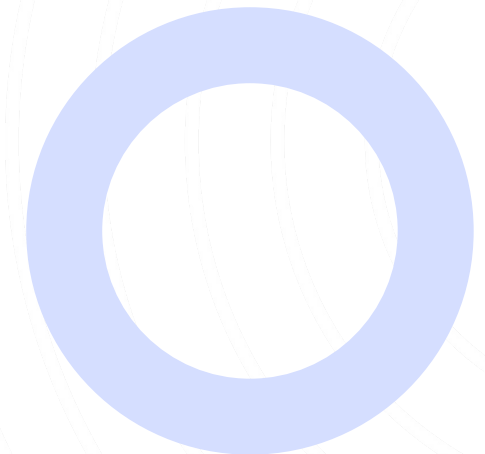
CSE Process: 13 Classifications Defined

- **Autism (AU)** – A developmental disability that significantly affects verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three.
- **Deafness (DF)** – A hearing impairment so severe that the child is unable to process linguistic information through hearing, even with amplification, affecting educational performance.
- **Deaf-Blindness (DB)** – A combination of hearing and visual impairments that cause severe communication and developmental needs.
- **Emotional Disability (EDis)** (formerly Emotional Disturbance) – A condition exhibiting one or more characteristics over a long period that adversely affects educational performance (e.g., inability to learn, inappropriate behaviors, pervasive mood disorders, difficulty maintaining relationships).



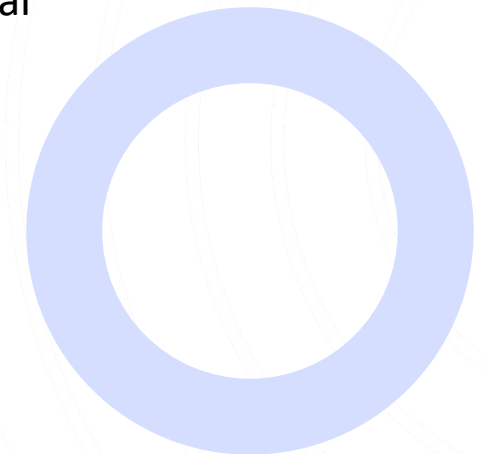
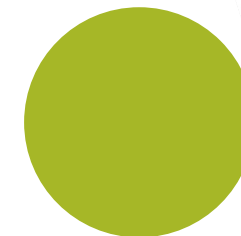
CSE Process: 13 Classifications Defined

- **Hearing Impairment (HI)** – An impairment in hearing that affects educational performance but is not classified as deafness.
- **Intellectual Disability (ID)** – Significantly below-average intellectual functioning with deficits in adaptive behavior, typically manifesting during the developmental period.
- **Multiple Disabilities (MD)** – A combination of impairments that cause severe educational needs that cannot be accommodated in a special education program solely for one impairment.
- **Orthopedic Impairment (OI)** – A severe orthopedic condition that adversely affects educational performance (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, bone tuberculosis).



CSE Process: 13 Classifications Defined

- **Other Health Impairment (OHI)** – A condition resulting in limited strength, vitality, or alertness, affecting educational performance (e.g., ADHD, epilepsy, diabetes, heart conditions).
- **Specific Learning Disability (SLD)** – A disorder in one or more basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language (e.g., dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia).
- **Speech or Language Impairment (SLI)** – A communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairment, or a voice impairment that affects educational performance.
- **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)** – An acquired injury to the brain caused by external force, resulting in disability that affects educational performance.
- **Visual Impairment (VI) including Blindness** – A visual impairment that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance.



Overview of Special Education Services:

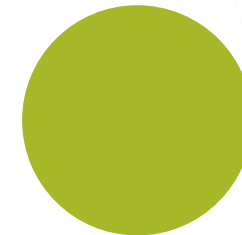
- ❖ Resource Room Services
- ❖ Self-Contained Classrooms/Special Class
- ❖ Related Services (Speech, OT, PT, Counseling)
- ❖ Transition Services (Post-secondary readiness)
- ❖ Extended School Year (ESY)
- ❖ Therapeutic Support Program
- ❖ Direct/Indirect Consultant Model
- ❖ Social Communication Class
- ❖ CHOICE Program (Life Skills)





Direct Consultant Model Grades K-5

- **K-2nd:** For each grade: Special Class – Content Support 15:1
 - ☐ 90 minutes
 - ☐ 5X weekly, Flexible schedule
- **3rd & 4th: Consultant Teacher Direct**
 - ☐ 90 minutes
 - ☐ 5X weekly, Flexible schedule
 - ☐ Special Class, Content Support – 15:1, 45 minutes, 5X weekly
- **5th: Consultant Teacher Direct**
 - ☐ 180 minutes
 - ☐ 5X weekly, Flexible schedule
 - ☐ Special Class: Content Support – 15:1, 45 minutes 5X weekly



Instructional Programs: Grades K-5



Schools	Upper Nyack Elementary Autism/Social Communication	Valley Cottage Elementary	Upper Nyack Elementary Therapeutic Support Class
Programs	•K-5: Ratio of students, teacher, Teacher Assistants 8:1:2	•K-5: Ratio of students, teacher, Teacher Assistant 15:1:1	•K-5: Ratio of students, teacher, Teacher Assistants 12:1:2

Instructional Programs: Middle & High School

□ Supportive Class – Content Support 15:1

- 45 minutes
- Students will take this in lieu of a language in 6thG
- To be used in conjunction with CTD classes

□ Consultant Teacher Direct

- English 53 minutes daily
- Math 53 minutes daily
- Social Studies/ Science 53 minutes daily

□ Special Classes

- English 15:1, 53 minutes daily
- Math 15:1, 53 minutes daily
- Social Studies 15:1, 53 minutes daily
- Science 15:1, 53 minutes daily

□ CHOICE Program-MS & HS (Life Skills)

- 12:1:1, 6 hours daily



Staffing & Professional Development



Special Education Staff:

- **43** Special Education Teachers (K-12)
- **2** CSE Chairs & **1** CPSE Chair – **1** Bilingual
- **5** School Psychologist – **2** Bilingual
- **6** School Social Workers – **3** Bilingual
 - *When I started in the district in 2016, we had 1 bilingual clinician/CSE chair supporting our diverse student population. Over time, we have significantly expanded our capacity to meet the needs of multilingual students and families.*
- **4** Speech Pathologist
- **1** Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- **2** PT/PTA & **3** OT/COTA (supported by vendors)
- **1** Behaviorist (supported by vendors)

Professional Development:

- **AVID training** for special education teachers
- **MTSS** and data-driven instruction workshops
- **De-escalation and crisis intervention** training
- **Inclusive practices** and culturally responsive teaching
- **Stop the Bleed/CPR** training for TAs
- **IMSE and multisensory** literacy training
- **Enhancing IEP Goal Writing**

Enrollment & Demographics

Total Special Education Enrollment: 480 total students

16% of Total Population (NYS = 19%)

13% (62 out of 480) of SWDs are placed out-of-district



- **Gender Breakdown:**

- **64.05%** Male
- **35.48%** Female
- **0.48%** Non-binary

- **Ethnicity Breakdown:**

- **31.21%** Hispanic or Latino
- **19.91%** Black/African American
- **36.55%** White
- **6%** Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- **6.35%** Multiracial

- **Additional Breakdowns:**

- **12.38%** ENL
- **42.86%** Economically Disadvantaged

- **Grade-Level Breakdown:**

- **37.62%** K-5th Grade
- **26.43%** 6th-8th Grade
- **34.76%** 9th-12th Grade
- **1.90%** Ungraded
- **13%** Out of District

Enrollment & Demographics by Classification

Total Special Education Enrollment: 480 total students



Classification Breakdown:

- **15%** Autism (**AU**)
- **3.8%** Emotional Disability (**EDis**)
- **0.42%** Hearing Impairment (**HI**)
- **1.8%** Intellectual Disability (**ID**)
- **33.5%** Specific Learning Disability (**SLD**)
- **3.5%** Multiple Disabilities (**MD**)
- **20.6%** Other Health Impairment (**OHI**)
- **0.21%** Orthopedic Impairment (**OI**)
- **20.2%** Speech or Language Impairment (**SLI**)
- **0.42%** Traumatic Brain Injury (**TBI**)
- **0.42%** Visual Impairment (**VI**) including Blindness

Enrollment & Demographics Trends:



- ➡ **Overall Special Education enrollment** - remains stable at **480** students
- ➡ **Increase in Hispanic/Latino student representation** - now making up **36.19%** of classified students
- ➡ **Slight growth in the number of English Language Learners (ELLs)** in special education - rising to **12.38%**
- ➡ **Out of District numbers** - remain stable
- ➡ **Gender distribution** - remains consistent, with males making up approximately **66%** of classified students
- ➡ **Economically disadvantaged students** - make up **42.86%** of classified students, highlighting the need for continued support services
- ➡ **Increase in** speech and language services
- ➡ **Increase in** students diagnosed with autism and developmental disabilities
- ➡ **Increase in** referrals for mental health and emotional support services



Student Performance & Progress

Graduation Rates for Students with Disabilities

Four-Year NHS SWD Graduation Rate by Cohort (Data LRIC):

- Cohort 2018 - 86%
- Cohort 2019 - 87%
- Cohort 2020 - 84%



Nyack Schools outperforms NYS averages in overall graduation rates.



Higher Regents Diploma rate in Nyack compared to NYS data.



Lower dropout and still enrolled rates than the NYS average.



Student Performance & Progress

ELA Performance

□ High School Trends (2017-2024):

- **Strong and Improving Performance:** High school ELA proficiency rates have consistently exceeded 60%, with significant growth from 41% in 2017-18 to 69% in 2023-24.
- **Post-Pandemic Rebound:** Following a dip to 60% in 2022-23, proficiency rose 9 percentage points in 2023-24, indicating effective recovery efforts and strengthened literacy interventions.
- **Outperforming Regional and State Averages:** Nyack's 69% proficiency in 2023-24 surpasses the state average (56%) and regional districts, reinforcing the impact of curriculum alignment and targeted literacy supports.
- **Sustained Growth in Literacy Achievement:** The trend suggests consistent instructional strategies and differentiation have contributed to improved outcomes over time.

□ Grades 3-8 Trends (2017-2024):

- **ELA proficiency has remained stable overall** with some fluctuations across years.
- **Our District outperforms state averages** in multiple years, showing consistent instructional impact.
- **Positive momentum in literacy interventions** with a slight increase from 20% (2022-23) to 22% (2023-24)
- **Continued focus on comprehension support and writing skills** has contributed to maintaining performance.



Student Performance & Progress

MATH Performance

□ High School Trends (2017-2024)

- **Steady Growth in Proficiency:** Math proficiency at the high school level has shown consistent improvement, increasing from 40% in 2017-18 to 62% in 2023-24.
- **Outperforming State Averages:** Nyack's proficiency rate has consistently surpassed state performance, with a 28-point increase over five years compared to the state's 5-point increase (from 39% to 34%).
- **Post-Pandemic Recovery:** After a drop in 2020-21 (29%), scores rebounded significantly, indicating the effectiveness of intervention strategies and curriculum alignment.
- **Sustained Support Leads to Gains:** The steady growth suggests strong instructional supports, targeted interventions, and increased rigor in high school mathematics coursework.

□ Grades 3-8 Trends (2017-2024)

- **Math proficiency has steadily improved over time,** though yearly fluctuations exist.
- **An increase in positive response to math intervention programs** from 20% (2022-23) to 22% (2023-24).
- **Maintaining steady progress with ongoing numeracy supports** have helped, but further refinement in interventions is needed to sustain upward trends.

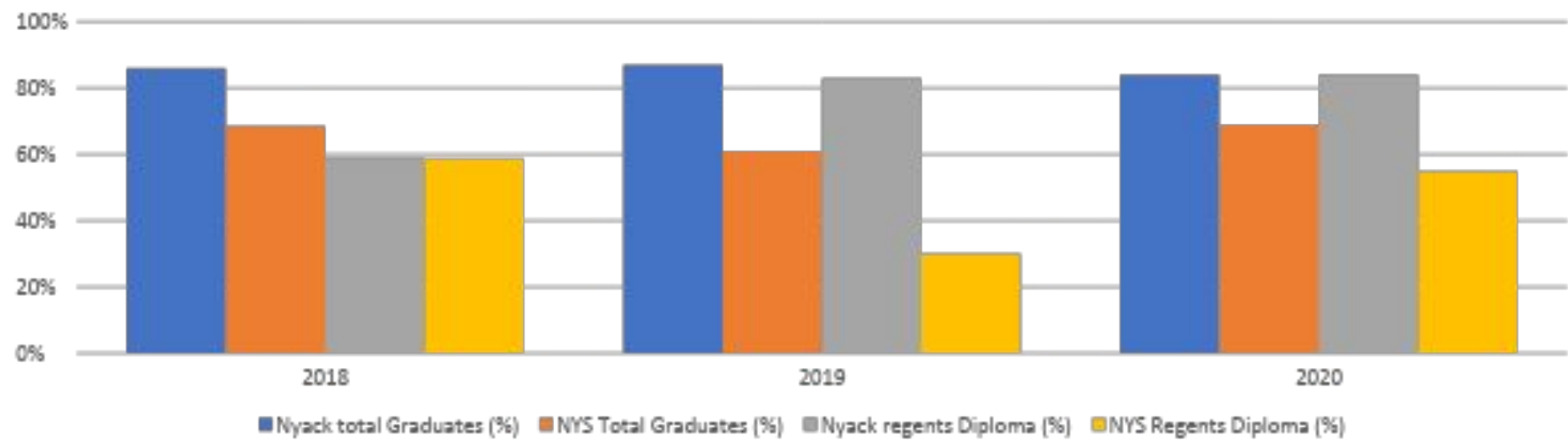


Student Performance & Progress

Key Takeaways

- ➔ **ELA and Math performance for grades 3-8** is showing incremental improvement, with Nyack trending above state averages.
- ➔ **High School proficiency rates** remain strong, particularly in Algebra I and Regents-level ELA.
- ➔ **Targeted literacy and math supports** continue to be key factors in sustaining and improving student success.

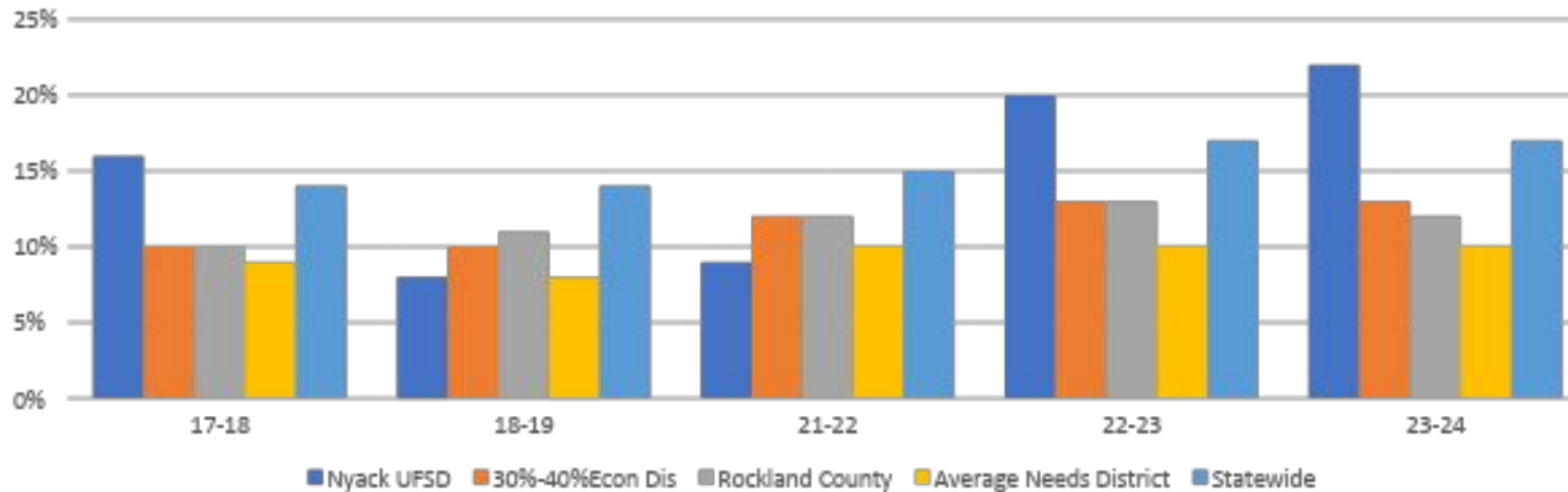
3-Year graduation Comparison for SWDs: Nyack HS vs. NYS



Cohort Year	Nyack total Graduates (%)	NYS Total Graduates (%)	Nyack regents Diploma (%)	NYS Regents Diploma (%)
2018	86%	68.50%	59%	58.80%
2019	87%	61%	83%	30%
2020	84%	69%	84%	55%

Achievement by Program: G3-G8 ELA

% Proficient (Level 3&4)

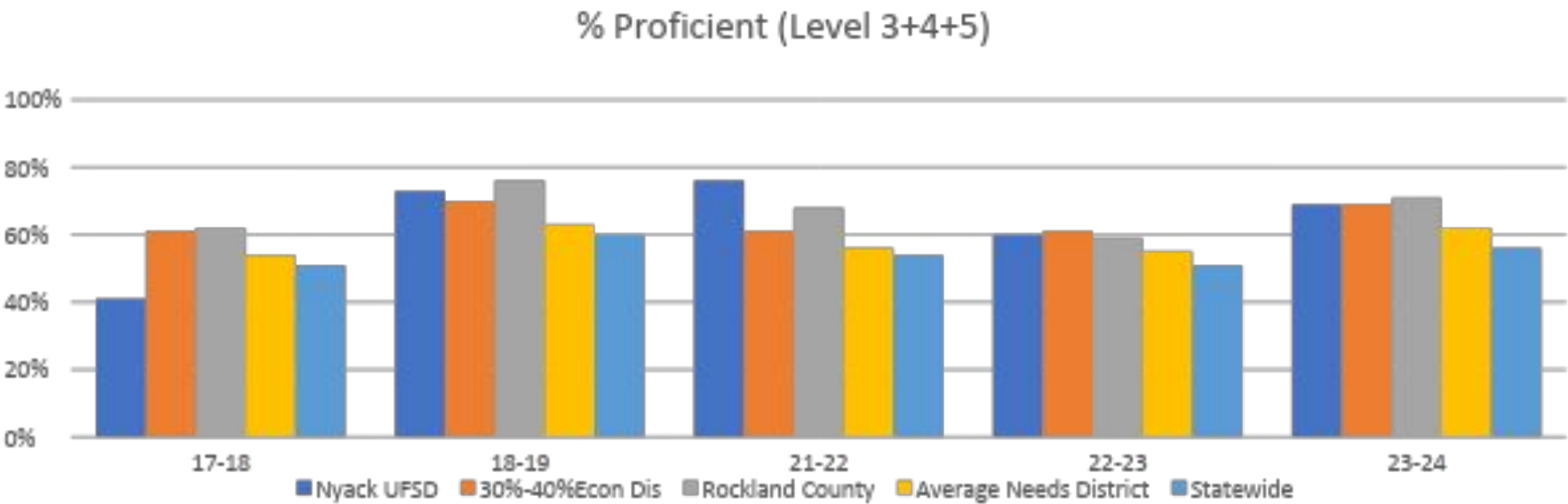


*This slide reflects the performance of Students With Disabilities (SWDs).

*30%-40% Economically Disadvantaged and Average Needs Districts reflect statewide data.

	Nyack UFSD	30%-40% Econ Dis	Rockland County	Average Needs District	Statewide
17-18	16%	10%	10%	9%	14%
18-19	8%	10%	11%	8%	14%
21-22	9%	12%	12%	10%	15%
22-23	20%	13%	13%	10%	17%
23-24	22%	13%	12%	10%	17%

Regents CC Achievement by Program: ELA

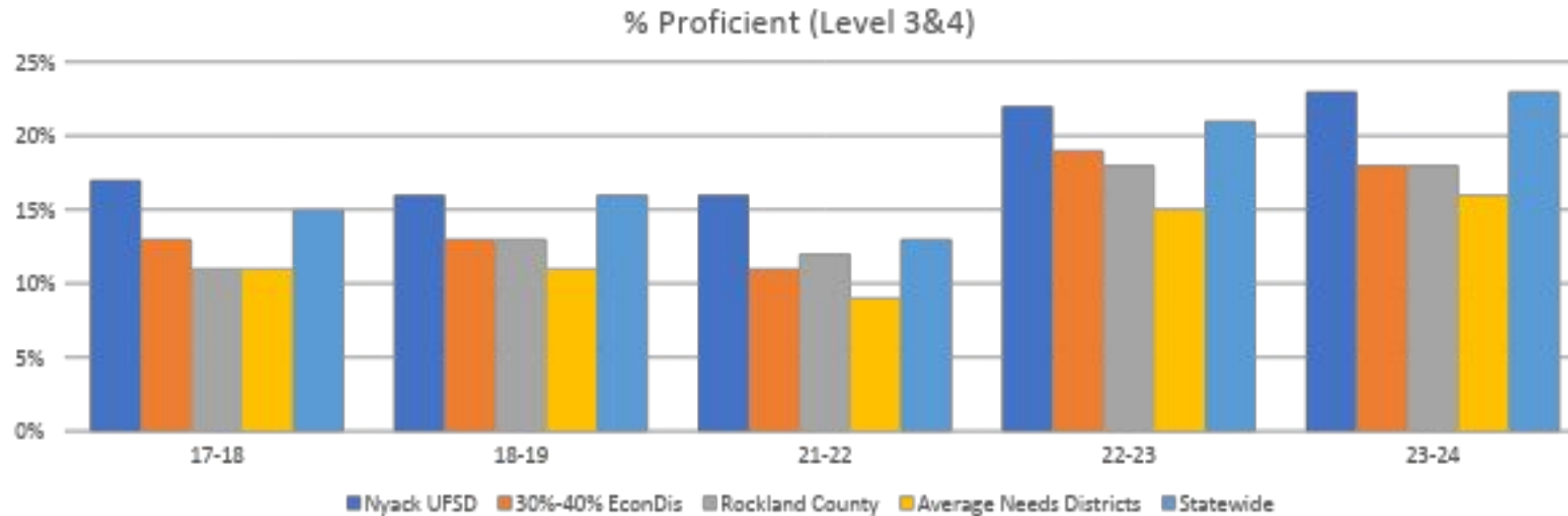


*This slide reflects the performance of Students With Disabilities (SWDs).

*30%-40% Economically Disadvantaged and Average Needs Districts reflect statewide data.

	Nyack UFSD	30%-40%Econ Dis	Rockland County	Average Needs District	Statewide
17-18	41%	61%	62%	54%	51%
18-19	73%	70%	76%	63%	60%
21-22	76%	61%	68%	58%	54%
22-23	60%	61%	59%	55%	51%
23-24	69%	69%	71%	62%	56%

Achievement by Program: G3-G8 Math

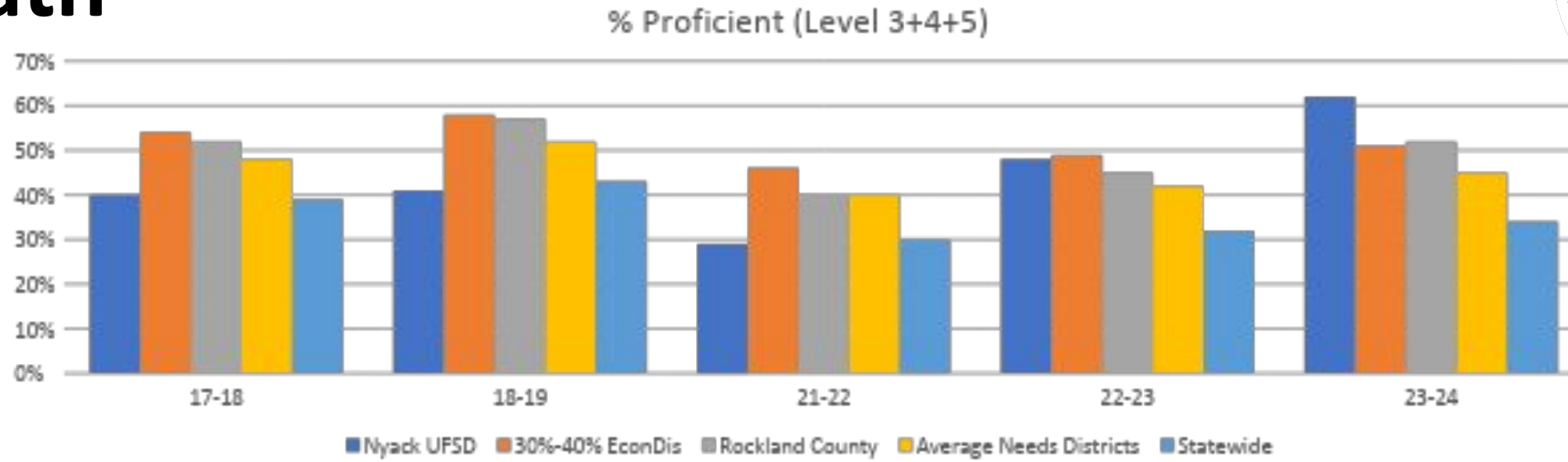


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17-18	17%	13%	11%	11%	15%
18-19	16%	13%	13%	11%	16%
21-22	16%	11%	12%	9%	13%
22-23	22%	19%	18%	15%	21%
23-24	23%	18%	18%	16%	23%

Regents CC Achievement by Program: Math



*This slide reflects the performance of Students With Disabilities (SWDs).

*30%-40% Economically Disadvantaged and Average Needs Districts reflect statewide data.

	Nyack UFSD	30%-40% EconDis	Rockland County	Average Needs Districts	Statewide
17-18	40%	54%	52%	48%	39%
18-19	41%	58%	57%	52%	43%
21-22	29%	46%	40%	40%	30%
22-23	48%	49%	45%	42%	32%
23-24	62%	51%	52%	45%	34%

Challenges & Areas for Improvement

→ Increasing Mental Health and Behavioral Needs

Addressing the growing number of students requiring emotional and behavioral support, particularly those with autism and emotional disabilities.

- SEL Screener
- Implementation of MTSS

→ Sustaining and Expanding Literacy & Math Growth

While student performance in ELA and Math has improved, continued targeted interventions and differentiated instruction are necessary to maintain and accelerate progress.

- 95%
- Eureka
- Targeted Progress Monitoring through AIMSweb



Challenges & Areas for Improvement



→ Enhancing Parent Communication and Engagement

Strengthening family partnerships to support IEP implementation and transition planning for students as they move across grade levels and into post-secondary options.

→ Out-of-District Placements & Support Needs

- ◆ 13% (62 out of 480) of SWDs are placed out-of-district in Rockland & SW BOCES, as well as residential settings across NYS. 2.2% of Total Population in Nyack Schools.
- ◆ Assess the effectiveness of in-district programs to determine where more services can be built internally to better serve students.

→ 504 Info/Data will be added to Special Ed presentations

Challenges & Areas for Improvement



→ How Do We Know How Our Students Are Doing?

- ◆ Benchmark assessments (e.g., LinkIt data)
- ◆ Progress monitoring tools tracking IEP goal mastery
- ◆ Behavioral data to evaluate SEL and intervention impact

→ Utilize data to inform decision making

- ◆ Staffing, instructional practices and programs.

→ Analysis of Staffing & PD Needs

Recruiting and retaining highly qualified special education teachers, related service providers, and support staff while providing continuous PD:

- Behavioral intervention strategies
- Differentiated instruction & co-teaching models
- Enhancing inclusive practices

Future Goals & Next Steps



→ Strengthen Inclusive Practices & Instructional Supports

- ◆ **Expand** in-district programs and services to reduce out-of-district placements by increasing access to SEL interventions, behavioral supports, specialized instructional models, and assistive technology to better meet diverse student needs.
- ◆ **Continue** training staff in co-teaching, differentiated instruction, and targeted interventions to enhance classroom inclusion.
- ◆ **Expand** assistive technology to support access to the curriculum for SWDs.

→ Enhance Behavioral & Mental Health Supports

- ◆ **Increase** professional development on behavioral interventions to support students with autism and emotional disabilities.
- ◆ **Continue** collaboration with Dorothy Novogrodsky & Karry Mullin on SEL initiatives to address emotional regulation and executive functioning.

→ Expand Transition Services & Community Partnerships

- ◆ **Strengthen** post-secondary planning and work-based learning opportunities for students.
- ◆ **Increase** community outreach efforts to support families of SWDs with resources and advocacy.

Future Goals & Next Steps

→ Refine Data-Driven Decision Making to Support SWDs:

- ◆ **Expand** the use of benchmark assessments & progress monitoring tools beyond state testing to drive instructional decisions.
- ◆ **Collaborate** with district leaders on using assessment trends to inform staffing and intervention models.
- ◆ **Support** the implementation of MTSS, ensuring that early intervention and pre-referral processes provide students with the necessary supports before a CSE referral is considered.
- ◆ **Enhance** data analysis methods to monitor SWD progress through:
 - Formative assessments (e.g., Benchmark, i-Ready, STAR)
 - Classroom-based data (teacher observations, intervention progress)
 - IEP-specific progress monitoring (goal attainment, behavioral data)



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & ACCOUNTABILITY



RedHawk Ready!
Remember. Refresh. Reunify.



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Karissa Sullivan, Nyack Middle School Asst. Principal
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Tom DiLeo, Upper Nyack Elementary School Principal
Lucrisha Addison Harris, Valley Cottage Elementary School Principal

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Strategic Communications
in Nyack Public Schools
by Lisa Mininger Retallack, PRCO
www.nyackschools.org



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**Educating the Exceptional Child
Every Day**

