



KCS | KNOX COUNTY SCHOOLS

SPECIAL EDUCATION

P.A.C.T.

*Enhancing Performance, Accountability, Collaboration, and Transitions
through Individualized Education Plans*

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MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

The commitment to strengthen special education in Knox County Schools begins with a single, immutable belief: **every student is capable of success**. Realizing that success requires more than access to services. It necessitates strong instruction, consistent practices, meaningful IEPs, effective collaboration, and systems designed to respond and adapt to the ever-changing needs of students.

This work has been years in the making. One of my first acts as superintendent was to call for a thorough examination of our student services and supports. That charge ultimately resulted in the formation of a Special Education Task Force and an actionable series of recommendations for improvement.

Since that time, we have engaged external consultants and internal stakeholders to identify the systems and structures that need to evolve to meet the needs of a changing special education landscape. Our Special Education Department has codified expectations for the IEP process and piloted several improvement strategies.

We have also made meaningful gains. The percentage of special education students spending the majority of their time in the general education setting has increased nearly 12%. Reading and math proficiency is up, and graduation rates are increasing.

Progress like this doesn't happen by accident, but progress alone is not enough.

Despite these gains, students with IEPs are not progressing at the same rate as their peers. That is the gap we must close. The solution will not come from a single initiative or a quick fix. It will come from building the systems, practices, and shared expectations that empower students to reach their full potential. The five-year *Special Education P.A.C.T.* serves as the roadmap for how we will meet our goal of creating a path to success for every student.

Over the next five years, KCS will focus on strengthening foundational skills, developing great educators in every school, expanding college and career readiness, enhancing IEPs, and improving communication and engagement with families. This plan establishes clear annual actions, measurable objectives, and ongoing monitoring to ensure progress is visible, accountability is shared, and adjustments are made when the evidence tells us they are needed.

This is ambitious work, but the most important work often is.

I want to thank the thousands of families and educators who have participated in this process. Together, I am confident we will build a special education system that is consistent, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of every student.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jon Rysewyk
Superintendent



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Special Education P.A.C.T.* is Knox County Schools’ five-year commitment to transform special education from a primarily compliance- and service-driven model into a fully embedded instructional system—one in which students with disabilities experience belonging, high-quality Tier 1 instruction, individualized support, and purposeful preparation for life after graduation.

A PLAN GROUNDED IN LISTENING, EVIDENCE, AND LEARNING

The five-year strategic plan is the culmination of several years of deliberate study, stakeholder engagement, and improvement work. This effort began in 2022 with a deep dive into student support programs and services and the subsequent formation of a Special Education Task Force. Over the next three years, KCS contracted with external consultants to facilitate stakeholder listening sessions, analyze existing systems and services, and identify changes needed to strengthen decision-making, inclusive practices, staff support, and student outcomes.

Together, these efforts established a case for change as well as a direction forward, staked in three key findings:

1

KCS students with IEPs are making gains, but they are not academically progressing at the rate of their typically-developing peers.

2

KCS has not had an established model for research and innovation to keep pace with promising and emerging strategies in special education.

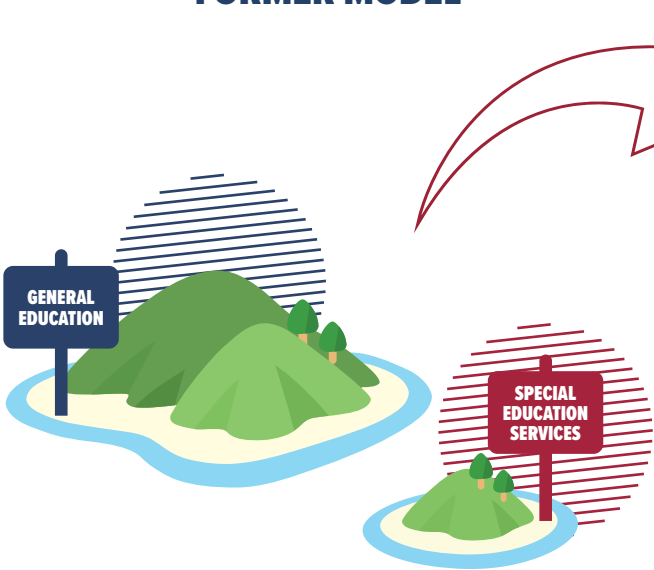
3

Students thrive when there is a group of adults wrapped around them, but the district has not had a consistent, systematic vision for collaboration.

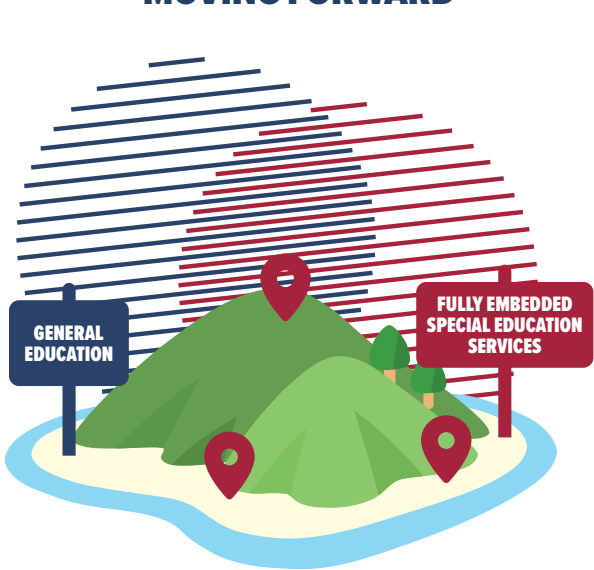
FROM SEPARATE SERVICES TO SHARED INSTRUCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

This plan aims to fundamentally alter the way KCS understands and organizes special education. Rather than implementing special education through compliance-based programming and pull-out services, the *P.A.C.T.* positions individualized support as an embedded part of teaching and learning. General educators, special educators, administrators, related-service providers, families, and district teams will be trained on shared responsibility and expected to deliver on IEPs that drive meaningful, measurable progress.

FORMER MODEL



MOVING FORWARD



TRANSLATING BELIEF TO ACTION

The *Special Education P.A.C.T.* is grounded in five core beliefs, each translated into action through a five-year implementation framework containing long-range objectives, annual actions, and measures of success.

Implementation of the plan will be guided by a standing P.A.C.T. Council that builds and expands on the district's existing Special Education Council. This council will serve as an accountability partner by monitoring and reporting on progress and making ongoing recommendations to strengthen the plan.

CORE BELIEFS

- 1** The best decisions are made closest to the student.
- 2** All students are capable of excellence.
- 3** Inclusion is more than presence; it is belonging.
- 4** The Special Education Department exists to research, pilot, and implement best-practice, best-fit strategies to enhance student learning and to hold the district accountable for high-quality, consistent services.
- 5** Collaboration is the catalyst.

THE 2031 COMMITMENT

In short, the *P.A.C.T.* is more than a collection of initiatives. It is a districtwide compact to create durable systems around students, equip educators to meet individual needs, engage families as genuine partners, and measure success through improved student outcomes. Its promise is both ambitious and practical: every student with an IEP should experience an education that is individualized, inclusive, instructionally strong, and intentionally connected to a successful future.

EXCELLENCE IN FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

Students with IEPs will meet or exceed the annual rate of growth demonstrated by their typically-developing peers in math and ELA—with at least 16.8% of students reaching proficiency in ELA, and 18.9% reaching proficiency in math.

- 1** Increase ELA achievement year-over-year, with students advancing on par with typically-developing peers.
- 2** Increase math achievement year-over-year, with students advancing on par with typically-developing peers.
- 3** Enhance programming and services to academically challenge and drive improvements for Intellectually Gifted students.

GREAT EDUCATORS IN EVERY SCHOOL

Schools will effectively deliver inclusive, high-quality instruction for all students and meet the needs of IEPs.

- 4** Enhance the classroom capacity to effectively meet the needs of students with IEPs in the general education environment.
- 5** Build principal capacity to make data-driven, student-focused decisions when scheduling, programming, and facilitating IEPs.
- 6** Develop and implement a plan to effectively staff and resource to student needs.

CAREER EMPOWERMENT & PREPARATION

Students will be equipped with the experiences and support needed to graduate ready for enrollment, enlistment, or employment.

- 7** Transition Plans are intentionally aligned to the student's unique interests and aptitudes.
- 8** Student participation in 865 Academies guaranteed experiences is on par with their typically-developing peers.
- 9** Close the gap in graduation rates between students with IEPs and their typically-developing peers.

SUCCESS FOR EVERY STUDENT

Students have actionable IEPs designed to drive year-over-year improvement.

- 10** Enhance the quality and consistency of IEPs.
- 11** Enhance vertical alignment between grade band programs, and standardize the transition process to improve the student experience.
- 12** Establish and implement a process for researching and developing effective, innovative practices to meet student needs.

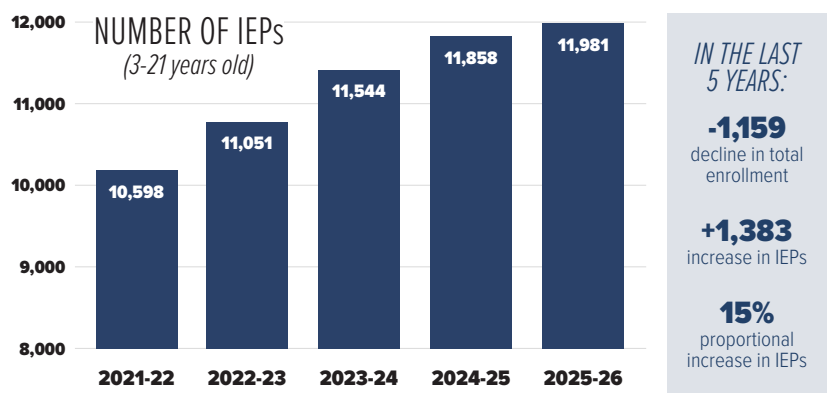
COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT

Families will be resourced and equipped to be fully collaborative partners in improving special education outcomes.

- 13** Establish and convene a P.A.C.T. Council to monitor year-over-year progress.
- 14** Leverage family engagement to improve communication and increase satisfaction with services.
- 15** Develop responsive resources, trainings, and materials for families.

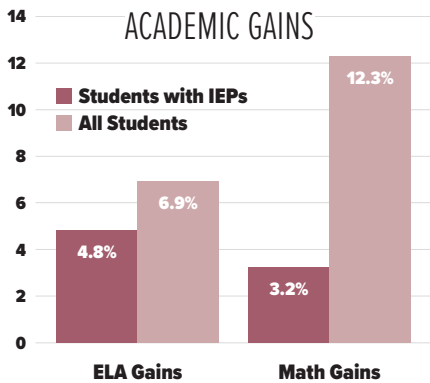
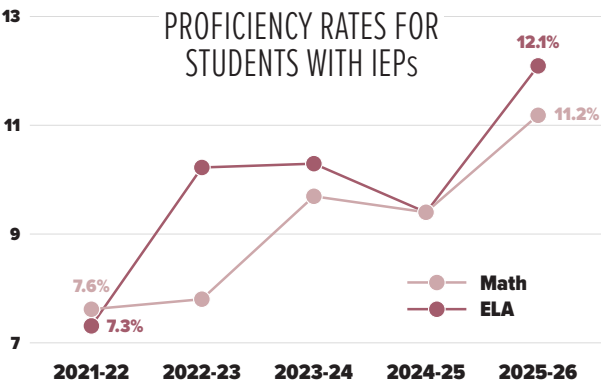
SPECIAL EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

Student needs are ever-evolving, and special education is no exception. Over the last five years, Knox County Schools has made meaningful gains in special education outcomes, though disparities continue to exist between the rate at which students with IEPs are accelerating compared to their typically-developing peers. The district has also observed a significant change in its special education population. Despite an overall decline in student enrollment since 2021-22, the total number of students with IEPs has increased by more than 1,300—representing a proportional increase of 15%. Approximately 70% of the increase in IEPs has been concentrated in certifications for autism and ADHD, further underscoring the need to adapt models for instruction, staffing, services, and collaboration.



EXCELLENCE IN FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

Students with IEPs continue to make meaningful gains in foundational skills, with ELA proficiency increasing nearly five percentage points over the past five years and math proficiency increasing more than three percentage points. These improvements reflect the dedication of students,



educators, and families across Knox County Schools. However, while achievement is moving in the right direction, students with IEPs are not progressing at the same pace as their typically-developing peers. Closing that gap will require high-quality instruction, targeted supports, and a shared commitment to ensuring every student has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

GREAT EDUCATORS IN EVERY SCHOOL

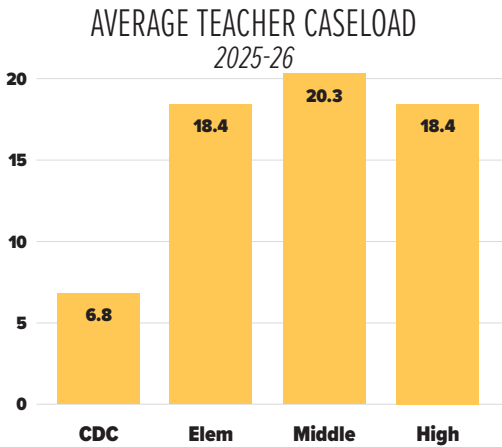
Great educators are the foundation of strong outcomes for any student. Currently, only about one in three staff feel confident that clear co-teaching standards exist or that general education teachers receive sufficient training to support students with IEPs, signaling real opportunity for growth in collaborative practice. Meanwhile, caseloads differ meaningfully by setting, ranging from under seven students in CDC classrooms to averages between 18–20 in general elementary, middle, and high school settings, highlighting the importance of implementing responsive service and support models.

36%

of staff agree KCS has established standards for delivering co-teaching and collaborative instruction

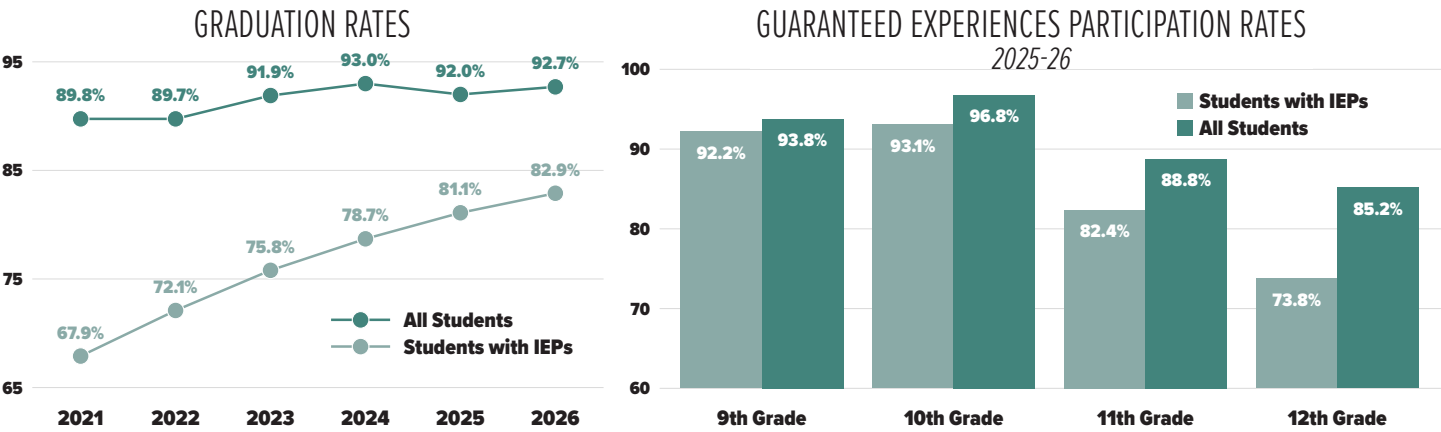
33%

of staff agree general education teachers are given adequate training in effectively supporting students with IEPs



CAREER EMPOWERMENT & PREPARATION

Graduation is a critical milestone for every student. Over the past five years, graduation rates for students with IEPs have increased from 67.9% to 82.9%, highlighting the intentionality and focus that has been directed to preparing every student for life after graduation. The 865 Academies have played a crucial role in closing the graduation gap between students with IEPs and their peers, as well as connecting students to guaranteed industry and post-secondary experiences. While students are participating in these experiences at relatively similar rates in ninth grade, that parity declines as students progress through high school. Addressing this gap will be a core focus of the strategic plan for special education.

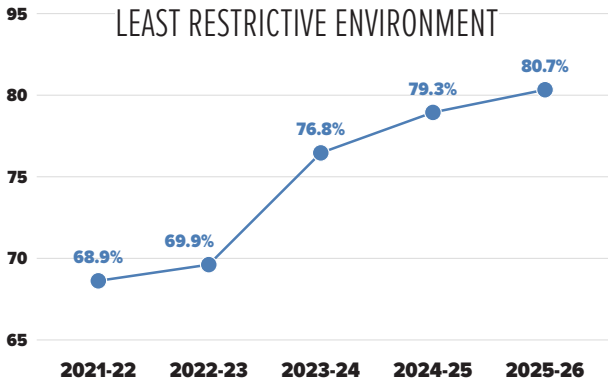


SUCCESS FOR EVERY STUDENT

The landscape of special education in KCS continues to evolve as the number of students receiving individualized services continues to increase, despite an overall decline in student enrollment. While the percent of students with IEPs had increased approximately 15%, the district has expanded inclusive practices, with more than 80% of students with IEPs now spending at least 80% of their day in the general education setting. These gains reflect meaningful progress, but inclusion must be paired with high-quality instruction, appropriate supports, and collaboration to ensure every student thrives.

82%

of parents feel their child is a valued member of the school and is generally included in all academic and non-academic activities



COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT

Meaningful communication and engagement builds trust across district and school staff, families, and community. This year, KCS offered eight special education workshops for families in English and Spanish, aimed at building understanding and participation in the IEP process. While most staff reported feeling equipped to run inclusive IEP meetings, fewer felt confident navigating referral timelines, highlighting where clarity is still needed. KCS remains committed to strengthening two-way engagement so families feel informed and equipped to support their students.

8

workshops offered to families in English and Spanish

79%

of staff agree their school teams know how to conduct IEP meetings to incorporate all voices to develop comprehensive and individualized IEPs

49%

of staff agree that staff in their school fully understand the steps and timelines associated with the special education referral process

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The *Special Education P.A.C.T.* is the result of several years of intentional planning, collaboration, and continuous improvement. Guided by a commitment to better serve students, families, and educators, the district has taken a thoughtful, phased approach to evaluating current practices, listening to stakeholder feedback, testing new strategies, and building the systems needed to support lasting change. Rather than pursuing isolated initiatives, each step has informed the next, creating a strong foundation for a shared vision and a clear path forward. This five-year strategic plan reflects that collective work and provides a roadmap for strengthening special education services, improving outcomes for students, and ensuring every student has the support they need to succeed.

2022 – 2023 | STUDENT SERVICES DEEP DIVE

A comprehensive review of key student support areas—RTI/tutoring, ELL, and special education—focused on analyzing performance data, evaluating current practices, and gathering stakeholder input to identify strengths and opportunities for improved alignment and student outcomes. This process provided a deeper understanding of how student support services were being implemented across KCS and highlighted opportunities to strengthen consistency, clarify expectations, and better align practices to student needs. These findings established a foundation for continued improvement and informed the development of future strategic planning efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Establish meaningful annual goals that are evaluated in earnest throughout the year*
- *Dedicate to following the IEP*
- *Have all teachers on board and be consistent from teacher to teacher*
- *Communicate with families*
- *Streamline information access*

1,152 STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED

MAY 2023 | ACKERMANN ANALYSIS

To further contextualize findings from the Student Services Deep Dive, KCS contracted with Ackermann to conduct regional focus groups with families to identify key areas of focus for the district. In-person sessions were held at Fulton, Central, Karns, and Bearden High Schools. An additional virtual session was also offered to families.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Establish consistent expectations for communication and service delivery across schools*
- *Strengthen accountability for implementing IEPs and monitoring student progress*
- *Ensure meaningful, collaborative IEP meetings—not meetings that feel like a compliance exercise*
- *Empower parents with the information and tools needed to advocate for their students*
- *Create centralized and multilingual resources to help families navigate the system*

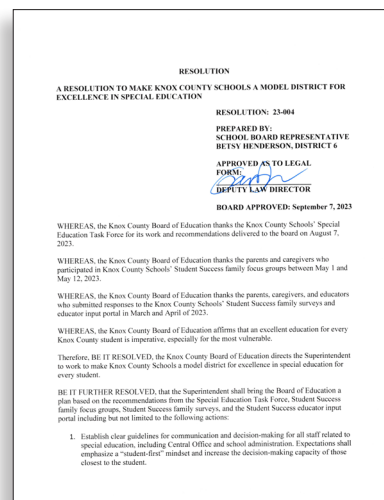
40 STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED

SPRING – SUMMER 2023 | SPECIAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE

Established by the Superintendent, the Special Education Task Force was charged with identifying a set of meaningful and actionable recommendations for KCS and the Knox County Board of Education (KCBOE) to improve special education services and supports. The Special Education Task Force leveraged results of the Ackermann Analysis and Student Services Deep Dive to inform and drive their recommendations. The group consisted of two representatives from each of the district's five regions, and were primarily parents of students with IEPs—reflecting a range of certifications and grade bands. Together, the Task Force presented their findings and recommendations to the KCBOE. These recommendations were later codified in a resolution passed by the KCBOE.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Establish a new code of conduct for special education staff and leadership*
- *Bring in an expert in inclusion and structural reforms to reimagine special education*
- *Someone other than the Knox County Law Department reviews and evaluates cases against KCS*
- *Always ask, "What is the 'win' in fighting parents in litigation?"*
- *Establish a non-time bound council to review the Special Education Department, including progress toward these recommendations*



see page 15 to view how the P.A.C.T. is aligned to the Task Force recommendations

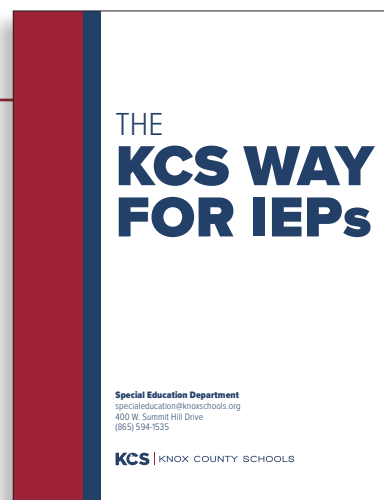
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2023 – 2024 | KCS WAY FOR IEPs

In response to Ackermann findings and Task Force recommendations, the Special Education Department produced the *KCS Way for IEPs*. This framework established a consistent process for developing and implementing IEPs. The *KCS Way for IEPs* provides clear guidance and shared expectations for the IEP process while reinforcing the importance of individualized supports, collaborative decision-making, and student-centered planning.

THE IEP MEETING MISSION

- *Honor individual student needs by recognizing each student's unique strengths and goals*
- *Ensure inclusive opportunities for every student to learn and grow*
- *Partner through collaboration with families, students, and educators*
- *Promote continuous growth through ongoing learning and evidence-based practices*
- *Advocate for student success by removing barriers and providing the meaningful supports*
- *Maintain accountability and transparency through consistent practices and continuous improvement*



STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

CONTINUED

2024 – 2025 | PCG ANALYSIS

Through a comprehensive partnership with Public Consulting Group (PCG), the district conducted extensive stakeholder engagement, research, and systems analysis to identify specific, high-impact opportunities to permanently improve special education systems and structures. Findings from educators, school leaders, families, and support staff, combined with a review of current practices and organizational structures, provided critical insight into districtwide needs. The PCG Analysis was ultimately used to shape the priorities, strategies, and recommendations in the five-year special education strategic plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthen consistent, student-centered decision making
- Build confidence in compliance and staffing support
- Expand access to consistent, high-quality inclusive practices
- Address disparities in identification and student achievement
- Enhance trust through communication and stakeholder engagement

3,153 STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED

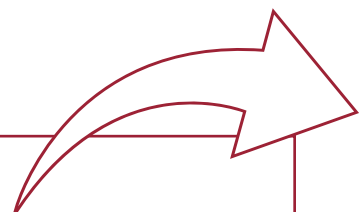
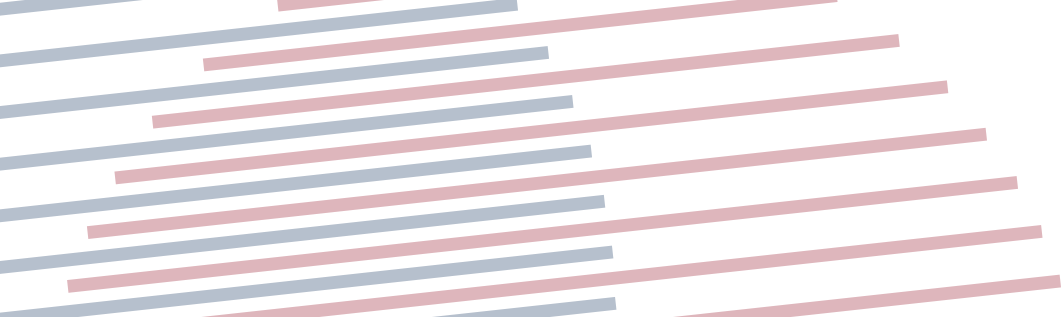
ACTION PLANNING – YEAR 1

1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER
INSTRUCTION	PERSONNEL
• Identification & Placement • Grade-Level Curriculum • Curriculum Modification Training • Aligned Reading Interventions • Expanded PD Opportunities	• Workloads vs. Caseloads • Staffing Allocations
3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER
COLLABORATION	MONITORING
• Collaborative Structures for Decision-Making • Communication Consistency • Rebuilding Trust	• APR Reporting & Data-Driven Results

JUL – AUG 2025 ACTION PLANNING

District leaders, school administrators, department teams, and family representatives spent two months collaborating to build a multi-year implementation framework based on the PCG findings. As part of the planning process, KCS surveyed families and staff to assess and prioritize PCG recommendations based on urgency and need. This action planning phase included PCG, the Special Education Department, the Impact & Policy Office, principals, and the Special Education Family Council. Together, stakeholders leveraged their shared expertise to refine priorities, align strategies, and build a roadmap for meaningful, sustainable improvement.

2,162 STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED

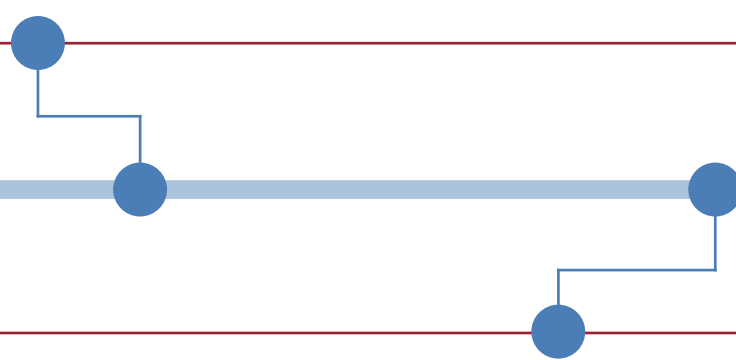


2025 – 2026 | PILOT & PLANNING YEAR

The 2025–26 school year served as a critical pilot and planning year for the five-year strategic plan—testing new practices, strengthening systems, and refining implementation strategies across all four priorities. A cohort of ten elementary schools piloted two separate instructional models in K–2 classrooms, staff conducted school-by-school facilitated reviews of LRE, historical APR data was reviewed across compliance and performance indicators, and schedules and IEPs were audited to expand general education access. This established a proven foundation to scale districtwide improvements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Expand the instructional coherence model one grade level per year through fifth grade*
- *Implement HQIM-aligned intervention materials and continue staff training alongside the model's expansion*
- *Develop internal guidance documents and a consistent staffing formula*
- *Build general education capacity to ensure students are genuinely thriving*
- *Develop a school-level report card to monitor graduation trajectory and postsecondary readiness for students with IEPs*
- *Monitor CCR rates as a core accountability measure*
- *Continue the annual IEP and schedule audit with monthly LRE monitoring to flag shifts needing attention*
- *Create a shared resource library for staff, to include the bank of modified content exemplars*



2026 – 2031 | P.A.C.T. IMPLEMENTATION

Grounded in stakeholder feedback, extensive research, and years of intentional planning, the *Special Education P.A.C.T.* establishes a long-term framework for improving outcomes and strengthening services for students with IEPs. The plan is organized around the district's four core priorities—**Excellence in Foundational Skills**, **Great Educators in Every School**, **Career Empowerment & Preparation**, and **Success for Every Student**—as well as a fifth critical domain centered on **Communication & Engagement**.

2031 VISION FOR SUCCESS

- **Excellence in Foundational Skills** — Students with IEPs will meet or exceed the annual rate of growth demonstrated by their typically-developing peers in math and ELA.
- **Great Educators in Every School** — Schools will effectively deliver inclusive, high-quality instruction for all students and meet the needs of IEPs.
- **Career Empowerment & Preparation** — Students will be equipped with the experiences and support needed to graduate ready for enrollment, enlistment, or employment.
- **Success for Every Student** — Students have actionable IEPs designed to drive year-over-year improvement.
- **Communication & Engagement** — Families will be resourced and equipped to be fully collaborative partners in improving special education outcomes.

2025–26 PILOT & PLANNING YEAR

The 2025–26 school year served as a foundational pilot and planning year for the *Special Education P.A.C.T.*, launching the work outlined across four core priorities: **Excellence in Foundational Skills**, **Great Educators in Every School**, **Career Empowerment & Preparation**, and **Success for Every Student**. This year served as an opportunity for the Special Education Department to test targeted initiatives, gather data, and refine systems prepare for districtwide implementation. A cohort of ten elementary schools began piloting new instructional approaches for students with IEPs, while other teams focused on compliance, performance, and access. Learning from the pilot year was captured and leveraged to develop the long-range vision for success codified in the *P.A.C.T.*

EXCELLENCE IN FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

WHAT WE DID

- Trained interventionists on Wilson Reading and Sonday curriculum
- Launched the instructional coherence model in kindergarten classrooms across seven cohort schools

WHAT WE LEARNED

- Standalone intervention programs are less effective when disconnected from the core curriculum and HQIM

WHAT'S NEXT

- Expand the instructional coherence model one grade level per year through fifth grade
- Implement HQIM-aligned intervention materials and continue staff training alongside the model's expansion

GREAT EDUCATORS IN EVERY SCHOOL

WHAT WE DID

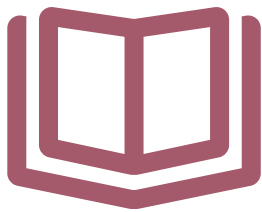
- Conducted a districtwide audit of student schedules and IEPs to identify students who could thrive with more time in the general education setting
- Conducted school-by-school facilitated reviews of LRE

WHAT WE LEARNED

- Staffing formulas lack consistency and schools have no clear method for determining when additional support is needed

WHAT'S NEXT

- Develop internal guidance documents and a consistent staffing formula
- Build general education capacity to ensure students are genuinely thriving



CAREER EMPOWERMENT & PREPARATION

WHAT WE DID

- Conducted a comprehensive review of current and historical APR (federal Annual Performance Report) data across compliance and performance indicators

WHAT WE LEARNED

- KCS meets most elementary-level APR indicators but falls short at the secondary level, particularly in graduation and dropout rates

WHAT'S NEXT

- Develop a school-level report card to monitor graduation trajectory and postsecondary readiness for students with IEPs
- Monitor CCR rates as a core accountability measure

SUCCESS FOR EVERY STUDENT

WHAT WE DID

- Conducted a districtwide audit of student schedules and IEPs to identify students who could thrive with more time in the general education settings
- Developed a bank of modified content exemplars

WHAT WE LEARNED

- Inclusive placement is incomplete without the general education capacity to serve students with IEPs
- Communicating the why behind LRE decisions to principals, teachers, and families is as critical as the placement decision themselves

WHAT'S NEXT

- Continue the annual IEP and schedule audit with monthly LRE monitoring to flag shifts needing attention
- Create a shared resource library for staff, to include the bank of modified content exemplars

2031 VISION FOR SUCCESS

The 2031 vision for success in special education is the result of years of planning, collaboration, research, and piloting. Guided by stakeholder input and a shared commitment to continuous improvement, the *P.A.C.T.* outlines a clear roadmap for the future of special education in Knox County Schools. The beliefs, commitments, and priorities memorialized in this plan will guide the district’s work and create meaningful, lasting improvements for students, families, and staff over the next five years. The importance and relevance of this work is further underscored by its alignment to the 2023 Task Force recommendations.

CORE BELIEFS

- 1 THE BEST DECISIONS ARE MADE CLOSEST TO THE STUDENT**
Those who know a student best—teachers, families, and support staff working directly with the student—are best positioned to make decisions about their learning. The district trusts and empowers this expertise to guide every student’s path forward.
- 2 ALL STUDENTS ARE CAPABLE OF EXCELLENCE**
Every student, regardless of disability, has the ability to achieve at high levels when given the right supports and expectations. The district refuses to let a label limit what a student can accomplish.
- 3 INCLUSION IS MORE THAN PRESENCE; IT IS BELONGING**
The district strives to move beyond simply providing access to the general education curriculum. True inclusion means that students with IEPs are welcomed, valued, and integrated into the social and academic fabric of every school.
- 4 BEST PRACTICES, HELD TO THE HIGHEST STANDARD**
The Special Education Department exists to research, pilot, and implement best-practice, best-fit strategies to enhance student learning and to hold the district accountable for high-quality, consistent services.
- 5 COLLABORATION IS THE CATALYST**
Silos have no place in effective education. The district believes the most powerful outcomes occur when expertise is shared.

2031 COMMITMENT

EXCELLENCE IN FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

Students with IEPs will meet or exceed the annual rate of growth demonstrated by their typically-developing peers in math and ELA—with at least 16.8% of students reaching proficiency in ELA, and 18.9% reaching proficiency in math.

GREAT EDUCATORS IN EVERY SCHOOL

Schools will effectively deliver inclusive, high-quality instruction for all students and meet the needs of IEPs.

CAREER EMPOWERMENT & PREPARATION

Students will be equipped with the experiences and support needed to graduate ready for enrollment, enlistment, or employment.

SUCCESS FOR EVERY STUDENT

Students have actionable IEPs designed to drive year-over-year improvement.

COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Families will be resourced and equipped to be fully collaborative partners in improving special education outcomes.

ALIGNING TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE P.A.C.T.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS	P.A.C.T. ALIGNMENT
Establish a new code of conduct for special education staff and leadership	Great Educators in Every School Objective 5 Annual Actions - Establish core beliefs for inclusive services and data systems to enhance proactive administrative practices - Establish structure for monthly administrative professional development sessions - Send district- and school-level administrators to relevant professional learning opportunities outside KCS Success Indicators - School-level APR targets year over year
Bring in an expert in inclusion and structural reforms to reimagine special education	Great Educators in Every School Objective 4 Annual Actions - Secure contractor to provide inclusive practices training Success Indicators - Cohorts to complete inclusive practices training with outside contractor year over year
Someone other than the Knox County Law Department reviews and evaluates cases against KCS	Success for Every Student Objective 12 Annual Actions - Establish process for IDEA complaint evaluation and review Success Indicators - Evaluate and review 100% of IDEA complaints
Always ask, “What is the ‘win’ in fighting parents in litigation?”	Communication & Engagement Objective 14 Annual Actions - Launch IEP experience survey to establish baseline data for every school - Establish baseline data for historical legal interactions with KCS families Success Indicators - Baseline data collected to assess the IEP experience from the parent/guardian perspective - Year over year targets established in partnership with the P.A.C.T. to improve the IEP experience
Establish a non-time bound council to review the Special Education Department, including progress toward these recommendations	Communication & Engagement Objectives 13, 14, 15 Annual Actions - Identify and convene group - Review year 1 progress for revisions needed - Adjust plan according to progress, data, and feedback - Audit available family trainings and materials with P.A.C.T. Council input to update website, new resources, and new materials for family use - Evaluate communication procedures for family engagement and educational resources Success Indicators - Quarterly progress reports delivered by staff to the Board of Education, with an annual summative report presented by the P.A.C.T. Council - Plan has been reviewed and revised to reflect changes identified by the P.A.C.T. Council - P.A.C.T. Council audit completed - P.A.C.T. Council has identified resources, trainings, and materials to be created

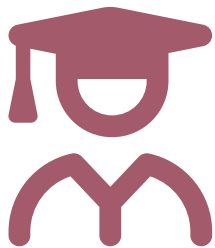
EXCELLENCE IN FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS



BY 2031

Students with IEPs will meet or exceed the annual rate of growth demonstrated by their typically-developing peers in math and ELA—with at least 16.8% of students reaching proficiency in ELA and 18.9% reaching proficiency in math.

WHAT CHANGES FOR...



STUDENTS

Increased rate of progress on grade-level standards

Greater connection among materials across all settings



STAFF

Enhanced capacity and confidence in selecting and implementing instructional strategies

Ability to effectively leverage high-impact, inclusive strategies in the classroom



FAMILIES

Confidence in the instruction students receive across grade bands

Trust in the team's shared accountability for student achievement

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
1. Increase ELA achievement year-over-year, with students advancing on par with typically-developing peers					
Annual Actions	Establish baseline IPG ¹ data in co-taught classrooms for HQIM ² implementation and culture of learning	Establish baseline IPG ¹ focused on teacher moves/strategies and student moves	Provide targeted feedback and training where teacher or student moves are consistently in the lower bucket on IPG ¹ walks	Provide targeted feedback and training where student moves are consistently in the lower bucket on IPG ¹ walks	Use exemplar individual teachers and co-teaching teams to assist with districtwide professional development based on IPG ¹ data and KCS co-teaching/instructional framework
	Observe and train general education and special education staff on models of co-teaching and provide curriculum support by region	Provide targeted feedback and training where HQIM ² implementation and culture of learning are consistently in the lower bucket on IPG ¹ walks	Train co-teaching teams to collect authentic student evidence and analyze student performance data to select the most appropriate co-teaching model within the context of the lesson objectives and anticipated student needs	Monitor the impact of trained co-teaching teams on student achievement	Identify co-teaching teams that need additional support to enhance student achievement rate
Success Indicators	Third grade reading proficiency increases by 1.8%	Met or exceeded the targeted increase for third grade reading proficiency, as identified in the Annual Action Plan			
	Overall ELA proficiency increases to 13%	Overall ELA proficiency increases to 14%	Overall ELA proficiency increases to 14.9%	Overall ELA proficiency increases to 15.9%	Overall ELA proficiency increases to 16.8%
	Percent of schools using instructional coherence ³ for special education services in kindergarten ELA increases to 100%	Increase the percent of schools using instructional coherence ³ for special education services in first grade ELA to 100%	Increase the percent of schools using instructional coherence ³ for special education services in second grade ELA to 100%	Increase the percent of schools using instructional coherence ³ for special education services in third grade ELA to 100%	Increase the percent of schools using instructional coherence ³ for special education services in fourth and fifth grade ELA to 100%

2. Increase math achievement year-over-year, with students advancing on par with typically-developing peers					
Annual Actions	Implement consistent and aligned HQIM ² across all settings and services	Utilize instructional round data, ongoing observations, and statewide assessment achievement data analysis to inform integrated professional development for co-teaching teams	Develop instructionally coherent practices by supporting educators in understanding coherent academic terminology, instructional routines, visual supports, and purposeful practice to increase student mastery by reducing cognitive lift required when learning is fragmented	Analyze achievement data to baseline across co-teaching teams	Adjust training and support to provide continuous learning and improvement to instructional staff
	Complete co-teaching and service area instructional rounds to collect baseline data regarding levels of coherence across learning environments	Train school-based instructional coaches to support co-teaching teams through the use of student data			
Success Indicators	Increase math proficiency for 6th–8th graders by 1.9%	Met or exceeded the targeted increase for third grade math proficiency, as identified in the Annual Action Plan			
	Overall math proficiency increases to 12.7%	Overall math proficiency increases to 14.3%	Overall math proficiency increases to 15.8%	Overall math proficiency increases to 17.3%	Overall math proficiency increases to 18.9%
	Increase the percent of schools using instructional coherence ³ for special education services in kindergarten grade math to 100%	Increase the percent of schools using instructional coherence ³ for special education services in first grade math to 100%	Increase the percent of schools using instructional coherence ³ for special education services in second grade math to 100%	Increase the percent of schools using instructional coherence ³ for special education services in third grade math to 100%	Increase the percent of schools using instructional coherence ³ for special education services in fourth and fifth grade math to 100%

3. Enhance programming and services to academically challenge and drive improvements for Intellectually Gifted students					
Annual Actions	Audit IEPs of Intellectually Gifted students for high-quality academic goals to meet student needs with same-age, same-grade peers	Provide IEP development training for IG case managers to increase the number of IG IEPs with quality academic goals Establish baseline for number of IG students receiving services in the special education setting	Monitor the number of IG IEPs with quality academic goals to provide targeted training		Monitor the number of IG IEPs with quality academic goals and the service delivery settings
			Provide training for service delivery in Tier 1 setting	Analyze the settings where IG students receive services	
Success	Baseline established for percent of IG IEPs demonstrating high-quality academic goals, and year-over-year targets established to reach goal of 100% by 2031	Percent of IG IEPs demonstrating high-quality academic goals increases to target established in Year 1			

- ¹ **Instructional Practice Guide (IPG):** A classroom observation and coaching tool that helps teachers and school leaders design, assess, and coach standards-aligned instruction
- ² **High-quality instructional materials (HQIM):** Vetted, rigorous classroom curricula, textbooks, digital tools, and lesson plans that align directly with academic standards and use proven teaching methods
- ³ **Instructional coherence:** Alignment of instructional practices, curriculum, supports, and expectations across classrooms, schools, and grade levels to create consistent learning experiences for students

GREAT EDUCATORS IN EVERY SCHOOL



BY 2031

**Schools will effectively
deliver inclusive, high-quality
instruction for all students
and meet the needs of IEPs.**

WHAT CHANGES FOR...



STUDENTS

Consistent exposure to staff that is prepared, poised, and purposeful in delivery to student with diverse learning needs



STAFF

Increased capacity in special education practices among general education teachers

Increased content knowledge among special education teachers

Greater sense of confidence in serving diverse needs across all settings



FAMILIES

Consistent expectations and quality of services across every school and classroom in the district

Year 1

Year 2

Year 3

Year 4

Year 5

4. Enhance the classroom capacity to effectively meet the needs of students with IEPs in the general education environment

Annual Actions	Increase the number of teachers with special education endorsement and the number of teachers with gifted certification through established district-managed pathways				
	Establish a unique job description for educators with gifted endorsement	Cohort of district support staff and special education teachers to attend and complete the elementary Literacy Boot Camp			
	Explore district-managed gifted endorsement pathway options for IG certification	Cohort of schools to complete inclusive practices training with outside contractor			
	District special education staff to attend all Teaching & Learning sessions devoted to instructional coaching				
Success Indicators	Secure contractor to provide inclusive practices training				
	Certified 125 additional teachers in special education, and 100 additional teachers with an IG endorsement			Certified 50 additional teachers in special education, and 40 additional teachers with an IG endorsement	
	Contractor for inclusive practices training identified and secured	Percent of special education instructional support staff trained in Literacy Boot Camp increases to 25%, with an additional 10 elementary case managers participating in the training	Percent of special education instructional support staff trained in Literacy Boot Camp increases to 50%, with an additional 10 elementary case managers participating in the training	Percent of special education instructional support staff trained in Literacy Boot Camp increases to 75%, with an additional 10 elementary case managers participating in the training	Percent of special education instructional support staff trained in Literacy Boot Camp increases to 100%, with an additional 10 elementary case managers participating in the training
		Percent of schools trained in inclusive practices increases to 25%	Percent of schools trained in inclusive practices increases to 50%	Percent of schools trained in inclusive practices increases to 75%	Percent of schools trained in inclusive practices increases to 100%

5. Build principal capacity to make data-driven, student-focused decisions when scheduling, programming, and facilitating IEPs

Annual Actions	Establish core beliefs for inclusive services and data systems to enhance proactive administrative practices	Implement monthly professional development sessions addressing high-leverage LEA moves in master scheduling, teacher assignments, and fit of services based on data trends to promote proactive problem-solving for student needs	Provide targeted coaching for high-leverage LEA moves from Year 2 along with IEP meeting preparation and implementation that focuses on student needs, parent concerns, and resources	Perform regular audits with administrative teams to evaluate the overall health of special education programming by school	Perform regular audits with administrative teams to evaluate the overall health of special education programming within the district, region, and grade band
	Establish structure for monthly administrative professional development sessions	Identify high-quality LEA moves across the district addressing IEP development and implementation	Develop guidance documents for administrative oversight of full IDEA programming		
	Send district- and school-level administrators to relevant professional learning opportunities outside KCS	Develop guidance documents for priority areas of administrative oversight of IDEA programming			
Success	School-level APR targets are established and baselined for year-over-year improvement	Percent of schools that meet 100% of school-level APR targets increases to goal established in Year 1			

6. Develop and implement a plan to effectively staff and resource to student needs

Annual Actions	Analyze baseline staffing ratios for school-based and related service personnel	Develop models for staffing options	Collaborate with business and talent teams to assess impact of staffing options	Adopt staffing process to accurately address student needs	Adjust staffing ratios and formulas to accurately address student needs
	Establish data systems to assess effectiveness of current staffing metrics	Analyze remedial service hours	Adjust service delivery models where necessary to provide services according to timelines consistently	Address areas of need where student outcomes are low or decreasing	
	Implement data monitoring for initial evaluation timelines to identify strategies for improvement	Implement strategies for improvement for initial evaluation timelines			
	Establish pilot schools for academic interventionists to serve as case managers	Analyze academic interventionist as case manager pilot			
Success Indicators	94–96% of highly effective special education teachers are retained	Met or exceeded the target for teacher retention as identified in the Annual Action Plan for highly-effective special education teachers			
	Completion rate for evaluation timelines in the APR increased to 89.4%	Completion rate for evaluation timelines in the APR increased to 92%	Completion rate for evaluation timelines in the APR increased to 94.7%	Completion rate for evaluation timelines in the APR increased to 97%	Completion rate for evaluation timelines in the APR increased to 100%

CAREER EMPOWERMENT & PREPARATION



BY 2031

**Students will be equipped
with the experiences and
support needed to graduate
ready for enrollment,
enlistment, or employment.**

WHAT CHANGES FOR...



STUDENTS

Connections between classwork
and future-readiness

More confidence and clarity in
postsecondary options



STAFF

Ownership of student's
trajectory and future success
across every grade and grade
band

Purposeful alignment between
classroom and guaranteed
experiences



FAMILIES

Will see students connecting
daily choices to long-term goals

Will see students entering
adulthood with direction and
independence

7. Transition Plans are intentionally aligned to the student's unique interests and aptitudes

Annual Actions	Train secondary special education staff to develop consistently high-quality transition plans with an accurate course of study according to the TDOE rubric	Conduct in-house audits to evaluate the quality of transition plan courses of study according to the TDOE rubric	Audit the quality of transition plans for quality transition goals	Train secondary special education staff to develop consistently high-quality transition plans aligned to student-selected 865 Academies pathways and community partnerships	Evaluate postsecondary outcomes for recent graduates to inform adjustments needed in transition practices
	Develop course of study protocols with the College and Career Readiness Department to define collaborative steps between counselors and case managers	Train secondary special education staff to develop consistently high-quality transition goals according to the TDOE rubric	Train secondary special education staff on quality alignment to KCS student surveys and community resources		
Success Indicators	Evaluate the availability of community partnerships for quality postsecondary and transition experience for students at all stages of the continuum of services in KCS	Analyze the alignment of student transition surveys and community partnerships to pathways across the district	Create resources detailing available community partnerships for all students		
	Transition Plans internally audited to establish baseline for year-over-year increase of percent of plans demonstrating alignment to YouScience results, or other relevant aptitude and interest assessment	Percent of Transition Plans demonstrating alignment to YouScience results, or other relevant aptitude/interest assessment, increases to target established in Year 1			
Success	Percent of audited Transition Plans that meet the state's high-quality standards increased to 44%	Percent of Transition Plans audited by the state that meet the APR's quality standards increased to 58%	Percent of Transition Plans audited by the state that meet the APR's quality standards increased to 72%	Percent of Transition Plans audited by the state that meet the APR's quality standards increased to 86%	Percent of Transition Plans audited by the state that meet the APR's quality standards increased to 100%

8. Student participation in 865 Academies guaranteed experiences is on par with their typically-developing peers

Annual Actions	Analyze baseline data for student participation and completion of guaranteed experiences	Operationally define guaranteed experiences for all students along the continuum of services	Evaluate inclusion data based on operational definition of guaranteed experiences	Adjust services according to data evaluation	Evaluate student access levels compared to baseline and plan for future programming changes
	Identify barriers to student completion of guaranteed experiences	Provide training to appropriate staff in collaboration with College and Career Readiness leadership for steps to include students along the continuum of services in relevant guaranteed experiences	Identify areas of need for further inclusive programming in 865 Academies structures		
Success	Student participation in 865 Academies guaranteed experiences increases to 85% in each grade	Student participation in 865 Academies guaranteed experiences increases to percent identified in the Annual Action Plan			

9. Close the gap in graduation rates between students with IEPs and their typically-developing peers

Annual Actions	Establish baseline data for historical graduation trends by school to include disaggregation of courses most commonly failed by students with disabilities	Conduct integrated training to high school academy principals on quality interventions for students at-risk of dropping out and data-tracking procedures	Evaluate performance for students with disabilities subgroup across all CCR measures and identify areas of opportunity	Implement consistent practices across all high schools for successful completion of CCR opportunities for students with disabilities	Analyze graduation rates and identify remaining gaps in practice for student interventions across all grade levels
	Analyze status of current cohort 9–12 grade cohorts on-track percentages	Provide high school principals with baseline data for commonly failed courses with intervention plan guidance	Analyze trends in commonly failed courses	Adjust intervention guidance for commonly failed courses based on trends	Evaluate growth of CCR completion for students with disabilities in high school
Success	Observe student intervention practices in high school small learning communities	Train district support staff on College & Career Readiness (CCR) measures and related opportunities with KCS	Provide integrated training to high school counselors to monitor early warning signs and at-risk interventions	Provide integrated training to middle school counselors to monitor early warning signs and at-risk interventions	
	Observe student intervention practices in middle school small learning communities	Observe student intervention practices in middle school small learning communities	Provide integrated training to middle school assistant principals on quality interventions for students displaying early warning signs for becoming at-risk of dropping out and data-tracking procedure	Provide integrated training to elementary school administrators on secondary data measures and quality interventions for students displaying early warning signs for becoming at-risk of dropping out and data-tracking procedures	
Success	Graduation rate increased to 82.9%	Graduation rate increased to 85.4%	Graduation rate increased to 87.9%	Graduation rate increased to 90.5%	Graduation rate increased to 93%

SUCCESS FOR EVERY STUDENT



BY 2031

Students have actionable IEPs designed to drive year-over-year improvement.

WHAT CHANGES FOR...



STUDENTS

Services and strategies designed to meet specific needs

Progressive ownership of learning and goals

Experience success in the classroom



STAFF

Enhanced accountability around effective development and implementation of IEPs

Regular quality and consistency audits of IEPs

Special Education Department researches and develops best-practice, best-fit strategies to innovate and improve services



FAMILIES

Enhanced quality and consistency of IEPs

Improved experience transitioning from grade to grade

Connection between the IEP meeting and their child's daily experience

Year 1

Year 2

Year 3

Year 4

Year 5

10. Enhance the quality and consistency of IEPs

Annual Actions	Establish KCS standard for high-quality IEPs Establish data tracking system, auditing procedures, and cadence for reporting to principals	Provide targeted professional development to case managers in areas of IEP development identified through IEP audits Evaluate alignment of IEP sections to instructional practices	Provide targeted professional development to case managers to connect areas of IEP training to instructional practices Audit progress monitoring quality	Train case managers for high-quality progress monitoring based on audit results	Evaluate quality measures compared to established baseline data
Success Indicators	IEPs audited for high-quality baseline, and year-over-year targets established to reach goal of 95% of IEPs audited as high-quality by 2031 Overall APR score from the TDOE moves from <i>Needs Intervention</i> to <i>Needs Assistance</i>	Percent of IEPs audited as high-quality increases year-over-year by percent identified in Y1 Overall APR score from the TDOE moves from <i>Needs Assistance</i> to <i>Meets Requirements</i>	Percent of IEPs audited as high-quality increases year-over-year by percent identified in Y1 Overall APR score is sustained at <i>Meets Requirements</i>		

11. Enhance the vertical alignment between grade band programs and standardize the transition process to improve the student experience

Annual Actions	Identify vertical alignment gaps between grade level programming	Develop proposals to align programming from preschool to elementary school Assess coherence with grade-level initiatives	Develop proposals to align programming from elementary to middle school Assess coherence with grade-level initiatives	Develop proposals to align programming from middle to high school Assess coherence to postsecondary transition opportunities	Evaluate alignment of programming Pre-K–12
Success Indicators	Satisfaction with transition process baselined using caregiver survey and year-over-year improvement targets established Protocols for effective grade band transitions are established	Satisfaction with transition process increases by percent established in Year 1 Protocols for effective grade level transitions are established Staff are trained on effective grade band transitions	Satisfaction with transition process increases by percent established in Year 1 Staff are trained on effective grade level transitions	Satisfaction with transition process increases by percent established in Year 1	

12. Establish and implement a process for researching and deploying effective, innovative practices to meet student needs

Annual Actions	Develop a public portal for soliciting innovative ideas Explore innovative services and service models across high-performing systems with a focus on forming partnerships in the area of inclusive practices Analyze partnerships, training, equipment, and programming materials for identified areas of further exploration Establish process for IDEA complaint evaluation and review	Establish research and development agenda Connect with identified experts in areas of exploration Secure partnerships with experts in inclusive practices to inform progressive work within the district	Develop an implementation plan for items identified through research and development Consider adjustments to current inclusive practices based on expert recommendations	Monitor the effectiveness of newly implemented items Engage in ongoing partnerships, research, and development for innovative solutions for Knox County Schools	Make adjustments to newly implemented items to ensure best-fit and enhanced student outcomes
Success	Innovation Portal established Evaluate and review 100% of IDEA complaints	Findings reported to P.A.C.T. Council on a semesterly basis Evaluate and review 100% of IDEA complaints	Adjustments made based on research and development and reported to P.A.C.T. Council on a semesterly basis Evaluate and review 100% of IDEA complaints		

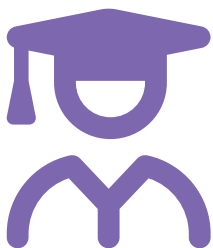
COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT



BY 2031

Families will be resourced and equipped to be fully collaborative partners in improving special education outcomes.

WHAT CHANGES FOR...



STUDENTS

Will receive intentional, meaningful, and high-quality services

Increased sense of confidence, belonging, and independence in the classroom



STAFF

Increased and proactive communication with families

Teachers ensuring accommodations are implemented



FAMILIES

Family orientation when students are identified

Confidence in the IEP process and systems of support

Will know where to direct questions and how to ask for support

Will engage with staff who are receptive to input

Year 1

Year 2

Year 3

Year 4

Year 5

13. Establish and convene a P.A.C.T. Council to monitor year-over-year progress

Annual Actions	Identify and convene group	Share out progress on identified metrics	Step back to review strategic plan and progress	Review adjustments and share progress	Plan for future continuous improvement
	Set model	Highlight groups/teams aligned with specific measures	Adjust plan according to progress, data, and feedback		
Success	Quarterly progress reports delivered by staff to the Board of Education, with an annual summative report presented by the P.A.C.T. Council				
		Plan has been reviewed and revised to reflect changes identified by the P.A.C.T. Council		Plan has been reviewed and revised to reflect changes identified by the P.A.C.T. Council	Continuity plan established with the P.A.C.T. Council to maintain progress and momentum

14. Leverage family engagement to improve communication and increase satisfaction with services

Annual Actions	Launch IEP experience survey to establish baseline data for every school	Monitor IEP experience survey results by school, region, and grade band	Adjust professional development based on experience and complaint data	Recognize and scale consistently high-performing IEP teams	Compare district experience and complaint monitoring with baseline data
	Establish baseline data for historical legal interactions with KCS families	Implement targeted professional development for IEP teams			
Success Indicators	Develop internal IDEA complaint review process	Monitor IDEA complaint proceedings			
	Baseline data collected to assess the IEP experience from the parent/guardian perspective	Targets established Y1 are met or exceeded			
	Year over year targets established in partnership with the P.A.C.T. to improve the IEP experience				

15. Develop responsive resources, trainings, and materials for families

Annual Actions	Audit available family trainings and materials with P.A.C.T. Council input to update website, new resources, and new materials for family use	Implement family trainings based on year one audit	Collect family feedback regarding availability and clarity of resources	Adjust family resources based on year three feedback	Organize access and delivery of resources to responsively meet the needs of various families across the district
	Evaluate communication procedures for family engagement and educational resources	Develop and implement communication and distribution procedures to share family materials	Evaluate and edit special education website	Audit ease of access to family resources	
Success	Roles and Responsibilities for Effective IEP Teams created and distributed	Family Orientation process and materials established for newly identified students	P.A.C.T. Council has identified resources, trainings, and materials to be created		
	P.A.C.T. Council audit completed		Materials, resources, and trainings are created according to schedule set by P.A.C.T. Council		

APPENDIX

GLOSSARY



Accommodations: Changes in how a student accesses instruction, participates in learning, or demonstrates understanding without altering academic expectations or learning standards.

Annual Action Plan (AAP): A one-year operational guide that lists the specific objectives KCS will use over the next twelve months to reach its larger goals.

Annual Performance Rating (APR): A yearly report that states submit to the U.S. Department of Education to show their progress in carrying out the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Co-Teaching: An instructional model in which general education and special education teachers work together to plan, deliver, and assess instruction for a shared group of students.

Continuum of Services: The range of instructional settings, supports, and service delivery models available to meet the diverse needs of students with IEPs.

Early Intervention: Services and supports provided as early as possible to address developmental, academic, behavioral, or social-emotional needs and improve long-term outcomes for students.

Guaranteed Experiences: Mandatory, hands-on learning activities that connect high schools students to real-world careers.

High-quality Instructional Materials (HQIM): Vetted, rigorous classroom curricula, textbooks, digital tools, and lesson plans that align directly with academic standards and use proven teaching methods.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): The federal law in the United States that guarantees eligible children with disabilities a free and appropriate public education.

Inclusive Practices: Instructional and schoolwide approaches that ensure students with IEPs are meaningfully included in academic, social, and extracurricular opportunities alongside their peers to include co-teaching, UDL, and other approaches.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): A legally binding written plan that outlines special education services, goals, and support for an eligible student with a disability.

Instructional Coherence: Alignment of instructional practices, curriculum, supports, and expectations across classrooms, schools, and grade levels to create consistent learning experiences for students.

Instructional Framework: A shared, research-based guide that defines how teaching and learning should happen at KCS.

Instructional Practice Guide (IPG): A classroom observation and coaching tool that helps teachers and school leaders design, assess, and coach standards-aligned instruction.

Instructional Rounds: A collaborative process for observing, analyzing, and improving teaching and learning.

Intellectually Gifted (IG): A student whose intellectual ability, creativity, and potential for achievement are so outstanding that the student’s need exceed differentiated general education programming.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): A principle under IDEA requiring students with IEPs to be educated alongside peers without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate.

Related Services: Supportive services required to assist a student with a disability in benefiting from special education, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, transportation, or counseling.

Response to Intervention (RTI/RTI²): A framework used to identify and support students with academic or behavioral needs through progress monitoring, targeted interventions, and data-based decision-making.

Tier 1 Instruction: Core instruction and supports provided to all students within the general education environment as part of a multi-tiered system of support.

Transition Plans: A section of a student’s IEP that outlines measurable goals and support services to help them move successfully from high school to adult life.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL): An educational framework that guides the design of flexible learning environments and instructional practices to reduce barriers and support learning for all students.

YouScience: An innovative aptitude and career discovery tool that combines psychometric aptitude testing , interest inventories, and career guidance to match individuals with personalized career and educational pathways.

ALIGNING TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

SPECIAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS	P.A.C.T. ALIGNMENT
Establish a new code of conduct for special education staff and leadership	Great Educators in Every School Objective 5 Annual Actions - Establish core beliefs for inclusive services and data systems to enhance proactive administrative practices - Establish structure for monthly administrative professional development sessions - Send district- and school-level administrators to relevant professional learning opportunities outside KCS Success Indicators - School-level APR targets year over year
Bring in an expert in inclusion and structural reforms to reimagine special education	Great Educators in Every School Objective 4 Annual Actions - Secure contractor to provide inclusive practices training Success Indicators - Cohorts to complete inclusive practices training with outside contractor year over year
Someone other than the Knox County Law Department reviews and evaluates cases against KCS	Success for Every Student Objective 12 Annual Actions - Establish process for IDEA complaint evaluation and review Success Indicators - Evaluate and review 100% of IDEA complaints
Always ask, “What is the ‘win’ in fighting parents in litigation?”	Communication & Engagement Objective 14 Annual Actions - Launch IEP experience survey to establish baseline data for every school - Establish baseline data for historical legal interactions with KCS families Success Indicators - Baseline data collected to assess the IEP experience from the parent/guardian perspective - Year over year targets established in partnership with the P.A.C.T. to improve the IEP experience
Establish a non-time bound council to review the Special Education Department, including progress toward these recommendations	Communication & Engagement Objectives 13, 14, 15 Annual Actions - Identify and convene group - Review year 1 progress for revisions needed - Adjust plan according to progress, data, and feedback - Audit available family trainings and materials with P.A.C.T. Council input to update website, new resources, and new materials for family use - Evaluate communication procedures for family engagement and educational resources Success Indicators - Quarterly progress reports delivered by staff to the Board of Education, with an annual summative report presented by the P.A.C.T. Council - Plan has been reviewed and revised to reflect changes identified by the P.A.C.T. Council - P.A.C.T. Council audit completed - P.A.C.T. Council has identified resources, trainings, and materials to be created

APPENDIX CONTINUED

FAMILY EXPERIENCE SURVEY

Thank you for participating in this meeting to support your student. You know your child best, and your voice matters to us. Your answers help us make these meetings better for every family. This survey takes about 2–5 minutes, and your responses will not affect your child’s services in any way.

ABOUT THE MEETING

1. Which school does your child attend?

2. When was your child’s meeting?

3. What type of meeting was this?

IEP, 504, S-Team, I am not sure

4. I received enough notice and information to feel prepared for this meeting.

Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree

5. I was offered a copy of my rights as a parent (sometimes called “Procedural Safeguards”).

Yes / No

6. The meeting followed the purpose described in the notice, included the participants described in the notice, and I was able to participate.

Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree

7. The team used everyday language and explained any terms or acronyms I wasn’t familiar with.

Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree

8. I was able to provide input to the decisions made during the meeting.

Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree

9. The plan addresses the concerns I raised, and I am confident it will meet my child’s needs.

Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree

10. I left the meeting with a clear picture of my child’s goals and supports, what happens next, and who to contact with questions.

Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree

11. What would have made this meeting more useful for you?

12. If you’d like to share your email address, you’re welcome to. Responses are anonymous unless you choose to include it.

Thank you. Your feedback goes directly to the people who plan and lead these meetings, and we use it to improve.

ACTION PLAN FOR FOLLOW-UP

This document serves as an action plan template used to guide follow-up during monthly professional development sessions and IEP meetings. Its purpose is to assign specific action items to specific personnel with clear deadlines, allowing administrators to track progress and follow up effectively. Using the same template across both scenarios builds consistency and familiarity while keeping the process simple.

ACTION PLAN FOR FOLLOW-UP

This form can be filled out during or after the IEP meeting as needed to ensure all team members know their expectations and follow up actions.

TASK	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE	SUPPORT NEEDED	OTHER / MISC.

SPECIAL EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

KCS has a team of highly qualified, passionate content-area experts to execute the plan set forth in the Special Education Strategic Plan. This team and full-scale implementation of this strategic plan will be led by:



Dr. Andrew Brown
*Assistant Superintendent of
Student Services*



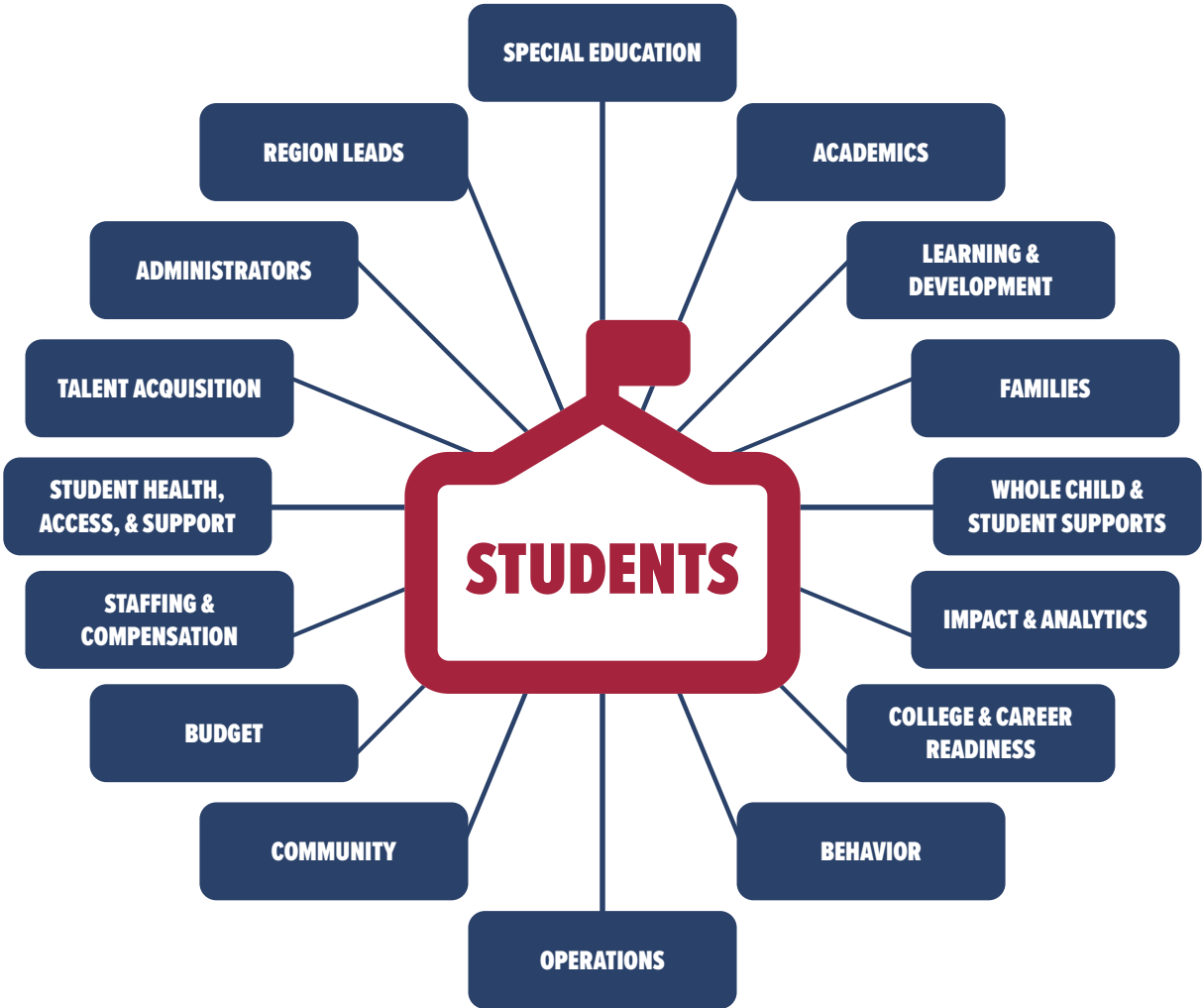
Dr. Brad Carr
*Executive Director of
Inclusive Services*



Michelle Flynn
*Director of
Special Education*

SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPPORT

Every school in KCS is supported by collaborative teams across several district office departments, including Academics, Whole Child Support, Operations, and College & Career Readiness. Special education services are strengthened through teams of content experts and school support specialists who partner with schools to provide consistent, targeted, and responsive support that enhances instructional practices, builds staff capacity, and improves student outcomes.



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Assistant Superintendent of Operations

DR. ANDREW BROWN

Assistant Superintendent of Student Services



VISION

Be the cornerstone of education in Knox County, empowering students to grow their talents, strengths, and skills to build a stronger community.

MISSION

Prepare students for life by providing a high-quality education that is accessible, meaningful, and future-focused.



CONNECT with **KCS**



knoxschools.org

400 W. Summit Hill Drive
Knoxville, TN 37902

KCS | KNOX COUNTY SCHOOLS

