

**Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) Annual Report to the Greenwich
Public Schools Board of Education
2025–2026 School Year**

Submitted by: Andi Harrington Cosby, *Chair, Special Education Advisory Council*

Introduction

On behalf of the Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC), I am pleased to present this year-end report to the Board of Education. The SEAC's role is to serve as a bridge between families, educators, administrators, and the Board of Education by gathering feedback, identifying trends, and providing recommendations that support students with disabilities across our district.

Throughout the 2025–2026 school year, the Advisory Board met regularly with families, district staff, and administrators to discuss the experiences of students receiving special education services. We appreciate the openness of district leadership in engaging with stakeholders and their commitment to continuous improvement.

While many families expressed appreciation for dedicated teachers, related service providers, and administrators who work tirelessly on behalf of students, several recurring concerns emerged throughout the year that warrant the Board's attention.

Key Themes Identified During the 2025–2026 School Year

1. Insufficient Paraprofessional Support

The most frequently cited concern from both families and faculty was the lack of adequate paraprofessional support to meet student needs.

Families reported concerns that students who require significant adult assistance are not consistently receiving the level of support outlined in their Individual Educational Programs (IEPs). Faculty members similarly expressed concerns that staffing shortages and assignment limitations have made it difficult to provide appropriate support across classrooms and programs.

The Advisory Board heard reports that paraprofessional vacancies, turnover, and the increasing complexity of student needs have contributed to challenges in maintaining consistent support for students throughout the school day.

Recommendation:

- Conduct a district-wide review of paraprofessional staffing levels relative to student needs.
- Evaluate recruitment and retention strategies for paraprofessionals.

- Consider additional professional development and career pathway opportunities to improve retention and effectiveness.

2. Challenges Scheduling PPT Meetings While Maintaining Required Services

Families and staff reported ongoing difficulties scheduling Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings.

Educators described challenges balancing legally required meetings with their responsibility to provide direct services to students. As a result, service providers are often pulled away from instructional time, creating disruptions in service delivery and increasing workload pressures.

Families expressed concerns regarding delays in scheduling meetings and the limited availability of team members, particularly during peak periods of the school year.

Recommendation:

- Explore dedicated meeting coverage or scheduling models that minimize disruptions to student services.
- Review district practices for scheduling PPT meetings to improve efficiency and reduce conflicts.
- Continue examining technological and administrative solutions that streamline the PPT process.

3. Staffing Models Not Fully Aligned with Student Needs

Another consistent theme was concern that current staffing models may not adequately reflect the growing complexity and diversity of student needs.

Faculty reported that caseloads and service demands continue to increase, while staffing allocations have not always kept pace. Families similarly expressed concerns regarding access to services and the availability of specialized support.

The SEAC recognizes the challenges districts face in recruiting and retaining qualified special education personnel; however, stakeholders consistently indicated that existing staffing structures are under significant strain.

Recommendation:

- Conduct a comprehensive review of special education caseloads, service delivery demands, and staffing allocations.
- Utilize student need data to guide staffing decisions and resource allocation.

- Review the current Human Resources recruitment strategies for Special Education staff and related service providers.
- Continue prioritizing recruitment and retention of special education teachers, related service providers, and specialized support staff.

4. Consistent Implementation of IEP Accommodations in General Education Settings

Families and educators repeatedly raised concerns about the inconsistent implementation of accommodations outlined in Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), particularly in general education classrooms.

While many general education teachers demonstrate a strong commitment to supporting students with disabilities, families reported instances where accommodations were not consistently provided or understood. Faculty members also noted that increasing demands on classroom teachers can make implementation challenging without sufficient training and support.

Stakeholders emphasized that accommodations are essential components of a student's educational program and must be implemented consistently to ensure equitable access to learning.

Recommendation:

- Increase professional development focused on understanding and implementing IEP accommodations.
- Strengthen collaboration between special education and general education staff.
- Establish systems for ongoing monitoring and support to ensure accommodations are implemented consistently across settings.

Positive Observations

In addition to these concerns, the SEAC wishes to recognize several strengths observed throughout the year:

- Strong dedication and professionalism among administrators, special education teachers, related service providers, and support staff.
- Continued efforts by district administration to engage families and address concerns.
- A shared commitment among educators to supporting students with diverse learning needs.

- Increased awareness of the importance of inclusive practices and collaborative service delivery.

Looking Ahead

As the district plans for the 2026–2027 school year, the SEAC encourages continued focus on staffing, service delivery, and professional development. The concerns outlined in this report reflect systemic challenges faced by many districts; however, they also represent opportunities for meaningful improvement.

By investing in adequate staffing, supporting educators, strengthening collaboration, and ensuring the faithful implementation of IEPs, the district can continue to advance its commitment to providing a free and appropriate public education for all students.

The Special Education Advisory Council appreciates the partnership of the Board of Education, district administration, educators, and families. We remain committed to working collaboratively to ensure every student receives the support necessary to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Respectfully submitted,

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Greenwich Public Schools
June 11, 2026