

# **Special Education Review: An Overview**

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**Presented By:**

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# *Guiding Principle*

**Seaford UFSD is continuously reflecting,  
mobilizing, and improving to meet the educational  
needs of all learners**


*“In order to transform schools successfully, educators need to  
navigate the difficult space between letting go of old patterns and  
grabbing on to new ones.” - Terrance Deal*

# Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)

CREC conducts program reviews in districts which support the development of collaborative efforts that create equitable and sustainable educational opportunities, assist in maximizing district and regional resources, and promote the advancement of successful educational practices for all learners.



# District Focus Areas

- 1. Utilization of Resources**
  - 2. Continuum of Services**
  - 3. Educational Program**
  - 4. Response to Intervention (RtI)**
- 



# Data Collection and Methodology

# Documents and Reports

## Analysis of Data

Comparison of data at the State level, local level and District level including:

- ◆ State Report Card
- ◆ Student Achievement Data
- ◆ Individual Education Plans (IEPs)



## Analysis of Documents

Internal District documents including:

- ◆ District Special Education Budget
- ◆ Staff caseloads
- ◆ Staff schedules
- ◆ Student schedules
- ◆ In-district and out of district placement information

## Analysis of Reports

US Department of Education requires the State to annually report each school district's performance and/or compliance on 20 indicator areas relating to three priority areas:

- ◆ Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
- ◆ Placement in Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- ◆ Disproportionality by Race and Ethnicity

# Student Individual Education Plan (IEP) Review

- ◆ A representative sample of 21 special education student Individual Education Plans (IEPs) were selected and reviewed
- ◆ IEPs were reviewed utilizing the *IEP Educational Benefit File Review Protocol*, a rubric designed to assess educational benefit across the following domains:
  - ◆ Gap Analysis of Present Levels of Performance
  - ◆ Scaffolds of Support: Supplemental Supports, Accommodations and Modifications
  - ◆ IEP Goals and Objectives
  - ◆ Placement and Types of Support



# In-Depth Student Review

Three special education students, one each from the elementary, middle and high school level, were selected for an in-depth review. The in-depth review for each student included the following:

- ◆ Classroom observations
- ◆ Student work was reviewed
- ◆ Selected students' IEPs were reviewed
- ◆ IEP responsible teachers were interviewed



# Classroom Observations

The focus of the classroom observations was to assess the following:

- ◆ Inclusivity of the learning environment and instructional practices
- ◆ School and classroom culture
- ◆ Implementation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)

A total of 21 classroom observations were conducted across all buildings throughout the following settings:

- ◆ Integrated Classrooms (9)
- ◆ Resource Room (2)
- ◆ Self-Contained Classrooms (2)
- ◆ Student Support Classes (6)
- ◆ Career Development Classes (2)



# Stakeholder Input

77 Stakeholders in Total

## Parent Surveys

- ◆ Sent to parents of Students with Disabilities
- ◆ 39 Surveys Returned
- ◆ At least one response on every grade K-12
- ◆ 9 out of 13 classification categories were represented
- ◆ Survey consisted of five questions with the opportunity for commentary

## Focused Interviews

- ◆ Individual and group interviews
- ◆ Participants included:
  - ◆ 20 Special Education Teachers
  - ◆ 5 Building Administrators
  - ◆ 3 Central Office Administrators
  - ◆ 3 School Psychologists
  - ◆ 3 Speech Pathologists
  - ◆ 1 OT/PT
  - ◆ 1 Reading Specialist
  - ◆ 1 BCBA
  - ◆ 2 Business Staff





*What are we  
doing well?*

# Commendations



- ★ Staff members are extremely dedicated to the students in their care and are genuinely concerned about students and their families
- ★ Teachers are dually certified as special education teachers and subject matter teachers
- ★ The District has adopted the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program which differentiates instruction for all students, both general education and special education
- ★ The District demonstrates a genuine willingness to reflect on its practices and engage in ongoing evaluation of services and programming

# Key Finding Categories

**Resource Allocations**

**Continuum of Services**

**Educational Benefit**

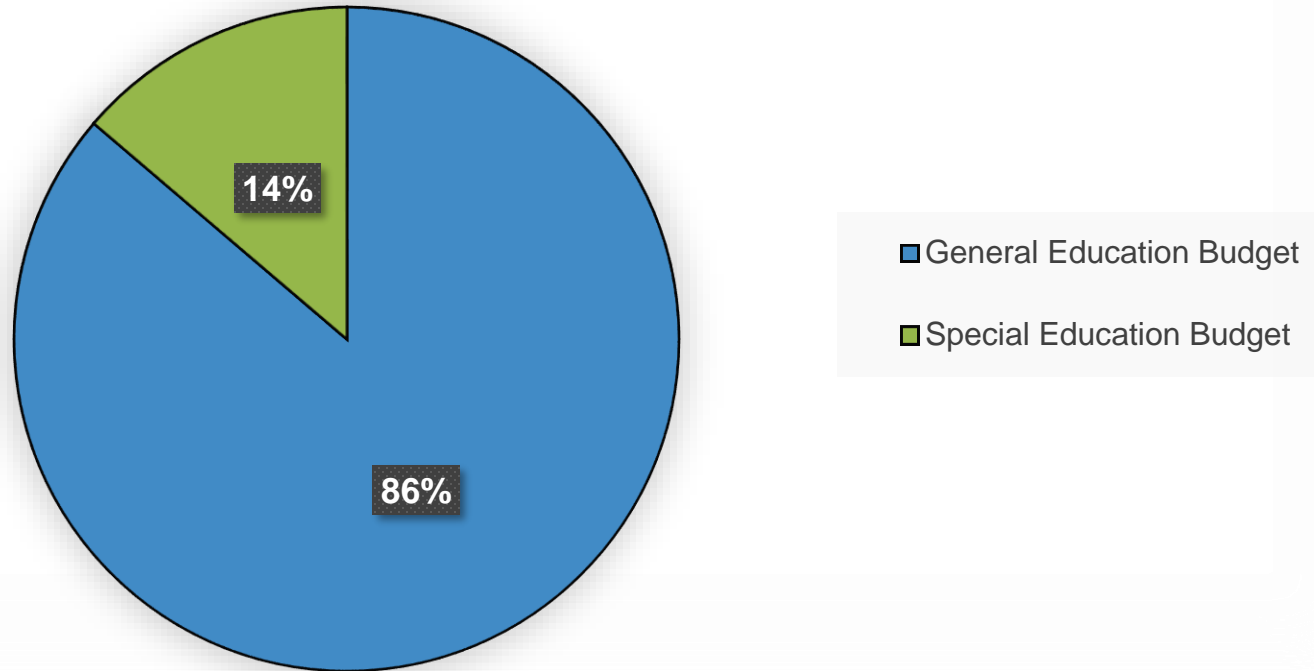
**Response to Intervention**

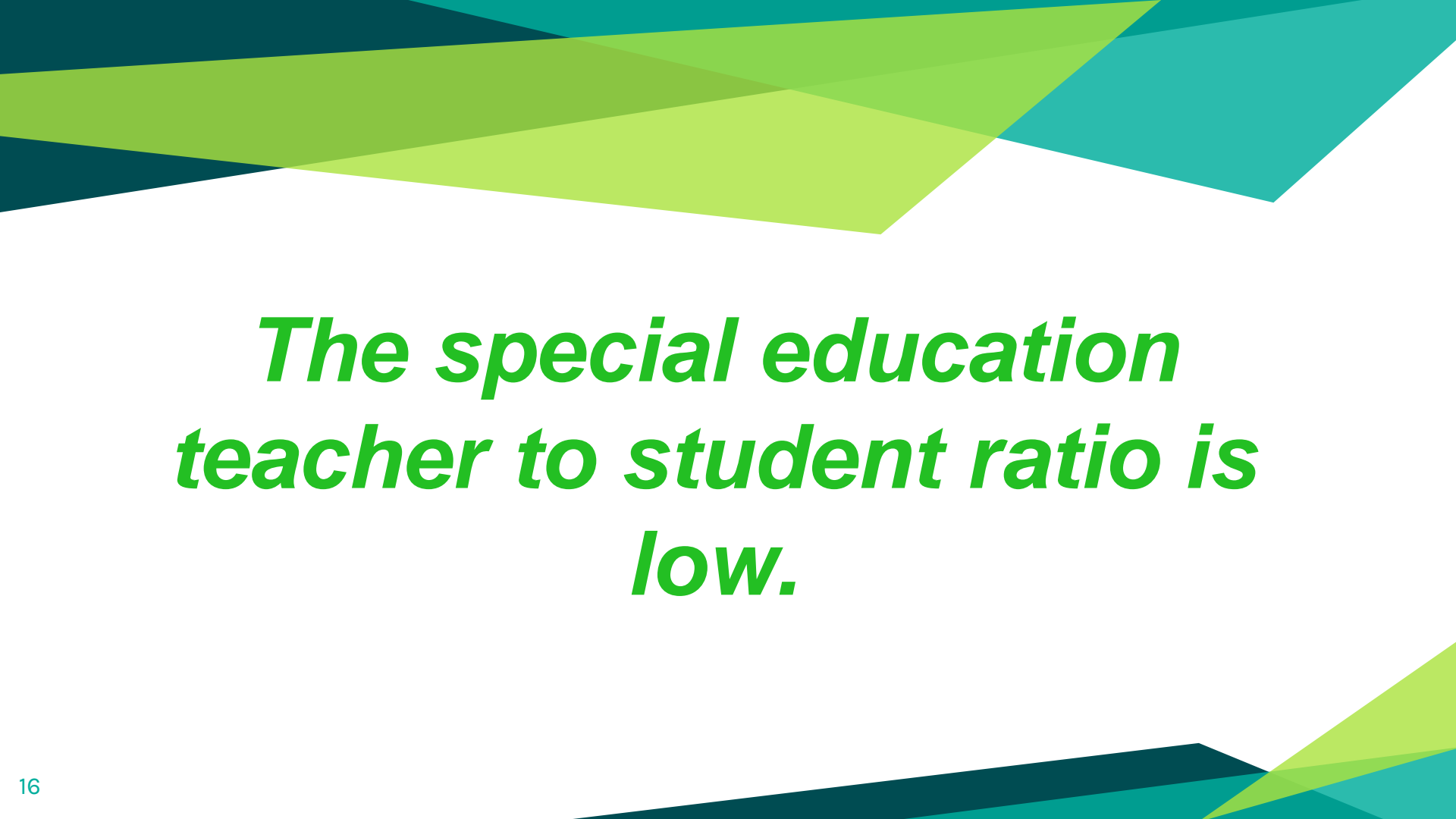




***The District operates on a  
tight special education  
budget.***

# Percent of General Budget Spent on Special Education





***The special education  
teacher to student ratio is  
low.***



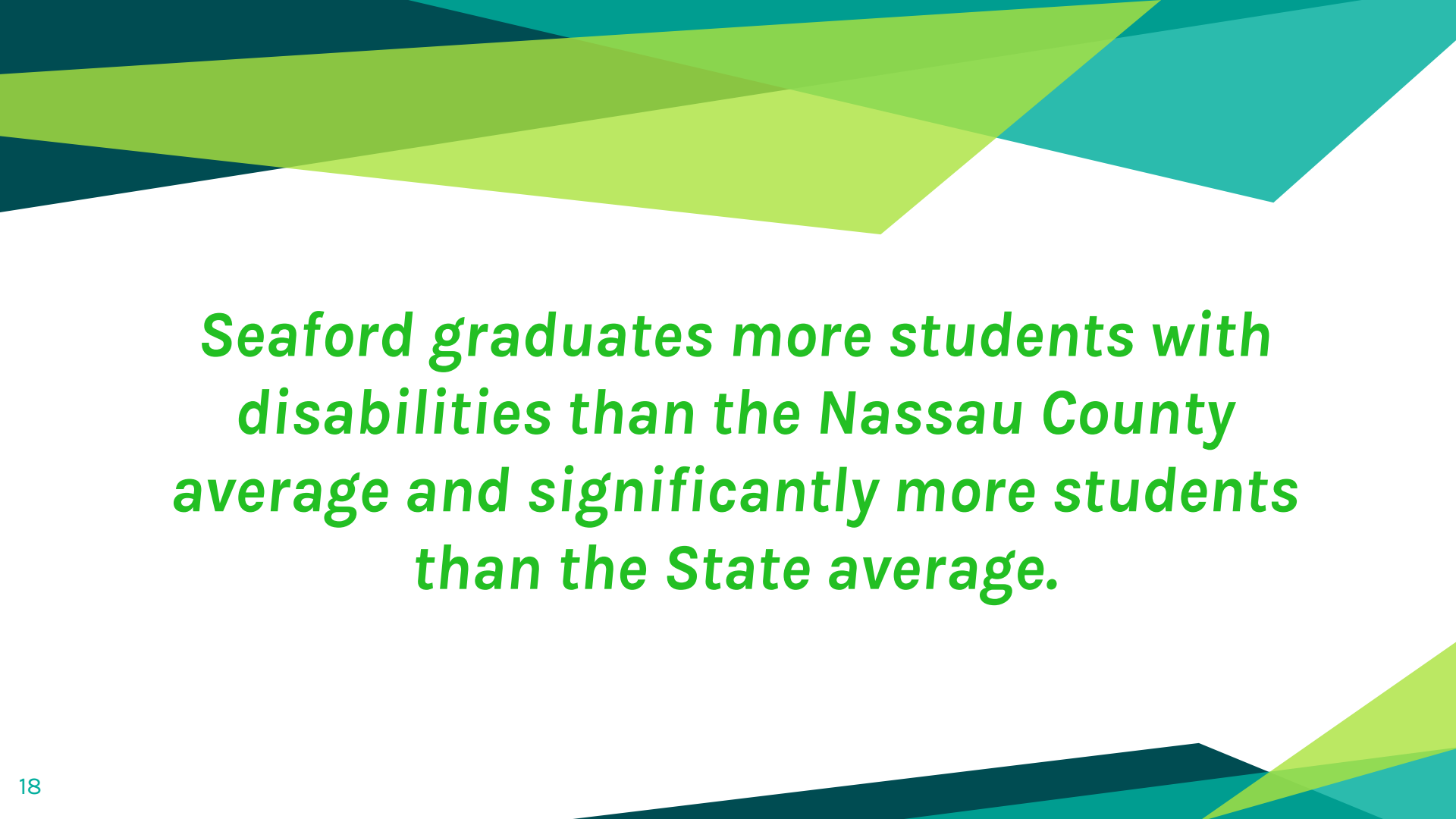
# Teacher to Student Ratio

	HARBOR		MANOR		MIDDLE SCHOOL		HIGH SCHOOL	
	FTE	Ratio	FTE	Ratio	FTE	Ratio	FTE	Ratio
Special Education Teacher	7.5	1 to 9.9	8.0	1 to 7.8*	9.0	1 to 10.7	12.0	1 to 11.2

Source: Seaford Special Education Office

\*Manor School has additional self-contained classes which reduces the teacher to student ratio

**District FTEs follow typical trends as services for students with disabilities tend to decrease over time**



**Seaford graduates more students with disabilities than the Nassau County average and significantly more students than the State average.**

# Graduation Rate of Students with Disabilities

Exit Data	Seaford	Nassau County	NY State
Graduation Rate	78	73	54
Regents w/Advanced Designation	7	12	3
Regents Diploma	50	42	29
Local Diploma	21	19	22

Source: NYSED State Assessment Results 2016



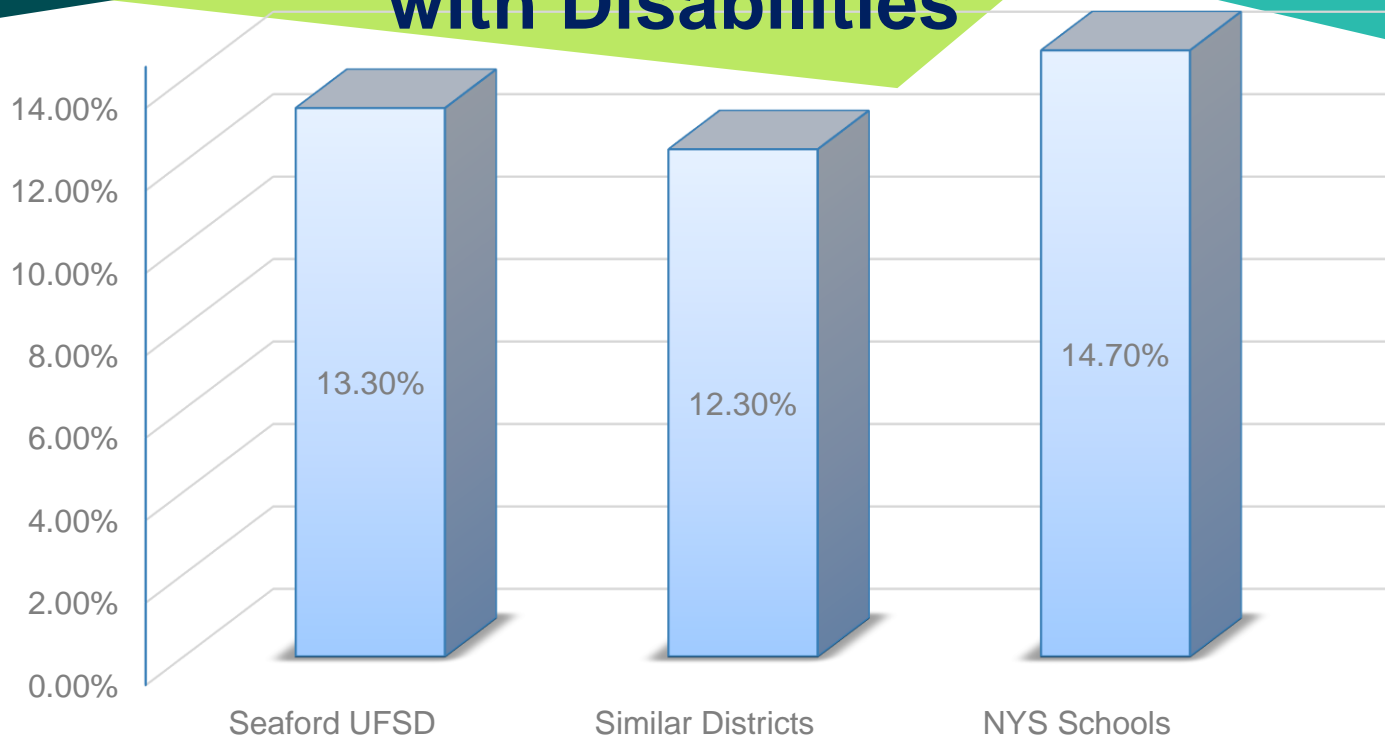
# *Areas for Consideration*

# ***Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)***

**Continue to increase time students with disabilities spend with non-disabled peers and strengthen the district-wide inclusion philosophy**



# Identification Rate of Students with Disabilities



Source: NYSED

# Recommendations

- ◆ CPSE and CSE should continue to recommend the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), as indicated by student need, in accordance with District guidelines and Part 200 of NYS Regulations
- ◆ The integration of related services into the general education program should be considered when appropriate
- ◆ Increase opportunities to support students in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) with the use of Assistive Technology (AT), when indicated by student need; create an AT team to audit equipment and improve implementation

# *Continuum of Services*



**Continuously evaluating our continuum of services  
to ensure that students receive maximum  
educational impact**



# Recommendations

- ◆ Further develop a district-wide plan outlining the continuum of services
- ◆ Expand upon the District's inclusive philosophy and use of best practices to support students in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) while keeping within the continuum of services

# *Educational Benefit*



**Specially Designed Instruction (SDI), comprehensive Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and Assistive Technology are tools to achieve student success**

# Specially Designed Instruction

Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) refers to adaptations to the content, methodology and/or delivery of instruction to:

- ◆ Address the unique needs of individuals
- ◆ Ensure access to the general education curriculum so individuals can meet the educational standards that apply to all children

# Recommendations

- ◆ Review IEPs with a focus on clarity and monitoring progress towards goals to inform instruction
- ◆ Continue to train general education staff and special education staff in Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) and monitor implementation
- ◆ Continue to foster a district-wide plan for co-teaching to include planning time and training

# *Utilization of Aides*



**District aides are utilized to assist in the delivery of special education support as needed**

# Recommendations

- ◆ Look for ways to increase student independence and reduce student dependency on teacher aides via fading plans and/or the use of shared aides when appropriate
- ◆ Hiring and reallocation of special education aide staff done in collaboration and coordination with the Department of Pupil Personnel Services

# *Response to Intervention (RtI)*



Integration of assessment and intervention within a schoolwide, multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and reduce challenging behaviors

**INTENSIVE:**

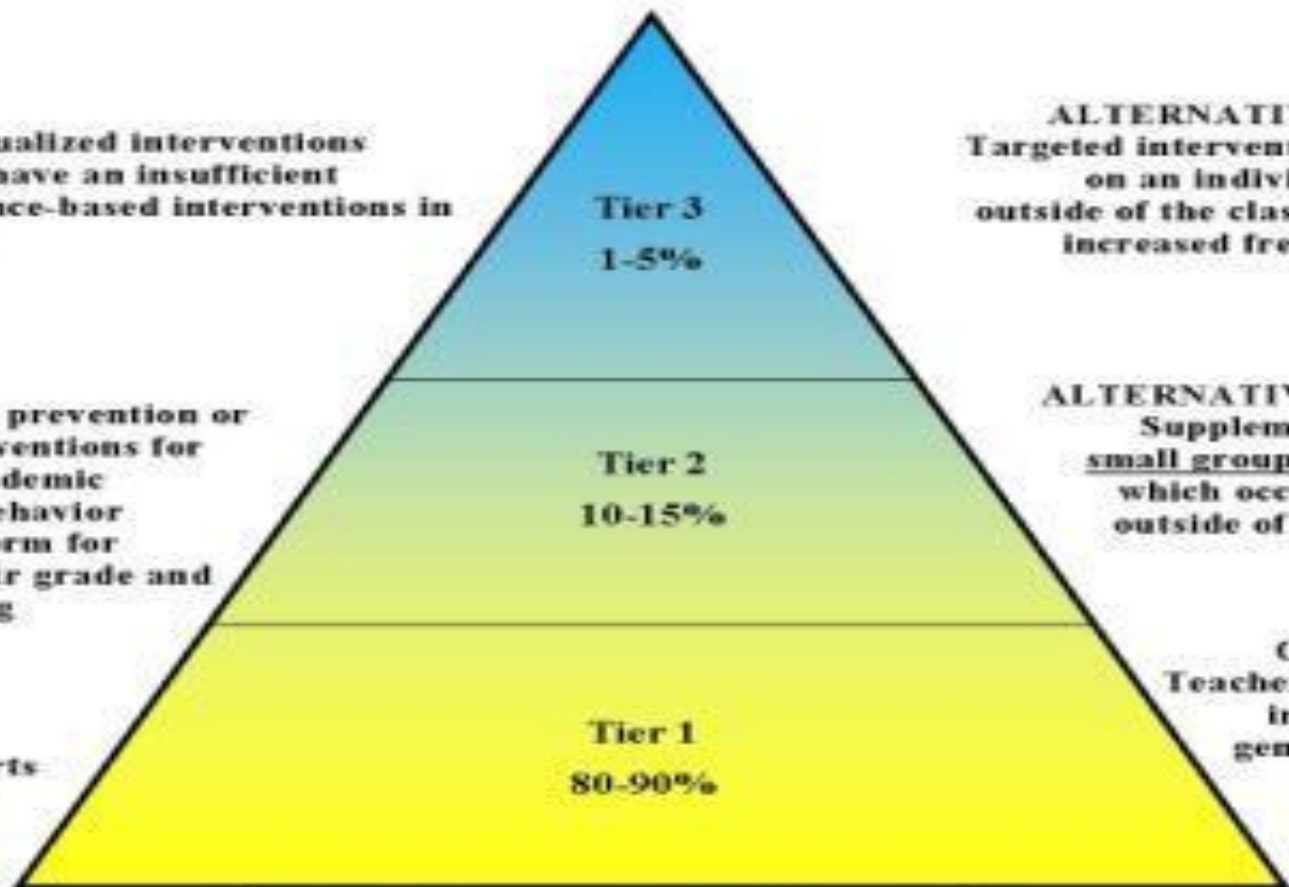
Intensive, individualized interventions for students who have an insufficient response to evidence-based interventions in the first two tiers

**TARGETED:**

Targeted, specific prevention or remediation interventions for student whose academic performance or behavior lags behind the norm for proficiency in their grade and educational setting

**UNIVERSAL:**

High-quality instruction and behavioral supports for all students to reach proficiency in general education



**ALTERNATIVE SETTING:**  
Targeted interventions delivered on an individualized basis outside of the classroom with an increased frequency and/or duration

**ALTERNATIVE SETTING:**  
Supplemental targeted small group interventions which occur in a setting outside of the classroom

**CLASSROOM:**  
Teacher implemented interventions in general education setting

Academic and/or Behavioral



# Recommendations


- ◆ Review the comprehensive RtI behavior system in each school and maintain the fidelity of the process from elementary through high school; institute Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) in each school
- ◆ Review and revise District RtI plan
- ◆ Implement and monitor the RtI process prior to referral to special education

*Next Steps?*




# Team Approach

***"Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision, the ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results." -- Andrew Carnegie***



**Recommendations will be used as a foundation for a 3-5 year special education strategic plan. Department goals, in close alignment with District goals, will be developed to implement a plan aimed at:**

- 1.) Maximizing special education resources**
  - 2.) Improving educational benefit**
  - 3.) Ensuring a full continuum of services**
  - 4.) Improving inclusive practices**
- 



# Thank You!

Any questions?

