

*School Alliance for
Continuous Improvement*

*Tully Central School District
K-12 Special Education Training Visit*

October 2009

Thomas Sopchak, SACI Executive Director
Madison-Oneida BOCES

***TRAINING SESSION ONLY
NOT A COMPLETE REVIEW***

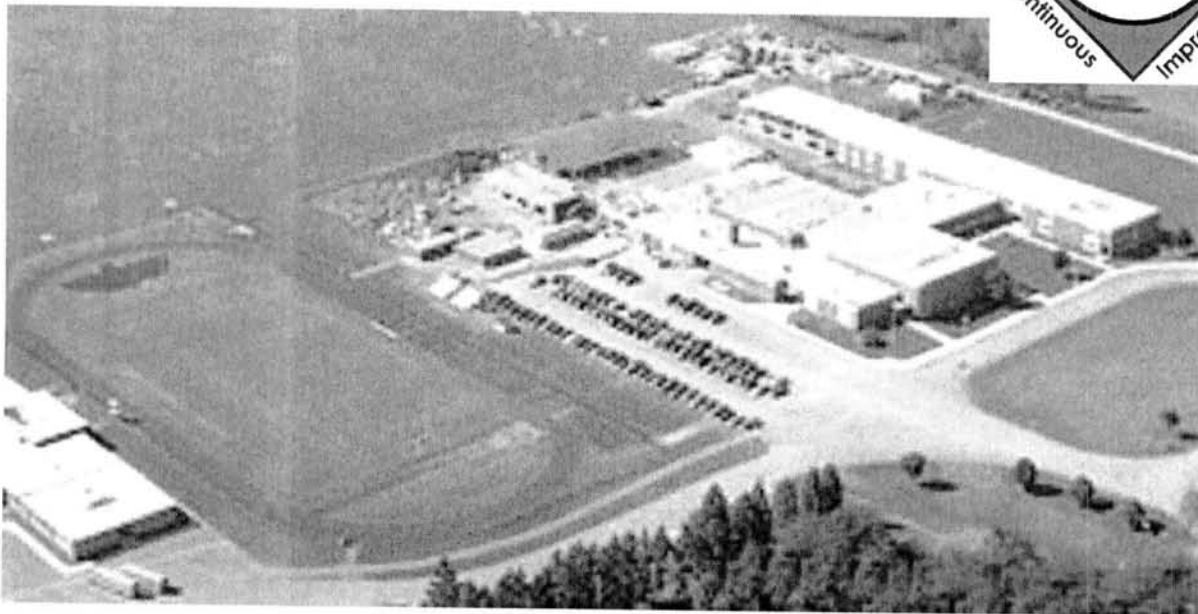


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Introduction and Overview

This feedback report is a product of the School Alliance for Continuous Improvement (SACI). Produced by the District Review Team, it includes:

- ◆ General information about SACI;
- ◆ Scoring information based on evidence pertaining to the district's educational program;
- ◆ Strengths, recommendations for growth, and innovative practices identified by the team;
- ◆ The indicators and scoring rubrics that comprise the Balanced Performance Model.

The districts in this alliance represent rural and suburban schools from across the State. These districts include diverse populations in terms of ethnic and socioeconomic factors, and demonstrate a range of results in student performance as indicated by State measurements. These districts share certain common interests:

- ◆ A commitment to rigorous standards for all students;
- ◆ A commitment to assessing student performance against international, national and local measure of excellence, both quantitatively and qualitatively;
- ◆ A commitment to using data to guide school improvement and planning to continuously evaluate the impact and effectiveness of school improvement efforts.

In order to operationalize these commitments, district representatives have employed systems thinking and a data driven approach to determine how to affect teaching and learning in their districts. Representatives have worked closely together to:

- ◆ Develop a model to monitor, measure and report the effectiveness of district systems by analyzing data related to identified performance indicators;
- ◆ Train teams of teachers and administrators as "critical friends" -- professionals who can externally review and validate evidence of a district's progress in planning, implementing and attaining results and provide useful feedback which encourages self-reflection and continuous improvement;
- ◆ Create tools for identifying, and forums for sharing successful and innovative practices that help all students meet higher standards.

During a week in October 2009, external mentors conducted a training workshop based on information about Tully Central School District's K-12 Special Education Program. The team gathered data from interviews, documents and observations and used them to reach a consensus on data related to each of six quality indicators.

This report presents a summary of team decisions related to the evidence found and agreed upon. It is a rich repository of information to support strategic planning designed to improve educational processes in the district.

Thomas Sopchak

SACI Executive Director
Madison-Oneida BOCES

Acknowledgements

District Review Team

This report was created as a result a collaborative effort between the District Review Team and the hosting district.

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Tully Central School District Trainees:

Kate Davin

7-12 School Counselor

Christine Deitz

Kindergarten Teacher

Paula Harty

7-12 Computer Lab Teaching Assistant

Nancy Hatch

Special Education Teaching Assistant

Virginia Killmore

7-12 Art Teacher

Tiffany Nesbitt

School Business Administrator

Michael Perkins

Grade 6 Teacher

Tully Central School District

Information Sources

Interviews:

The following fifty two (52) individuals were interviewed by the team as part of the District Review information gathering process:

7-12 Special Education Teachers 4
Art Teacher 1
Board Member 1
Computer Lab Teaching Assistant 2
Director of Special Education Assistant 1
Elementary Special Education Teachers 4
Elementary Teacher Assistants 4
Interim Assistant Secondary Principal 1
Interim Secondary Principal 1
Language Other Than English Teacher 1
Math AIS Teacher 1
Parents 2
School Business Administrator 1
School Counselors 2
Secondary Special Education Department Chair 1
Secondary Teacher Assistants 4
Secondary Teachers 7
Social Worker 1
Speech Therapist 1
Superintendent 1
K-6 Elementary Teachers 11
Director of Special Education/K-6 Assistant Principal 1
Physical Education Teacher 1
School Psychologist 1

Documents:

The following documents were reviewed by the team as part of the District Review information gathering process:

1998 15-1 English ELA and Math curriculum
Alternate writing activities
Annual Professional Performance Review Plan
Annual review form
Board Policy related to Special Education
Classroom inventory of technology
Co-teach Handbook
Counseling and Career Program chart
Critical thinking wheels
Dictation book
Everyday Math Program
Explore the Code
Federal budget for special education
Jr.-SR. High handbook
Jr.-Sr. High Staff Development Committee minutes
Merrill Reading books
Modified social studies test
New York State District Report Card
Notes from meeting at OCM BOCES
Organizational Chart
Planning meeting notes for Lafayette and Tully
Provision for Special Education Services
Report of achievement
Resource Guide for Committee on Special Education Director
Resource guide grades 7-9
School calendar
Sound Board
Special Education agenda and minutes
Special Education District Plan 2009-2011
Special Education parents' schedule
Special Education Resource Manual Information on Inclusive Committee Conference
Special Education School to Home communication
Special Education Teacher Binder with IEPs and report cards
Speech Home School Activities
Spelling Menu
Staff Handbook
Student Referral Folder
Superintendent's Conference Day presentation on brain research
Test accommodation schedule
Tully Central School District

Testing binder
Testing modifications
Triumphs® Reading program
Tully Jr.-Sr. High School course curriculum guide
Tully Special Education Programs and Services
Wilson Reading Program™

#1: *The leadership system is linked to goals for student performance.*

Definition:

The degree to which the district operates from the perspective of a shared vision/agreed upon goals that are driven by student performance.

Plan:

1. District Plan for Special Education for 2009-11 was presented to the Board of Education. It includes program objectives, methods for evaluating objectives, consistency with Board of Cooperative Educational Services' special education space requirements plan for 2009-14 and provides for alternative format of materials and assessments for students with disabilities.
2. Board of Education policies exist relating to children with disabilities. Policies include areas of least restrictive environment, pre-referral intervention strategies, committee on special education procedures including the Board's right to challenge committee on special education recommendations, parent involvement and impartial due process hearing.
3. Board of Education Goals for 2009-10 identify a need to study differentiated instruction for students at all levels of learning, including investigating the Pre-Kindergarten program, using the data team to drive instruction, and developing a summer intervention program.
4. According to the Superintendent of Schools, the District has a focus of being "student centered and meet students where they are" and develop individual strategies to allow the students to progress toward meeting the educational standards.
5. There is a District Organizational Chart that depicts the chain of command within the District that was adopted by the Board of Education on February 12, 2008. The Director of Special Education reports to the Superintendent of Schools and the Data Collection and Verification Coordinator. The K-12 Special Education Staff reports to the Director of Special Education.
6. There is an adopted local budget for 2009-10 of \$1.6 million for the Special Education Department. The local budget encompasses special education personnel, equipment, contractual services, materials and supplies, special school tuition, Board of Cooperative Educational Services and textbooks. There is a \$365,000 federal budget for Individuals with Disabilities Education Act that encompasses personnel, materials and supplies, and professional development.

Implementation:

1. The District Plan for special educations was adopted on October 19, 2009 by the Board of Education.
2. The Board of Education reviews and votes to support administrative recommendations for committee on special education placements.
3. Administration has formulated and submitted to the New York State Education Department of Grants Finance a budget under Title 1 federal stimulus monies for a summer intervention program to commence in the summer of 2010.
4. A Pupil Services Team exists for grades 7-12, which meets to discuss individual student needs and develop strategies to allow for student success.
5. A Youth Intervention Team for grades K-6 meets to discuss individual student needs and develop strategies for differentiated instruction at some levels.
6. There are a variety of programs where students are placed according to individual needs including co-teaching classrooms, resource rooms, district primary instruction programs, Board of Cooperative Educational Services' programs and a shared special educational program with LaFayette Central School District.
7. The Director of Special Education is identified by many regular education as well as special education staff as being the person to contact for special education information and concerns.
8. One person is perceived as the informal leader at the high school level in matters related to student testing and accommodations.
9. There is a 7-12 Department Chair for the special education department.
10. According to school principals the Committee on Special Education meets the individual needs of students in a fiscally responsible manner.

Student Outcomes:

11. According to the School Report Card for the 2007-08 school year students with disabilities met Annual Yearly Progress for Elementary and Middle Level English Language Arts and Math.

#2: Instructional practices are evaluated and modified based on assessment of student performance

Definition:

The degree to which educators use student data to drive instructional change and how non-instructional personnel implement their job.

Plan:

1. A process exists, K-12, in which class lists and the master schedule are driven by the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEPs), program needs, and special education staffing.
2. The 2009-11 Special Education Plan outlines the special education program objectives. According to the plan, students will be placed in programs that are: age appropriate, allow for access to general education, differentiate instruction, analyze data, and involve career planning for those 15 and above. (Board approved 10/19/09)
3. Based on high school teacher interviews, there is an overall plan to promote independence and self-advocacy of identified students.
4. The district has a plan to use the Weschler Individual Achievement Test™ (WIAT).

Implementation:

5. Work samples in the evidence bins show that students with disabilities are presented with a multi-sensory approach to spelling instruction.
6. Evidence in the bins shows that at the high school Resource Room teachers create Regents exam schedules for students with accommodations.
7. Junior/senior high school students with disabilities are generally placed in one class per content area with the support of at least one teaching assistant.
8. Selected classes contain at least 10-15% of students with disabilities.
9. According to speech therapist interviewed, pull-out or push-in services are determined based on the needs of the individual student. Speech therapists also provide parents with school to home activities to reinforce learning at home.
10. Teachers interviewed indicate that, at the K-6 level, there is adaptive physical education provided as needed. At the 7-12 building the physical education program is entirely inclusive.
11. Based on 2004-05 reports, Tully spends approximately \$11,000 per Special Education student.
12. At the elementary level identified students receive Academic Intervention Services (AIS) if they score a 1 or 2 on any New York State assessment.

13. Teacher interviews indicate that, teaching assistants provide most of the in-classroom support to student with special needs.
14. There are resources available that provide a diversified approach to ELA instruction.
15. Based on instructional plans provided in the evidence bins, some units are developed in order to present thematic concepts in a cross-curricular manner.
16. Teachers interviewed said there are resources provided to special education teachers at the elementary level to differentiate the instruction in the Everyday Math® series.
17. High school teachers interviewed said, the teaching assistants are responsible for implementing most of the testing accommodations for students with special needs in the general education setting.
18. A teaching assistant interviewed said, support is provided in a push-in and pull-out manner dependent on the needs of the student(s).
19. At the 6th grade level there is a co-teaching model in place with a general education and special education teacher co-teaching reading, writing, and math. They have a half day of planning time per month.
20. According to third grade teacher interviews, general education and special education teachers co-teach for 90 minutes daily for ELA. They differentiate reading groups based on the needs of students, utilizing the general education series *Treasures*® as well as the lower level, sister program, *Triumph*®.
21. Elementary teacher interviews indicate that, if requested, resource room teachers are given the opportunity for one day per month to connect and plan with general education teachers.
22. Special education teachers and teaching assistants support all students when they push-in, not just the students with disabilities.
23. Some elementary special education teachers utilize daily sticker charts to document and improve students' time management skills.
24. Reading Recovery® is a reading program utilized for the lowest performing students in the primary level as an intervention prior to a Committee on Special Education (CSE) referral.
25. Elementary teachers interviewed said that, Lucy Caulkins Writing Program® is utilized in K and 1 to provide whole group lessons and 1:1 conferencing to address individual writing needs. Grades 3 - 6 utilize the 6 + 1 Traits ®.
26. Writing samples in the evidence bins indicate that alternate writing activities are provided to differentiate the instructional needs for students.
27. Some teachers utilize the games and multi-sensory activities in the Everyday Math® series to differentiate instruction.
28. Some students with disabilities need a repetitive, skill-based math program. Therefore, the special education teachers customize the instruction for math to meet some students' individual needs.
29. The Superintendent said there is a partnership with a neighboring school district for accessing special education programs and transportation.
30. According to the District Special Education Plan, 1.4% of students with disabilities are serviced outside the district.

31. A counselor interviewed said that 90% of students in the Resource Room program choose to go to BOCES.

Student Outcomes:

32. Work samples in the evidence bin demonstrated that some students with disabilities can demonstrate proficiency with skills when assessments are modified using testing accommodation and necessary modifications.
33. Over a three year period the district was in 100% compliance with State Performance Plan 13 (transitions) for all students that were long-term residents of Tully.

#3: The curriculum is linked to standards for and data on student performance.

Definition:

The degree to which the curriculum is linked to state and district standards for and data on student performance.

Plan:

1. There is a process in the Tully School District to follow the New York State core curriculum with curricular modifications where appropriate for special education students after.
2. There is a plan to adopt the reading series, *Treasures*®, in grades two through six. Grades kindergarten through first grade will transition to the series.
3. There is a plan for all students to use *Everyday Math*® in the elementary school. At the secondary level, state standards are used for all students in math.
4. There is a plan for an opportunity at the high school level for special education students to enroll in modified and/or accelerated courses.
5. There is a plan within the high school program of studies to guide students to the appropriate courses leading to graduation.
6. There is a plan within the high school for students to participate in courses that offer college credit and those located out of district.
7. There is a plan within the district to create curriculum maps.

Implementation:

8. Special education students follow core curriculum with modifications where needed provided by special education teachers in conjunction with regular education teachers.
9. The reading series, *Treasures*®, is currently being utilized in grades two through six and is in the transitional process for grades kindergarten through grade one. There is a parallel series that is used, *Triumph*®, to accommodate students' Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Students in grades seven and eight are scheduled for a reading skills course two days out of a six day cycle.
10. *Everyday Math*® is used in the elementary school. To accommodate IEPs, curricular modifications may be made. At the secondary level, students follow state standards but modifications may be made such as 15:1 courses, stretch courses, resource room, and Academic Intervention Services.
11. Regular education and students with disabilities (SWD) have a variety of academic offerings (i.e. American Sign Language, Mandarin, and Advanced Placement [AP] US History).
12. Students, including SWDs, utilize the Counseling & Career Center and program of studies to guide them into an appropriate graduation path.

13. Students, including SWDs, enroll in career technical education programs at BOCES, AP courses, community college courses, etc.
14. Curriculum mapping is currently being revisited.

Student Outcomes:

15. 89% of the Class of 2007, inclusive of special education students, students graduated.
16. Tully is in the top quintile of the 2003 cohort graduation rate for OCM BOCES inclusive of special education students.
17. A special education student completed an advanced placement course in the 2008-2009 school year and is eligible for college credit.

#4: Professional and organizational development is linked to student learning needs.

Definition:

The degree to which professional and/or organizational development is linked to student learning needs as measured by student performance.

Plan:

1. The Board of Education policy for Children with Disabilities states that there will be training provided to special education personnel including ongoing training through Special Education Training and Resource Center, Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) and private consultants.
2. The Tully Central School District Mission Statement states that "We will, through staff development and the use of the community and its resources, provide a challenging and innovative curriculum which develops creative thinking and problem solving while incorporating high standards and accountability."
3. The Special Education District Plan for 2009-11 states that professional development and technical assistance in differentiated instruction is an objective for the District.
4. According to the Superintendent of Schools, it is his goal that the Administrative Cabinet explore opportunities for professional development focusing on student outcomes based on prior School Alliance for Continuous Improvement reports.
5. There is an Annual Professional Performance Review Plan in place in the Tully Central School District for the purpose of fostering continued improvement of teacher performance in complying with Commissioner regulation 100.2(7)
6. Tully Central School District has a mentoring plan for new teachers in compliance with Commissioner's regulation 100.2(dd) with the goal of fostering effective instruction and student achievement.
7. There was a Professional Development Plan adopted in 2003 with the goals of increasing student achievement by 5% annually by developing curriculum aligned to New York State Standards and fostering effective instruction and communication strategies.

Implementation:

8. Special education teachers have attended National Association of Special Education Teachers' conferences.
9. The Director of Special Education along with several special education and regular education teachers has attended workshops on collaborative teaching.
10. The collaborative teaching model has been implemented in several classrooms at the elementary level.

11. The Director of Special Education has attended professional development opportunities regarding new regulations and laws and communicates them back to the special education staff.
12. Many special education teachers have had professional development opportunities regarding the teaching of children with anxiety disorders, working with children with autism, children with central auditory processing disorder and the Cornell University Transitions Training Program.
13. Resources have been allocated within the District budget for professional development opportunities.
14. Regular education and special education teachers have attended conferences and training regarding Response to Intervention strategies including Reading Recovery®.
15. An Academic Intervention Services Taskforce was created as a result of reviewing prior School Alliance for Continuous Improvement reports.
16. Teachers within the District are reviewed on an annual basis focusing on continued improvement of teacher performance and effects on student achievement.
17. A formal mentoring process has been implemented for all new teaching staff.
18. There is a professional development committee in each building that meets to discuss and plan for professional development opportunities within their building. A special education representative participates on these committees.

Student Outcomes:

At this point we were unable to attribute student progress directly to staff development.

#5: Data Management and communication are linked to improving the entire learning and operational organization

Definition:

The degree to which information is managed and communicated for the purpose of improving the entire learning and operational organization.

Plan:

1. A K-12 Data Team, led by an administrator, has been established to determine what data needs to be collected, how it will be done, and how to appropriately analyze it to effect instruction. Based on a teacher interview, in the spring of 2009 the team was organized, and in the fall of 2009 duties were delegated in anticipation of putting together a final plan of action.
2. There is a plan for data dissemination for teachers and administrators utilizing web based technology, Student Information System (SIS), which allows teacher to access students' IEP, attendance, student/parent information, and track students' academic progress.

Implementation:

3. The district website provides contact information for all personnel, as well as the mission and Board of Education Goals. In addition, there are links to some individual teacher websites which often display up-to-date homework assignments and activities. There are also links to educational sites that are relevant to curriculum. As reported by teachers, they are strongly encouraged by administration to develop and update their websites in a timely manner.
4. District-wide, agendas are provided to all students 3rd-12th grade. Interviews from teachers and teaching assistants reflect that these agendas are utilized to organize students' homework and communicate notes and general classroom information.
5. Teacher interviews and data bin indicate that all students, K-12, are provided a copy of the student-parent handbook which describes school policies and procedures, as well as rules and expectations for students.
6. All residents of Tully Central School District are mailed a published copy of the school calendar. The calendar outlines mandatory dates of attendance, as well as testing schedules, report cards, and school events.
7. Based on interviews and artifacts collected in the document bin, many teachers develop individual plans for communicating with parents regarding individual students, as well as classroom updates. Aside from teacher websites, many teachers send home weekly/monthly newsletters highlighting learning and activities that have occurred throughout that time period.

8. Based on teacher interviews, K-6, at the beginning of each Everyday Math® unit a packet is sent home with a brief description of the unit, the homework answers, and an outline of how to carry out the basic algorithms in the unit.
9. In grades 7-9 there are curriculum resource guides for teaching assistants and parents. They include goals, rubrics, and internet sources.
10. Based on teacher interviews, it was reported that K-12 general education teachers are responsible for reporting the grades for all students on the report cards, unless the student participates in a modified program.
11. Each grade level, K-6, has a specific report card which outlines pertinent skills that students should demonstrate mastery in upon completion of the school year. At each grade level, there are evaluations for academics as well as character education skills.
12. In 7th-12th grade, Student Information System (SIS) is used as a tool to organize attendance, report grading, and share student performance, including individualized education plans (IEP). All teachers can view IEPs for individual students on SIS, but they can not print them.
13. In grades 7-12, Progress Book® is a computer database system that is utilized to develop and organize report cards.
14. All staff members are provided with a handbook of procedural/policy information.
15. K-12 students with disabilities are placed in classes based on the services recommended on the individualized education plans.
16. IEP Direct® is the database utilized to manage the development and organization of IEPs. K-12 progress reports are developed and sent home quarterly with updates regarding students with IEPs progress towards their individualized goals.
17. Starting in 2006 another division of IEP Direct®, RTI Direct®, contains student state test performance which the Academic Intervention Service (AIS) teachers utilized to create their schedules for services.
18. Within the district, according to teacher interviews, teachers and teaching assistants communicate with one another face-to-face as well as through e-mail. This allows for them to receive information regarding individual student needs, as well as the daily lessons.
19. Many of the resource room teachers organize binders with information regarding the student IEPs, report cards, upcoming assignments, and notes. These binders are also used as a resource for the teaching assistants to gain information regarding students' plans.
20. Special education teachers create "confidentials" for general education teachers. These documents provide a brief summary of the accommodations and needs of individual students with IEPs.
21. There is a K-6 Youth Intervention Team (YIT). Teachers recommend students with academic and/or behavioral needs to be presented at this collegial review team. The team reviews the needs of the student, as well as all the interventions that have currently been employed, and make suggestions for further intervention that may be effective.

22. There was a special education budget for a 2009-10 school year approved by the Board of Education - \$1.6 million from the local budget and \$365,000 from federal funds.

Student Outcomes:

23. Based on Students Performance Plan (SPP) indicator #8 the 2005-2006 parent survey results reflected that 88.7% of parents of students with disabilities ranked their student's involvement with Special Education positively.
24. Based on the State Performance Plan, Indicator 11 demonstrated that 61.8% of school age students with disabilities participated in timely evaluations.

#6: Technology for Teaching and Learning

Definition

The degree to which technology is integrated with teaching and learning (curriculum, instruction, and assessment) to provide educational opportunities for all students

Plan:

1. The comprehensive Tully School District Technology Plan 2007-2010 contains an overview with five goals:
 - a. all teachers and students will have access to information technology in their classrooms, schools, communities, and homes;
 - b. all teachers will use technology effectively to help students achieve high academic standards;
 - c. all students will have technology and information literacy skills, research and evaluation will improve the next generation of technology applications; and
 - d. digital content and networked applications will transform teaching and learning.
2. The technology plan incorporates grade appropriate curriculum, architecture and infrastructure plan, future trends and upgrades (next 3 years), long range plans, a hardware/software budget, scope and sequence for our students, a monitoring and evaluation process, and appropriate staff development.
3. There is a plan for data dissemination for teachers and administrators utilizing web based technology, Student Information System (SIS), which allows teacher to access students' IEP, attendance, student/parent information, and track students' academic progress.
4. There exists a district technology committee that creates the district technology plan which includes the annual budget as well as visionary goals for the district. Those goals are disseminated to the individual building committees. The district committee is composed of superintendent, building administrators, business administrator, information technology coordinator, library media specialist from elementary and high school, and computer teaching assistants from elementary and high school.
5. There are two building level technology committees that are comprised of appropriate teacher representations, building administrators, and computer teaching assistant. This committee is responsible for the building level technology plan.

Implementation:

6. Some regular education and special education teachers are integrating technology in the classroom at all grade levels. Examples of technology being used are: FM systems, Elmos, Franklin™ dictionaries, calculators, public address systems, Alpha Smarts®, portable keyboard (Neo), audio books, Star Fall®,

Dynavox™, SMART® boards, video conferencing, computer software, web page capabilities, books on tape, compact discs that parallel curriculum, appropriate websites, manipulatives, Castle Learning®, Turn It In® (plagiarism software), instrumentation and design software.

7. The district technology committee is working toward implementing the district technology plan through recommendations from the individual building committees.
8. The building technology committee works to achieve stated district level goals by providing for classroom and staff needs.
9. The Student Information System® is used by all secondary teachers to monitor students' academic performance. In addition, regular education teachers may view students' individualized education plans (IEP).
10. IEP Direct®, web based software, allows special education teachers to write and monitor students' individualized education plans.
11. At the elementary level, all students receive keyboard training in grades kindergarten through six in the computer lab. It is monitored by the classroom teacher and the computer paraprofessional.
12. Special education classrooms have computers in their rooms to assist with special education students.
13. There are different types of technology available to teachers to assist students, i.e. every teacher has a computer available to them. At the high school, Elmos and projectors are available, appropriate grade level calculators, design and digital software, Finale®, composing, and SMARTmusic®, instrumentation, computer aided design, databases for student research purposes.
14. The district has the capacity to offer Mandarin Chinese and American Sign Language with the use of distance learning technology. Special education students are currently participating in both of these courses.

Student Outcomes:

15. Software technology is allowing students to have real life business experiences. The students involved received an award from an art and literary magazine of the National Council of Teachers of English.

Areas of Strength

The following areas of strength in the district's overall programs were identified during the District Review process:

1. District teaching assistants
2. Special Education students are treated with respect and participate at the secondary school integrated social and extra-curricular programs.
3. Positive atmosphere and philosophy to ensure that students' needs are being met
4. A developing Co-teaching model at the elementary level, inclusive of planning time, was implemented
5. Caring, dedicated, passionate staff
6. Potential of the Youth Intervention Team and its initial implementation K-2
7. AIS teacher and assistant teacher at elementary school
8. Cultural diversity displays at high school
9. Availability of staff (regular education) to colleagues and parents
10. Elementary school tiles project
11. Differentiated math at elementary school
12. School is safe, healthy community based institution
13. Video conferencing (LOTE)
14. Small class sizes
15. Procedures followed to implement co-teaching at 3rd grade level

Recommendations for Growth

The following recommendations for growth in the district's overall program were identified during the District Review process:

INDICATOR 1: LEADERSHIP

1. The district needs to have a clearly enunciated vision and plan for special education which is communicated and understood by the staff. Once this is in place the table of organization should be reviewed to include the CSE Chairperson and the Special Education Department Head. Job descriptions should be published and widely disseminated.
2. The present models being used to deliver instruction in special education need to be evaluated to determine their effectiveness in meeting state and federal standards.
3. Communication links between administration and staff at all levels should be reviewed to see if they foster
 - a. collaboration
 - b. ownership of program
 - c. an emphasis on prevention
 - d. a sense of shared decision making
4. The district needs to examine its present structure of providing planning time inclusive of allocated time, utilization of time, articulation between regular ed and special ed staff and time for co-planning between teacher assistants and teachers.

INDICATOR 2: INSTRUCTION

1. The district appears to have some commitment to the co-teaching model for delivering instruction. In order to more dramatically facilitate its implementation the following areas need review:
 - o Time assigned for co-teaching
 - o Grouping (sorting) students identified as special need students
 - o Regular education program's ability to educate diverse learners
2. The Youth Intervention Team at the elementary level appears to be a pre-cursor for the Response to Intervention Model. The pupil support team at the secondary level provides support for identified students but does not address pre-requisite alternative strategies for teaching in the regular class. All teachers need to become conversant with RTI and its impact on the instructional package.
3. Teaching Assistants are relied on to a large extent to teach identified students. This relationship appears personal at this time and linked to the assigned classes to move

to a more professional basis. A district protocol on teacher-teacher assistants should be developed, disseminated and implemented.

4. Other instructional issues to be addressed include:
 - TA's input on IEPs
 - TA involvement in non-core subject

INDICATOR 3: CURRICULUM

1. Examine the curriculum in the regents required subjects (i.e. English, Math, etc.) to insure that the curriculum is aligned K-10, 11 or 12. Once examined, create curriculum maps to help special education staff to identify essential learning at each step.
2. Strategies to integrate the special education program curriculum and the regular education program should be explored to promote joint ownership of identified students.
3. Reading Recovery® is a program designed to accelerate student achievement. If it is successful in the district it should be viewed as a prototype of special programs in areas related to instruction and staff development.

INDICATOR 4: ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Staff Development, to a large extent, is individually driven and BOCES viewed as a primary vendor. The SACI Model suggests that staff development be systemic and district wide in nature and have the following components:
 - driven by student academic needs
 - trained in a practice
 - monitored to assure program compliance
 - students evaluated to assure academic success
2. Once the model is organized and implemented it should address issues related to:
 - funding
 - availability of training
 - collaborative training for regular education and special education teachers
 - IEP training for access and utilization by teachers and teacher assistants
 - sharing information among staff
 - model effective co-teaching techniques
 - turn-key trainers
 - use of superintendent days

In addition, content concerns should be addressed related to assistive technology

- classroom teachers trained to deal with diverse learners
- technology utilization

INDICATOR 5: DATA MANAGEMENT

1. The district wide website is commendable but should be examined for accuracy
2. District has information related to special education and there is evidence that it is disseminated and plans are being formulated to teach staff to utilize the data to impact curriculum and instruction. This needs to be done to address issues related to:
 - a results driven curriculum and instructional program
 - evaluation and analysis of programs, i.e. resource room, teacher assistance programs, etc.
 - presenting data to parents in a user friendly manner
3. A feedback loop should be built into a communication system to assure that messages have been effectively delivered.

INDICATOR 6 TECHNOLOGY:

1. Examine chain of command in relationship to defining the roles of the staff devoted to technology. Attention should be paid to technical issues and staff development. After examination clearly communicate the process and roles to teachers and teaching assistants.
2. Since teaching assistants carry some of the load for teaching students with disabilities , their knowledge and utilization base for using technology and assistive technology needs to be further developed. In addition parents interviewed felt there was a lack of utilization of assistive technology.
3. At present, the district is providing technological resources for teaching and learning. These appear to be under utilized. If this is substantiated strategies to increase utilization for teaching and learning needs to be implemented.
4. There was a concern about the utilization of Kurzweil®. Determine the stated purpose of the program and clearly communicate it to stakeholders.

Innovative/ Best Practices

The following innovative and best practices were identified during the District Review process:

1. Planning time half day a month for collaboration at the elementary school
2. Co-teaching
3. Pit Stop
4. Access to students IEPs
5. Reading and writing program in first grade
6. SIS availability
7. Teaching assistant's utilization of role playing and math instruction at the elementary level
8. Co-teaching seminar at elementary level
9. Video conference and district sharing
10. Castle Learning