

Brookfield Public Schools

Special Education Out of District Program Review
November 2023

CREC Mission, Vision, Core Values

Mission

Equity, excellence, and success for all through high-quality educational services.

Vision

To become our member districts' primary resource to facilitate collaborative efforts that create equitable and sustainable educational opportunities, assist in maximizing district and regional resources, and advance successful educational practices for all learners at all ages.

Core Values

Expect Excellence

Demand Equity

Act with Courage

Embrace Collaboration

Purpose

Evaluate in-district programs to meet the needs of students with disabilities in out-of-district placements.

Determine the patterns and trends in out-of-district placements initiated for Brookfield Public School students

Data Collection

- ▶ District documents and reports
- ▶ Connecticut State Department of Education data
- ▶ Special education student files (9)
- ▶ Staff survey (21 respondents)
- ▶ Focus groups and interviews (7 out of district teams, 9 families, 4 in-district staff)

Research Limitations

- ▶ Perception-based
- ▶ Sampling and its expectation to represent everyone
- ▶ Small N size
- ▶ One (1) school declined to participate

Promising Practices

1. In-district students are accessing the general education setting regularly
2. In-district programs are established in each building for students with significant cognitive disabilities
3. Strong school-based teams with a vested commitment to students
4. Special education leadership support and focus
5. Fiscal support to enhance programs in materials and professional learning

Key Findings

1. Out of district programs have high levels of protected collaboration and targeted professional learning time
2. Out of district programs have established theories of action, core values, procedures, and selective admissions criteria
3. Students in out of district programs do not have access to the general education setting or peers without disabilities
4. Most out of district programs have opportunities for parents and families to attend trainings, social events to promote community, and a regular frequency of parent meetings outside of PPTs
5. Difficult to determine specific reasons and rationale for out of district placement recommendations - parent initiated or district initiated

Recommendations for Consideration

1. Determine each program's theory of action, core values, and universal practices. Include building administration and general education teachers that have students from these programs in their classrooms.
2. Provide opportunities for teams to collaborate vertically across schools.
3. Develop an annual professional learning plan specific to team member roles.
4. Explore additional opportunities for family involvement, training, and support specific to the needs of students in district programs.
5. Build capacity around quality indicators for programs that serve students with significant cognitive disabilities or severe emotional disabilities.

Recommendations for Consideration

6. Conduct a self-assessment across district programs using program quality indicators, including general education teachers and building administrators. Include an analysis of staffing needs in the self-assessment.
7. Observe students in out of district programs as a form of professional learning, but also to determine practices that can be adopted into the district.
8. Ensure language in IEPs that include specific reasons for out-of-district placements in relation to the student's present levels of performance, impact of their disability, and goals/objectives.
9. Unwrap and apply Brookfield's Portrait of a Graduate and the district's 4Cs specific to students in the district's programs.