

Brookfield Public Schools

Special Education Program Review
Spring 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

Review the utilization of resources, organizational structures, student learning, and collaboration and communication

Data Collection

- ▶ District documents and reports
- ▶ Connecticut State Department of Education data
- ▶ Special education student files (39)
- ▶ Classroom observations (35)
- ▶ Staff survey (138 respondents)
- ▶ Parent survey (230 respondents)
- ▶ Focus groups and interviews (112 staff, 51 parents)

Research Limitations

- ▶ Perception-based
- ▶ Interpretation is subjective
- ▶ Sampling and its expectation to represent everyone

Promising Practices

1. Strong dedication and motivation across the district to support special education and students with disabilities, from all levels
2. Strong collaboration at the school level across members of a student's special education team, including general education and paraeducators
3. Potential for IEP Compliance Teacher position to evolve and impact practice
4. The Director of Instruction position to be filled in 2023-24 school year
5. Comprehensive training on IEP Quality in the 2022-23 school year
6. The district dedicates 24% of its local budget to special education
7. Continuum of services is already well-established
8. Special education teacher caseloads are desirable
9. Despite dissatisfaction with IEP implementation, parents were generally satisfied with their child's progress this year

Key Findings

1. The district needs a strategic plan for special education
2. Individual claims of noncompliance were not represented at the systems level
3. Communication issues in special education, reported by special education leadership, school staff, and parents
4. Special education staff desire a relationship with the special education Director that is conducive to a positive culture, teamwork, and collaboration
5. Availability of staff to implement IEPs created disruption and discontent, further intensified by lack of communication
6. IEPs do not articulate detailed present levels of performance, leading to other weaknesses in the IEP
7. IEP services are written inconsistently between the elementary and secondary level, preventing an accurate understanding of staffing needs
8. Inconsistent responses to requests for resources through special education leadership
9. Building leaders' role in special education is limited
10. District's intervention system operates more consistently at the elementary and middle school levels

Recommendations for Consideration

Systems level

1. Prioritize goals for special education in the district
2. Develop and implement a 3 - 5 year plan for improvement; adhere to principles of transparency and frequent communication about progress
3. Differentiate professional development across special education in alignment with a strategic plan for special education
4. Re-examine the building administrator's role in special education and establish shared expectations
5. Revisit the special education Supervisory model in light of the IEP Compliance Teacher and building administrators' roles
6. Examine the differences in how IEP services are written across the district and establish a consistent expectation
7. Continued training in IEP quality development, educational benefit, and meaningful inclusive practices for special education and general education staff

Recommendations for Consideration

Focused

1. Discuss and plan for any further proposals or changes in special education with building administrators prior to implementation
2. Remove the practice of special education teachers to simultaneously be providing adult support to individual students within the district's specialized special education programs
3. Deeply study the district's specialized special education programs
4. Review the high school's academic support model and scheduling special education services
5. Clarify understanding of an Independent Educational Evaluation vs an outside evaluation and establish parameters for recommendations at a PPT, provide professional development as appropriate
6. Revisit professional development in specialized reading programs for special education teachers