Hanscom Schools Walker Partnerships Program Evaluation

Purpose

- Identify areas of:

  - Strength
  - Needs
  - Recommendations

Commendations

The report commends the:

- District's efforts to meet the needs of students

- Superintendent and Administrator for Student Services for commissioning this report

- Enthusiasm and dedication of school based personnel to the students

- Continuous positive statements of encouragement and support by teachers and tutors to students

- Support to students and families as they transition into and away from the Base Schools and community

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Commendations (cont.)

- Full inclusion model of service delivery

- Types and use of data:
  - Special education census
  - Outcomes of evaluation
  - Student need data for determining staffing levels

- Primary School implementation of school-wide Positive Behavioral Intervention system

- Well written Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

- Motor room size and resources

- Ample supply of sensory equipment for general education classrooms

Commendations (cont.)

- Well skilled tutors in their use of effective strategies and behavioral interventions
- Use of microphones by kindergarten teachers as a calming influence and effective classroom management tool
- Class size and in-class support with small group and individual instruction to address student needs at all levels
- Teachers' use of similar language to gain student attention at the time of transition

Commendations (cont.)

- Instructional Support Teams (IST) and the Primary School's BEST process
- Tiered systems of instructional support for math and language arts within general education classes and in pull-out services
- Use of evidence-based teaching strategies
- Communication among classroom teachers, special education personnel, specialist and related services providers

Factors Affecting the Implementation of Programming and Services

- Transitory nature of the school population
- Special education census of 14.5% (below the 17% State average)
- Inclusion of special needs students
- Fiscal factors of special education
- Out of district placements
- Advocacy and legal perspective
- Educational experience

Findings

- Concern re: balance of special education staffing between campuses, especially with the number of tutors at the Base schools and number of out of district placements
- Lack of structured planning time between tutors and their respective special education liaison
- Question of less effective instruction through inclusion rather than instruction in a separate setting

Findings

- Professional development needs to be expanded, on-going and in-depth over time and focused on the needs of the populations being served
- Evaluations are being conducted for a high number of 7th and 8th grade students
- The number of typical students requiring literacy and math support is increasing

Findings

- Insufficient mental health services provided given the level of student need
- More focused, concentrated instruction that is substantially separate needed for some students
- Clarification of the IST process use of data and intervention
- Establishment of entrance and exit criteria needed for all special education services
- Increase in common planning time between and among special education staff and special education staff and general education staff needed

Recommendations

- Implement Flexible Therapeutic Inclusion Support Model
  - Respond to students in the moment
  - Provide significant support to students
  - Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Collaborative Problem Solving
  - Staffing:
    - Special Education Teacher with a therapeutic background
    - Clinical Social Worker
    - Therapeutic Intervention Specialist

Recommendations (cont'd)

- Develop and implement a co-teaching model of instruction, one class at each grade level
- Implement a training program in the area of trauma and learning
  - Curriculum
  - Instructional strategies
  - Classroom support
  - Behavior management

Recommendations (cont.)

- Provide a comprehensive professional development program re: general and special education topics
- Provide clarification of the tutor position
- Develop criteria for determining the need for a tutor
- Collect data to determine how to respond to the increased demand for mental health services

Recommendations (cont.)

- Provide appropriate levels of support to staff who provide mental health services and respond to crisis situations while performing regular aspects of their positions
- Review the Instructional Support Team (IST) process
- Formulate a strategy to enable all staff to have common planning time

Recommendations (cont.)

- Review evidenced-based practices and support services to determine alignment and effectiveness in meeting the needs of the current and ever changing population
- Ensure that IEP language is consistent in IEP service grids
- Provide clinical consultation to the mental health professionals on a consistent basis

Next Steps

- Review recommendations with school administrators
- Prioritize recommendations
- Develop an action plan to respond to the Walker evaluation report