



To: Mr. Watts, Superintendent
Ms. Malone, Chairperson of the Board
Members of Newport Board of Education

August 29, 2024

Exceptional Children Operations

This report highlights key areas of our work, including related services provided, the implementation of CEC high-leverage practices, professional development, and our ongoing initiatives for educational improvements.

Overview of Related Services

- **Service Spectrum:** Our district continues to offer a comprehensive range of related services essential to the success of our students with disabilities, including speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, mental health therapy, orientation and mobility supports for visually impairments, and specialized bus transportation.
- **Related Service Provider Collaboration:** Our approach emphasizes collaboration between related service providers, classroom teachers, and families, ensuring each student receives coordinated and comprehensive support. Service providers are in attendance at all Admission and Release Committee Meetings where IEP's are developed. Service providers communicate with parent/guardians' the type of services needed, rational for these services, and frequency/schedule of services provided during the school year for their child.
- **Service Delivery Scope:** To date, 199 related services are scheduled to be provided.
- **Related Service Provider Personnel:**

Full-Time Related Service Providers:

M. Kaising – Speech and Language Pathologist

K. Munn- Mental Health Therapist

J. Scruggs – Mental Health Therapist

Part-Time (Contracted) Providers:

P. Kaising – Speech and Language Pathologist

S. Anthrop – Speech and Language Pathologist

M. Kaising – Speech and Language Pathologist

A. Martin- Physical Therapist

A. Tucker – Occupational Therapist

M. Gerton-Orientation and Mobility

Implementation of CEC High-Leverage Practices

We continue to prioritize the integration of Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) high-leverage practices within our classrooms, focusing on evidence-based strategies that enhance student learning and engagement.

- **Practice Adoption:** Our educators have actively embraced these practices, emphasizing explicit instruction, collaboration with colleagues, embracing technology, analyzation of student information to inform educational decisions, and utilizing parent engagement to improve student outcomes.

Professional Development

This year, we conducted several professional development sessions to equip our teachers and staff with the skills needed to implement practices effectively. Examples include targeted training on data-driven decision-making, individualized instruction techniques and accurately evaluating student specific educational needs as it relates to the medical diagnosis and disabilities. To do this effectively special education teachers must have access to a wide variety of comprehensive resources, and a clear understanding of the following:

- **Medical Knowledge:** Special education teachers must have a foundational understanding of various medical conditions and disabilities, including how these can impact learning and behavior. Ongoing professional development in areas like neurodiversity, mental health, and specific disabilities (e.g., autism spectrum disorders, ADHD, physical impairments) is crucial.
 - **IEP Development Skills:** Teachers require training in creating and managing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), including setting realistic, measurable goals and identifying appropriate accommodations and modifications.
 - **Data Analysis:** Educators need to be proficient in interpreting medical reports, assessments, and academic data to identify student needs accurately. Training in data-driven decision-making ensures that instructional strategies are based on solid evidence.
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- **Assessment Tools:** Teachers need have access to a variety of assessment tools, both standardized and informal, to evaluate students' academic and functional performance. These tools help in determining the present levels of performance and in identifying areas where students require additional support to be successful.
- **Assistive Technology:** Availability of assistive technology, such as speech-to-text software, adaptive devices, and specialized communication tools, is essential to help students overcome barriers to learning and access the general curriculum.
- **Curricular Resources:** A diverse array of instructional materials, including differentiated curricula and resources designed for various learning levels, is necessary to meet the individualized needs of students.
- **Understanding IDEA and ADA:** Special education teachers must be well-versed in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to ensure that they are meeting all legal requirements for providing accommodations and modifications.
- **Ethical Decision-Making:** Teachers need to be equipped with the skills to navigate ethical dilemmas, ensuring that they always act in the best interests of their students while respecting their rights and dignity.

Future Initiative: Artificial Intelligence (AI) Integration in the Classrooms

Looking ahead, we are excited to explore new avenues for enhancing our special education services. Our staff has received training on integrating artificial intelligence (AI) in the classroom, a new initiative designed to enhance personalized learning experiences and provide students with cutting-edge tools that support their unique educational needs. AI integration can tailor educational experiences, enhance accessibility, and support individualized learning.

Examples of AI Integration:

1. Personalized Learning

- **Adaptive Learning Platforms:** AI-powered tools can adjust the difficulty of tasks in real time based on a student's performance, providing personalized learning paths that cater to individual strengths and needs.
- **Customized Instruction:** AI can help create customized instructional materials and resources that address the unique needs of students with disabilities, ensuring they receive instruction that aligns with their learning style and district curricular content.

2. Enhanced Accessibility

- **Speech Recognition and Text-to-Speech:** AI technologies like speech-to-text can assist students with physical disabilities or those with reading impairments participate in classroom activities and completing assignments.
 - **Real-Time Translations:** AI can provide real-time captioning and translation services, which is particularly beneficial for students who are deaf or hard of hearing and those who use a different language as their primary mode of communication.
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3. Assistive Technology

- Smart Assistive Devices: AI can power assistive devices such as voice-controlled technology, and predictive text tools that help students with mobility impairments or communication challenges interact more effectively with educational content.

Special Education Service Programming Rates:

- Special Education Population
208 Students
- Related Service Enrollments:
Speech & Language- 73
Occupational Therapy – 31
Physical Therapy – 6
Mental Health Therapy- 51
Orientation & Mobility- 1

Alternate Service Locations:

- Restore Program – 7
- Home/Private School Students – 4
- Newport School of Innovation- 4

504 Programming Rates – 13 Students

- NPS- 1
- NIS – 2
- NHS – 11
- NSOI- 1

District Mental Health Programming:

Number of Students Receiving Individual Therapy:

- Newport Primary School-J. Scruggs
16 Students Total/Caseload
- Newport Intermediate School-K. Munn
33 Students Total/Caseload
- Newport High School-Hannah Lunde
34 Students Total/Caseload

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Swanson
