

Evaluation Report Manchester-Essex Regional School District Special Education Programs

Educational Consultants

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Conducted December 2022-January 2023

Commendations

Evaluation

- Superintendent and Director of Student Services for requesting this independent evaluation
- MERSD Staff for sharing their insight and feedback about their roles and responsibilities and ideas for improving special education services and best practices.
- Strong Collaboration between teachers, paraprofessionals, and related service providers

Commendations

INCLUSION

- Quality Inclusion / Co-Teaching experiences
- Related Services providers SLP's, OT, and PT were forward thinking and worked with teachers to increase co-treatments, and push in vs. pull out therapy
- High school learning strategies liaisons and the middle school moderate liaisons model are vital components of both the middle school and high school.

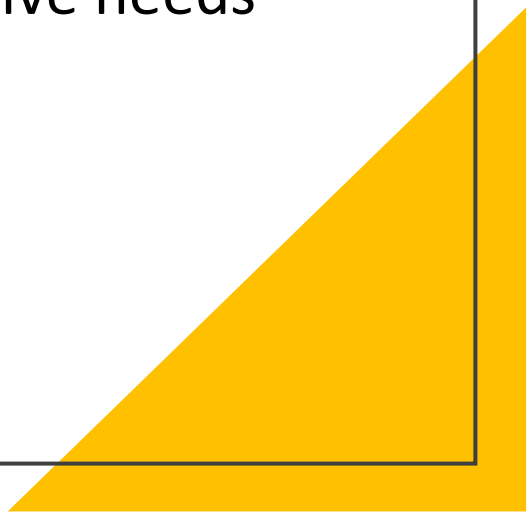
Commendations

High Quality In-District Programs

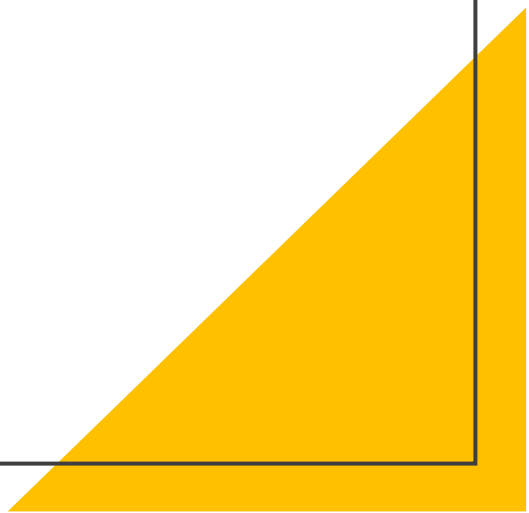
- **IRWL** (Intensive Reading Writing Language)
- **TRANSITIONS** Social - Emotional
- **ACE** (Academic and Communication Program)
- **PRESCHOOL PROGRAM** strong collaborative staff, excellent teacher, student ratios

Recommendations


Preparing Pre-School for Future Growth

- Increase of Students with more intensive needs
 - Potential for Universal Pre-School
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Re-Structure ACE / SWING

- This was been implemented in the 2023-2024 School Year
 - Updated Program Descriptions
 - Criteria for Assigning 1:1's
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Chairperson's Role should be changed to an Administrative Position

- To observe and evaluate
 - to have authority to make “Resource” Decisions at IEP meetings as stated by DESE regulations.
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The Cost of Least Restrictive Environments (LRE)

- Percentage of Budget spent on Special Education
- Circuit Breaker
- Transportation Costs
- Cost Avoidance

The Cost of Least Restrictive Environments (LRE)

- Staffing
- Resources: Curriculum, Technology

Professional Development

- Professional Development TEAM
- General Education and Special Education Collaboration with Students with Special needs. Understanding Roles and Responsibilities.
- Relevant to Support Related Service Providers.

Recommendation Updates and Status

Recommendation	Steps to Implementation	Status
Provide Increased Oversight of the Manchester-Essex Early Childhood Program	Add a Preschool chair/BCBA/supervisor position as the program expands.	Position on hold due to budget
Manchester-Essex Team Chairpersons Should Have Independent Contracts	Move chairpersons into administrative contracts.	Further action on hold pending discussion with META and consideration of budget implications

Recommendation	Steps to Implementation	Status
Restructure ACE/SWING Programs and Update Program Descriptions	<p>Program review was completed in FY23 and 24 with staff. Program name is now ACE. Program descriptions updated.</p> <p>Complex needs classrooms for younger children consolidated at Memorial.</p>	<p>Completed</p>
Re-evaluate Staff to Student Ratios and One-to-One Assistants Assigned to Specific Students	<p>Student to staff ratios assessed in all programs. 1:1 criteria established.</p> <p>Teaching assistants reduced in MS ACE program and teacher added. HS is implementing similar model in FY25.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Recommendation	Steps to Implementation	Status
Professional Development for General Education and Special Education	Training for special education department and parents in new IEP this year.	
	Administrative training on UDL completed this year.	Ongoing
	Partnering with curriculum director on PD for next year that will address UDL and students with disabilities.	
Update District Procedures Manual	District policies and procedures are under review in preparation for Tiered Focus Monitoring with DESE in FY 25	Ongoing