

Coventry Public Schools

Todd Giansanti, Director of Pupil and Staff Support Services

Goal Achievement: 2017-2018

1. Identify, define, and measure the critical skills and attributes that are required for success and align systems to continuously improve student performance and achievement.

- *Conduct a comprehensive analysis of the continuum of services to use as a basis for the development of a three-year plan to enhance special education services districtwide.*

The Coventry Public School District is dedicated to providing successful, exciting, and beneficial learning experiences for all children. Our administrators, teachers, and support staff have worked collaboratively to develop a wide variety of programs and services to meet each child's unique learning needs.

The goal of our Pupil and Staff Support Services program is to provide equal access and equal opportunities for all Coventry school children in the least restrictive environment. In order to ensure that we fulfill this goal, the task of analyzing the continuum of services begins with understanding the needs of all stakeholders, students, families and staff. I continue to review current district systems in place for identifying student need for services, frequency of services, and measurement instruments for determining student success and program effectiveness.

I have conducted a district-wide analysis of student referral information beginning with students entering preschool who receive birth to three services as well as students referred to special education. Analysis includes, but is not limited to, the review of intervention services provided prior to referral, type of special education referral, referral outcome and if identified, what exceptionality.

In collaboration with building administration, I have reviewed special education teacher caseloads to ensure equitable distribution of students. This is to ensure that our students are educated in the least restrictive environment while providing program flexibility to further meet student needs. Building schedules are carefully constructed to support a collaborative instructional model where special educators and reading and math interventionists deliver a research based, multi-tiered program.

As the needs of our students change, our interventions and delivery of supports must also. This year, I have initiated a time study, surveying the daily activities of our related service providers. This study will provide valuable information as I collaboratively conduct a comprehensive analysis of district special education and related services.

Extended School Year (ESY) services provide individualized programming to prevent student regression and to reduce recoupment time of lost skills over the summer break. By meeting

with parents, reviewing student progress and working with teachers to monitor these areas, recommendations and enhancements have been made to continue to meet our students' needs during the summer.

In collaboration with our special education and related services professionals, a district-wide review of psychological, achievement, speech and language and motor evaluation instruments was conducted. The review not only ensured the most recent and advanced assessment inventory, but additional evaluations have been acquired to enable our evaluators to provide further insight into student learning. With the support of our consulting psychologists, our professionals have increased their repertoire of assessment materials and have gained additional knowledge in the delivery and interpretation of evaluation instruments. I have established district-wide system supports to provide ongoing professional learning opportunities for our staff in this area.

- *Continue to work with key stakeholders to develop a multi-year plan to review, evaluate and enhance the Pre K-12 autism program.*

Continuing our work with the district's autism program, I worked with district leadership and consultants to conduct a site visit to an out of district autism program, developed strategic planning guides and facilitated ongoing focus group meetings to prioritize district needs in order to ensure program enhancement. I worked closely with EASTCONN consultants to ensure weekly common planning time with our Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) program teachers and para-educators, and further expanded learning opportunities during scheduled professional development days to all K-5 teachers and district support service staff.

In order to support a continuum of services for students, a multi-year planning document guides our work, ensuring facilities, curriculum and staffing needs continue to be met. Multiple site visits have been conducted at Coventry Grammar School and George Hersey Robertson School to ensure building facilities continue to meet programming and incoming student needs upon the start of the 2018-2019 school year. Due to anticipated student need and to further support the comprehensive plan of ensuring a continuum of services for students districtwide, site visits have been conducted by all stakeholders at Captain Nathan Hale Middle School to begin the development of ABA programming for the 2018-2019 school year.

As we continue to support programming, we have collaborated with EASTCONN's consulting Board Certified Behavior Analysts to provide weekly embedded professional development to staff, while accomplishing set program goals.

With the expansion of our ABA programming ranging to multiple schools in Coventry, the support and implementation of vertical teaming has been initiated. This not only ensures that we have the correct supports in place for our special education students, but provides a framework for scaffolding as we continue to build and enhance services.

- *Work with district administrators to review, evaluate and refine alternative programming.*

The Coventry Public School District is committed to providing a quality education to all students in a safe and inclusive environment. Alternative education programs offer a different pathway in which children are more apt to achieve educational success. Coventry is committed to not only continually meeting the needs of at-risk students but to further explore and develop innovative programming to enhance the learning experience for all students.

Examples of this comprehensive review and refinements include:

Coventry Grammar School:

- ❖ Reallocated resources to support a developmental teaching model/alternative education program.
 - Curriculum
 - Staffing
 - Facilities

Developmental Teaching is a comprehensive method of teaching that fosters increasingly responsible behavior, social and emotional competence, and academic progress. Based on the findings of developmental psychologists such as Piaget, Bronfenbrenner, Erickson, Vgotsky, Olson and Brunner, teachers must be equipped with an understanding of the mind of a child from a developmental perspective by uniting developmental research and practice. As such, a developmental map for guiding educators in the sequence of key competencies that are typically acquired from birth through the teen years is critical in ensuring mastery of developmental tasks necessary for healthy development. Further, teachers are able to safeguard against practices that are developmentally inappropriate and inadvertently lead children to develop maladaptive habits of mind and coping. Developmental Teaching provides a framework to guide school wide practices which spans teacher capacity building, collaboration with developmental specialists, prevention, targeted interventions, and developmental classrooms.

A developmental classroom is a supportive environment with a low teacher-student dynamic to address developmental anxieties, developmental stagnation, and reverse the downward cycle of chronic failure to learn. By identification of the child's developmental stage (Stage 1, 2, or 3), rather than chronological age, instructional needs and environmental accommodations are carefully and explicitly designed to meet the unmet developmental needs of the child while ensuring educational success. Stage 1, 2, or 3 classrooms will all encompass the following developmental teaching beliefs as a general foundation: focus on students' individual strengths, follow developmental guidelines, provides lessons that elicit pleasure and success, and make school positive and individually relevant. With the developmental foundation in place, the

developmental teacher will intentionally align teaching pedagogy to development and mastering developmental competencies.

To initiate a developmental classroom, I have collaborated with district personnel and consulting psychologists to accomplish this task. As students exhibit the need for this type of intervention, developmental assessments have been identified and acquired, staff have been trained to proctor and interpret evaluation results to determine the developmental stage, developmental anxiety and appropriate stage classroom. I have supported the development of a work group charged with the task of constructing a developmental classroom, which incorporates evaluation results to drive appropriate individualized programming. Programming includes but is not limited to an environment with a small student to teacher ratio that provides consistent staffing continuously trained to recognize emotional needs conveyed by student behavior. Teachers support our students with developmentally appropriate instructional strategies, which assists in meeting behavioral competencies as well as Individualized Education Program (IEP) objectives. These strategies encourage willing participation and curriculum content that evoke enthusiastic student participation and help alleviate and resolve developmental anxieties. I have secured developmental specialists to provide feedback to our teachers, para-educators and related service staff in the areas of developmental teaching.

Coventry Academy

The goal of the Coventry Academy is to offer a different pathway in which children are more apt to achieve educational success and ultimately earn their high school diploma. This year, we identified Coventry Academy as its own school with the State of Connecticut. A review of Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) guidelines for distinguishing "Schools" verses "Programs" further confirmed the appropriateness of the Academy's school classification. The Academy is housed in it's own facility and has assigned faculty. Students are enrolled for a school year, providing a flexible schedule to students requiring a self contained schedule or a model that incorporates classes at Coventry High School and complies with all appropriate state statutes. To better meet the needs of this student population, we have expanded access to the Vocation trainer to increase post-secondary opportunities and provide push in counseling services to increase participation rate and further foster group collaboration.

Further enhancements to the program will include expanding the facility to accommodate student and staff needs, reviewing and revising curriculum to include an interdisciplinary approach and reallocating a special education teacher to support the student needs.

- *Collaborate with district administration to support the NAEYC accreditation process as it relates to special education programming.*

As the Hale Early Education Center (HEEC) prepares for the NAEYC accreditation process, I have provided direct support to our preschool administrator and staff. Weekly meetings were held with the HEEC administrator to develop and review the progress toward developed action plans directly related to NAEYC accreditation. I have conducted building walkthroughs, reviewed and scheduled staff at HEEC to ensure early childhood experience requirements are met, supported the facilitation of mandated professional trainings and monitored grant requirements. Additional examples of actions completed are listed below.

Action	Completed
Monitored the number of staff who meet Qualified Staff Member (QSM) requirements for School Readiness and Smart Start Grants.	All teachers meet criteria. 42% of the para-educators (50 % NAEYC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working to adjust posting to attract candidates who meet requirements
Ensured staff / student ratios are met	Continued review of class size/program description to maintain staffing ratios of 1:10 for licensing.
Supported Professional Development to meet NAEYC Standard 6 focus areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of ethical conduct • Health & safety guidelines • Curriculum • Knowledge of specific ages taught • Special Education • Child abuse and neglect/mandated report training
Thrive Grant Application	Preschool awarded grant through the Office of Early Childhood to receive NAEYC accreditation support from Eastconn's Early Childhood Specialist. Monthly on-site visits. Work involved review of classroom and program portfolios and preparation of staff for NAEYC visit.
Participated on the School Readiness Council	Collaborated with committee members as the McKinney-Vento Liaison. Committee action plan implemented to focus on state and program requirements

- *Collaborate with the various stakeholders in the evaluation and implementation of procedures to support the district alignment of the Hale Early Education Center (HEEC).*

There were many tasks associated in supporting the district alignment of the Hale Early Education Center (HEEC). In collaboration with all district stakeholders, I worked to review and restructure the HEEC registration process to best model current practice and procedures utilizing the PowerSchool platform. This entailed regular workgroup sessions to review and revise registration forms which were programmed by our technology professionals to the district database. I collaborated with district and the HEEC administrators to support the completion of the Parent/Student Handbook, specifically relating to special education, transportation, and preschool screening. To support the transition of our preschool students to kindergarten, I secured professionals in the area of social/emotional learning and child development who presented to staff at Coventry Grammar School during vertical teaming.

- *Work with key stakeholders to support the implementation and evaluation of the newly designed model for research based interventions.*

To prepare for the addition of identified research based interventions, I have collaborated with the district leadership and building administrators to support the implementation of an inclusive schedule, combining interventionists and special education teachers in service delivery. With this restructuring, professional development has been ongoing to foster a collaborative learning environment that spans beyond our special education teachers. Special education teachers, interventionists, general education teachers, administrators, support service staff and paraeducators participated in specific and shared learning opportunities. This has increased our district's capacity in meeting the various needs of our learners. A collaborative review and monitoring of our multi-tiered research based intervention system that includes delivery of programming by both reading and math interventionists and special education teachers is ongoing to ensure student academic growth.

Examples of the research based interventions that our teachers utilize with students include:

K-5	Foundations
K-2	Lips
Gr. 1	Reading Recovery
K-2	Read Naturally-Gate
K-8	LLI
K-5	Ortin Gillingham
Gr. 3-8	Just Words

Gr. 3-8	Visualizing and Verbalizing
K-5	Bridges
Gr. 3-8	Aleks Math

- *Collaborate with district personnel to develop structures, procedures and guidelines in reviewing student goals and objectives to ensure alignment to grade level standards to support student learning.*

Many states and local school districts are embracing a revised approach to how they develop Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students receiving special education. This approach—most often referred to as “standards-based IEPs”—is driven by changes to both the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the current Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)—known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB). While the requirement that every student receiving special education have an IEP is not new, linking the content of a student’s IEP to the state’s academic standards for the student’s enrolled grade is both new and challenging. This approach seeks to raise the learning expectations for students with disabilities—including those with a specific learning disability increasing opportunities for students to make significant achievement gains. This process focuses on alignment with what all students are expected to know and do (Cortiella, C, Understanding the Standards-based Individualized Education Program (IEP) National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2008). The work associated with this continues for the next few school years as we continue to improve the work our educators do to ensure student achievement of the standards and the instruction our special educators deliver to help students realize their strengths to compensate for their disabilities.

Professional development is strategic and aligned with district goals. In accordance with this goal, our educators participated in a wide variety of learning activities, including a training provided by The State Education Resource Center of Connecticut, titled “Writing Effective IEP’s”. This training focused on the further development of writing IEP goals and objectives and assessing student progress. As an additional means to this end, common planning time supports embedded teacher development, as our collaborative service delivery model of special education, interventionists and district curriculum coaches ensure IEP and State Standards align.

2. Maintain and promote a positive and respectful learning community.

- *Work with district administration to analyze and explore ways to utilize technology systems to maximize efficiencies related to the many facets of special education.*

As technology continues to evolve, I have in collaboration with the technology staff analyzed and explored ways to utilize technology systems to maximize efficiencies while ensuring student privacy. Many districts utilize paper copies to communicate confidential student information to teachers and related service providers. This archaic practice leaves room for human error and increases the likelihood of this sensitive information landing in the hands of an unintended audience. Through the exploration of available and reliable technology systems a plan has been constructed to utilize electronic resources to share student information on a need to know basis.

An example of the work being conducted includes:

IEP Viewer for Powerschool

The IEP viewer will allow general education teachers to view the last finalized IEP in Powerschool. The general education teacher will only be able to view the students assigned to their class.

Timeline for implementation

- ❖ April 6th - tested on live side
 - Works well
- ❖ April - develop training materials for staff meetings
 - Communicate changes in system to Pupil & Staff Support Services staff who complete IEP and 504 plans for students
- ❖ May/June
 - Present to PSSS leadership team - May 22nd
 - Share/Develop processes and procedures for implementation
 - Develop training
- ❖ **Target June 4th as "Go Live" date for implementation**

Data-Base Alerts

- ❖ Wednesday, April 18th - installed plug-in (in test...can be available in Live environment at any time)
- ❖ April-May
 - Reviewed processes by school
 - Develop common protocol collaboratively with administration and leadership team
 - Develop training materials for Secretary Retreat in Summer

- ❖ August - train secretaries in new procedures
- ❖ First day of school and beyond - roll out

I have worked with building administrators and IT staff to develop and schedule time to present process and procedures in accessing and utilizing technology to acquire student information through our district student information system (PowerSchool). This will further support the secure communication of student needs to the staff working directly with them.

- *Continue to collaborate with community agencies and key stakeholders in order to develop and provide resources to support students with disabilities as they transition within Coventry Public Schools, as well as plan for post-secondary opportunities.*

We continue to provide support for student transition to and from Coventry Public Schools by working directly with our special educators, support service staff, general education teachers and administrators in identifying appropriate programming needs for a variety of learners. We work closely with sending school districts and agencies, families and state appointed surrogates to offer a variety of service options in order to ensure students are educated in the least restrictive environment.

In order to further support our students and families as they transition from school to school, I have worked with our building administrators and service staff so that the receiving school teacher representatives attend PPTs and are able to immediately address parent questions and concerns. I have worked with all stakeholders to implement districtwide procedures, including, but not limited to, vertical teaming to ensure a seamless transition as our students transition from school to school and to post-secondary programs.

I have supported our transition service providers in way of professional development in order to provide students and families accurate and timely information regarding available post-secondary services. Our school transition coordinator and vocational trainer are essential in supporting Coventry students and families as they work to navigate the post-secondary school process. They have attended state and regional forums and worked to bring professional learning opportunities back to district. For students requiring post-secondary services, our school psychologists and consulting neuropsychologist support students and families by providing additional updated evaluations and work directly with transition coordinators to ensure state and local documentation is completed upon graduation. Extensive work has been accomplished by the district to enhance Coventry's 18-21 Transition Program.

Examples of our work included:

- ❖ Expanding the job sites to offer a variety of work experience to our students. These sites include:
 - All Pets Club
 - Crossroad Fitness Center
 - Manchester Area Conference of Churches
 - Hale Early Education Center
 - Price Chopper
 - Petco
 - Walgreens
 - Windham Interfaith Ministry

- ❖ Coventry Public School's 18-21 Transition program is in alignment with CSDE standards:

Curriculum Area	Key Activities	CT Core Transition
Money/Budgeting	Identifies amount of a coin and paper money Add and subtracts like and unlike coins/bills Pays a cashier and waits for change Uses a wallet to organize money Understands that tax is applied to items Compares the cost of items in different store Reviewing sales circulars Understands the meaning and use of a coupon Design a budget Visit a bank and learn about the different services	B,C,F,H,L
Cooking/Kitchen Safety	Using equipment properly Reading a recipe Measuring liquid and dry ingredients Handling sharp objects safely Storing food safely Table manners Setting a table	B,C,F,H
Nutrition and exercise	Understands the benefit of exercise Identifies different types of exercising Making healthy choices Identifying the five food groups	B,C,H,J
Transportation	Learn about and how to use a public transportation Identify services that are offered in the community	B,C,F,K,O
Computer/Technology	Safety on the internet How to save a file Locating a saved file Finding information on the internet (movie times, stores, activities, etc.)	B,C,K,L,P
Self-care, hygiene	Showering or bathing Caring for hair Caring for nails Caring for teeth	B,C,H,J

	Washing hands and face Washing hands before eating Toileting Learning about healthcare resources	
Telephone Use	Calling for appointments or service Calling friends and acquaintances Calling in emergencies Answering calls from others	B,C,F,H,J
Cleaning and care of clothing	Washing and drying clothes Appropriate clothing for work Folding and storing clothes Changing clothes daily	B,C,H
Cleaning and care of home	Vacuuming Identify appropriate cleaning supplies Dusting and wiping surfaces Neatening and organizing Washing dishes Making beds	B,C,H

- ❖ Our Vocational program, with the oversight of the Coventry Food Services Department, developed a Food Rescue Program at G.H. Robertson School and Captain Nathan Hale Middle School.
- ❖ Facilities:
 - In collaboration with the Town of Coventry, relocation to Patriots Park.
 - Students will have access to an efficiency style apartment to increase authentic learning opportunities as outlined by CSDE Transition Curriculum.
 - Increase community engagement. Students manage Coventry Food Pantry in the Community Building.
- ❖ Inter-district collaboration:
 - Social/Luncheon with Vernon's 18-21 transition program.
 - In Collaboration with Bolton Public Schools, Coventry will host a transition night scheduled for the Fall of 2018 to support families new to special education as well as requiring post-secondary transition support. (PK - 21)

The expansion of programming will not only be an example in which other schools can model, but also increase our capacity to serve a potential need for surrounding towns. The Coventry Transition (18-21) Program is a collaboration of the individual, family, school, and community to support secondary students' special education services, maximizing each student's potential for a successful transition toward adult independence.

- *Work collaboratively with district administrators and support staff in the development and enhancement of appropriate social-emotional learning and trauma informed practices.*

Our administrators, teachers, and support staff have worked collaboratively to develop a wide variety of programs and services to meet each child's unique learning needs. Often, students who have experienced trauma may be unavailable to learn unless specific structures and supports are developed and implemented. In collaboration with our elementary building administrators, I have attended multiple professional development opportunities to gain greater

understanding on best practice for school implementation of trauma sensitive programming and have supported our support service staff's learning goals in this area. We continue to identify and utilize in district and out of district experts in this field and implement programming immediately to increase our student's ability to find academic success. I continue to recruit experts in the field of neuropsychology and child development to provide consultation services, specifically in reviewing student cognitive profiles and developing alternative intervention strategies and programming to ensure continuous student progress. The neuropsychologist not only conducts advanced psychological testing, but also has provided training to our district psychologists to expand their repertoire of evaluations. This has led to a decrease in out of district evaluations, but has also immediately met our student and family needs. I have conducted multiple observations and site visits to therapeutic schools in order to gain programming insight and have utilized this information to develop programming in district. Trauma sensitive spaces have been developed in collaboration with district stakeholders to fulfill an immediate need in our elementary school. These are developmentally appropriate spaces that incorporate individual student interests in a safe and soothing environment. Special attention to detail was given when developing these multi-sensory retreats, such as dimmed lighting to the soothing color choices of paint on the walls.

3. Recruit, retain and develop high quality staff at every level.

- *Provide customized professional learning opportunities to ensure that staff are trained in best practices as well as informed of state mandates and requirements to increase district capacity to meet the diverse needs of our learners.*

Work has been conducted to ensure professional development opportunities are coherent with district goals as well as pertinent to staff and student needs. I have coordinated and facilitated district-wide special education and related service professional development plans in collaboration with administrators, service providers and experienced staff members. Our teachers have attended state and community led workshops, guest presenters were recruited to present in district, increasing staff participation while reducing costs, and our teachers and support personnel have facilitated workgroup activities. I have also promoted ongoing and embedded professional learning by utilizing in district resources to work with our staff on a regular basis. The items below reflect the professional development topics conducted this school year.

**Professional Development Topics
PK - 12**

Staff:

- Preschool staff orientation training included NAEYC Re-accreditation, NAEYC Standard 6, First aid/CPR, DCF Mandated Reporter training, NAEYC Portfolios for classrooms, standards based report cards, Buffering Stress and Reducing Challenging Behaviors for Young Children
- ABA Program - Best Practices in Supporting Special Populations with Eastconn
- Related Services staff - Trauma Training, Restraint and Seclusion, NEPSY, CBT - Focused Trauma Treatment for Children & Adolescents, Risk Assessments
- DCF Mandated Reporter Training
- Eureka Math
- Play Therapy
- Speech AAC/AT at Eastconn Library, Best Practices for Teaching Students who have a Vision Impairment with Additional Disabilities
- Social work supports - home visits, attendance truancy
- IEP finalization by leadership team to increase building capacity and provide immediate feedback to PSSS staff
- Alpine Training
- Bridges Intervention Program
- Psychological and Physical Management Training (PMT)
- Special Education teachers participated in Student Led Conference trainings
- Intervention Trainings - LLI, Visualizing and Verbalizing, LIPS, Just Words, Bridges, ALEKS, Reflex, Reading Recovery, Ortin Gillingham
- Positive Behavior Management Protocols
- Writing Standard Based IEP's with the State Education Resource Center
- Restorative Practices
- Student Work Protocol
- COTA - Fine Motor Skill Development, Handwriting Without Tears Program, Practical Strategies for Improving the Effectiveness, Efficiency and Impact of Your School-based Occupational Therapy Services
- Strategies to Foster Social-Emotional Well-Being
- Vertical Teaming - Social Emotional
- BAS III Training
- Chromebook Training
- CSRPI
- DTORF
- Youth Services Bureau - training on anxiety and school refusal
- Guidance - Yoga & Mindfulness in the Classroom: Tools to improve Self-regulation, Learning and Classroom Climate
- Provided an overview of the Special Education process during New Teacher Orientation, Administration and to the Board of Education

- *Develop systemic structures for professional learning opportunities for our special education and support service staff leadership team to maximize our ability districtwide to meet the complex needs of our students and families.*

As we continue to identify and promote staff leadership in order to maximize our ability districtwide to meet the needs of our students and families, I have worked to develop process and procedures to build district capacity. Monthly meetings are held districtwide with our Pupil Personnel Support Staff to review various professional topics related to special education and social/emotional learning. I have identified a Pupil and Staff Support Services leadership team who represent the district and the Pupil and Staff Support Services department. This team is provided with ongoing professional learning opportunities with the expectation of disseminating this information to building staff. The leadership team utilizes their knowledge to ensure that the district continues to model best practices in special education and is compliant with state mandates. The team provides oversight of the IEP writing process and provides immediate feedback to building staff as questions arise with my overarching support.

Examples of the Leadership Professional Development topics include:

Leadership Professional Development Topics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Alternative Education Best Practices ● Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention for K-12 (Risk Assessment) ● Legal Obligations and Best Practice - Shipman & Goodwin ● Developing Standards-based IEP's ● PPT Facilitation Strategies and Family Engagement Practices ● Performance Matters - Data Summit ● Bureau of Special Education - Back to School Meeting ● SEDAC User Training ● Supporting Families Trauma ● IEP finalization ● Child Find Requirements ● Case Review