

## Coventry Public Schools

Beth Giller, Director of Pupil and Staff Support Services  
2018-2019

### **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.**

#### **1.1 Analyze state standardized assessment data to identify strategies to reduce the gap between general education and special education students, grades 3 - 11.**

Reducing the achievement gap between general education and special education students, grades 3 - 11 continues to be an area of focus. This issue is not unique to Coventry, however Coventry is fortunate in that our district size affords educators the opportunity to know and understand students' needs well. While we have a systemic approach to reducing the gap, due to the diverse needs of our students, it is often necessary to tailor interventions for individuals.

While Connecticut's Scientific Research Based Intervention (SRBI) process recommends review of intervention services every 6-8 weeks, our process is more fluid. When intervention data indicates less growth than expected, the type of intervention, frequency of intervention, and interventionist are reviewed by the Team to support the student's progress. If concerns continue, then the team may request the support of our district consulting neuro-psychologist to review evaluations to provide recommendations for programming. This year, interventions were refined at all grade levels with additional staff being trained in Bridges Math and Orton-Gillingham reading.

Students with an IEP may be included in either Tier II and/or Tier III instruction/interventions. The extent to which all students are included in Tier I instruction is also important, however, as this provides equitable access to grade level curriculum. Thus, crafting a schedule that includes effective Tier I instruction as well as Tiered interventions can be a daunting task with which our special educators are masters. Tiered instruction is evaluated each year in conjunction with schedules to validate that we are meeting the diverse needs of our students.

Since the achievement gap is identified as a result of standardized testing, careful consideration is given to standardized testing environments including the size of the group testing, seating, proctors, time of day, and student's well-being on a given testing day. Students significantly below grade level, but who do not meet the criteria for the Connecticut Alternate Assessment, have now been included in the Interim Block Assessments (IABs) for appropriate exposure to the rigors of the test.

Moving forward, further examination is needed to determine the extent to which there is a correlation between intervention services and a student's IEP goals, as goals are written

in specific areas in need of improvement. In addition, an analysis of students' IEP goals and the instructional areas in which they are supported will be conducted to determine whether we are maximizing instructional time spent in support of IEP goals.

## **1.2 Refine and define the Autism Program practices and procedures to establish an effective continuum of services PreK-12.**

Coventry's Autism Program has evolved into a strong intensive instructional program. With the ongoing support of EASTCONN and in collaboration with our Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) staff, the program has clearly defined entrance and exit criteria in conjunction with an ABA Student Support Rubric. This means that student's eligibility for ABA programming will be based on predetermined criteria. In addition, when students no longer require the intensity of ABA programming, the student will be exited from the ABA teacher's caseload to be supported by other available programming.

Lead teachers at Coventry Grammar School (CGS) and George H. Robertson Intermediate School (GHR) have built their capacity to be able to closely monitor implementation of Discrete Trial Instruction (DTI) by conducting fidelity checks and graphed data. DTI is a structured ABA technique that breaks down skills into small, "discrete" components, teaching one skill at a time; instruction, response, and reinforcement. Explicit feedback and training is ongoing for all ABA program staff members to ensure that consistent implementation of services is delivered no matter who the interventionist may be. In addition, K-5 ABA teachers have been trained in Bridges Math and Leveled Literacy Intervention (reading) to provide higher functioning students appropriately rigorous material to ensure continuous growth.

Our ABA program expanded to Capt. Nathan Hale Middle School (CNH) this year. ABA team members shared their expertise in developing program books and implementing DTI with our middle school staff. This is noteworthy as our K-5 staff have the confidence and skills to provide training for staff and students. Ongoing collaboration to obtain appropriate instructional materials for incoming sixth grade students has been a spring area of focus in preparation for the new school year.

Ongoing training and support of our ABA programming has resulted in consistent staffing in the program. In addition, we now have a district K-5 BCBA and a .4 BCBA for students in grades 6-12 and our 18-21 program. Not only do our BCBA's support students with Autism and our ABA program, they are trained to conduct Functional Behavioral Analysis (FBAs) to collect ABC data -the antecedent (of the behavior), the

behavior (to modify), the consequence (event after the target behavior) to support students across the district.

The continuum of services includes standardized paperwork. Materials for student's individualized program books, including lesson plans, data sheets, behavior protocols, FBAs and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) are in the same format. District templates have been developed to ensure consistency and clarity in expectations.

### **1.3 Work collaboratively with building administrators and special educators to build continuity, stronger vertical alignment, and understanding in programming for special education services during transitions between buildings.**

Transitioning students to a new school can be challenging, not only for students and parents, but for educators as well. There are now many opportunities for students and staff to become familiar with their new school. Kindergarten, Grade 3, Grade 6 and Grade 9 Orientation evenings are in place. Grade 2 students visit GHR during school, and are invited in the spring to after school events. Students in need of additional support or those in intensive instructional program visit their new school several times in the spring to meet teachers and to become familiar with the new setting.

As the former administrator of GHR, grades 3-5, a middle child of sorts, it was evident to me that practices, programming, and Individual Education Plan (IEP) development was inconsistent from one level to the next. In the past, this posed challenges for special educators and administrators at the next level. This year the transition from Hale Early Education Center (HEEC) and CGS was the primary focus. Collaborative discussions included topics including, student needs, assessments, staff collaboration opportunities, Pupil Placement Team (PPT) invitees, IEP hours and setting, and evaluations identified for triennial PPTs. One of the results that made an immediate impact was including a kindergarten general education teacher and a related services staff member at the spring HEEC PPTs. This provided parents with the opportunity to ask specific questions about their child from the new school staff, and was optimum to ensure that appropriate services to support the child are provided. Similar protocols and practices are also in place for the transitions between CGS and GHR, GHR and CNH, and CNH and CHS. Staff is provided time in either the spring or August to collaborate and plan for next school year with their counterparts.

The education supports required by some students transitioning to a new building have been carefully reviewed and evaluated. To support student transitions, and in review of student needs and special educators' caseloads this year, staff members were transferred

across buildings to support areas in high need. While this may be atypical, it is evidence of the need for ongoing evaluation of needs, services, and resources.

In addition, a state grant provided us with the financial means to seek the assistance of an EASTCONN consultant to support staff in building fluency in utilizing effective strategies that maximize the outcomes and meaningful inclusion for students with low cognitive functioning. The goal is to maximize the amount of instructional time devoted to supporting IEP goals. This work is ongoing as students transition during this year.

Another area in which to deepen special educators' understanding is in the development, progression and alignment of transition goals in IEPs from grades 6-12. In grade 6 all students develop Student Success Plans (SSP) which is an individualized student plan to support student's needs and interests including student's career and academic choices. Students with IEPs are required to have transition goals included in their IEP when they turn 15, if not before. An area of focus next year will be the process by which an 'deeper dive' into interest and career inventories to truly support students to be college and /or career ready.

#### **1.4 Conduct review of current special education practices to finalize a comprehensive plan that will maximize resources and services.**

As a former building administrator, I have extensive experience in collaborating with a team to provide the most appropriate program to support students' needs. As one of the 'middle' schools, I recognized that there were inconsistent practices and service documentation between buildings. Transitioning into this role where I have now experienced routines and practices Pre-K - 21, this is more evident. While it is logical that services may look different at each level, the question as to whether we are maximizing the use of our resources remains. Additional questions:

- Given our students' disabilities, what are the most effective instructional models?
- What other instructional models may be appropriate in lieu of co-teaching K-5, 6 - 12?
- What structures are effective for maximizing instructional time supporting IEP goals?
- What other approaches may be trialed to support teachers with differentiation to ensure students have time to practice skills and strategies at their independent level?
- What models support students success in earning credits at the high school level?

To address these questions and more through an objective lens and using research based practices, we contracted with District Management Group (DMGroup). The DMGroup Team is in the midst of a comprehensive evaluation of our practices and procedures. Through data gathering (focus groups, schedule sharing, interviews, assessment data) and

analysis, the Team returns to us this summer to share their findings in how we can improve our services while simultaneously maximize our resources. The results of this evaluation will guide our special education programming and services over the next few years.

### **1.5 Survey tiered intervention practices across the district to then develop and implement a program-wide Behavioral Intervention Plan for PreK-12 Autism Program.**

One of the goals of our work with EASTCONN was to develop a program-wide behavior intervention plan that our staff could implement in-house. Information gathering was necessary in order to complete this work. A district-wide review of Tier I, II, and III behavioral supports ensued. While there were many behavioral supports identified, the distinction between Tiers was not clear and the implementation was not always consistent. In consultation with EASTCONN a program wide Behavior Intervention Plan was developed. To effectively implement, ABA staff training was required on the components of the plan: proactive strategies, reinforcement procedures, safety plan and progress measurement techniques. It is most important to be consistent among service providers and since staff shifts mid-day, training included monitoring implementation with fidelity and consistency. The ABA Team meets regularly to review ongoing implementation of the Behavior Intervention Plan to identify any areas in need of additional training. Our district K-5 Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) was trained by EASTCONN to oversee the plan.

With the transition complete, our district BCBA will now train new staff in program-wide behavior intervention plan, monitor student data and develop any additional student protocols needed to effectively reduce rates of problem behavior.

In addition, Entrance and Exit Criteria for intensive instruction in the ABA program were revised and finalized. Along with this criteria, a process document, including an ABA Student Support Rubric, for entry into and exit from the ABA program was developed.

### **1.6 Expand opportunities within the Vocational Training Program at Coventry Academy to provide integrated training and employment for students who need an alternative educational track.**

Coventry received a grant to implement a vocational training program at Coventry Academy this year. The implementation of this program was a collaborative effort between our Vocational teacher, Transition Coordinator, and Coventry Academy staff.

Student interests were gathered through interviews and/or completion of interest inventories . Through completion of the inventories, career clusters were generated and placements were then aligned with the students' top three career clusters.

A brochure was created by the team outlining the Coventry Academy/Coventry Business Community Partnership. Staff canvassed local area businesses to determine interest in partnering with the school, and participating businesses were then paired with students. A Work Ethics class was provided to all students before starting placements. In addition, students were connected with the district's Level Up Services Coordinator (through BRS/DORS) to provide more job training skills.

Students are provided transportation to job sites through the use of the district's electric vehicle and district van. Special Education teachers verbally check in with supervisors when dropping off students. Evaluations were sent to each work site to be completed weekly by the supervisor.

Nine students participated in vocational opportunities: Tara Farms (animal care), Rose Brothers Garage (auto maintenance and repair), Mansfield Discovery Depot (preschool), HEEC (preschool), Coventry Kids Center (preschool), Windham Area Interfaith Ministries (WAIM - retail), Hot Strings (guitar shop), GHR (guitar lessons) and CNH (guitar lessons).

### **1.7 Evaluate programming at Coventry Academy to establish structures to support the recurring academic and therapeutic components needed for this targeted population.**

This has been a challenging year for our academy students and staff as they lost a beloved teacher, colleague, and mentor. Mr. B established a strong foundation for Coventry Academy and it is now the appropriate time to evolve the program to meet the ever-changing and diverse needs of the students placed in this alternative setting.

Programming was evaluated by conducting monthly walkthroughs, staff and student observations, staff meetings, review of lessons and student tasks, incident reports, and general communications. In addition, I visited other alternative education programs and have referenced the CSDE's Guidelines for Alternative Education Settings and the National Alternative Education Association (NAEA) Fifteen Research-based Practices for Effective Alternative Education Programs to further guide program evaluation. Finally, interviews were conducted with staff and returning students (separately) for input into programming refinement and redesign.

An alternative education environment may be appropriate for students who do not experience success in the traditional high school setting, those students with school avoidance issues due to anxiety or stress, students with social, emotional and/or behavioral dysregulation, students in need of credit recovery, and/or expelled students. Given that an alternative setting is the most restrictive environment under IDEA, Academy Entrance Criteria has been established to insure that all viable interventions have been exhausted prior to changing a student's placement. In addition, it is hoped that education between the high school and the academy becomes more fluid with the possibility of students returning to Coventry High, if appropriate.

During program evaluation, structure was identified as a focus area for improvement. Simple structures such as developing a routine schedule, displaying visual schedules, setting clear and consistent expectations for students, and planning and collaboration time for staff are imperative.

Given careful consideration to best practices for alternative education, schedule refinements will be in place for the 2019-2020 school year. In addition to the four core classes, English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies, in moving forward the schedule will also include Community Meetings, Individual and/or Group Counseling, Transition Planning, Library Media Support, and Developmental Guidance. In addition, from 7:40 am - 8:00 am the students may start their day with breakfast, music, a walk, and/or organizational check-ins.

Staff and students provided input regarding instructional practices and learning tasks. As curriculum is reviewed and students' interests and credit needs identified, core standards will be taught and assessed through project based learning and hands on activities via high interest topics.

The vocational programming for juniors and seniors will continue. Using Transition Class and/or Developmental Guidance review of interest and career inventories to identify potential careers will guide job placements for students. The Team will again seek community partnerships to support students in providing opportunities for work experience.

Finally, the new district-wide K-12 Social Worker, in collaboration with the CHS Related Services staff, will provide support services to the Coventry Academy students and staff. Currently, individual and small group counseling sessions are held at CHS. Counseling opportunities and options will expand moving forward, with the inclusion of a

Community Meeting/Large Group Counseling time, and structures in place to provide privacy for individual or small group sessions. The intent is to foster positive relationships and increase a sense of belonging to the school community.

### **1.8 Explore potential partnerships with Goodwin College to support students interested in opportunities in manufacturing.**

Coventry has partnered with Goodwin College for the 2019-2010 school year to provide students with the opportunity to participate in Early College Advanced Manufacturing Programs (ECAMP) at Connecticut River Academy at Goodwin College Manufacturing Annex.

Goodwin's Advanced Manufacturing Mobile Training Lab visited CHS on May 7. Students were able to gain exposure to real manufacturing equipment and see how they can take an idea from concept to design; design to computer program, and from the program they write directly into the real world. This was an exciting opportunity for students from both CHS and Coventry Academy.

A group of six CHS students and possibly two Coventry Academy students have been identified to attend Goodwin College in the fall of 2019 and will participate in manufacturing classes two days per week during the first and second semester. These students' toured the manufacturing school and campus on May 21, 2019.

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

### **2.1 Evaluate the extent to which best practices are employed in Coventry's 18 to 21 year old program to ensure students' success after program completion.**

Patriot's Park is an optimum location to house our vocational program for students ages 18-21. It provides students with a great venue to learn independent living, social, and vocational skills off site from the district high school. Patriot's Park houses a kitchen, bathroom, laundry area, instructional areas, and lounging space. The majority of the students' days are spent at job sites, but students also prepare daily schedules, do laundry, prepare meals, engage in lessons, and clean the facility.

Our vocational teacher references the Connecticut Core Transition Skills developed by the CT Transition Task Force in 2016 for planning purposes. The CT Core Transition Skills is a list of 16 key areas that were determined to be critical to the post-school success of any student with a disability. The theory is that if these key CORE skills are addressed, all students with disabilities will be significantly better prepared to meet their post-school goals after exiting from high school. These CORE skills guide the work of the teacher to prepare students life after this program.

In order to properly assess students' progress, we purchased the Checklist of Adaptive Living Skills (CALs) Assessment this year. As stated by ACER, the CALs is a criterion-referenced, individually administered measure of adaptive living skills and an ideal tool for planning. As a measure of adaptive living skills, CALs is used to determine the specific skills a student has mastered or needs to master in important environments. The CALs looks at approximately 800 specific behaviors organized into skill modules in four broad domains including: Personal Living Skills, Home Living Skills, Community Living Skills, and Employment Skills.

The CALs can also be used with each one of our students in the program as long-term goals are evaluated, each time the student experiences a major change in environment, and each time there is a need to select new or different skills areas for evaluation and instruction. CALs has been an essential element in ensuring we are supporting students to excel past perceived limitations. To this point, we also implemented data-tracking of post program success.

## **2.2 Work collaboratively with building administrators to integrate trauma informed practices district wide to ensure continuity of verbiage, expectations, and to support individual student needs.**

A district goal reads as follows: *Develop a plan to integrate appropriate social emotional learning practices, restorative practices, and trauma informed practices for all PreK-12 students.*

This goal stems from the awareness and reality of the increase of students with significant trauma history attending school. The social and emotional challenges of these students often results in their responses and behaviors not being well understood by adults. While adults may want to know "why?", the question really should be "what happened (to you)? Once adults know *what happened*, they will come to understand the *why* of the behavior. Then comes the need to respond appropriately to provide the support the student requires to become regulated. To punish a child for behaviors that may have been used as coping mechanisms in the past does nothing to support the child in making progress to move forward.

It is for this reason that Related Services staff at all building levels accessed professional development and resources to present information to staff to deepen their understanding of trauma and trauma informed practices. Presentations were tailored to individual buildings with the exception of the grades 6-12 whose staff collaborated to engage in joint presentations. According to Overstreet & Chafouleas (2016), "professional development training typically aims to create a shared understanding of the problem of trauma exposure, build consensus for trauma-informed approaches, and engender attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors conducive to the adoption of system-wide trauma-informed approaches." In review of the presentations shared with staff across the



district, it is evident the staff's awareness of trauma and the effects of trauma on students has increased.

Prior to training staff may have viewed students demonstrating any of the behaviors from the list on the left, as daydreamers, or attention seekers; now, we hope staff will look deeper as these are signs that may indicate trauma.

Despite this awareness, it becomes challenging for staff to embrace restorative practices when a student has demonstrated inappropriate behavior and disrupted learning for other students. Historically, there are consequences for inappropriate behavior; however, punishments do not support the traumatized student.

So, while we have created a shared understanding of the problem of trauma exposure, the need to build consensus for trauma-informed approaches continues. This will continue to be an area of focus moving forward.

### **2.3 Analyze data collected through ongoing time study to increase Related Services staff contact time with students.**

One of the challenges of Related Services staff is the multiple demands for their time. Their expertise is often sought by administration and teachers in intervention or student support meetings, PPT and 504 meetings. In addition, the increase in complex scenarios in which our students are involved has resulted in more crisis situations and DCF referrals. This is time consuming for our Related Services.

A time study was disseminated last year; results reflected inconsistencies in completion and challenging to analyze. This year, a well-designed schedule sharing disseminated by District Management Group was conducted. Given this is an area of their expertise, we are anxiously waiting for the results and recommendations to assist our Related Services staff with increasing their contact time with students.

### **2.4 Continue to collaborate with community agencies and stakeholders in order to develop and provide resources to support students with disabilities as they transition with the Coventry Public Schools.**

Pupil and Staff Support Services (PSSS) staff continues to collaborate with community agencies and stakeholders in order to support students with disabilities. Early in the year, our Transition Coordinator partnered with Bolton Board of Education and hosted a Transition evening that included representatives from the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DORS)/Bureau of Rehabilitative Services (BRS) Level Up Program,

Department of Developmental Services (DDDS), Job Corps of Hartford, Lincoln Tech, Manchester Community College, Mitchell College, and UCONN.

Coventry is fortunate that a strong Youth Services Coordinator is in place and actively collaborating with our school social workers across the district to support our students and families in need. We continue to contract with a Community Engagement Specialist (CES) who has many connections to community agencies that provide a myriad of services for students with disabilities and mental health challenges. In addition this CES has coached our Related Services staff on promoting family engagement through home visits. Home visits provide a better opportunity for connection, communication, and collaboration between school staff and students and families.

This year is the first for a monthly Special Education Parent Group meeting. This venue has brought parents of students identified with disabilities together for many reasons. One of the reasons supports this goal, as parents provided suggestions to improve transitions, sought information to deepen their understanding of how to best support their children, and shared their experiences with adapted sports at area venues: Sparetime Bowling Alley, TOPS Soccer, Challengers T-bALL, and Tri-Town Gymnastics.

## **2.5 Develop and deliver entrance/exit criteria for district programs to establish clear expectations and pathways for student's individual learning plans.**

IDEA mandates that we provide a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) to all students. Thus it is our goal to provide the most appropriate program for student's individual learning plans. In order to do this well, it is imperative to establish clear criteria for services and specialized programs.

As referenced earlier, in collaboration with EASTCONN, we have established clear Entrance and Exit Criteria for our ABA program. Again, a Student Support Rubric further supports the established criteria for intensive services. Entrance Criteria has also been developed for student's transition to Coventry Academy. The use of this criteria will insure that a multitude of tiered interventions to support students' needs have been provided prior to a change in placement.

Procedures to determine student's eligibility for the Extended School Year (ESY) program have also been established. An ESY Checklist was developed with the purpose of reviewing at the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting to determine the necessity of ESY. In addition, criteria for providing Adapted Physical Education (APE), as well as proper documentation of APE in student's IEP has been revised and communicated to staff.

**Parent Goal: Partner with Coventry parents/families to establish a Special Education Parent Group to provide families with networking opportunities, resources, and presentations to deepen their understanding of special education.**

This year we established a Special Education Parent Group that meets monthly. After our first meeting, it was evident that this group meeting would be an important venue for parents to provide support to one another. At that time, the group brainstormed presentation ideas for the year's meetings. Presentations to the group included the following topics: Review of IEP page by page, IEP Goals and Objectives, Medical Plans versus 504s, Social Stories and how to use them, Executive Functioning 101 and how to support children's executive functioning deficits. In addition, Officer Kelsey Carpenter from the Coventry Police Department presented to the group on Project Safe Return.

Special Education staff attended meetings to offer their support as they responded to questions through the teacher's lens. This collaborative setting deepened the understanding of others' perceptions by both teachers and parents. For example, it was eye opening to staff that some parents indicated they did not fully understand their child's IEP. This comment led to a lengthy discussion of what we could do better and/or different to support parents throughout the PPT process. A few of the suggestions implemented this year were a Special Education Acronym Glossary, PPT Agendas, phone call before and after PPTs to provide parents the opportunity to ask questions in a more private setting.

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

#### **3.1 Provide structures for collaboration and professional learning to further develop the capacity of staff in trauma informed practices, family outreach, and transitional strategies from PreK-12.**

Effective and high quality professional development is often the result of the collaborative culture and the structures developed in-house. The Coventry Team has developed a strong collaborative culture and we seek to provide the structures to develop the capacity of our staff. The challenge for PSSS staff is that they are across the district and there are many competing demands for their time and professional learning.

To support students and families in crisis, it was imperative to develop the capacity of staff across the district in trauma informed practices. The Related Services team, including school psychologists, social workers, and middle school guidance counselors, developed and delivered several presentations to staff regarding trauma and practices to support students with trauma history. The connection between trauma, brain development, and students' emotional and social well-being was shared with all staff members. This will be an area of focus as we move forward as well.

The need for home visits has increased in recent years, and as such has become part of our social work delivery model. Our Community Engagement Specialist conducted training with Social Workers and School Psychologists on the benefits and processes of effective home visits. Teams of two will conduct home visits and debrief afterwards to acknowledge the strengths and challenges of the home visits. Staff are becoming more comfortable with this venue to connect with parents and families. Home visits have

increased this year to support students and families with hopes of removing any barriers for students to be successfully educated.

Purposeful planning to discuss students' transitions between buildings resulted has resulted in increased communication and understanding of the needs at transitional grade levels. The primary focus this year was review of transition practices between HEEC and CGS to ensure a seamless between Pre-k and Kindergarten. Several meetings were scheduled with teachers and administrators from HEEC and CGS to ensure the following were scheduled: student data transfer, PK-K articulation meetings, CGS special education teacher observations at HEEC, CGS staff at spring PPTs at HEEC, and PK student visitations to CGS as needed. Collaborative meetings resulted in well defined procedures and timeline for future use.

Planning meetings for transitions between other buildings were held as well to ensure consistency in PPT meetings and IEP development. Spring PPTs require staff from the receiving building to provide input into programming and potential re-evaluations. In addition, services and service implementer recommendations should be made as a team with staff members from both schools present. Spring visits are organized for students as needed with hopes of connecting students to adults/mentors prior to the new school year beginning.

A half-day professional development day for *Legal Discussions* to provide an overview of special education legal updates and to clarify questions and scenarios posed throughout the year. This proved to be a top-notch professional development experience for our staff.

As the year progressed, and special education staff realized how responsive I was to supporting their professional growth, it was evident that special educators would benefit from additional collaboration time. Upon review with building administrators and PSSS staff, additional structures will be put in place next year to support their need for professional learning through collaboration with colleagues.

### **3.2 Develop structures and practices to ensure staff at all levels have frequent and consistent access to and communication with the director.**

I have worked diligently to be visible and available to PSSS staff across the district. I established building level office hours twice per month (one morning and one afternoon) at CGS, GHR, CNH, and CHS. HEEC staff were invited to attend CNH hours as it is the most convenient location for them. This proved to be time well-spent. Teams of PSSS staff often joined me for questions or follow-up clarification. Other times, I had lines of staff taking turns to review specific students and/or situations that we would work through together. I also had staff just stop by to say, "Hi" and "Thank you" for being so accessible and available.

These meetings provided me with the opportunity to become familiar with staff at all levels and to listen first hand concerns about special education programming.

Other structures in place are Leadership monthly meetings, Related Services monthly meeting, Speech Language Pathologists quarterly meetings and special education building level meetings. All meeting participants provide agenda items to ensure we are addressing all needs, questions, and concerns. While I presume meetings reduced emails, I still receive many. I respond to staff emails promptly. In addition, PSSS also sent a monthly newsletter out to PSSS staff.