



# Special Education Review

## May 19, 2021

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Director of Special Education  
Secretary for Supervisors of Special Education  
Supervisor of Elementary Special Education  
Supervisor of Secondary Special Education  
Secretary to Director of Special Education

## Mission Statement

Drawing on its cultural richness, creativity, and tradition of scholastic excellence, the Cheltenham School District strives to nurture each child through a wealth of academic endeavors and community partnerships that provide the skills and vision needed to lead a productive and meaningful life beyond our classroom walls.

## Vision Statement

With a clear connection between the classroom and the world, the Cheltenham School District will strive for excellence by:

1. inspiring our students to develop principled and knowledgeable responses to the local, national, and global challenges of the 21st century;
2. actively engaging parents in their children's intellectual, social, and moral education;
3. encouraging faculty and staff to continually broaden the web of connections between their academic disciplines and the world on which they depend;
4. stimulating dynamic leadership of building and district administrators; and
5. creating partnerships with community individuals, institutions, organizations, and businesses that model real-world connections for all students.

## Special Education Plan Update

- Due every three (3) years
- Outlines planning generated from the district special education data, compliance monitoring, professional development activities, and training necessary to provide appropriate programs to students with disabilities.
- Ms. Carole Clancy, Pennsylvania Department of Education Bureau Director of Special Education, notified districts providing an extension to the Special Education Plan.
  - The BSE granted the extension as they recognize COVID-19 response efforts continued to present unprecedented obstacles for school leaders.
  - LEAs are to continue to implement their current special education plan
  - School districts must submit their plans by *March 1, 2022*
  - Ms. Lewis, Dr. Sandberg, and Dr. Gallagher participated in mandatory pre-recorded webinar providing training to school districts on the special education plan requirements and the new Future Ready Comprehensive Planning Portal (FRCPP) system.

## Demographics

Year	# of Special Education Students Dec. 1 Count	LEA	State	Variance
2014-2015 (*Retired Interim Director and a team from CCIU Interim Director )	628	13.5%	15.6%	-2.10%
2015-2016	743	16.2%	15.9%	0.30%
2016-2017	815	15.5%	16.5%	1.00%
2017-2018	818	17.9%	16.9%	1.00%
2018-2019	858	19.7%	17.3%	2.40%
2019-2020	866	19.7%	17.8%	1.9%
2020-2021	815	18.3%		

## Out of District

Year	Out of District (APS/Private License)	LEA	State	Variance		MCIU	Total Out of District and MCIU
2014-2015	37 (*Retired Interim Director and a team from CCIU Interim Director )	5.8%	4.8%	1.0%		31	68
2015-2016	56	7.5%	4.9%	2.6%		32	88
2016-2017	49	6.0%	4.9%	1.1%		35	84
2017-2018	52	6.3%	4.9%	1.4%		34	86
2018-2019	49	5.7%	4.8%	.09%		42	91
2019-2020	40	4.6%	4.8%	-0.2%		44	84
2020-2021	24	TBD	TBD	TBD		41	65

## Five Year Review

Strategic Plan Pathway 1: Curriculum and Instruction

Strategic Plan Pathway 2: Student Achievement

Strategic Plan Pathway 3: Professional Learning

Strategic Plan Pathway 4: Holistic Experiences

Strategic Plan Pathway 5: Communication and Engagement

Compliance

Budget

## Strategic Plan Pathway 1: Curriculum and Instruction

- Returned Students identified with Learning Support to their “homeschool/neighborhood school”
- Continuum of Services-Created a K-4 ES in-district program
- Academic Achievement Seminars
  - Reading
  - Math
  - Executive Function
  - Social Skills
- Apartment/Daily Living Skills
- Collaborated with MCIU to create a “transitional classroom” at Elkins Park for students identified with Autism

## Strategic Plan Pathway 2: Student Achievement

- Caseload Review Meetings
  - Review goals/progress
  - Programming
  - LRE: Additional support-- reduce/increase amount/type of support
  - Reevaluation of a student
  - Revisions to an IEP meeting
  - Targeted Support for staff
  - ES, LSS and Lakeside support meetings
- Revised Early Intervention Transition to school age program to create a more effective process
- Focused Transition Plan (Grade/Grade and School/School) teachers collaborate to better understand the strengths and needs of their incoming students

## Strategic Plan Pathway 3: Professional Learning

Paraprofessionals

Special Education Teachers

Special Education Teachers and Administrators

Administrators

[Master Teacher Online Training](#)

Induction and Learning Manual for Teachers

[IEP Checklist](#)

[Principal's Brief Overview to Special Education](#)

## Strategic Plan Pathway 4: Holistic Experiences

- Ensured Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) were completed for students identified with emotional disturbance
- Assigned School Counselors to all Special Education students
- Unified Sports and a PE class were initiated at the high school
  - Cheerleading, Bocce, and Track and Field
- Emotional Support Classes at CBK and CHS to provide an increase in support to students and reduce out of district placements

## Strategic Plan Pathway 5: Communication and Engagement

- Change of name from Special Needs Advocacy Group (SNAG) to (SEAC) Special Education Alliance of Cheltenham
- Collaboration with SEAC and UPG for Community
  - Individual School Meetings with Building and Central Office Administrators
  - Inclusion Parent/Guardian Presentation: What is it and Why Does it Matter to Everyone?
- Resource File
  - Teachers and Administrators
  - Procedures, Professional Development, Resources

## Compliance

- Special Education Plan
- Compliance Monitoring for Continuous Improvement (CMCI)
- Records Destruction Notice and Process to Purge Files
- Accurate December 1 Count
  - Creation of a [Penn Data document](#) to assist in a more accurate overview of the student's profile for efficiency in reporting information for Dec 1 Count
- Procedures for all participants to attend the IEP Meeting

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  - Creation of a [Penn Data document](#)
- Procedures for IEP Meeting Participants

## Budget

- Revised budget to create specific “line items”
- Creation of transition opportunities eliminates the need to use contracted services
- Constructing an “apartment living/daily living” opportunity eliminates the need to send students out of district to gain this experience
- Completion of Contingency Fund Application
- Submission of Act 16 Special Education Per Pupil Expenditure Reporting
- School Based ACCESS Billing

## 2020-2021 Year in Review

- Strategic Plan Pathway 1: Curriculum and Instruction
- Strategic Plan Pathway 2: Student Achievement
- Strategic Plan Pathway 3: Professional Learning
- Strategic Plan Pathway 4: Holistic Experiences
- Strategic Plan Pathway 5: Communication and Engagement
- Compliance
  - Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (A-TSI)
  - Significant Disproportionality
- Reopening
  - Evaluations
  - Hybrid
  - COVID Compensatory Services

## Strategic Plan Pathway 1: Curriculum and Instruction

- Alternative Standards Curriculum Mapping Framework
  - Life Skills Support Program
  - Resources
- Implementation of Reading Mastery
- System 44 at Elkins Park
- Supporting Block Scheduling and Reconciling IEPs
- Digital Speech Resources to assist with TeleTherapy
  - The Ultimate SLP
  - Superduperinc Digital Fun Decks
  - Teachers Pay Teachers

## Strategic Plan Pathway 2: Student Achievement

- **Transition students from Virtual to In-Person Learning**
- **Digital Assessment Library Implementation**
  - Collaboration with Technology Department
  - Professional Development for School Psychologists and Speech Therapists
- **Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment System (DLM)**
  - A new system designed to more validly measure what students with significant cognitive disabilities know and can do
  - Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA)
  - Webinars to introduce PASA Assessors to the new assessment, instructional content and terminology and resources

## Strategic Plan Pathway 3: Professional Learning

- AIM-Accept-Identify-Move Social Skills Curriculum
- Inclusion (Collaboration with SEAC)
  - Universal Design for Learning (PK-12)
  - Beyond PK-12: Redefining Norms for Radical Postsecondary Success
  - Social Valorization: A helpful Perspective to Guide Inclusive Practices
  - Opening Doors to College
  - A Rising Tide Lifts All Boats: How inclusive educational practices benefit ALL children
- Data Quality Curriculum Program
- Reading Mastery
- System 44

## Strategic Plan Pathway 4: Holistic Experiences

- [Virtual Sensory Room](#)
  - Images open a different resource focusing on internal/external sensory integration for students grades K-6
  - Videos focus on mindfulness, interoception, or visual/auditory sensory seeking input
  - Other links lead to activity resource such as coloring, yoga, and auditory/tactile sensory seeking activities.
  - Group of 3rd and 5th graders assisted in selecting the activities
- Third Annual Inclusion Event Hosted by UPG and SEAC supported by the District
  - “A Rising Tide Lifts All Boats: How Inclusive Educational Practices Benefit ALL Children”
- The Trauma-Informed Classroom
  - This session will explore the impact that trauma and stress can have on our students' brains and will introduce practical strategies that can be utilized to support all students.

## Strategic Plan Pathway 5: Communication and Engagement

- Special Education Alliance of Cheltenham (SEAC) Monthly Meetings
  - The Office of Special Education facilitated monthly meetings with the leadership team of Special Education Alliance of Cheltenham (SEAC), the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent to share information and collaborate concerning specific District initiatives.
  - To have a general discussion surrounding the nature of SEAC and the relationship it wants between itself and District leadership.
- Updated Website
  - Pennsylvania Alternate System Assessment (PASA)
  - School Year (ESY)
  - COVID Compensatory Services (CCS)

## Compliance

- Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (A-TSI)
- Significant Disproportionality

## Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI)

- Cheltenham High School was designated as an ATSI School for students with IEPs in 2018-19
- A committee developed a comprehensive three-year plan to address the areas of need based on the 2019 Spring Keystone and needs to be submitted annually to the State
  - Goals in performance and growth in reading and math
  - Goal specific to attendance rates
- Collaboration with staff from MCIU and other identified districts has provided the committee with guidance for implementation of evidence-based strategies and measuring the impact of school improvement efforts.

## Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI)

**Goal:** The District will increase the performance and growth of IEP students on the ELA and Math Keystone Exams by 3 percentage points.

### **Action Steps in progress:**

- Development of standards-based aligned Algebra and Literature Curriculum with Common Assessments
- Keystone-specific skill-based instruction
- Identification and implementation of evidence-based interventions to support students in the area of Literature and Mathematics aligned to standards based curriculum
- Implementation of specially-designed instruction (SDI) with fidelity across academic settings.
- Professional Learning for teachers on targeted strategies to increase student achievement

### **Action Steps achieved:**

- Modify Master Schedule to increase the instructional time allocated for targeted instruction

## Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI)

**Goal:** The District will increase the number of students with IEPs who are enrolled for more than 60 school-days and attend school 90% or greater by 3 percentage-points.

- District met the State expectation of 77% attendance in year one

### **Action Steps in progress:**

- Implementation of accurate attendance-tracking procedures and formalize attendance procedures utilizing existing software and Powerschool
- Provide system and designated roles related to interventions directed at identifying and improving absenteeism among students with IEPs.
- Quarterly meetings with attendance secretaries to ensure consistency with monitoring student attendance

## Significant Disproportionality

- Based on 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018 data, the rate at which the District excluded black students with disabilities exceeded the rate at which it excluded all other students with disabilities.
- The District set aside IDEA subsidy, for the development of targeted *general* education intervention programming that addressed the problem
- Upon a deeper review of data it was determined that the disproportionate pattern of exclusion in the District is not a special education-specific issue

## Targeted *General* Education Intervention Programming

Ms. Nakea Jeffers, NeuroLogic Specialist (Lakeside)

- Provided virtual coaching and support services to Elkins Park, Cedarbrook, and Cheltenham High School
  - Virtual coaching and support services centered around de-escalation strategies, student engagement, building community within the classroom, student regulation, and teacher regulation.
- NeuroLogic 4-Week Professional Development Workshop at Elkins Park
- Brain-Based De-escalation Strategies Professional Development Workshop for Paraprofessionals

## Targeted *General* Education Intervention Programming CPI and Safety Care

- Provides the skills and competencies necessary to effectively prevent, minimize, and manage behavioral challenges with dignity, safety, and the possibility of change.
- Safety-Care provides the tools you need to be safe when working with behaviorally challenging individuals.
- Using effective technologies from Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS), the Safety-Care program provides staff with strategies for preventing and managing behavioral challenges teaching replacement behaviors.
- These strategies are appropriate for individuals experiencing developmental, neurologic, psychiatric, and other impairments.
- Safety-Care promotes a positive reinforcement-based approach and develops new skills, resulting in fewer restraints.

# Significant Disproportionality Update

- Each year, due to federal guidelines, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) is required to notify LEAs concerning Significant Disproportionality.
- The District received an official announcement, according to data obtained by PDE Cheltenham did not demonstrate Significant Disproportionality, as noted in 2019-20.
- The District is commended for our efforts in providing the best education possible, for the students of our area, and for the improvements achieved by your LEA.

# Planning for Reopening

- **Special Education Consultation-Reopening of Schools**
  - Building Administrators and Central Office -Professional Development Mr. Andy Faust
- **Special Education Department Meeting-Reopening of Schools**
  - Meeting with teachers and CEA to discuss process for determining students returning for in-person instruction
- **Individualized Education Program (IEP) Review Meetings-Reopening of Schools**
  - Meetings with parents/guardians and IEP teams for transition to in-person instruction
- **MCIU Autistic Support Classes Reconsider Return to In-Person Learning**
  - Provide in-person instruction for students not making progress on IEP goals
- **Meeting with: Business Office, Transportation, Chartwells, Facilities, and Student Services**
  - To collaborate/communicate with all departments to transition students into CE and CBK

## Transition to Virtual

- In September two (2) students were provided in-person instruction in the emotional support classroom at Cheltenham Elementary
- In October nineteen (19) students identified who received learning support and nine (9) students in the autistic support program were provided in person instruction at CE
- In November the Office of Special Education facilitated meetings with teams of teachers and paraprofessional staff for the purpose of transitioning from in-person instruction to virtual instruction between November 23 and December 6th as was decided on by the County.
  - The focus of the meetings was to provide procedures to communicate with parents the details surrounding the District's move from in-person special education instruction to a virtual model of instruction.
  - Supports necessary for student success were discussed as a matter of high priority in order to best deliver a free and appropriate public education given the imminent closure of buildings as well as logistical information regarding materials.
  - A follow-up letter was also sent to the parents of this specific group of students.

## In-Person Instruction

- Beginning in February, the Supervisors of Special Education, as part of school-based teams, have recommended in-person instruction to the maximum extent currently allowed (4 days a week) as a result of students' individualized education programs (IEPs), and needs related to FAPE.
- As of May 2021, recommendation has been made for six (6) students K-6, approximately 21 students at Cedarbrook Middle School and approximately 82 students at Cheltenham High School for in-person instruction
  - Revision IEP meetings have been held for these students

## Reopening Evaluations

- The Office of Special Education facilitated numerous meetings with Psychologists Related-Service Providers, and Legal Counsel to plan for the resumption of multidisciplinary evaluations, reevaluations and screening for ELL students new to the district.
  - First, meetings have centered around how to best address safety-issues for students being tested as well as the Psychologists and related-service providers who are performing evaluations.
    - Consisting of establishing set buildings and testing locations, protective equipment and developing protocols
  - Second, a methodology for prioritizing the backlog of evaluations and reevaluations was established
  - Finally, exploration of alternative testing methodologies including but not limited to virtual testing products
- Evaluations began in September at Cheltenham Elementary and Cedarbrook Middle School.
  - School Psychologists, Speech Therapists, Occupational and Physical Therapists are completing evaluations and reevaluations while English Language Learner teachers completed screening for students new to the District. Additionally, behaviorists, nurses, custodians and administrators will provide support to those completing the evaluations.

## COVID Compensatory Services (CCS)

- [COVID Compensatory Services \(CCS\)](#) are special education and related services the district will provide to some students with disabilities who have suffered serious educational losses because of the closure of schools during the pandemic. The District will provide these services in addition to the special education and related services already in the child's Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- The District will provide these services in addition to the special education and related services already in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

The background features a large, faded watermark of the Cheltenham School District logo. The logo is circular with 'CHELTENHAM' at the top and 'SCHOOL DISTRICT' at the bottom. In the center is a shield containing two open books and a star. Below the shield, the text 'Begin With Education' is visible.

# Questions