Concord Carlisle High School Special Education Review

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Date: December 5, 2017

Acknowledgements

WestEd greatly appreciated the hospitality, openness, and concern for students demonstrated by all educators in Concord Carlisle High School. We wish to thank the district and school administrators, who gave so much of their time to collaborate on the program review plan, provide various data quickly and efficiently, arrange and facilitate the visit for 12 focus groups and 26 classroom observations, and facilitate administration of the survey to staff.

We would like to thank the following district leaders: Dr. Laurie Hunter, Superintendent; Jessica Murphy, Director of Special Education; Kristen Herbert, Director of Teaching and Learning; and building administrators: Michael Mastrullo, Principal, Brian Miller, Assistant Principal; and Thomas Keane, Special Education Department Chair for their time and attention to detail.

Last, we would especially like to thank the teachers, guidance counselors, and tutors at the school who exhibited their professionalism and dedication to all diverse learners as they opened their classrooms for us to observe instruction and participated in focus group interviews before, after, and during school and took their time to respond to a survey.

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Executive Summary

This executive summary presents major findings about current program practices for students with disabilities and other struggling learners at Concord Carlisle High School, with a focus on instructional practices, entry and exit criteria for various interventions, commendations, and recommendations for improving district and school practices. Findings are based on document and extant data reviews; surveys of school staff; focus group interviews with teachers, case managers, tutors, guidance counselors, intervention program staff, parents, and students; and observations in a sample of 26 classrooms. WestEd, the external program reviewer, organized the findings and recommendations by the themes that emerged during analysis.

Overall, Concord Carlisle has a large number of intervention programs, a relatively large and well-prepared staff, and engaged students. Staff are committed to providing the best possible supports to their students within their skill set and the school system. Implementation of services across the intervention programs observed appeared similar, with minimal variation from one type of intervention to the next. Other than the Challenge program, information gathered through focus groups about the unobserved interventions described these as having minimal to no academic component other than providing students with academic support for assignments. The school climate was positive, professional, friendly, and appeared relaxed. However, during focus groups and classroom observations, the issue of student and staff anxiety became a theme. The variety of opportunities in schools for professional collaboration was minimal and influenced the self-efficacy and professional morale of staff. There is widespread evidence of welcoming all students, including those with disabilities, as valuable members of the school community. WestEd offers commendations and recommendations that acknowledge strengths and areas for improvement across the thematic areas.

COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Commendations

- Staff are professional, well educated, and student focused.
- Students and parents are relatively pleased with staff, instruction, and the outcomes of Concord Carlisle High School programs.
- Concord Carlisle High School provides a rich, diverse, and rigorous curriculum.
- Staff recognize communication issues and work to overcome this challenge.
- The vast majority of students observed or interviewed are actively engaged in learning and their academic success.

- The school has a high number of staff members and a small student-to-staff ratio.
- The staff make a concerted effort to help struggling learners in a variety of ways.
- Many intervention programs are offered.

Initial Recommendations

1. **Create an MTSS/RTI framework to develop systems for interventions**
    a. Currently programs are difficult to define both by staff and parents. Teachers are unsure of how to access interventions for their students other than going to the guidance counselor. There is no true entry or exit criteria for these interventions other than teacher observations and grades. Due to a lack of data-based decision making where interventions are concerned, some interventions can become exclusive as student entry is determined subjectively.
2. **Provide a continuum of special education services**
    a. Currently there is not a continuum of supports available for students who have IEPs. The Pathways program provides supports to students with significant developmental disabilities and those on the autism spectrum, but students with other disabilities only have access to consultative special education supports. The current study skills model does not provide the opportunity for students with IEPs to receive the specially designed, grade-level instruction that is needed. While the inclusion model is commendable, students need special educators to provide additional supports either through co-teaching, supplemental instruction aligned to the standards, or separate core content instruction in a special education setting.
3. **Place tutors in inclusive general education classrooms to provide support**
    a. CCHS has a cadre of knowledgeable tutors that support special education students. Currently this occurs in the special education study skills class and in some cases in the general education classrooms. Since many general education classes have a high number of students with IEPs or 504 plans in them, tutors should be placed in these classes to support the classroom teacher by modeling accommodations and adaptations as they support students in the class either individually or in small groups. Tutors in these classes can more effectively support students when they are familiar with the content, curriculum, instructional style, and expectations of the teachers with whom they work.
4. **Provide direct instruction in special education and general education intervention classes**
    a. Currently, except for the Challenge program and a math course for the METCO students, most of the interventions focus on helping students to complete assignments. Interventionists mentioned teaching students executive functioning skills, but this is done one-on-one with each student in an ad hoc manner. Direct skill instruction is needed using research based interventions focused on organization, reading, writing, and math.

5. **Reduce homework**
    a. Despite efforts to reduce the homework overload, students are still often doing more than 30 minutes per class per night. Research supports that as with classwork, homework should be purposeful (connected to objectives, standards) and translate to better outcomes. In order to reduce the homework load associated both with classwork and long-term projects, teachers need to be given the opportunity to identify the essence of the standards and determine which assignments are aligned, which are not necessary, and which are more of a "tradition" rather than standards-aligned. Developing cross departmental calendars for assessments and projects will support spacing projects to avoid student overload during the semester.
6. **Use a data system within an MTSS/RTI framework to identify students at risk and in need of intervention for academics and social emotional needs**
    a. Currently there is no universal screening data to identify student "at risk" both academically and behaviorally. The process for placing students in interventions is subjective and little if any data is used to determine entry or exit for any of the intervention programs. There is a high reliance on guidance counselors and special education testing to identify students for either an IEP or 504 plan. Implementing an MTSS/RTI framework will utilize a data-based decision-making process for determining eligibility for interventions, the effectiveness of the interventions, and when students no longer need them. This will reduce the reliance on specialized testing to obtain special education or other intervention support for students.
7. **Create a more balanced climate at CCHS**
    a. While the rigor at CCHS is commendable, most students are taking at least six classes a day and the vast majority are taking two or more AP courses at a time. This level of rigor with the homework load associated with it and the addition of several hours of extra-curricular activities daily takes a toll on students. CCHS will need to fully enforce polices to ensure that students take a lunch period, limit the number of classes they take, and continue to develop and implement policies on the types, purposes, and amount of homework. The issues related to imbalance do not come from CCHS alone and are due to a community culture of high expectations. In light of the dangerous outcomes as evidenced by student suicides, parents need to be educated on the danger of the imbalance in the current climate.
8. **Identify ways to improve communication within the school community**
    a. Currently teachers are unsure of how to access interventions resulting in a heavy reliance on guidance counselors and special education case managers for testing. Teachers and special educators do not have common planning times to plan instruction that will support the needs of students with IEPs in the general education classroom. Tutors do receive instruction or support from case

managers on how they should be helping students meet their IEP goals. A general lack of clear communications processes contributes to staff working harder, not smarter in their support of students at CCHS.

Concord-Carlisle High School
Special Eduction Program Review
Full Report

Concord-Carlisle High School (CCHS) contracted with WestEd in September 2017 to conduct a review of the Concord-Carlisle Special Education Programs and to provide the district with a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of general education supports to students with disabilities, intervention programming for all students and special education services as seen through varied perspectives. The onsite review occurred on October 19th and 20th and included 26 classroom observations and 12 interviews and focus group meetings to gain a broad perspective of the programming at CCHS.

This final report provides recommendations for school wide program structures and special education services that meet the needs of all struggling learners. The term "WestEd" will refer to the evaluation team for this project. The terms "general education" and "regular education" will be used interchangeably.

This full report starts with background information about CCHS and its students, and then describes the major evaluation questions and methodology used to collect evidence to answer those questions. Next, the findings section presents summaries of the collected evidence to answer each evaluation question and support recommendations intended to guide CCHS toward a goal of providing cohesive support structures and interventions to all students including students receiving special educations supports and services.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Concord Carlisle High School (CCHS) has strong core values and learning beliefs including that "students learn best from engaging, relevant instruction that blends the best of the traditional with the innovative, … when they apply their knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, and when instruction is differentiated." As of the 2017-2018 school year, high school had nearly 90 professional staff, including tutors and about 1,300 students in grades 9-12.

During the 2016-2017 school year, 4.3% of CCHS students were African American, 9.5% Asian, 4.0% Hispanic, 78.5% White, and 3.7% Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic. English language learners comprised .4% of the population; students with disabilities, 16.5%; and economically disadvantaged 5.4%. Eighteen percent were Hispanic.

The school is set in Concord, a historic town, 19 miles west of Boston and was settled in the 1600s. Concord's median household income in 2015 was $142,325, while all of Massachusetts' was $70,628.[1]

CCHS falls among one of the highest performing high schools in state. They outperform the state average in all academic areas on the Next Generation MCAS state assessment including students with disabilities and students identified as high need. They boast a graduation rate of over 98% with students with disabilities also graduating at well over 90%. They have a zero drop-out rate and 95% of students with disabilities attend either private or

[1] Income data found at: http://www.city-data.com/city/Concord-Massachusetts.html on November 20, 2017.

public four-year colleges. CCHS is staffed by highly qualified teachers and the community recognizes the effort of the staff to do whatever it takes to help students be successful learners.

CCHS provides a variety of instructional supports and interventions to students across grade levels. The following is a description of the many programs, beyond general education classes, that CCHS offers, as WestEd understands them.

Network – General education program for freshmen that provides largely self-contained core classes to a small group of "at risk" students as a cohort. If students are deemed still in need of this type of support, they may receive supports through the Advanced Learning Strategies class in 10th grade and beyond.

Advanced Learning Strategies – General education program for 10-12th graders who were previously in the Network Program. Provides support for completing assignments and executive functioning strategies.

Challenge – General education program, taught by a special education teacher, with small class size that provides supports to students at risk for not passing the MCAS. The focus of this class is math and executive functioning skills.

Social Studies/English Resource Center (SSERC) – General education program that began as a social studies intervention but has evolved into homework and test preparation for all English language arts-based courses. It is staffed by special education tutors. Students may have SSERC in their schedule or can access it on a drop-in basis.

Math Resource Center (MARC) – General education math intervention for homework and test preparation. Staffed by one general education math teacher and special education tutors. Students may have MARC in their schedule or can access it on a drop-in basis.

Alternative Program (AltPro) – Special education alternative education program that serves students with emotional or behavioral issues. This is a fully self-contained program staffed by two special educators.

Study Skills – Special education class staffed by tutors and special education teachers (case managers) that focuses on homework, test preparation, and providing accommodations.

Pathways – Special education program for students with significant intellectual disabilities or on the autism spectrum that provides a separate course of study largely in a separate setting.

Pathways Light – Students with autism or other developmental disabilities who are part of the Pathways program, but have opportunities for inclusion into general education classes.

Rivers and Revolutions – General education class with 40-50 students, staffed by five or more teachers. The class is a cohort of mixed ability students (inclusive classroom) that lasts all school day for one semester. The curriculum is based on the same standards as other classes, but classwork is integrated and mastery can be shown in many ways.

The Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO) Pre-algebra math course- General education math class for METCO students and others identified as needing extra support.

METHODOLOGY

This section describes the methodology utilized in the evaluation study to collect data as evidence to answer the major evaluation questions and support recommendations. A chart of the evaluation questions and data sources is followed by a description of each method for collecting the data.

MAJOR EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SOURCES OF DATA

The WestEd team addressed the major evaluation questions through a variety of means including document reviews, MCAS data review, focus group and interview data, classroom walk through data, and survey data to provide supportive evidence for findings. The special education program review addressed the following questions.

What program supports are available to students to support progress in their general education classes?

1. What instructional supports are provided to struggling learners and students with IEPs in core content classes?
    - **a.** How does instructional practice provide scaffolds to access high Lexile level content?
    - **b.** How does instructional practice include differentiation built upon the principles of Universal Design for Learning?
    - **c.** How does instruction provide accommodations and modification for students with IEPs?
    - **d.** How does co-teaching support access to the content for students with IEPs?
2. What programmatic supports are provided to struggling learners and students with IEPs in core content classes?
    - **a.** What programs are available school wide to support struggling learners?
    - **b.** How does special education programming support students with their core content classes?
3. How do these programmatic and instructional supports support social emotional development?
    - **a.** What supports are available to general education students to support social emotional development?
    - **b.** What supports are available to special education students who have social emotional needs?

What general education interventions are in place to support struggling learners and students with disabilities within the school-wide intervention program?

1. Does the current intervention program provide supports for all struggling learners in the core content areas?
    - Are there intervention classes available for all students identified as needing additional support in ELA, math, science or social studies?
2. What data is used to determine placement in an intervention program?
    - Is there a universal screener or common assessment to determine risk for all students in core content areas?
    - Are there common assessments in all core content areas as a data source to determine the need for intervention?
3. What data is used to measure the effectiveness of the intervention programs?
    - Is there progress monitoring data available to determine the effectiveness of interventions?
    - Is progress monitoring data reviewed regularly to determine if students are benefitting from interventions?
4. What type of targeted instruction occurs during the intervention time?
    - Are there specific evidence-based instructional curricula identified to support intervention

instruction?

5. Are students with disabilities included in the general education interventions?
    - Is placement in an intervention class determined by data or by special education status?
6. Do both general education and special education staff provide targeted intervention instruction?
    - When intervention instruction is provided to a mixed group of students, are both general and special education teachers involved in providing intervention instruction?

How are students progressing in the current special education program?

1. Are state assessment skill gaps closing for students with disabilities receiving special education services?
    a. Have the number of students with disabilities in the failing and needs improvement categories decreased in the last two years?
    b. Have skills gaps between advanced and proficiency ratings for all students and students with disabilities decrease in the last two years?
2. Does the current continuum of special education supports provide adequate services to help students meet graduation requirements?
    a. Are there services available to support students with development disabilities?
    b. Are there services available to support students with high incidence disabilities?
    c. Are there services available to support students with social emotional needs?
    d. Are there services available for students with autism spectrum disorders?
3. Are students receiving the supports needed to successfully transition to post-secondary programs?
4. Do IEP teams and guidance counselors work together to develop comprehensive transition plans to support successful transition?

The following chart presents the major evaluation questions and the sources of data that provided supportive evidence for findings. Multiple sources of qualitative and quantitative data that produce similar findings build confidence that the findings are accurate.

Major Evaluation Questions and Data Sources by Focus Area	Documents	Assessment Data	Focus Groups	Surveys	Classroom Observations
1. General Education Supports for All Students					
• What instructional supports are provided to struggling learners and students with IEPs in core content classes?	*		✓	✓	
• What programmatic supports are provided to struggling learners and students with IEPs in core content classes?	*		✓	✓	
• How do these programmatic and instructional supports support social emotional development?	*		✓		
2. School-wide General Education Interventions					
• Does the current intervention program provide supports for all struggling learners in the core content areas?			✓	✓	✓
• What data is used to determine placement into an intervention program?			✓	✓	
• What data is used to measure the effectiveness of the intervention programs?	*		✓	✓	

• What type of targeted instruction occurs during the intervention time?			✓		✓
• Are students with disabilities included in the general education interventions?			✓		✓
• Do both general education and special education staff provide targeted intervention instruction?			✓		✓
3. **Progress in Current Special Education Programs**					
• Are state assessment skill gaps closing for students with disabilities receiving special education services?	✓	✓			
• Does the current continuum of special education supports provide adequate services to help students meet graduation requirements?	✓		✓		✓
• Are students receiving the supports needed to successfully transition to post-secondary programs?	✓		✓		✓
*Due to a lack of documentation on the current intervention programs, documents were not available for review.					

FINDINGS

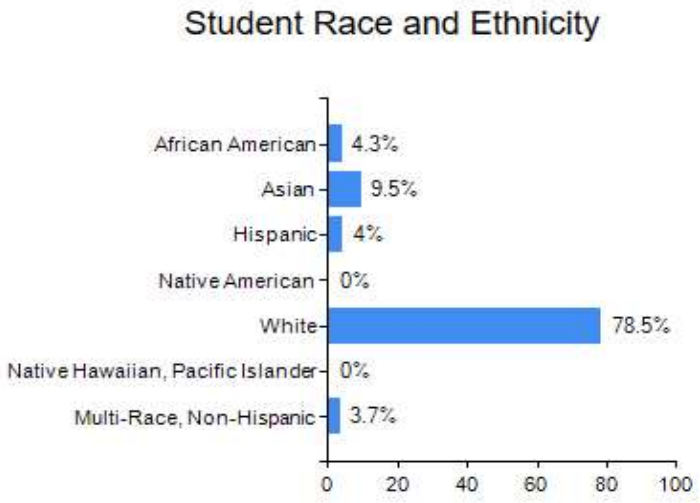
This section presents findings by data source (documents, student achievement data, surveys, focus groups, and observations) and a summary of findings organized by the evaluation questions.

DOCUMENT REVIEW

School and District Accountability

Concord-Carlisle High School has an enrollment of 1,276 students in grades 9-12 with a student-to-teacher ratio of 13 to 1. One hundred percent of the teachers are highly qualified for the content areas in which they teach. The students who attend CCHS have a stability rate of 98% with very few students leaving CCHS during their high school tenure.

The majority of students at CCHS are white, 78.5% of the student population, which is greater than the statewide average of 61.3%. The next largest group at CCHS is Asian with 9.5% which is larger than the statewide average of 6.7%. African American students make up 4.3% of the population which is smaller than the statewide average of 6.7%. Hispanic students make up 4% which is significantly smaller than the statewide average of 19.4%. The Multi-race, Non-Hispanic population of 3.7% is very close to the state average of 3.4%. This data reflects limited cultural and ethnic diversity at CCHS.



Most schools in Massachusetts are assigned a level from 1-5 as part of the statewide accountability system. Those schools meeting their proficiency gap-narrowing goals are assigned Level 1 and the lowest performing schools are assigned to Levels 4 and 5 in the Progress and Performance Index (PPI). A district is typically assigned a level based on the level of its lowest performing school, which in the case of the Concord Carlisle School District, CCHS is the lowest performing school, despite its high academic achievement. Numerous measures are included in the determination of levels including such factors such as growth on the statewide assessment, narrowing of achievement gaps, participation rate in the statewide assessment, graduation and drop-out rates. Concord-Carlisle High School received a score of 2 due to the assessment participation rate of students with disabilities of 94%, thus not meeting the 95% participation rate threshold. All other indicators under the PPI were met.

School percentiles indicate how a school performs overall compared to other schools that serve the same or similar grades. CCHS scored 93 on a scale of 1-99 indicating that it is among the top performing schools in the state.

The Special Education Planning and Policy Development Office has a goal of reducing proficiency gaps by 50% between 2011 and 2017. In the 2016-2017 school year, CCHS met its targets for all significant groups including all students, high needs students, and students with disabilities. CCHS met state requirements in relation to requirements for special education populations. These measurements include indications of progress, such as MCAS scores and compliance measures. If a school has a designation of 3 or higher, the district is determined as "At Risk," by the special education division at DESE. Since CCHS scored a level 2 on the PPI, it has the current designation of, "Meets Requirements-At Risk (MRAR)", due to not meeting the minimum participation requirement of both the district and federal requirements of 95% participation rate for students with disabilities.

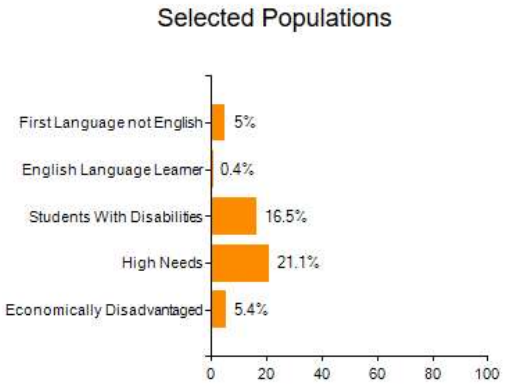
In reviewing other indicators related to school accountability, the following are findings related to each area:

Attendance

The attendance rate at CCHS at 95.2 % is higher than the state average of 93.5%. The average absence rate at CCHS of 8.9 average days per student is lower than the state rate of 11.1 days per year. Chronic absenteeism at CCHS is 8.5% while the state rate is 17.7 %.

Selected Populations

Students with disabilities make up 16.5% of the student population at CCHS. This is below the state average of 17.4%. The high needs population at CCHS of 21.1% is also lower than the state average of 45.2%. Statewide the English Language Learner population is 9.5% while at CCHS the ELL population is below 1% and the students whose first language is not English at CCHS is only 5% as opposed to the statewide population of over 20%. CCHS also has a lower percentage of students who are economically disadvantaged at 5.4% compared to the statewide average at 30.2%. Compared to the statewide compilation of special population, except for students with disabilities (SWD), the percentages are considerably lower than the state average in all areas. The SWD population is also lower than the state average, but only slightly lower. This 16.5% of the student population identified as students with disabilities only reflects students with IEPs and does not include those students who are on 504 plans. Site leadership stated that combined students with 504 plans and IEPs make up 25% of the student population at CCHS.



Graduation Rate

The four-year graduation rate for all students at CCHS is 98.3% and for students with disabilities it is 91.3%. The high needs population 4-year rate is 93.3%. The 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate in 2016 was 99% for all students, 92.7% for SWD, and 94.4% for high needs. The 5-year graduation rate for all students is 99% , for students with disabilities 98.2%, and 98.6% for high needs students. In the five-year calculation, 1.8% of the students with disabilities population was identified as still in school. This small number represents students not on a diploma track who will age out at age 22. CCHS has a 0% drop out rate.

Post School Outcomes

Ninety-five percent of students with disabilities graduating from Concord-Carlisle High School attend 4-year private and public colleges. Less than 5% attend a two-year public college or other post-secondary institution or have go directly to work.

Discipline

Data on the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education reflect that there have been zero students disciplined across the different subgroups. The data reflects 0% of in school suspensions, out of school suspensions, expulsions, placements into alternate settings or emergency removals.

Summary of Accountability Documentation

The review of documents on the School and District Profiles website provided a picture of a successful school on many fronts. The school boasts a highly qualified teaching staff with a low student to teacher ratio and a student population that is very stable. While CCHS is one of the higher performing schools in the state, they did receive a Level 2 rating on the Progress and Performance Index due to the fact that only 94% of the students with disabilities population participated in the state-wide assessment. This also put them in the, “Meets Requirements- AT Risk (MRAR)” category special education technical assistance in the state. The school reflects higher attendance rates than the state average and high graduation rates for all student populations including students with disabilities and high needs. Along with high graduation rates, and a zero percent drop-out rate, the post-secondary outcomes for students with disabilities reflect the high expectations and support students need to be accepted into four year private and public institutions. Based on this document review Concord-Carlisle

High School is a highly successful school, reflecting supports that allow all students access to college and career post-secondary options.

Concord Carlisle High School Homework Survey, 2017

Overview

The majority of students take five or six classes with about 20% taking more than six. Most students select courses in order to pursue their own interests, to have a competitive college application, or to meet the CCHS graduation requirements. In a typical week, most students (33%) reported having five to six blocks open for directed studies, lunch, study skills, and tutorial classes. Approximately 20% reported having either only one to two blocks open or no blocks open at all during a week.

While there is an after-school homework club that provides a place for extra homework support, 64% of students reported not using it. Many did not know it existed. This might be because most teachers (59%) reported never telling their students about homework club. Forty-six percent reported never recommending it to their students.

Amount of Homework

While there is a policy at CCHS regarding a 30-minute per subject homework limit, the survey found that students are spending at least 18 hours on homework each week. Students do at least one hour of work at school during their academic classes, free time, lunch, studies or tutorial class times. On school nights they are typically spending 2.23 hours per night and then doing and addition 2.5 hours over the weekend. The time spent on homework has reduced by about 30 minutes in a week since the 2016-2017 school year.

Due to the nightly time demands and full schedules during the day, approximately 35% of students report that they cannot finish their homework at least once a week. Forty-eight percent report that they do complete all their homework on a regular basis. Students cite the main reason for not being able to complete their homework as time constraints due to extracurricular activities, being too tired, and a lack of interest and motivation. Students with IEPs reported that the main reasons for not being able to complete their homework had more to do with their struggles to focus on the work, that the work was too challenging, and a lack of motivation. Students with 504 plans also identified focus challenges, challenges with the work, and also being too tired.

Students identified that content areas (ELA, math, science, social studies) take the most homework time. Typically, students identified ELA homework as taking only 15 to 30 minutes nightly while math, science, and social studies take from 30 to 45 minutes nightly. Thirty-eight percent of the students reported that social studies homework takes from 45 minutes to over an hour each night. Thirty-one percent of students reported that science also takes this much time, and 23% of students reporting the same for math.

Students with IEPs reported spending less time on homework with the majority reporting that they spend between 15 and 30 minutes in each content area per night with even less time for science. They also spend more homework time on social studies than their other classes. Students with 504 plans spend between 30 minutes and an hour for most content classes per night. They also spend more time on social studies than other classes, but also reported spending closer to an hour on homework in science and math.

Rigor and Relevance of Homework

Most students reported that the rigor of their homework as appropriate, but nearly 30% reported that the social studies homework was too challenging. Twenty-five percent reported that science homework was too challenging and 20% reported that math was too challenging. Overall, students do see the connection of their homework to their classwork. The students in performing arts and health and fitness find their homework less connected to their classwork.

Impact of Extracurricular Habits

Most students (93%) at CCHS are involved in at least one extra- curricular activity. A large majority (68%) are involved in two or more activities. The common activities include school sports, community service, school clubs, club sports, and jobs. Students reported that the time commitment to these activities is usually one to three hours per day, and usually an additional three hours on the weekend.

Stressors

Students report that the highest stressors that they face are most often related to tests, balancing their school work and extra-curricular activities, homework, and in school work. As students progress up the grades, the stressors related to college planning and preparation increase.

Essential Practices

Staff have adopted essential practices related to homework to support students in being more successful in its completion. These include the following:

- Homework is announced before the end of the block.
- Homework is written on the board.
- Homework is posted online using Google Calendar.
- Homework documents are posted online.
- When posted online, homework assignments include due dates.
- When posted online, homework assignments include mini deadlines for long-term projects.
- Specific “No Homework Night” policies are used.
- Homework Free Vacations are provided.
- A coordinated testing schedule is used.

The majority of students reported that teachers adhere to these essential practices “often” except for posting homework on the board. In relation to the “no homework” night policies, over 50% of the teachers seldom or never followed the policy. As far as homework free vacations, over 30% of teachers did not adhere to the policy, and over 40% did not adhere to the coordinated testing schedule intended to keep tests evenly distributed throughout the course of a semester.

Recommended Practices

Staff have also adopted recommended practices to support students around homework that include the following:

- Homework is individualized to meet a students’ specific learning style.
- Teachers let students know how much time it should take to complete an assignment.
- Teachers support students in spending no more than 30 minutes per class, per night on homework.
- Teachers explain the purpose of the homework when they assign it.
- Teachers check in along the way for longer assignments.
- Teachers instruct on specific skills/content they expect students to know for an assignment.

Related to these recommended practices, most students reported that teachers seldom individualize work to their learning styles, seldom let them know how long homework will take, and seldom support the 30-minute rule about homework. Nor do they often explain the purpose of the homework. Most students reported that teachers did check in along the way for longer assignments and did teach them the skills and content necessary to do the work.

Teacher responses in relation to their adherence to these essential and recommended practices differed significantly from student responses. Teachers reported that they do implement these often or always and feel that they have capped the homework to no more than 30 minutes per night.

In 2016 A *Challenge Success Survey*, was conducted by **Stanford Survey of Adolescent School Experience.** The report revealed very similar findings to the 2017 homework survey conducted at CCHS. The Challenge Success Survey also found that most students spend from 2.5 to 3 hours on homework each night and an additional 2.5 to 3 hours of homework on the weekends. Both studies also identified that most students are multi-tasking during their homework including activities such as listening to music, eating, texting, emailing, social networking or watching some form of media. Only 12% of students reported that they just do their homework. This level of distraction could contribute to the time it takes for students to complete homework. In this study, students reported that up to a majority of their homework is busy work as opposed to useful homework, although 38% did report that many of their classes assign homework that helps them learn the material. This may contribute to the lack of motivation reported in the previous survey.

Summary of CCHS Homework Survey Data

Students at Concord-Carlisle High School have a rigorous course of study. Eighty percent of students are taking two or more AP courses, with the majority of students taking five or six classes at one time. Homework takes students approximately 2.25 hours at night in addition to extra-curricular activities which also take an additional one to three hours per night. Daily, this equates to between four to five hours per night working on either homework or involved in extra-curricular activities. Students struggle with meeting the demands of a full school day and the additional time needed to meet these commitments. In order to meet these demands, students spend an additional 2.5 hours on homework over the weekends and an additional three hours on extra-curricular activities. This high level of demand due to homework and activities leaves many students unable to complete homework at home and they resort to using time at school to complete assignments. Even with school supports, many students report that they are still unable to meet all deadlines in a week.

While policies have been put in place to limit the amount of time students spend on homework, students reported that they often spend more than an hour on core content classes each night, with the data showing that most students spend more time on social studies homework than the other course. Students report that the time constraints, fatigue, and lack of motivation are the main issues that cause them to fall behind on their homework. Students with IEPs and students with 504 plans had similar struggles but did identify focus and the rigor of the homework along with motivation and fatigue as factors that affect their ability to complete homework on time. While there is a homework club available to help students, very few students are aware of it, so few students use it.

Despite attempts to limit the amount of homework that have been made through the Essential and Recommended practices, the amount of homework combined with extra-curricular activities continues to have a negative impact on students at CCHS. Guidance counselors report that 75% of the student have some type of anxiety issue. Students report that tests, balancing their school work and extra-curricular activities, and completing their homework and in-school work are all stressors that contribute to anxiety.

SUMMARY OF DOCUMENT REVIEW FINDINGS

The document review reveals that students and teachers at CCHS are working very hard to be successful. State accountability data reflects a school performing well above most high schools in Massachusetts. Teachers provide rigorous instruction and students attempt to rise to the challenge through meeting the homework, classwork, and project assignment demands. Students use the school resources such as free periods and drop-in interventions to help them meet their deadlines, but some still struggle. Students also actively participate in extra-curricular activities that are both school and community related which reflects students and families trying to find a balance of academics, sports, performing arts, school clubs, community service, club sports, and jobs.

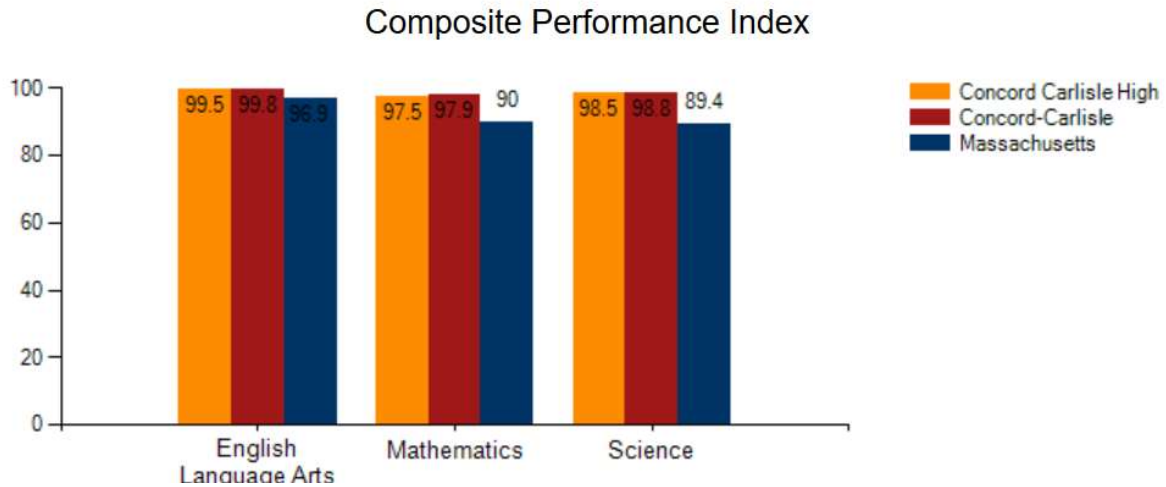
The rigor and success of CCHS does come at a price. Students are overwhelmed with anxiety and stressors related to test taking, homework, projects, and juggling their responsibilities with school and other activities. While a homework club exists, it seems that students do not have time in their schedule to access it or are unaware of its existence. The school has made a concerted effort to develop policies to help alleviate some of these stressors and the data reflected that there has been some improvement in the last year. The community culture of high expectations has not changed and the dangers of such high expectations continue to escalate as students are facing more anxiety and depressive disorders without a systematic support system in place at CCHS.

Additionally, CCHS has been rated a level 2 on the PPI due to a low participation rate for students with disabilities on the Next Generation MCAS. Special education case managers and school staff including school psychologists need to help students and families when making decision to opt out of the MCAS to understand the ramifications for the student and the school when appropriate.

STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

A review of the Massachusetts School and District profiles provided the following information regarding the academic achievement on the Next Generation MCAS tested for 10th graders in ELA, Math and Science and Technology/Engineering.

In reviewing 2016 Student Achievement, Concord Carlisle High School received a transitional Composite Performance Index (CPI) score representing the extent which students attained to or are progressing toward proficiency in a given subject.



CCHS outperformed the state and was only slightly lower than the district average in each of the three areas assessed.

Comparisons of achievement across the four levels of proficiency over the past four years, show little change from year to year for the percentage of students performing at proficiency or above.

GRADE 10 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL	2014	2015	2016	2017
ADVANCED	75	79	80	78
PROFICIENT	22	19	18	20
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	2	1	2	1
FAILING	1	0	1	1

GRADE 10 - MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL	2014	2015	2016	2017
ADVANCED	82	76	80	82
PROFICIENT	13	18	14	16
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	3	3	4	1
FAILING	2	3	2	1

GRADE 10 - SCIENCE AND TECH/ENG ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL	2014	2015	2016	2017
ADVANCED	74	62	75	68
PROFICIENT	19	34	22	28
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	5	4	2	3
FAILING	2	0	2	1

Overall achievement for students at CCHS is well above the state average with 98% of the students assessed performing at proficiency or higher. Only a small percentage (1%) of the student population assessed fell into the Needs Improvement or Warning/Failing categories compared to 6% and 3% statewide respectively.

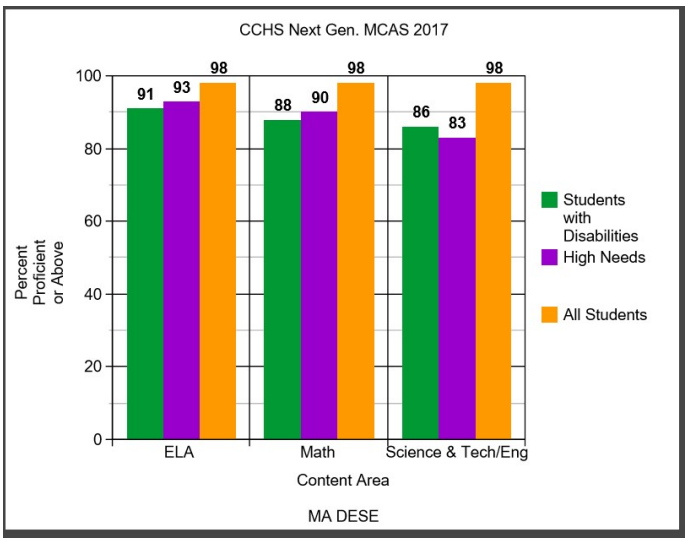
MCAS Tests of Spring 2017
Percent of Students at Each Achievement Level for Concord Carlisle High

	Proficient or Higher		Advanced		Proficient		Needs Improvement		Warning/ Failing		Included
Grade and Subject	School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	School	State	
GRADE 10 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	98	91	78	47	20	44	1	6	1	3	337
GRADE 10 - MATHEMATICS	98	79	82	53	16	26	1	14	1	8	334
GRADE 10 - SCIENCE AND TECH/ENG	96	74	68	32	28	42	3	21	1	5	326

When reviewing subgroup data, the WestEd team focused on two populations compared to all students at CCHS since the review as focused on meeting the needs of struggling learners. These populations were comprised of the largest subgoups with 65 students included in the students with disabilities category out of a total of 337 students and 80 students are included in the high needs population. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE) identifies “High Needs” as students who are either low income, economically disadvantaged, English language learners, or students with disabilities.

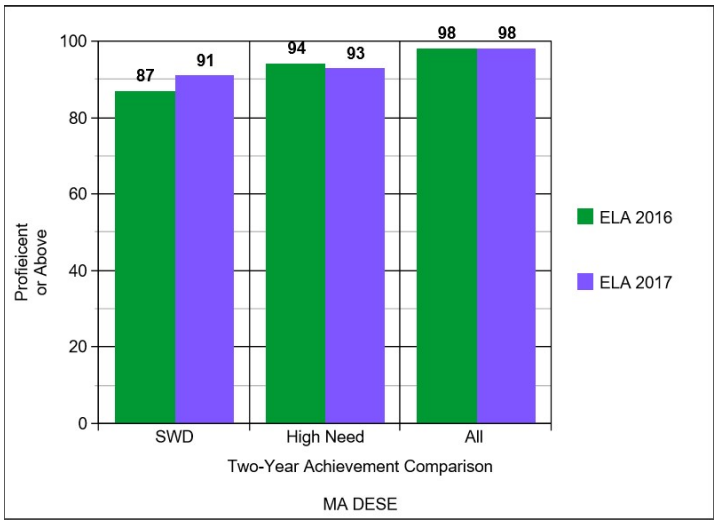
When analyzing achievement gaps for these populations, 91% of students with disabilities were proficient or above on the Next Generation MCAS. Ninety-three percent of the high need population scored at this level while 98% of all students scored proficient or above. A gap of 7% for the SWD subgroup and a gap of 5% for high needs was present for ELA at grade 10.

In math, 88% of the students with disabilities scored at proficient or above, 90% of the high need group scored in this range and 96% of all students scored proficient or above. A 10% gap exists in math for SWD, and a gap of 6% for the high need population exists.

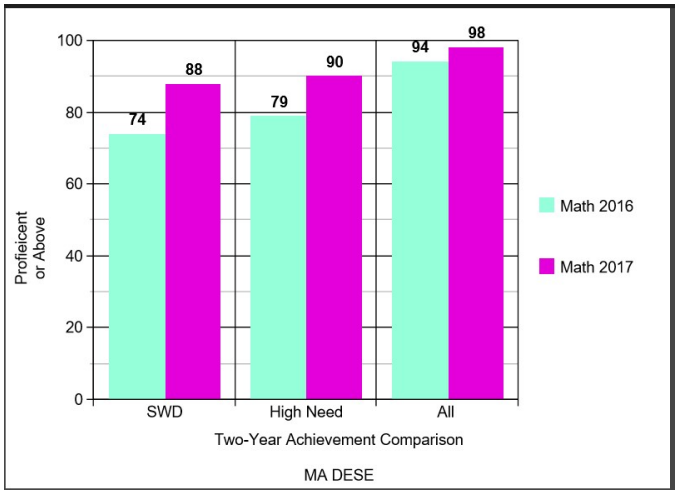


In science, technology and Engineering, 83% of the students with disabilities population scores at proficient or above, 84% of the high needs group scored in this category while 96% of all students scored proficient or above. In science and technology/engineering a larger gap of 13% exists for SWD with a gap of 12% for high needs.

Most students at CCHS are continuing to increase in proficiency in ELA with students with disabilities making a 4% increase in proficiency while the high needs group had a 1% decrease in proficiency and all students maintained their 98% proficiency over the two years. When compared to the state averages, the students with disabilities population in CCHS has 22% more students at proficient and above than the state average. The high needs population has 12% more students scoring proficient and above than the state average.



Students with disabilities made even greater gains in math over the two years with a 14% increase in proficiency. High needs students made an 11% increase and all students made a 4% increase overall.



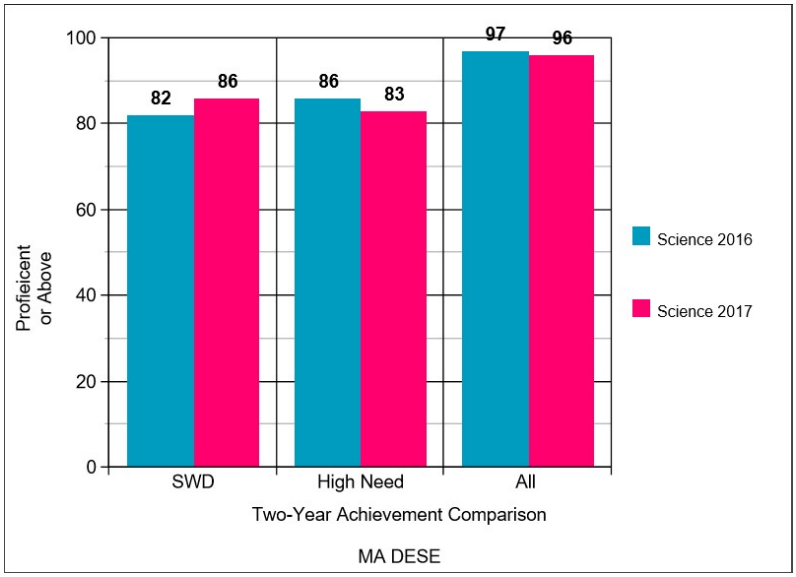
When compared to the state averages, 47% more students with disabilities scored proficient and above while the high needs population at CCHS 38% more proficient and overall all students at CCHS 19% scored at proficient and above.

Students with disabilities also made gains in science with a 4% increase in proficiency while high needs students decreased by 3% and all students decrease by 1%.

Compared to the state averages for science & technology and engineering, a large number, 47% more students with disabilities scored proficient or above than the state average for this subgroup. The high needs population also outscored the state with 31% more students at CCHS

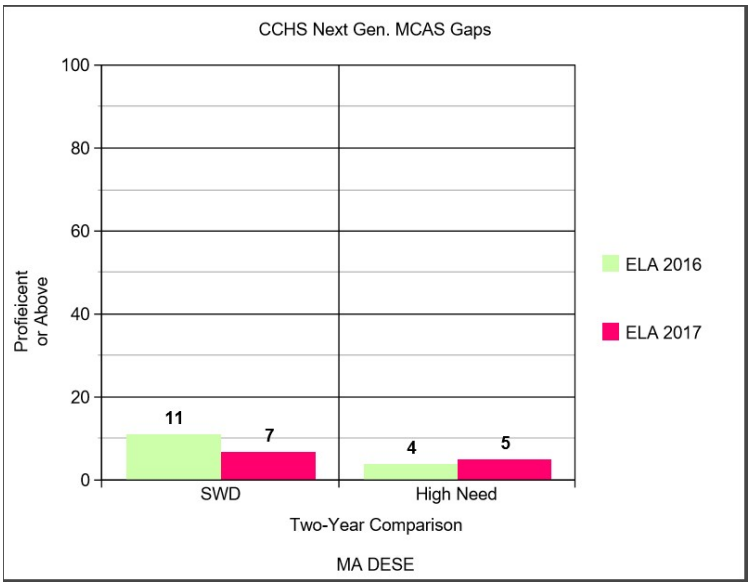
scoring proficient and above while 22% of all students at CCHS scored proficient and above when compared to the state.

Based on the analysis of this data, students with disabilities are receiving effective instruction and supports that are allowing them to access and make progress in the standards-aligned general education curriculum as reflected in the significantly greater proficiency levels above the state averages and continued growth in proficiency over the last two years. Generally high needs students score well above the state average in all areas and are also making gains, specifically in math with only slight drops in proficiency in ELA and science, but overall proficiency rates are well above the state average for all groups in all the tested content areas.



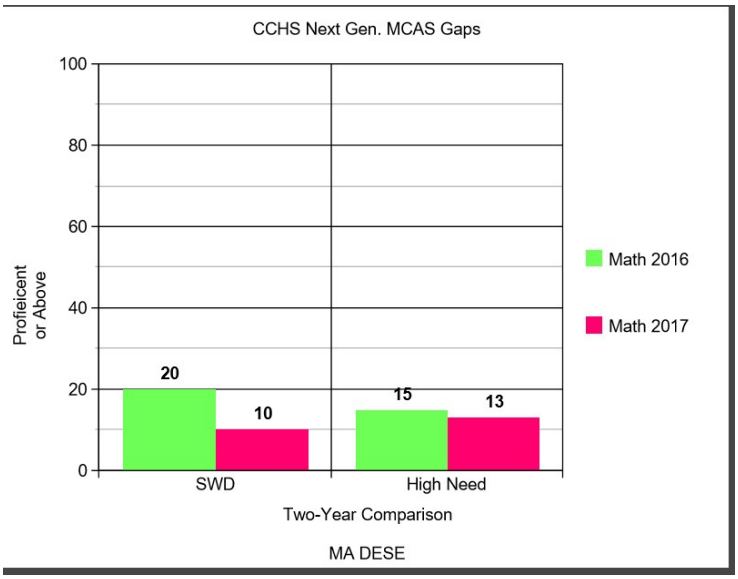
GAPS FOR ELA

In a two-year comparison of achievement gap data which reflects the gap between the proficient and above population for all students and the same proficiency levels for the two target groups, the achievement gap between all students and students with disabilities in ELA has decreased by 4% over the last two years, while the gap for the high needs population increase slightly by 1% in the last two years. The gaps of 7% and for SWD and 5% for high needs populations are significantly lower than the state averages for achievement gaps. At the state level the gap for ELA for 2017 was 22% for students with disabilities and 10% for the high needs population.



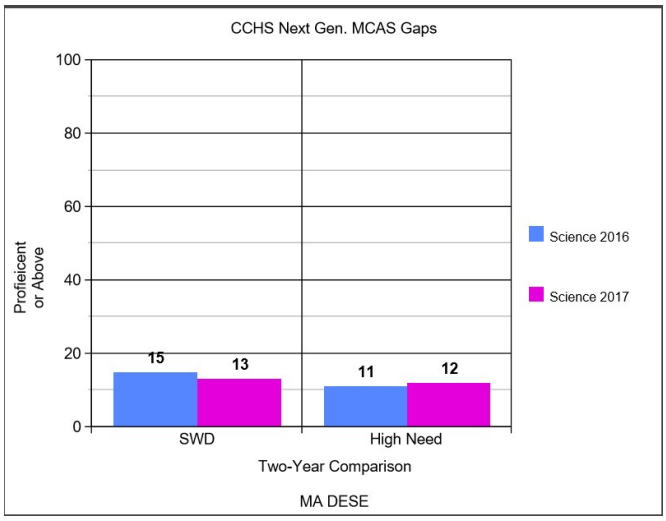
GAPS FOR MATHEMATICS

In a two-year comparison of achievement gap data for math which reflects the gap between the proficient and above population for all students and the same proficiency levels for the two target groups, the achievement gap between all students and students with disabilities has decreased by 10% over the last two years, while the gap for the high needs population decreased by 2% in the last two years. These gaps of 10% for SWD and 13% for high needs students are significantly lower than the state averages for math achievement gaps. At the state level the gap for math for 2017 was 35% for students with disabilities and 22% for the high needs population. The data from CCHS reflects the effort of teachers and students in their academic rigor in math.



GAPS FOR SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY/ENGINEERING

In science & technology and engineering, the two-year comparison of achievement data which reflects the gap between the proficient and above population for all students and the same proficiency levels for the two target groups reflects a decrease in achievement gap for students with disabilities of 2% over the last two years. The high needs population gap increased by 1% over the last two years. Again, these gaps are significantly lower than the state average which reflect a gap of 35% for students with disabilities and 22% for high needs students in 2017. These significantly small gaps of 13% for SWD and 12% for the high needs population compared to the state average reflect the level of support for students with disabilities and high needs students that are provided at CCHS.



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Students with disabilities and high needs students are scoring well above the state average in all content areas assessed. Achievement gaps for students with disabilities have decreased in the past year with gaps that are significantly lower than state average gaps for these two subgroups.

The high achievement of all students at CCHS, including students with disabilities and high needs reflects the rigor of the instruction and the level of supports provided to struggling learners. In all content areas students are

outperforming their peers across the state. Based on the data, students are receiving the supports needed to be successful on the state assessment.

SURVEYS

WestEd administered a web-based survey to teaching staff including guidance counselors, intervention providers, case managers, and tutors. Survey responses were anonymous; the only identifier was the respondent's role. CCHS sent emails embedded with a link to the respective survey. The survey lasted several weeks, and staff were provided time to complete the survey during a staff meeting on November 7th. The surveys also included many of the items in the classroom observation form. (Survey found in Appendix A)

"Teacher" will be used to refer to all staff that participated in the survey. Staff respondents included teaching staff as described in the chart below, with a total of 86 teaching staff responding. Thirteen individuals identified themselves as, "other." Eight were Guidance and Counseling, and the others were identified as Related Service Provider, Lighthouse, Rivers and Revolutions, Library, and other.

Staff Type	Teachers	
	#	%
English	16	17.98%
Math	4	4.49%
Social Studies	10	11.24%
Science	8	8.99%
World Languages	12	13.48%
Health & Fitness	4	4.49%
Fine Arts	3	3.37%
Performing Arts	0	0.00%
Special Education	9	10.11%
Intervention Teacher	1	1.12%
Tutor	10	11.24%
Other	13	14.61%
Total	89	

In regard to longevity at CCHS, the majority, 76% have been teaching at CCHS for six years or more, with 9% having worked at CCHS for 4-5 years and 13% having been at the school between one and three years. Only one respondent was new to CCHS in the 20187-2018 school year.

The vast majority, 97.75% identified that they do work with students who have IEPs with only 2% stating that they did not. Fifty-four percent reported that they currently teach English Learners, 40% stated that they did not, and 5.6% reported that they did not know if they were teaching English Learners.

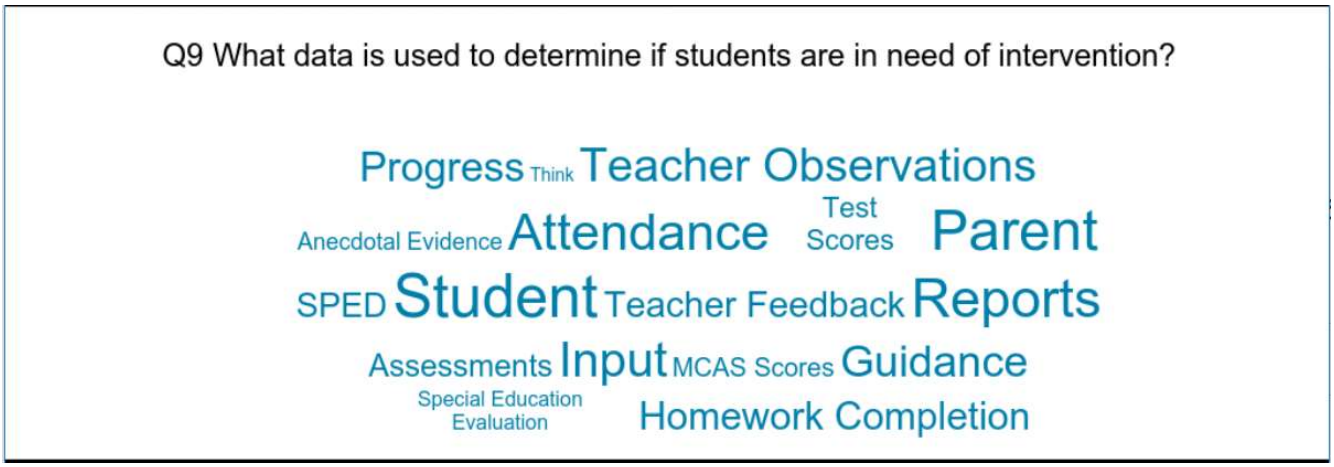
INTERVENTION

The majority, 78%, of respondents report working with students who receive some type of intervention instruction. Only 6% reported that the students that they work with are not part of any intervention instruction and about 17% were not sure if the students they worked with received any type of intervention

Most teachers (59%) agree that there are interventions and supports available to struggling learners with and without IEPs. Thirty percent strongly agreed that interventions are available for all struggling learners while a much smaller group, 9 % disagreed that interventions are available and 3% strongly disagreed that interventions are available and accessible to all students.

When asked questions about the processes for accessing interventions, a total of 58% of teachers felt that there was a clearly understood entry and exit criteria for participating in or exiting the current intervention programs. Forty-two percent felt that there is not a clearly understood entry or exit criteria for interventions. A similar size group, 58% also felt that there is a clear student study team process in place for students who continue to struggle despite intervention support. Again, about 42% disagreed or strongly disagreed and did not feel that there is a clear process in place.

When asked the open-ended question on what data is used to determine if students are in need of intervention, the responses produced the following Word Cloud:



From this information, it is clear that Teacher Observations, Attendance, Parent Reports, Student Reports, Input from Guidance and Homework Completion are top data sources that determine if students are in need of intervention. When the data was analyzed more carefully, grades were the most commonly mentioned data source (36 responses), with teacher observations or reports next with 35 responses. High response rates also included testing or special assessments done by special education or guidance counselors (24 respondents) with attendance being another factor for 13 of the respondents. Less frequent, but relevant, responses included, work completion, and parent or student input.

Seventy-five percent of teachers reported that they agree or strongly agree that teachers do regularly collect data to determine if students are making progress in their intervention classes. Twenty-five percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that data is collected regularly to determine progress in intervention classes.

INSTRUCTION

Sixty-eight percent of teachers reported that they agree or strongly agreed that they are regularly collecting data and/or are using formative assessment data to inform differentiation in their instructional planning. Approximately 32% disagreed or strongly disagreed that regular data collection informs instructional planning.

All teachers reported using specific strategies or practices that support struggling learners in their classrooms including English learners and students with disabilities.

In response to questions about instructional delivery, over 80% of teachers reported that they primarily provide teacher-led instruction to the whole group or class, or provide teacher-led instruction to both large and small groups. Thirty-eight percent reported using student-led learning where the teacher monitors small groups and assists the students as needed.

Teachers spend most of a class period…			
Teacher-led Instruction to Whole Class	Teacher-led Instruction to Small Groups	Monitoring Student-led Learning	Other
36%	44%	38%	38%

Another 38% identified other methods of instructional delivery as noted in the Word Cloud below:

The Word Cloud reflects some individualized instruction, some group instruction that supports students. Most respondents shared that they use a variety of instructional delivery models in any given day usually including a combination of all three on a regular basis including teacher led and student led instruction.

Regarding Universal Design for Learning, most teachers (66%) shared that they represent the "what" of learning by discussing information that is supported by visuals and other means of technology to connect learning to a student's prior experience. Thirty-five percent of teachers address the "how" of learning, through students receiving options such as more time, and breaks to support accessing the curriculum while another 29% reported that they provide options for assessments or assignments such as multi-media or changing the response mode to support student learning. Thirty-two percent provide different responses as options to support how to best assess students. These included, providing student choice, group work, with oral instead of written responses. Teachers shared a variety of practices to address their students varied needs. One teacher said:

> *"Each quarter incorporates a variety of assessment and assignment types. Often on any given assignment/assessment there is an element of choice (choice of writing prompt, choice of topic to research, choice of type of product to produce, etc). All students are given as much time as needed to finish tests."*

Representing Information…("What")			
Discussion	Discussion Planned Visual	Discussion, Planned Visuals Technology	Other
3%	11%	66%	20%
To assess students, teachers use… ("How")			
Same assessment for all students	Some provided options of more time, breaks, etc.	All provided options for assessment & assignments	Other
3%	36%	29%	33%

Most (59%) of teachers reported that they are using engagement strategies such as using clear, specific goals, opportunities for collaboration, flexible assessments, providing frequent and formative feedback with authentic and relevant answer to support the "why" of learning. Approximately 40% of the teachers stated that they used these strategies all the time and only about 3% shared that they rarely use engagement strategies.

Engagement Strategies			
Never	Rarely	Most of the time	Always
0%	3%	59%	39%

When reflecting on instructional practice, the vast majority of teachers (96%) reported that they regularly check for understanding and adjust instruction to student needs during their daily instruction. All teachers reported using hints, cues and probing questions during instruction, while 95% reported using visuals to support instruction. Nearly 75% reported using graphic organizers either always or most of the time as well as the strategy of summarizing orally and/or in writing to support learning as needed.

Strategies	Never	Rarely	Most of Time	Always
Graphic organizers	3%	20%	53%	22%
Other Visuals	0%	6%	50%	44%
Hints, cues, probes	0%	0%	41%	60%
Think-Pair-Share	4%	18%	46%	31%
Summarizing	1%	13%	63%	22%
Check for understanding	0%	4%	52%	43%

Most teachers (74%) reported that they have students work in groups (pairs or small groups) to perform tasks daily or often. Twenty-six percent reported that the only occasionally or rarely have students work together to perform tasks in class. When students do work together, they most often work in pairs or triads.

Percentages of Teachers Using Teacher-led and Student-led Instruction

Small Groups	Never/rarely	Occasionally	Often	Daily
Frequency of small group work	3%	23%	51%	23%
	Pairs/Triads	**Groups of 4**	**Groups of 5+**	
Size of small groups	79%	14%	3%	

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Most teachers (62%) agreed or strongly agreed that the district's professional development had equipped them to provide instructional supports to all students in their classrooms, whereas approximately 38% disagreed or strongly disagreed that the district's professional learning had helped them in this area. There was a fifty-fifty split with teachers agreeing and disagreeing overall that they had ample opportunities for job-embedded professional learning through PLC teams or coaching and mentoring to support them in planning differentiated lessons.

	% Agree	% Disagree
The district's professional development has equipped me to provide instructional supports to all students in my classroom	62%	38%
There are ample opportunities for me to participate in job-embedded learning through PLC teams, coaching, mentoring in order to plan and deliver differentiated instruction.	50%	50%

SUMMARY OF SURVEY FINDINGS

According to survey respondents, most teachers have been teaching at CCHS for more than 6 years and teach students with IEPs and other struggling learners in their classes. Most agree that there are interventions available to supports students in need and a small majority (58%) stated that they believe that there are clear entry and exit criteria for interventions. More than 41% were unclear on any entry or exit criteria. About the same number of teachers agreed that there is a clear pre-referral process in place while about 41% were also unsure of that process as well. In response to what data is used to determine if students needed further intervention, the responses mostly pointed to grades, teacher reports/observations and specialized testing. Several responses mirrored the confusion felt by teachers reflected in the following statements:

"I didn't know there was data to access. I would go to the Guidance Counselor for help."

"As far as I understand, students, teachers and/parent can ask for a student review meeting if it appears the student would benefit from one."

"I have not seen the criteria if it is documented somewhere."

"We do not have a formal, systematized intervention process. When teachers see a struggling student, they work with the student to support him or her. Ultimately, struggling students get referred to special ed. Resulting in too many special education students."

Despite the lack of clarity on what data to use, 75% of teachers report that they use data to determine if students are making progress in intervention classes, but it was unclear what data that might be other than grades, teacher observations and attendance.

Most teachers (68%) responded that they use formative assessment data to inform their instructional planning and all teachers identified that they use specific strategies to support struggling learners in their classrooms. For instructional delivery teachers use a variety of methods including teacher-led instruction, teacher-led with student discussion and student led learning. Teachers apply Universal Design for Learning (UDL) by discussing new information using supports such as visuals and technology for diverse learners and allowing student choice and a variety of options for assessments and assignments. Teachers strengthen student engagement by using cooperative grouping as an instructional practice.

Most teachers responded that they use the following research-based instructional strategies often or daily: graphic organizers and other visuals; hints, cues and probing questions; Think-Pair-Share; summarizing; and checking for understanding and adjusting the lesson accordingly.

Most, (62%) of teachers responded that the district's professional development has equipped them to meet the diverse learning needs in their classrooms, while fifty percent feel that they have ample opportunities for job-embedded learning and fifty percent do not.

In response to the other information they wanted to share about the instructional practice at CCHS, these overall themes were identified:

- General education classrooms have a high percentage of students identified as having disabilities.
- Teachers do not feel supported by special education staff or tutors to support the diverse learning needs in these classrooms.
- Instructional practices across the school vary significantly with too much discretion left to the individual teacher.
- Teachers and tutors go to great lengths to help students with or without IEP or 504 plans.
- Tutors are vital to the success of students with IEPs.
- Communication between all support providers is lacking with confusion about how to access information on how to best support students, and how to determine who else might already be working with the student.
- Case managers do not know the instructional needs of their students, leaving the classroom teachers without a resource person to go to directly for help.

- Some teachers are not adjusting their practice for struggling learners unless the student is on a plan.
- The case manager model is an ineffective means of supporting students due to limited contact time with students.
- Teachers are overwhelmed by the high demand of student need.
- Teachers would like more instructional support from the special education staff, have more professional development on how to support students with disabilities in their classrooms, have common planning time, and push-in support.

The survey data identified that most teachers are using effective evidence-based instructional practices and elements of Universal Design to support diverse learners in their classrooms. When it comes to interventions, there currently is no clear data source for entry or exit criteria for interventions or a commonly identified data source to determine if the interventions have been effective. Some teachers have benefited from district professional development to support them in providing the differentiated instruction needed to support the high number of students with disabilities in their classrooms, but some teachers feel ill equipped to support the high needs of many of their students.

Additionally, general education teachers do not feel supported in their daily instruction to provide effective inclusive instruction. They report that tutors provide the most support, but they are not often available to support classroom instruction. Providing targeted supports is difficult for teachers due to the high numbers of students with disabilities in their classes and a lack of connection or in class support from the special education case managers.

FOCUS GROUPS

WestEd conducted 12 interviews and focus groups during the site visit on October 19th and 20th with school and district administrators, other school staff, students, and parents. (Focus Group Question can be found in Appendix B)

Specifically, focus groups were held separately with:

- Special education case managers, including seven teachers, one school psychologist, and one speech-language pathologist;
- Special education tutors;
- Guidance counselors, including a school psychologist;
- Parents of students with disabilities;
- Administrators, including principals, the special education chair person, the superintendent, and the district special education director;
- General education teachers, including a separate focus group with the content area chair persons;
- Network and Challenge general education intervention program staff, including two special education tutors, the special education chair person, a school adjustment counselor, two school psychology interns, and a school psychologist;

- Lighthouse general education intervention program staff, including a school adjustment counselor, a special education Tutor, a school psychologist, and the district special education director; and
- Junior and senior students with disabilities.

Interview and focus groups protocols were specifically tailored to the particular group in question, however, there were several questions in common across the groups.

INTERVENTIONS

Parents mentioned that the class work and content were overwhelming, and that the school was competitive. One conundrum they expressed was that some of the interventions to help with these high expectations were socially isolating, but without them, their children "dropped off the academic cliff."

Parents felt that, in general, parents are unaware of interventions that are available and are unsure that what the school offers is the best choice for their child. Concerns that parents voiced about interventions included: "Once in Lighthouse, always in Lighthouse"; it is difficult for new students to get into Lighthouse; study skills class is just for homework; Network's academic instruction is "not so great"; and MARC intervention is ineffective because students need to self-advocate there to receive support. Parents expressed that AltPro was "very engaging…right on target," however was not focused on academics. Parents were impressed with the Rivers and Revolutions class, saying that this type of class was able to support student's executive functioning skills.

The case managers reported that the study skills time is ineffective and there are inequity, and possibly legal, issues because they are unable to provide direct services to their students. Most of the work in study skills is focused on homework or class assignments. The administrators made the point that parents do not want their children doing hours of homework, so they expect students to be helped at school.

Case managers believe that higher functioning students with disabilities should have a specific program such as literacy skills or a comprehensive program that provides them with a home base, cohesive program, and access to a consistent set of adults.

Guidance counselors believe that the Challenge program is a "great option" for students and addresses executive functioning skills; however, they are concerned that there is no program designed specifically to address executive functioning. They do not feel that other programs, specifically SSERC, are beneficial. They are concerned about the overarching difficulty they face understanding what the programs provide, what programs are available, and which are best for the student.

General education teachers supported this and said that the supports are only as good as their awareness of them but that it is hard to figure out what supports students receive or should receive. The reported that, "going through the guidance counselor is circuitous – they are too busy and too hard to find. Teachers said that there are a lot of regular education supports, but no direct instruction. One general education teacher expressed concern that some students do not have the opportunity to engage in a variety of courses early in high school due to time needed for Tutorials; he felt that students struggling in content areas might shine in other courses. Teachers expressed that the Rivers and Revolution program was positive in respect to having various levels of students working together.

Staff from the Freshman intervention, Network, explained that about half of the students have disabilities, mostly ADHD or ED and may also be in a study skills or Advanced Learning Strategies class. General educators, administrators, and guidance counselors expressed a concern about Lighthouse students not being part of the general education experience, including coursework, with one person stating, “General education doesn’t own any of these kids.”

When discussing the various interventions available throughout the Concord Carlisle school system, the administrators noted that the system is staff heavy so that by the time students reach high school, they need an “adult by their side.”

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORTS

The special education tutors reported working directly with students one-on-one in Pathways, a program for high needs students; MARC and SSERC, general education intervention classes; and study skills. They feel that students with disabilities slip through the cracks in MARC class because there are more students than tutors, so they can’t provide the one-on-one testing on students’ IEPs. The tutors, although hired as special education personnel, explained that only 50% of the students they work with are students with disabilities. They would like to attend the general education classes when their students are there to help them and learn the curriculum and assignments before students come to an intervention class for help with homework and to study for tests.

Case managers report that the curriculum at Concord Carlisle High School is quite challenging, but it is up to the tutors to make the content accessible through re-explaining, reading passages, and other accommodations. General educators report that the school had a “curriculum disability” in which the curriculum is designed for the average learner, and that the school was not a comprehensive high school any more, but a college prep school, “sometimes on steroids.” The special education teachers feel that there has been push back from the general education teachers to build in supports for all learnings, and tutors report that no supportive strategies or practices are being used in classrooms. General education teachers diverge from the case managers, saying that they are committed to modifying the curriculum and are “pretty knowledgeable about how to differentiate.” Parents believe that some teachers were not sympathetic to students with disabilities and do not provide accommodations without being pushed.

The case managers report that the number of students has doubled (from 75-150) in the past several years, making it difficult to break away from the study skills method of service delivery and forcing these classes to be overcrowded. While they feel that the tutors are very talented and skilled in many areas, they are not certified special education teachers. Case managers expressed concern that while tutors are the main service providers, they do not tend to understand different learning styles, autism, and other traits of students with disabilities that require unique specialized instruction. The case managers report that students who have been in study skills classes for a couple of years start to “spiral down” and the case managers must then “triage” the situation through one-on-one direct instruction.

Students explain that often teachers are unaware that they needed more support, that they are behind, and that many of the adjustments that the teachers made were not helpful. For example, one teacher had a student use

the extended time on a test to rewrite the test as a learning strategy. Students explained that after making mistakes on a test, tutors will teach them the material, but they are never give the opportunity to apply that knowledge. Students expressed that it was "not a good technique to learn on your own and then be tested in class." One student went further, saying: "That's a teaching style I struggle with."

SOCIO-EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

An overarching concern for parents is that students with disabilities do not feel good about themselves as students. They would like the school staff to focus on the whole child and know the children better because anxiety is "a big issue." Parents are grateful for the new PE class that provides a self-guided mindfulness program, but would like a program for all students to address anxiety. Yet, they also feel fortunate because the school community is full of "incredibly caring people."

Case managers believe that the challenging curriculum at CCHS and the general push in the school community, particularly from parents, for high achievement pushes students to take another class during lunch time. They believe the students "spiral down" because the setting they are provided is not appropriate and the case managers are unable to individualize given this structure.

Guidance counselors report that about 75% of parents, students, and teachers talk about anxiety and that students are stressed and anxious because of the workload, excessive homework, and overloaded schedules.

General education teachers explained that they had to provide emotional support to students with disabilities, particularly around MCAS testing, because the tutors are often unskilled at dealing with student anxiety. Yet, they reported that the Tutor is the primary connection for the students to the school, both emotionally and academically, and they are "ripped away at the end of the year." General educators believe that most referrals are due to student anxiety.

For the students' part, they describe the stresses of not knowing their grades until it is too late to correct an issue, explaining their grades to parents who have extremely high expectations, the excessive amount of homework, and having full school and extracurricular schedules.

STAFF ROLES

The special education tutors felt that only some teachers know their roles and many students and parents believe that the tutors are the teachers. In general, tutors do not believe that it is their role to modify tests, but some general education teachers expect them to do so. Some tutors believe it is their role to modify curriculum, tests, teach the subject matter, and assist students to prioritize and organize.

Tutors reported that they taught themselves how to fill their role. They would like to attend professional development to learn more, but these would be unpaid. The librarian reported being available to train teachers on the use of educational technology to personalize the learning environment and how to use graphic novels in chemistry and physics. She explained that tutors do not get this support from library, but one case manager trains tutors.

There was consensus among parents that tutors are mostly responsible for helping students with homework, and that a good Tutor could also help the students prioritize and stay organized. However, parents express confusion about the tutors' background, preparation, and role. When discussing the roles of the case managers, parents provide mixed information. Some parents had children with a case manager who is aware of their child's needs, but others feel they were not proactive. Mostly, parents are not sure what case managers do with students.

Case managers describe their role as a "duty", like general education teachers' study halls, or a homework tutelage like MARC and SSERC. Case managers teach four study skills classes a day, and feel "spread thin' keeping up with and preparing for classes and "can't be the professionals [they] would like to be."

The general education teachers express concern that the tutors do not know their role and that the role is different for different tutors. The teachers feel that they must take on the role of education by themselves sometimes because they are unable to find the right person to help the student. They explain that many staff have "bits and parts of the kid with no system to pull it all together." They would like to see more tutors in the general education classes so they can help the students.

One student works with, and has a strong relationship with, her case manager. Others weren't sure if they had a case manager. In general, students feel that their tutors are their "main special education teachers." The administrators second that opinion, saying: "The tutors are doing the special educator role. Tutors are super high quality, but that is causing them to do the special education job."

COMMUNICATION

Parents feel challenged because Aspen is not kept updated so they are unable to be proactive in helping their children. Students also lament that they are unaware of their grades until the test or even after the quarter ends. One student said, "What's the point if after a whole quarter, you still don't know anything. I've never learned from what I didn't get before, or reflected on mistakes I've made." Another said, that due to missed classwork from a two-day absence, he had an F on Aspen. "What teachers put in Aspen is important to consider … [it's] discouraging for students and upsetting to parents. It causes home-life trouble."

Students also feel it is difficult to access their teachers for quality help outside of class, even though they have office hours posted. "It's their time, they seem to rush and have something else to do so they don't explain things well." They also mention that since so many students need to take advantage of teacher availability outside of class, "why not teach [the material to] the whole class?" Students are also concerned about explaining their accommodations to teachers. "They seem to think I get extra time to cheat."

Students feel that their teachers do not communicate with each other about what is expected of the students. They feel that the implementation of testing for certain classes on certain days was supposed to balance the workload for students, but it did not work. They explain that if teachers were to communicate with each other an hour every single morning, "like in Rivers and Revolutions, it would make a big difference." Students express

the sentiment that each teacher thinks his/her class is more important than others, which decreases the empathy and increases the level of homework.

Case managers report that they generally communicate with parents via an initial letter or phone introduction and then tend to rely on the counselors to inform them if a student is struggling. Students report that their family is heavily involved in their education, particularly as part of the IEP team. But they lament that sometimes teachers contact their parent before mentioning a problem to them.

The case managers are unable to attend content department meetings nor to meet with their general education counterparts to plan for instruction in the inclusive classes because each department, including special education, has a different lunch block. Case managers usually communicate with the general education teachers through the guidance counselor. The general education teachers receive the IEP through the online IEP system. General education teachers report that communication happens via email and they do not want to have difficult conversations through that medium. General educators also want more opportunities to communicate with middle school teachers to inform them of the high school classes, meet some students prior to receiving them, and be able to read all their students' files as early as possible to help students integrate.

One apparent communication breakdown is that case managers said that study skills class was based on homework because that was the "culture of the school" and that parents want this. The administrators supported this view. Yet, parents made a point of stating that the IEPs focus on improved executive functioning skills and that the study skills homework focus was not addressing this.

Case managers also feel stymied because they were unable to see the 20 students on their caseload daily and must receive information about them from other sources including the students themselves, tutors, general education teachers, and parents. This lack of direct communication and access to students causes an over reliance on third party information as they conduct IEP meetings. They would like to teach the students on their caseload because they can "feel the difference" when they do so.

Some tutors feel that there is not a communication loop with the case manager, reporting that rarely does the case manager provide information about students' instructional and behavioral needs. Tutors determine what assistance the students need from the X2 program and they sometimes check the IEP at the beginning and later in the year. Only some tutors have laptops and believe they will be taken away after this year. They report that laptop use is how they communicate about student needs and access the IEPs. Students may also tell tutors their needs. Tutors and case managers are supposed to meet every Friday, but this often does not happen. Finally, tutors believe that the current system breeds tension and turf wars.

DATA USE FOR DECISION MAKING

The case managers report that no progress monitoring, documentation of interventions, implementation strategies, review, or other steps are happening before being student cases are pushed to the guidance counselor and then directly to a 504 plan. There is no systematic method for determining if a student needs an intervention. Exacerbating this situation, the case managers are not made aware of students' needs because they are not part of the Student Study Team.

Case managers feel that a true Response to Intervention model would support both the teachers and the students better and would break the model of students who have a problem, "any problem" being evaluated go directly to an intervention.

Guidance counselors explain that there are rarely openings for interventions because "once [students] are in the program, they stay." They also explain that parents of students with concussions push for an "Individual Student Success Plan" which allows students to access accommodations for the PSAT and SAT. While this is designed to be a temporary plan, it can be extended into perpetuity or the student may receive a 504 plan. When discussing exit criteria for special education, case managers report that "it is nonexistent."

Administrators and general education teachers second the sentiment that there is the need to systematize a Response to Intervention system and that there are no exit criteria for the various interventions.

General education teachers explain that if they are "concerned" about a student, they contact the guidance counselor who determines if the student is struggling in more than one class. In this case, they coordinate services through one of the interventions. If only the one class is an issue, the teacher "keeps working." They said that if concerns persist, they can conduct a student review meeting and look at possible supports, but they "don't have a formal process that is tiered and looks at data." They lament that the recent RTI training had been canceled due to lack of interest.

Program staff for the freshman program, Network, identify students in collaboration with the middle school counselor and teachers to see who would benefit from this group. They then meet with the parents. Network staff explain that they do not "want to end up with a bully or acting out student" that might harm the cohort. There is "no chart or rubric" to identify students for Network, but middle school and Network staff are "looking for kids who will be able to work in the relational model and would benefit from it." They want students who could complete coursework if the right supports were in place, who are independent, mature, assertive, and can self-advocate.

Network staff explain that the exit criteria during the freshman year is a student not being a good fit in the cohort and making A's in class. Students who exit Network following their freshman year often move on to Challenge or Advanced Learning Strategies or study skills if in special education. Following students' freshmen year, Network staff "follow these kids" and report that many need no further intervention. Staff conduct some satisfaction surveys and report that they "help them a lot," and that many students need no further intervention.

Entry criteria for the Challenge program tends to be if students are not doing homework, parents are concerned about their children's choices, if they have low grades, and they do not qualify for special education. When asked about the use of data, staff said, "No, we just work closely with the department, look at grades, and homework completion."

When asked about entry criteria for the Lighthouse program, staff explained, "It's complicated". Entry is "primarily because of missing school" and is always voluntary. When asked about exit criteria, they said that it is "sometimes difficult to reintegrate [students] into general education classes because they feel comfortable [in Lighthouse] and it is easier." Students sometimes get a referral to AltPro special education class following

Lighthouse. However, AltPro is a special education program and Lighthouse staff explained that most of their students do not qualify for special education services, although it is funded with special education money.

The administrators were concerned that those running certain program staff say that they are full and have caps. One administrator expressed the concern this way, “What does that mean? We’re a public school.”

SUMMARY OF FOCUS GROUPS

While parents appreciate all the supports provided by the teaching staff at CCHS, they do feel that the classwork and content are overwhelming to many students. They are unclear on the purposes of each of the intervention programs offered and are not sure that they have been effective for their children. Case managers also felt that the current interventions were limited and identified a need for specific programs for direct instruction to support more than just homework completion. Guidance counselors and general educators aged that not all the current programming is beneficial.

Tutors are the primary conduit for instructional supports as they work directly with students in a variety of settings including the Pathway program, in the intervention classes, in study skills and at times in the general education classroom. Tutors and case managers do not feel that general education teachers are providing supportive strategies. Case managers find that study skills classes are overcrowded and do not provide the direct instruction supports that students with IEPs need. While students appreciate the support of the tutors, they do not feel that they are able to apply their learning once they have taken a test.

This frustration with the rigor and pace of learning has led to many problems with anxiety. All focus groups mentioned this concern. The challenging curriculum, a general push from the community, particularly from parents; and the stress of workload, excessive homework, and overloaded schedules all contribute to this problem.

There is not just confusion and inconsistency in instructional practice but also confusion regarding staff roles. Tutors play the role of special educators in the intervention classes as well as for push-in support to general education classrooms. The tutors have not had specific training and have had to teach themselves how to best meet students’ needs. Parents are appreciative of the support that the tutors provide their students in completing their homework, but do not feel like the case managers provide enough special education support. Case managers cover study skills classes, but do not have the opportunity to provide direct instruction in the current model, so students perceive the tutors as their special education teachers.

Focus group participants also identified communication as a contributing issue to the anxiety and inconsistency of practice across the school. Issues with grades not kept up-to-date on Aspen and difficulty gaining quality access to teachers outside of class time reflects the communication issues felt by students and families. Case managers do not attend department meetings creating communications barriers related to supporting general education teachers in providing instructional supports and adaptations for students in their classrooms. Case managers do not work regularly with the students on their caseload and have no system for obtaining information about their students from either the general education teacher or tutors in order to plan and provide instructional supports.

A heavy reliance on guidance counselor support and special education testing is due to the lack of any universal screening or progress monitoring data available to inform interventions. The lack of data and case manager involvement in Student Study Team meetings results in many referrals for special education testing. The high reliance on the guidance counselors and specialized testing is the result of a lack of data-based decision making

across the school. A true tiered system of support for both academics and social emotional needs would help alleviate this overreliance on specialized testing and intervention supports.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

WestEd observed 26 classrooms at CCHS including general education classrooms, special education classes including Pathway and study skills classes, intervention programs, and the Rivers and Revolutions integrated class. Most observations lasted approximately 15 minutes and occurred during the middle of a class lesson. Most of the classes observed were taught by general education teachers. Class sizes ranged from small intervention classes of five to general education classes of 26 students. Students with IEPs in those classes ranged from zero to 15 students. With 504 students included, tutors shared that 75% of the students in some classes were on either an IEP or 504 plan. (Observation Tool can be found in Appendix C. Observation resources in Appendix D)

The majority of classes observed were in 10th grade with a total of nine classes, eight in 9th grade, seven in 11th grade, six in 12th grade and four in mixed grade classes such as intervention classes. The most frequent content area observed was math with three classes. A wide range of classes were observed including math, ELA, Geometry, History, Science, Sociology, and the intervention programs. Nearly 70% of the observations occurred in general education classes, 23% were in special education classes and 8% were in intervention classes.

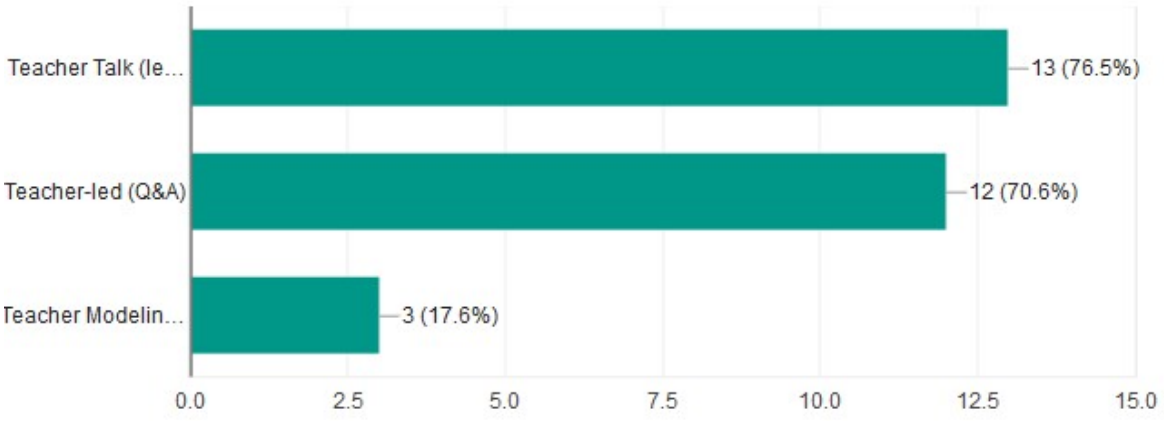
Special education service delivery observed was mostly resource room pull-out (36%) and push-in with Tutor support (27%). Other special education service delivery included, other (18%) which included a general education resource room with students working independently (SERRC), or classes where students with IEPs did not receive any special education supports. Co-teaching supports were observed in one classroom, and one classroom observed was a self-contained program where students received special education instruction for the majority of the school day in the Alternative Program. In the one classroom where co-teaching was observed, the model they were using was team teaching.

Tutors most often were observed assisting students (50%) or supporting instruction (30%). They were also seen observing instruction or doing an activity that was non-instructional, such as class preparation and modification of work. Some tutors observed were very engaged with students supporting their learning through writing for them, helping them find information on the internet, and providing writing scaffolds and instructional supports in the study skills classes. Most of this support was provided to students one-on-one.

When observing student engagement and participation, the majority (60%) of the classes had 91 to 100% of the students engaged and participating either through speaking, writing, signaling, and responding in some fashion during the observation. In 28% of the classes, 76-90% of the students were engaged or participating during the observation, and in one class 51-75% of the students were engaged, while in one class less than 50% of the students were engaged or participating in the lesson.

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY

When observing instructional delivery, most teachers provided instruction through the more traditional lecture model (77%) while 70% also used teacher-led question and answer with a small number (18%) teaching through modeling with student practice.



Five observed classrooms used small group instruction or centers, with students working in cooperative groups in one classroom, students working in pairs in three classrooms, and two classrooms where the teacher or Tutor led small group instruction.

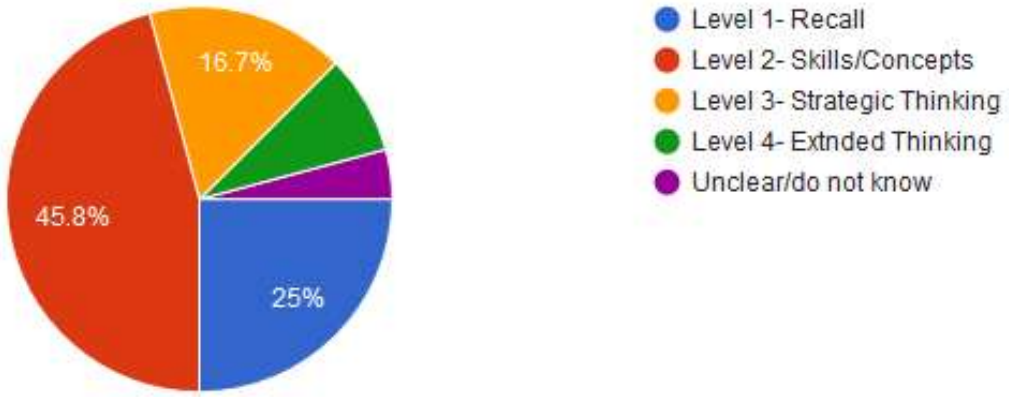
In 21 classrooms students sat either in clusters or in pairs. Some classrooms had students sitting in a U shape with only five classrooms observed where student sat in rows. In special education study skills classes and intervention classes there were only tables and independent study offices or pods in the classrooms. In these classrooms students were at times working together, but in some classes students worked completely independently with no interaction with the teacher or other students.

Student seating in some classes supported cooperative learning where students were observed peer editing in google drive and holding peer-to-peer conferences while editing, engaging in discussion, working together on study guides, or working on projects together. While students sat in pairs in some classes, and the teacher requested that they work with a partner, the teacher did not enforce with mandatory engagement and let some students choose to work alone**.**

Higher Order Thinking

Depth of Knowledge, or DOK, is the complexity or depth of understanding needed to answer or explain an assessment related item or classroom activity. This concept of depth of knowledge was developed through research by Norman L. Webb in the late 1990's. Webb identified four distinct depth of knowledge levels. Level 1 includes basic recall of facts, concepts, information, or procedures. This is the rote learning or memorization of facts. Level 2 includes skills and concepts such as the use of information (graphs) or requires two or more steps with decision points along the way. Level 3 includes strategic thinking that requires reasoning and is abstract and complex. Students must analyze and evaluate complex real-world problems with predictable outcomes. They must be able to reason their way through the problem logically. Level 4 includes extended thinking such as an investigation or application to solve complex real-world problems with unpredictable outcomes. Students must strategically analyze, evaluate, and reflect over time often having to change their approach on their way to coming up with an amicable solution.[2]

The majority (46%) of classroom instruction observed was aligned to Level 2 or the Skills/Concepts Depth of Knowledge level. In 25% of the classroom observed, the instruction was aligned to the Recall level or Level 1 of the DOK. Over 16% of the instruction was more challenging at a Level 3, or Strategic Thinking level of DOK and a small percentage (8%) were utilizing Level 4, Extended Thinking levels of the DOK.



Some examples of higher DOK level lessons included, a lesson where after discussion, the teacher provided the students with video clips of different politicians and students had to synthesize the information from the video clips and develop their own conclusions as to which political party the speaker represented. In another classroom, the teacher suggested that the students formulate possible alternatives to solving a geometry problem if they could not remember a theorem.

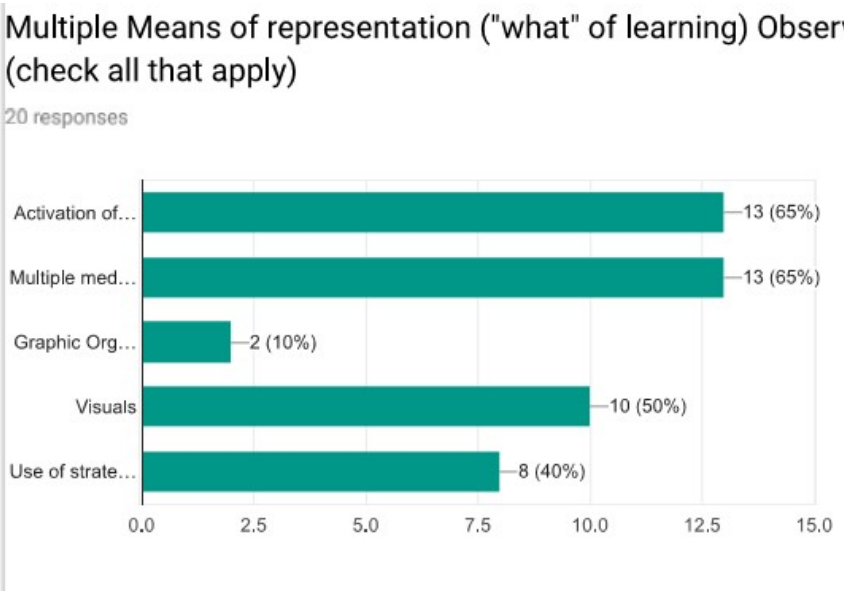
Despite the rigor of CCHS, the instruction is often still aligned to the skills and concept levels where students are not required to think strategically or extend their thinking to support the generalization of concepts across content areas.

Standards Based Instruction

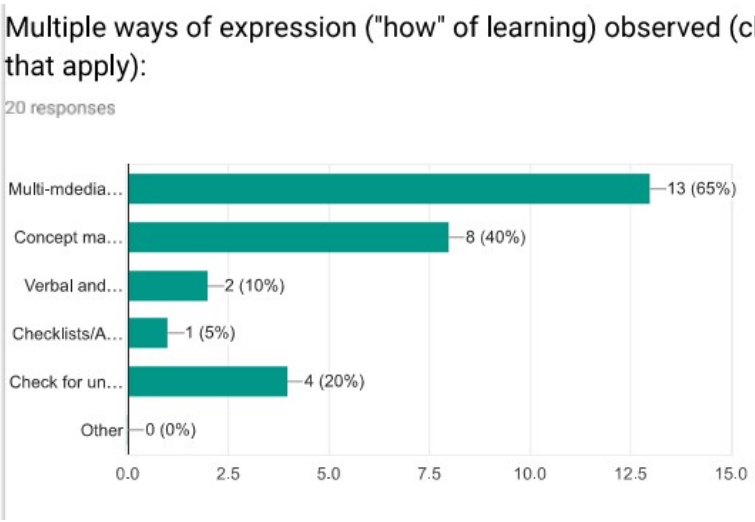
While instruction in observed classrooms did seem aligned to the grade level standards since in 12 (52%) of the classrooms the teachers connected the instruction to a standard in the lesson itself, observers did not find the standard posted in any classrooms, or noted in the platform the students were using, and only in one classroom did the observer see the grade level objective for the lesson posted. In 4 of the classes, the assessments that were being given were aligned to the standards in general. Since few classes had specific objectives for the lesson posted, in 48% of the classes it was difficult to tell if the checks for understanding were associated with the objectives. Observers who were able to observe the beginning of lessons to see if the lesson was introduced with a standard or objective related to the standard reported seeing that in only one classroom. One observer reported, “There was minimal to no lead in to what they were going to talk about, how that related to past learning, or how it related to the overall outcome of the course.” When tutors were asked if they were aware of specific standards that they were working on, of if they received any lesson plans to support aligning the instruction to the standards, they responded that they did not. They knew what to do based on previous experience and that the particular project they were working on was a tradition at the school. They were unsure of which specific standards the project addressed.

Effective Instructional Strategies

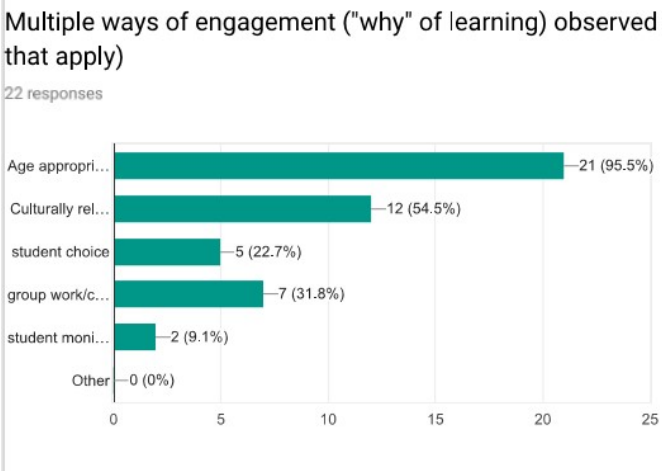
Universal Design for Learning provides flexibility in ways information is presented, the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills. Observations revealed that most teachers are using these principles in their instruction, with 65% of the classroom observed activating prior knowledge and using multiple media formats to support the "what" of learning. Eight observed classrooms used specific strategies or tools to help students make meaning of their learning and ten classrooms observed used visuals such as pictures or video clips to support learning. Only two observed classrooms used graphic organizers that support concept enhancement. Some classrooms used a variety of media including manipulatives, pictures, whiteboards, SMARTboards, and video clips to enhance learning.



In 13 classrooms, teachers were using multi-media for student expression including laptops, iPads, video, audio, text and visual media to support the multiple expressions that support the "what" of learning. Eight classrooms used some other type of concept mapping or note-taking guides, with four classrooms where teachers were observed using checks for understanding and ongoing formative assessments. Only two classes used verbal and written scaffolds and/or prompts to support student accessing the content such as sentence stems, frames or the use of specific protocols. In one classroom, the teacher used a checklist or assessment rubric so that students could monitor their own learning.



Observers noted that the type of multi-media were differentiated between students with some working on computer, some working on Word documents, one working in Quizlet and some working in books. One observer noted that the teacher did have a notetaking guide, but only half the students seemed to be completing it. Some students were not expected to complete one and no other option for expressing what they were listening to was observed.



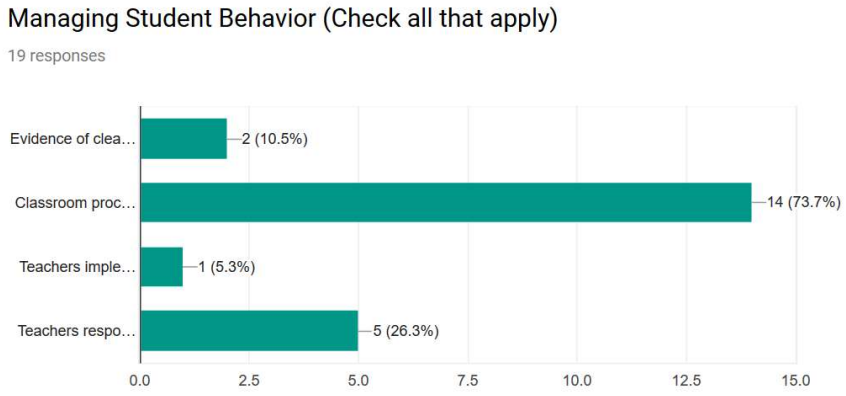
In observing for UDL strategies associated with multiple means of engagement reflecting the "why" of learning, in 21 classrooms (95%) the instruction reflected age appropriate activities and 12 classrooms (55%) reflected culturally relevant activities and materials. To support engagement, seven classrooms (32%) used group work or cooperative grouping, five (23%) provided options for student choice and two classrooms had students monitoring their own progress through some type of self-assessment.
Observers noted that students had the option of choosing from a number of assessment projects, as well as options around how to produce a project including a video, PowerPoint, Google Doc or Adobe Spark. One observer saw students working together peer editing where the teacher first reviewed strategies to deliver comments (commendations, recommendations). Students were developing self-assessment skills through clarifying conversations.

Physical Space

Observers found that special education study skills classes are located throughout the school and not segregated away from the general student population. In observing classroom physical space 77% of the classrooms had physical arrangements that encourage engagement in student learning. These classrooms had spaces for students to work together as well as space to work independently in "quiet areas." In some of these classrooms students received instruction in rows, but then moved into pairs and groups to do the work of the lesson. In seven (27%) of the classes observed, teachers used physical resources skillfully to increase access to student learning. In one classroom the teacher used a globe and allowed students to use cell phone flashlights to model the concept and enhance the learning. In one classroom, a student too ill to attend school was able to participate through Skype, and in a science class, students had access to two classrooms in order to complete the tasks for an integrated lesson. In these rooms students had the use of manipulatives and plenty of choices for supplies.

Managing Student Behavior

Overall behavior problems seemed non-existent in the classrooms observed. While little evidence of clear classroom management policies and procedures were evident through posted rules, policies and/or procedures, two classrooms did have some evidence of policies. Most classrooms (74%) did utilize classroom procedures that promote student learning, social development, and group responsibility with the use of norms, routines, "sponge activities", transitions, system of recognition, and consequences instead of punishment. When behavior problems were seen, teachers responded to behavior errors in appropriate manners that reflected respect and conserved student dignity.



Teachers were observed using proximity control, hand signals, positive demeanor, routines such as starting on time and staying on topic. Teachers gained student attention prior to the lesson, and when a student faded, the teacher,

respectfully, asked the student, “Can you please raise your head so you can see? Are you ready now? Can you focus?” Teachers supported behavior by being organized, on time, and prepared.

SUMMARY OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

In the 26 classrooms that WestEd observed, most students were well behaved, an evidence of good classroom management policies even though these were not posted in the classrooms observed. In most classes, 91 to 100% of the students were engaged or participating in the learning. Overall instructional delivery reflects principles of Universal Design for Learning with most teachers using strategies to support the multiple means of representation, multiple means of expression, and multiple means of engagement. Instruction in classrooms still relies heavily on lecture or teach talk as the most common way to deliver instruction. Most teachers also use teacher led question and answer to enforce concepts while some also use small group instruction or a variety of the three during lessons.

The majority of teachers “set the bar of rigor” at the two lower DoK levels while fewer teachers are planning lessons and assessments at the higher levels. Instruction in classes is aligned to the standards as most teachers connected the instruction to the standards during the lessons even if the standards and objectives were not posted in the classroom. However, evidence that students understand that the work they are engaging in relates to the long-term outcome of mastering specific standards is missing.

Most teachers set up their classroom to support small group instruction as well as individual learning, so students could work together in small groups or work in “quiet zones” as needed. Some classrooms, despite quiet zones, did not provide quiet options for students who were taking test due to the level of noise and the number of students in the room. Teachers used classroom resources to support learning although it was noted by observers that there were few visual resources on the walls that supported learning such as informational posters or student work as exemplars. One teacher used Skype to allow a student who was too ill to join the class physically to be present for the lesson at the student’s request.

Special education study skills classes are located throughout the school building and not segregated in any way. When observing special education service delivery, most services were provided in a special education pull-out setting in the study skills class or through a push-in model with Tutor support in general education classes. There are no classes other than the Pathway program for students with severe cognitive disabilities or students on the autism spectrum where students with high incidence disabilities receive specially designed direct instruction within the continuum of special education services. All services are provided as homework help in the study skills class or in class supports through tutors in the general education classroom.

OVERALL STRENGTHS

CCHS is a high performing school where teachers and staff work hard to meet specific student needs in order to “normalize differences.” Teaching staff go out of their way to provide students one-on-one supports to help them complete assignments and learn the content. The school has a Composite Performance Index of near 100 in all content areas assessed on the state assessment and students continue to attain high levels of achievement while closing gaps for special populations. This achievement reflects the efforts of teachers, students and their families to meet the state’s high achievement standards.

Most teachers are utilizing using Universal Design Principles during instruction to support differentiated learning styles, and are working to reduce the homework burdens on students by coordinating testing schedules and limiting the amount of homework given daily. Inclusive practices are the norm with nearly all students with IEPs having access to general education grade level core instruction.

The school has numerous interventions programs available to support students with completing assignments and receive individualized help within the school day. Staff overall, including guidance staff, special education staff and intervention

staff take a deep interest in each student they work with and provide high levels of support. Special education tutors provide another layer of intervention support to students both with and without IEPs.
CCHS is a place where students are challenged with a rigorous curriculum and provided a variety of options to receive help to meet those challenges although how to access those options are not always clear.

OVERALL CHALLENGES/CONCERNS

Since an MTSS/RTI framework does not exist, staff and parents are unclear on how to access interventions for all students other than going through the guidance counselor or requesting special education testing. Teachers have concerns about the high number of students with disabilities in their general education classrooms, inconsistency in instructional practice and a lack of support for teachers and students from the special education case managers. An overall lack of communication between staff contributes to confusion about interventions, instruction and special education supports.

For students with disabilities, the full continuum of special education services and supports are not available at CCHS. This limits access to specially designed instruction for students with IEPs and does not meet the federal compliance requirements. The current program needs to be redesigned to meet these requirements to include direct instruction within the resource program as well as separate core content classes.

While teachers and staff have attempted to reduce some of the homework burden through the implementation of *Essential and Recommended Practices*, a culture persists of traditional projects that take more than the recommended homework time. In addition, students take many AP courses in a semester, often taking more than a full load of classes. This combined with involvement in extra-curricular activities leaves students overwhelmed and anxious. Parents, staff and students are concerned that these high levels of anxiety have resulted in depression and suicide.

While there are many interventions currently in place, the lack of a data system does contribute to the lack of data to determine if these interventions are effective in supporting students in learning the skills they need to become independent learners. Students rely on intervention staff, teachers and special education tutors to provide them with one-on-one help to complete assignments.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overarching Question # 1

GENERAL EDUCATION SUPPORTS FOR ALL STUDENTS

What program supports are available to students to support progress in their general education classes?

1. **What instructional supports are provided to struggling learners and students with IEPs in core content classes?**

How does instructional practice provide scaffolds to access high Lexile level content?
There is no particular direct instruction course or intervention to help students with strategies to approach reading that is at a high Lexile level. From observations, it seems that special education teachers and tutors provide individual supports to either read to the students or support reading in the study skills classes. Classroom teachers do use different UDL strategies to make the content accessible in the classroom using multi-media such as video and graphics to support comprehension of high Lexile content.

Recommendation

- ***Provide direct instruction special education classes to teach students strategies to support reading materials at a high Lexile levels. These classes should include evidence -based instruction that supports academic vocabulary instruction, reading strategies, and comprehension strategies for students assessed and identified as needing these supports.***

How does instructional practice include differentiation built upon the principles of Universal Design for Learning?

Based on observations, teachers are using a variety of UDL principles in their instruction. The majority of teachers use strategies such as activating prior knowledge, using multi-media, concept-mapping, and frequent checks for understanding to support student learning. Teachers also engage students through instruction that is age appropriate and culturally relevant. In about 30% of the classrooms observed students were allowed to work together in cooperative groups.

Recommendation

- ***Continue to support the implementation of UDL in classroom instruction through using lesson planning protocols that include UDL principles. Provide job-embedded professional learning through PLC instructional planning time. Teachers can also explore the lesson plans and lesson planning tools at the CAST website.***

How does instruction provide accommodations and modification for students with IEPs?

Based on focus group data and survey data, most teachers provide accommodations and modifications when these are written in IEPs or 504 plans. If they are not specifically written in IEPs or 504 plans, not all teachers adapt instruction as needed. Some teachers report that accommodations are not implemented in classrooms unless either the student, parent or case manager advocate for them. Some teachers were unsure of how to get information on accommodations needed.

Recommendation:

- ***Ensure that teachers are aware of accommodations prior to the beginning of the school year. Providing teachers with a one-page information sheet is more informative than providing the entire IEP. Teachers need to know which case manager to contact for information. Provide opportunities for collaborative planning and job-embedded training.***

How does co-teaching support access to the content for students with IEPs?

There is very little co-teaching occurring at CCHS. Because most special educators are supporting students through homework help in the Study Skills class, their schedules do not allow them the opportunity to provide co-teaching supports in the content area classes. General education teachers provide nearly all direct instruction in the content areas. Some classes with high numbers of students with IEPs in them have tutors assigned to the classes to support their learning.

Recommendation:

- ***Change the current model of study skills support to allow special educators a schedule that allows them to co-teach in content area classes. Schedule fewer study skills sections, with more students in a section allowing for available periods for co-teaching.***

2. **What programmatic supports are provided to struggling learners and students with IEPs in core content classes?**

What programs are available school wide to support struggling learners?

There are numerous programs available to support struggling learners including the Network Program, Challenge, Lighthouse, SERRC, MARC, Literacy Skills, and Advanced Learning Strategies. There are no school-wide systemic interventions in place with clearly identified entry and exit criteria. The supports that students receive differ based on whatever "program" the student is placed in. Only the Challenge program and METCO math intervention class provides direct instruction to support academic achievement. Focus group respondents most often mentioned the purpose of interventions as supporting executive function skills.

Recommendation:

- ***Identify data sources for determining student need for interventions. Based on multiple measures, determine which of the current interventions might match student need. Re-evaluate the current programs to determine their effectiveness. Develop specific program descriptions and parameters including the number of students appropriate for each period/program, evidence-based practices employed in each intervention, progress monitoring sources and***

schedule, as well as entry and exit criteria for each. Based on the data of the effectiveness of each program, either continue the intervention program, repurpose the program to provide more systematic supports or discontinue and develop new interventions programs based on a school-wide model of supports within an RTI/MTSS intervention framework to support both academic and executive function needs.

How does special education programming support students with their core content classes?

The Pathway program for students is the only direct instruction special education instruction available at CCHS. This program supports student with cognitive disabilities and students on the Autism Spectrum only. Within the continuum of services, there is only general education instruction with some push-in collaborative support through tutors, and resource room pull-out. The in class supports are not provided by special educators, nor is there any opportunity to provide specially designed instruction in the core content areas for students who need that level of special education support.

Recommendations

- ***A full continuum of services needs to be developed at CCHS for students who need their specially designed instruction delivered by special education teachers. This could be provided by making the Study Skills classes direct instruction courses in ELA and Math to provide the instruction that is aligned to the standards and IEP goals. These classes should not be homework help classes or accommodations supports, but provide curriculum that is evidence-based to support strategy instruction and skill development in standards aligned goal areas.***
- ***Additionally, students with IEPs could receive specially designed instruction from special educators in co-taught classes through differentiation and adapted instruction in the general education core classroom aligned with their IEP goals. Students needing more scaffolding than the co-taught class, should have an additional period built into their schedule for special education supports for strategy instruction in their IEP goals areas including ELA, math and executive functioning skills utilizing evidence-based curricula.***

3. **How do these programmatic and instructional supports support social emotional development?**

What supports are available to general education students to support social emotional development?

The interventions provided through Lighthouse are focused specifically on students' social emotional needs. It provides support to students who have had any prolonged absences or other attendance related school issues. The program provided social, emotional, and instructional supports with a therapeutic component.

Other than the Lighthouse program and counseling provided for some students through the Guidance Counselors, there is no school-wide program to support social emotional development.

What supports are available to special education students who have social emotional needs?

Lighthouse is a program funded by special education funding so students with IEPs also have access to the program supports.

Recommendations:

- ***Currently there is only a loose criterion for entering the Lighthouse program. There is no data to determine the effectiveness of the program and not specific exit criteria for students to exit the program. It is recommended that entry and exit criteria be identified and that data be used to determine the effectiveness of the program. An evidence based social emotional development curriculum would also be recommended to move students through the program in a systematic way in order to develop social emotional coping strategies.***

Overarching Question # 2

GENERAL EDUCATION INTERVENTIONS

What general education interventions are in place to support struggling learners and students with disabilities within the school-wide intervention program?

1. Does the current intervention program provide supports for all struggling learners in the core content areas?
Are there intervention classes available for all students identified as needing additional support in ELA, Math, Science or Social Studies? There are several different intervention programs available to students but no systemic way to access these programs. There is no screening or progress monitoring tool nor data sources identified to determine which students need intervention and what particular targeted intervention would address their learning or behavioral needs. There are interventions provided for math, ELA and social studies through the MARC and the SERRC. Students in need of MCAS support receive this support in the Challenge program in 10th grade. The Challenge program has a limited number of seats, and while successful as seen in the MCAS scores only a handful of students receive this direct instruction math support. Since there are no data sources such as universal screeners it is difficult to determine if all students in need of intervention are identified. There are intervention classes for ELA, math and social studies. These classes are not direct instruction classes, but more of a homework help type class where students receive help with assignments. No direct instruction evidence based intervention programs are in place for the content except possibly in math for the METCO students. **RECOMMENDATIONS** • ***Investigate, purchase and implement a Universal Screener in order to identify all students in need of intervention. Develop interventions based on data rather than what has been tradition at CCHS. Provide interventions that provide direct instruction in ELA and math as well as strategy instruction that can cross over all the content areas. Discontinue providing only study skills homework help as this practice does not develop the skills necessary for students to work independently.***
2. What data is used to determine placement into an intervention program?
Is there a universal screener or common assessment to determine risk for all students in core content areas? No, there is no universal screener or common assessment to identify students at risk. The data used most is grades, and teacher observations which can be subjective and not always aligned to standards. **Are there common assessments in all core content areas as a data source to determine the need for intervention?** No, not all content areas have common assessments. Some departments are beginning to develop common lesson plans and assessments across a grade level. **RECOMMENDATIONS** • ***Investigate, purchase and implement a Universal Screener in order to identify all students in need of intervention Core content grade level teams need to develop unit plans, lesson plans and common assessments to better determine students need for instructional supports within the general education classroom. Consider using the Model Curriculum Units as guides found at the DESE website.***

3. What data is used to measure the effectiveness of the intervention programs?

There currently is no data used to measure the effectiveness of the intervention programs other than completed assignments, grades and MCAS scores.

Is there progress monitoring data available to determine the effectiveness of interventions?

No, there is no progress monitoring data available as most of the intervention programs do not provide direct instruction in a content area to assess.

Is progress monitoring data reviewed regularly to determine if students are benefitting from interventions?

Since there is no data, progress monitoring data is not reviewed regularly. Teachers do report that they use data from student work to inform instruction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ***Investigate, purchase, and implement a universal screener, progress monitoring tool in order to use the frequent data points to determine the effectiveness of the interventions once interventions become standardized to reflect evidence-based practices to develop student skills.***

4. What type of targeted instruction occurs during the intervention time?

Are there specific evidence-based instructional curricula identified to support intervention instruction?

Currently there are no specific evidence-based curricula being used in the intervention classes. Most classes provide homework or classwork help. The Challenge program and a METCO math class provide academic math instruction, but it was unclear if this was driven by an evidence-based curriculum or another curriculum.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ***Investigate, purchase, and provide training in evidence-based curricula to support strategy and skill development in ELA, math, writing and executive function skills.***

5. Are students with disabilities included in the general education interventions?

Yes, students with disabilities are included in all interventions available to their general education peers.

Is placement into an intervention class determined by data or by special education status?

No, special education status does not determine placement into an intervention other than the special education study skills class which is a special education support. Students with IEPs access the interventions in a similar fashion through teacher request or parent request for support through the guidance counselor.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ***Develop a systematic process for accessing general education interventions.***

6. Do both general education and special education staff provide targeted intervention instruction?

Both general education teachers and special education tutors provide instructional homework supports in the intervention programs.

When intervention instruction is provided to a mixed group of students, are both general education teachers and general education teachers involved in providing intervention instruction?

All intervention, except for the special education study skills pull-out class are provided to a mixed group of students. Both general education teachers and special education tutors provide support in these classes.

- **Recommendations**
  Develop a tiered system of supports for all students that are staffed by general education and special education teachers.

Overarching Question # 3

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

How are students progressing in the current special education program?

1. Are state assessment skill gaps closing for students with disabilities receiving special education services?
Yes, Next Generation MCAS data shows that assessment skill gaps for students receiving special education services continue to decline. Skill gaps reduced by 4% in ELA and 10% for math in the last two years. The 7% skill gap for ELA and the 10% skill gap for math fall significantly below the state average for skills gaps of 22% and 35% respectively. **Are the number of students with disabilities in the failing and needs improvement categories decreasing in the last 2 years?** Yes, the number of students with IEPs in the failing and needs improvement categories decreased by 4% in ELA and 10% in math in the last two years. **Recommendations** • ***None***
Are skills gaps between advanced and proficiency ratings for all students and students with disabilities decreasing in the last 2 years? Yes, the gaps between advanced and proficient rating for all students and students with disabilities has decreased from 11% to 7% in the last two years in ELA and from 20% to 10% in math. **Recommendation** • ***None***
2. Does the current continuum of special education supports provide adequate services to help students meet graduation requirements?
Are there services available to support students with development disabilities? Yes, the Pathways program provides instructional and life skills supports to students with developmental disabilities. Parents and staff reported that the program was very successful for students with development disabilities. **Recommendations** • ***None***
Are there services available to support students with high incidence disabilities? There is not a continuum of services available to students with high incidence disabilities. Regular classroom instruction is provided and in some classes tutors provide push-in supports. Most students also receive in addition to the regular classroom instruction, supplementary supports through the study skills class, but this class is intended to support students with homework or classwork completion and for allowable accommodations. Currently there is no resource room instruction that provides direct specially designed instruction aligned to support the student in meeting their IEP goals. For this population, there is no separate classroom setting where the student would receive their academic core instruction from the special educator in a special education setting.

Recommendations

- ***Special education staffing needs to be reconfigured to allow for a full continuum of services to be available to students with IEPs. For students in need of specially designed instruction, special education teachers need to be providing grade level standards aligned instruction in the core academic areas replacing the general education content classes. Students who do attend general education content classes, need to be provided supplementary specially designed instruction opportunities provided by special educators in addition to the core either in a regular resource pull-out model or in a school wide intervention model based on student data.***

Are there services available to support students with social emotional needs?

The Lighthouse program provides services to support students with social emotional needs who are re-entering school following a long absence such as hospitalization. This program is limited to students who have had a prolonged absence due to psychological or medical reasons only. Guidance counselors do also provide some therapeutic counseling for individual students. There is not a school-wide system to support social emotional needs.

Recommendation

- ***Develop a school-wide systematic process for all students who may need services to support social emotional needs. This should be a part of a school wide behavioral MTSS framework where students in need of social emotional help are identified and there are specific entry and exit criteria for interventions to meet the needs of any at risk populations before the need for intensive intervention occurs***

Are there services available for students with ASD?

There are limited services for students on the autism spectrum. The staff has worked to use the Pathway program to support these students, referred to by parents and some staff at "Pathway Light" to support this population. Since there is no continuum between separate classroom such as the Pathway program which teachers a life skills curriculum and regular classroom with supplementary support, there is a gap for students who may need specially designed instruction from a special educator in a small group setting for grade level content area instruction.

Recommendation

- ***Reconfigure special education staffing to provide grade level core content instruction in a separate setting, as well as provide supplementary classes to support executive functioning skills.***

1. **Are students receiving the supports needed to successfully transition to post-secondary programs?**

Ninety-five percent of students with disabilities leaving Concord-Carlisle High School attend a 4-year private or public college. A small percentage attends 2-year public institutions and even smaller number have gone directly into the workforce.

Recommendation

- ***None***

Do IEP teams and guidance counselors work together to develop comprehensive transition plans to support successful transition?

Based on focus group information, it was not evident that guidance counselors and case managers work closely to develop comprehensive transition plans to support transitions. There does not seem to be a cohesive system in place, yet students do seem to transition successfully.

Recommendation

- ***Develop a system for guidance staff and special education case managers to work with students to successfully develop comprehensive transition plans. Regular communication and staffing meetings with guidance counselors and case managers would support the development of cohesive system.***

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Document Review

Based on the review of the school report card and the Homework survey, CCHS is a high performing school, but has a history of rigor that can have a negative impact on students. Teachers work hard to meet specific student needs to "normalize differences," but no system is in place to ensure this happens for all students.

Student Achievement

CCHS has a Composite Performance Index of near 100 in all content areas assessed. Students continue to attain high levels of achievement while closing gaps for special populations. This achievement reflects the efforts of teachers, students and their families to meet the state's high achievement standards.

Survey

Teachers perceive that interventions are available, yet are unclear on how to access those for all students other than going through the guidance counselor or requesting special education testing. Teachers report using Universal Design Principles during instruction to support differentiated learning styles. Teachers have concerns about the high number of students with disabilities in their general education classrooms, inconsistency in instructional practice and a lack of support for teachers and students from the special education case managers. A lack of communication between staff contributes to confusion about interventions, instruction and special education supports.

Focus Groups

Focus groups identified several common issues related to the instruction at CCHS. There is a lack of clarity on how to access interventions resulting in a reliance on guidance counselors and special education testing. Instructional supports for students with IEPs is provided by tutors enforcing the perception that they are the special education teachers. A lack of clarity and exists on interventions in general and a lack of communication between special education case managers and teachers impacts the ability for delivering differentiated supports in the general education classroom. A lack of data exacerbates communication issues when intervention decisions are often made on subjective perceptions rather than data.

Classroom Observations

Overall instruction in general education classrooms utilized Universal Design for Learning principles with a high level of students engaged and participating in the learning. While the primary method of instruction is still teacher delivery of instruction, teachers do provide opportunities for cooperative student led learning. Instruction is aligned to the standards, but these standards were not posted in the classroom, nor did teachers refer to them often during instruction. The rigor of instruction was mostly focused on the Skill and Concept level of Depth of Knowledge. Special education instruction in the Study Skills classes consisted of homework help and accommodations supports. No direct instruction was observed except in the Pathways program.

SUMMARY OF EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS AROUND EVALUATION QUESTIONS

GENERAL EDUCATION SUPPORTS FOR ALL STUDENTS

Implement a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)/Response to Intervention(RTI) framework that will support strong, standards aligned Tier I, general education core classroom instruction. This Tier I instruction should be driven by data for instructional planning and to identify the need for targeted interventions based on universal screening, progress monitoring, and multiple curriculum based measures.

Tier II interventions should be provided for students identified to be “at risk” through universal screening and progress monitoring data. These students should be provided additional instruction through supplementary interventions that are evidence based and standards aligned. This supplementary instruction is intended to support students to learn the skills and strategies necessary to be successful in the core.

Tier III interventions should be provided to students who are identified by the universal screening and other data sources as being at “great risk” and can include both general and special education students. This group must be provided opportunities for direct instruction utilizing an evidence-based program in the skill areas identified as areas of need with greater intensity and frequency in order to accelerate student growth in the area of concern.

Within the MTSS/RTI Framework:

- The purpose and structure for each intervention, including entry and exit criteria, must be standardized within the framework. Within the framework, develop and implement the MTSS plan to include input from stakeholders for changes in infrastructure, roles, communication, and school-wide interventions.
- Data systems must be utilized to drive the framework for decision making. Universal screeners and progress monitoring tools need to be identified, purchased, and utilized to inform decision making for tiered interventions.
- Students in both general and special education interventions should be provided with direct instruction opportunities within the framework. Strategy instruction in intervention classes should address academic vocabulary instruction, reading strategies, comprehension strategies, math skills, and executive function skills.
- To support social emotional health, the MTSS framework needs to provide intervention and supports to students in need of Tier II and Tier III behavior support. For students in Tier III, in programs such as Lighthouse, specific programs or processes need to be developed and implemented to support reintegration after extended hospital stays, to address anxiety and other socio-emotional needs, to teach executive function and 'soft skills', and to reinforce content instruction through direct instruction based on individualized needs.
- To support student engagement within all tiers, ensure that students understand the standards being taught and the objectives for the lesson. Explicitly connect instruction to the objectives for the lesson that are based on the standards.
- In Tier I, teachers should rely less on homework for teaching student content. Homework should be minimal and used only to practices skills. Teachers need to re-evaluate current projects and assignments to determine their alignment to the grade level standards.
- In order to effectively implement tiered instruction and intervention, professional development in a variety of methods will be required. Provide ongoing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for differentiated instructional planning, peer coaching and feedback, job-embedded training including data-based decision making, targeted intervention instruction, co-teaching, teaching content skills to diverse learners, and executive function skills including self-advocacy, etc.

- Within the development of the MTSS framework, develop a procedural handbook that includes a flow chart reflecting the process steps for receiving tiered intervention. This procedural MTSS handbook should include entry and exit criteria for interventions and programs and full descriptions of the interventions and programs. The procedural handbook should also include the staff roles within the framework including the roles of case managers/special education teachers, guidance counselors, tutors, general educators, and administrators.

GENERAL EDUCATION INTERVENTIONS

The implementation of an MTSS/RTI framework should ensure that all students have access to the general education tiered interventions and school-wide supports for behavior and academics. The framework would allow for a systematic process for accessing general education interventions that are staffed by both general education and special education teachers as appropriate. In order to provide the appropriate tiered interventions, it is recommended that CCHS:

- Investigate, purchase, and implement a universal screener in order to identify all students in need of intervention.
- Purchase evidence-based intervention resources to support intervention instruction in ELA (including reading and writing), math, and executive function skills.
- Utilize the progress monitoring data to determine the effectiveness of intervention instruction.
- Discontinue providing only study skills homework help in intervention programs. Intervention programs should provide direct instruction to help students develop the skills necessary to work independently.
- Use data from screening, progress monitoring, and curriculum based measures to inform instructional planning for Tier I instruction.
- Use data from progress monitoring to make decisions about continuing or ending certain intervention programs or practices.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

Since there is not a continuum of placements with appropriate services available to students with high incidence disabilities it is recommended that CCHS:

- Reinvent the special education program into one that builds on best practice and provides legally defensible services to include a full continuum of placements including regular classroom with supplementary instruction and services, resource room direct instruction, separate classroom for core content instruction based on student need in addition to the regular classroom, regular classroom with consultation, and separate classroom programs currently available.
    - Within the supplementary instruction and services, resource room, and separate core class, special education teachers provide direct instruction for individualized specially designed instruction for students with disabilities.
    - To support the regular classroom instruction with supplementary support, special education teachers work in co-taught classes where both the general and special education teachers support all students and provide additional supports in the general education classroom.
    - Tutors provide supportive instruction based on special education teachers' instructions/lesson plans to support students in the general education classroom or within the special education setting.
    - Direct instruction within the special education classrooms should be aligned to the grade level standards, utilizing evidence-based resources to support students in skill development and meeting IEP goals.
    - Special education teachers should be providing direct instruction or supplemental special education supports to the students on their caseload. They need to have a method of communicating with tutors who work with these students in their general education classes to inform instructional planning and the development of adapted materials as needed.

- Provide common planning time for special and general educators to support co-teaching and to plan instruction to include adaptations and differentiated supports in the classroom.
- Provide specific paid training to paraprofessionals/tutors on their role in the general education classroom, modifying assignments (when, why, how), role in the special education classroom, and how to collaborate and communicate with their supervising teacher.
- Develop a system of communication for guidance staff and special education case managers to communicate on a regular basis to inform the development and implementation of comprehensive transition plans.
- Ensure that special education funding (federal and state) are spent on allowable special education purposes (federal IDEA dollars other than CEIS [up to 15% after state approval], must be spent on the educational services for students with disabilities as identified under IDEA). Ensure that special education services are not diluted due to the provision of support to general education students.
- Define a clear structure of hierarchy and communication within special education where administrators supervise and communicate with general education teachers and special education case managers. Special education teachers supervise and provide direction to tutors/paraprofessionals. One special educator is the contact for each tutor, general education teacher, guidance counselor, and parent.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS AND REFLECTIONS

In order to provide a system of supports to all students, Concord Carlisle High School needs to implement a school-wide MTSS/RTI framework that supports both academic and behavior/social emotional interventions. The Massachusetts Tiered Systems of Support (www.doe.mass.edu/sped/mtss.html) provides many tools and resource that would help CCHS take this important step to improving instruction and intervention for all students. The implementation of a tiered system of support will strengthen Tier I general education classroom instruction, meeting the needs of a majority of the students, resulting in decreased numbers of students needing Tier II and Tier III interventions. In order to effectively implement an MTSS framework, a data system must be utilized that will provide teaching staff objective data to inform both classroom instruction and intervention instruction

To meet federal compliance requirements, a continuum of special education placements must be developed at CCHS. Within the continuum, students need to have the opportunity to receive direct specially designed instruction within the special education setting. While the general education inclusion is commendable, students in inclusion classes need the support of special educators through the scaffolding of co-teaching and supplemental pull-out supports. General and special education teachers need the opportunity to collaborate to coordinate and support the instruction of students in the inclusive setting.

CCHS staff need to continue the work they have begun to identify policies and practices such as time limits for homework, a coordinated testing schedule, a coordinated project schedule, homework free vacations, and coordinating “homework free” nights to reduce the homework load for students on a daily basis. It would benefit staff to be provided the time to review their major homework assignments and projects to determine if they are essential to meeting the standards for that grade level and content area. They should analyze each project to determine how it may meet the standards in other content areas, so that through this integrated approach, the work a student does will contribute to a grade in several courses. If assignments or projects are found to not align to the standards, they should be discontinued.

Finally, an intentional communication plan must be developed to ensure that staff, parents, and students are aware of MTSS-related policies and procedures so that all stakeholders know how to access the supports they need so that CCHS can continue to provide a student-centered approach to learning and remain a top performing school in the state.

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APPENDIX A: TEACHER SURVEY

CCHS Special Education Review: Teacher Survey

Introduction

Concord Carlisle High School has asked WestEd to gather data to inform district supports for struggling learners and students with disabilities at CCHS. This survey offers you an opportunity to reflect on your current instructional practices and how you currently provide instructional supports to all students at CCHS.

Your responses will be anonymous and school-wide results will be used only to inform future intervention and special education program planning.

The survey is intended to take less than 10 minutes. We respect your time and know how busy you are. Let's get started.

Section 1: Background Information

1. **Are you a general education, special education teacher or other service provider?**

General Education Teacher:

____ ELA, _____Math ____SS/His ____Science _____Unified Arts (specials)

Special education teacher

Other _____

2. **How many years have you been teaching at this school?**

New this school year (2017-2018)

1-3 years

4-5 years

6 or more years

3. Do you teach one or more students with…

IEPs?

Yes
No
I don't know

Identified English Learners?

Yes
No
I don't know

Struggling Learners

Yes
No
I don't know

4. I feel equipped to meet the instructional needs of students with IEPs in my classroom

Section 2: Intervention Programs

6 Interventions and supports are available to struggling learners with and without IEPs.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

7 There are clearly understood entry and exit criteria for participating in or exiting the current intervention programs.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

5. There is a clear student study team process for students who continue to struggle despite intervention support

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

6. What data is used to determine if students are in need of intervention?

Open response.

7. Regular progress monitoring data is used to determine if students are making progress in their intervention classes.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

8. **Regular progress monitoring data and other formative assessment data is used to inform differentiation in instructional planning.**

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Section 3: Instructional Practices

9. There are specific strategies or practices that I use to support struggling learners in my classroom including English learners and students with disabilities.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

10. **Typically most of each class period involves...**

Teacher-led instruction to the group/class
Teacher-led instruction to both large and small group(s)
Student led learning, teacher monitors small groups and assists students as needed.

11. Which statement best reflects how you represent information (the "what" of learning)?

Discuss Information
Discuss Information supported by planned visuals
Discuss information supported by planned visuals and other means of technology to connect learning to students prior experience

12. Which statement best reflects how you assess students (the "how" of learning)?

Student receive the same assessment and assignments under the same conditions
Some students receive options such as extended time and breaks, etc.
All students have options for assessments or assignments such as multi-media, or responding in writing, orally or by action with support.

13. I incorporate engagement strategies into my instruction (e.g. using clear, specific goals, opportunities for collaboration, flexible assessments, providing frequent formative feedback, providing student choice, use authentic and relevant examples):

Never Rarely Occasionally/sometimes Always

14. How often do you use each of the following instructional practices?

	Never/rarely	Occasionally	Often	Daily
Graphic organizers				
Other visuals (e.g. pictures, video clips)				
Hint, Cues, Probing Questions				
Think-Pair-Share (Turn and Talk)				
Students Summarize orally or in writing with support a needed				
Check for understanding (all students, not a few) and adjust the lesson to meet the students' needs.				

15. **How often do students work/learn in pairs/groups to perform tasks?**

Never/rarely Occasionally Often Daily

16. **When students work together, it is usually in...**

Not applicable, students do not work in groups
Pairs or triads
Groups of 4
Groups of 5 or more

Section 4: Inclusive Co-teaching Practices

17. Are you part of a co-teaching team?

____Yes

Special educator

Content teacher/general education

___No (you can skip questions 19-21)

18. **How often do you plan lessons collaboratively? (general education teacher with special education teacher; formally or informally)**

☐ Never/rarely ☐ Occasionally ☐ Often (e.g. once a week) ☐ Daily

Describe your collaboration time:

_____

19. During a co-taught lesson, the special educators is usually involved in…

Academic instruction with students in general

Academic instruction with only special education students/ELs

Supporting special education students in other ways (behavior)

Section 5: Professional Development & Instructional Support

20. **The district's professional development has equipped me to provide instructional supports for all students my classroom.**

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

21. **There are ample opportunities in this school for me to participate in job-embedded learning (e.g. PLC team, grade/subject team, coaching, mentoring).**

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

22. **I have regularly scheduled collaboration time to review formative assessment data with my grade level/content area team and plan differentiated instruction.**

Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

23. Anything else you would like to share about the instructional practices at CCHS.
24. https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/77TVRBD

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW/FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Leadership Interview (group discussion)

Background:

- What are your titles and roles?
- How many years have you been in the field of education?
- How many years have you been in your position?
- How many years have you been at CCHS?

Program Specific

1. What programs or interventions at Concord Carlisle High do you think are the most effective for students at risk? What is it about these programs that you think is effective?
2. About what programs or interventions do you have concerns regarding effectiveness? Why?
3. What are the entry and exit criteria for these programs? What data is used to determine when interventions are needed? What data is used to determine when they are no longer needed?
4. What is the process for students who are not improving despite intervention instruction? Is there a pre-referral process that uses intervention data to determine that there is a lack of response to intervention?
5. What data is reported to you from teachers, and intervention programs?
6. How many students have been initially identified as having a disability while attending CCHS? What is the primary disability of those students identified while at CCHS?
7. Regarding staffing, who provides the intervention instruction in most intervention classes? Are specific research-based interventions in place to accelerate the learning of students in those classes? If so, how have the teachers been trained in the implementation of those programs?
8. How often to you walk through classes to observe instruction and provide constructive teacher feedback?
9. Beyond the observation protocol, is there anything in particular that you would like us to note, consider, or look for during our observations?
10. What else do you want to share about CCHS that will inform this special education review?

Special Education Teacher Focus Group Questions

Background:
How long have you been teaching?
At this school? In this district?

1. What systems of support and/or interventions are available to students who struggle in their classes?
2. What data is used to determine if students need intervention?
3. What data is used to determine if they are making progress in the intervention programs or in their classes?
4. What are the entry and exit criteria for these programs? What data is used to determine when interventions are needed? What data is used to determine when they are no longer needed?
5. What is the process for students who are not improving despite intervention instruction? Is there a pre-referral process that uses intervention data to determine that there is a lack of response to intervention? What role do special education staff play in providing interventions to students with disabilities? To non-identified struggling learners?
6. Regarding staffing, who provides the intervention instruction in most intervention classes? Are specific research-based interventions in place to accelerate the learning of students in those classes? If so, how have the teachers been trained in the implementation of those programs?
7. How effective are the Lighthouse, Challenge, SSERC, MARC programs in supporting the academic and social emotional needs of students with disabilities? (for example, do they progress out of the program? Do they frequently or seldom stay out of the hospital? Etc.)
8. How effective are the current special education services provided to students with IEPs including study skills, resource centers, Lit. Strategies, etc?
9. Describe the CCHS special education programming for students on the Autism Spectrum? How adequate do you feel it is? Do you have suggestions for improvement?
10. What does inclusive practice look like at CCHS? If you are co-teaching, can you describe the most frequently used co-teaching practices?
11. What roles do Tutors play in supporting inclusive practices?
12. Are there specific instructional strategies or practices used to support struggling learners including students with disabilities and English learners in inclusive classes? Can you describe these strategies?
13. Describe how you might differentiate instruction to meet the needs of struggling learners, students with disabilities and English learners in intervention or special education classes?
14. To what extent do general and special education teachers have the opportunity to meet regularly to plan instruction for their inclusive classes?
15. What types of professional development and or coaching opportunities are available to support the instruction of students with diverse learning needs at CCHS?
16. What types of ongoing job embedded support (PLC team, grade/subject team, coaching, mentoring) do you receive to support the instruction of diverse learners?
17. Anything else you would like to share about the instructional practices at CCHS?

General Education Teacher Focus Group Questions

Background:
How long have you been teaching?
At this school? In this district?

1. What systems of support are available to students who struggle in their classes? What interventions are available at CCHS? Please describe.
2. What programs or interventions at Concord Carlisle High do you think are the most effective for students at risk? What is it about these programs that you think is effective
3. What is the course of action when interventions do not prove successful?
4. Are there specific instructional strategies or practices used to support struggling learners including students with disabilities and English learners in inclusive classes? Can you describe these strategies?
5. What does inclusive practice look like at CCHS?
6. If you are co-teaching, can you describe the most frequently used co-teaching practices?
7. What roles do tutors play in supporting inclusive practices?
8. Describe how you might differentiate instruction to meet the needs of struggling learners, students with disabilities and English learners in your classes.
9. To what extent do general and special education teachers have the opportunity to meet regularly to plan instruction for their inclusive classes?
10. What data is used to determine if students are in need of intervention?
11. What are the entry and exit criteria for these programs? What data is used to determine when interventions are needed? What data is used to determine when they are no longer needed?
12. What is the process for students who are not improving despite intervention instruction? Is there a pre-referral process that uses intervention data to determine that there is a lack of response to intervention?
13. What data is used to determine if they are making progress in the intervention programs or in their classes?
14. Regarding staffing, who provides the intervention instruction in most intervention classes? Are specific research-based interventions in place to accelerate the learning of students in those classes? If so, how have the teachers been trained in the implementation of those programs?
15. What types of professional development opportunities are available to support the instruction of students with diverse learning needs your classes?
16. What types of ongoing job embedded support (PLC team, grade/subject team, coaching, mentoring) do you receive to support the instruction of diverse learners?
17. Anything else you would like to share about the instructional practices at CCHS?

General Education Interventions: Network, Challenge

Background:

- What are your titles and roles?
- How many years have you been in the field of education?
- How many years have you been in your position?
- How many years have you been at CCHS?

Program Specific

11. Describe the intervention programs that you represent. What is it about these programs that you think is effective?
12. About what programs or interventions do you have concerns regarding effectiveness? Why?
13. What are the entry and exit criteria for these programs? What data is used to determine when interventions are needed? What data is used to determine when they are no longer needed?
14. What is the process for students who are not improving despite intervention instruction? Is there a pre-referral process that uses intervention data to determine that there is a lack of response to intervention?
15. Regarding staffing, who provides the intervention instruction in most intervention classes? Are specific research-based interventions in place to accelerate the learning of students in those classes? If so, how have the teachers been trained in the implementation of those programs?
16. Do you see a trend of students taking more challenging classes after participating in the Network program or other intervention programs?
17. How do you identify the students who are placed in the Network program?
18. What is the process for determining eligibility for the program?
19. What happens for these students in particular, and all rising 9th graders, to prepare them for the transition to high school?
20. What data are you collecting showing academic and social emotional effectiveness?
21. What data do you share with school leaders?
22. What else do you want to share about the general education intervention programs at CCHS?

Special Education Interventions: Lighthouse

Background:

- What are your titles and roles?
- How many years have you been in the field of education?
- How many years have you been in your position?
- How many years have you been at CCHS?

Program Specific

23. Describe the Lighthouse Program?
24. How are students identified for the Lighthouse Program?
25. What are the entry and exit criteria for this program? What data is used to determine when this program is needed? What data is used to determine when the program is no longer needed?
26. What is the process for students who are not improving despite the intervention? Is there a pre-referral process that uses intervention data to determine that there is a lack of response to intervention?
27. Regarding staffing, who provides the intervention instruction in the Lighthouse Program? Are specific research-based interventions in place to support the social emotional development of students in the program? If so, how have the teachers been trained in the implementation of those programs?
28. What is the process for determining eligibility for the program?
29. What strategies are used to in the Lighthouse program to keep students from being referred to a more intensive intervention/program, or out of school placement?
30. What data are you collecting showing academic and social emotional effectiveness?
31. What data do you share with school leaders?
32. What else do you want to share about the Lighthouse Program?

Parent Focus Group Questions

Background:

How long have you been a parent of a child in this district? In this school?

1. Does your child receive any intervention supports at CCHS? Please describe.
2. For how long have they been receiving these supports?
3. How are these supports provided?
4. What are the challenges your child faces in their general education program classes?
5. What challenges do they face in the intervention classes/programs?
6. If your child receives any special education services, what do these services look like?
7. How is the instruction in special education programs aligned to the grade level content?
8. How is intervention instruction aligned to the grade level content?
9. What data is shared with you to inform you on your child's progress in their classes and/or their intervention programs or IEP goals?
10. Are teachers using any specific instructional strategies or practices that support your child in learning the content that you are aware of? Can you describe any of the strategies or practices that help your child?
11. If your child has an IEP, are accommodations identified in the IEP (or other individualized plan) being implemented? Can you provide some examples?
12. What role do tutors play in helping your child?
13. What are the strengths of CCHS in supporting the needs of your child?
14. What are the challenges and solutions to improving outcomes for your child?

Student Focus Group Questions

Background

What grade are you in?
How many years have you been enrolled in this district?
How many years have you been enrolled in this school?

1. What kinds of classes are you taking? Do you feel challenged in your classes or do you feel like you are struggling? Do you feel engaged in your classes? In what ways are you challenged, or what makes your classes hard? How could teachers challenge or support you more?
2. What strategies or activities do your teachers use to help you understand what they are teaching? (group work, discussion strategies, graphic organizers, note-taking guides). Describe some of them.
3. How does a teacher know if you, or the class understands something? How does the teacher support you when you don't understand?
4. How do you know how you are doing in a class? Do you receive other feedback other than grades?
5. If you have a problem or need support with your school work, who do you go to? Does the school have programs or places you can go to get help? How difficult or easy is it to get help when you need it?
6. If you are receiving any additional supports or interventions, can you describe them? How do these classes or services help you? Are you assigned these supports or do you choose them?
7. How are you informed about how you are doing in those classes or programs other than report cards and progress reports?
8. Do your teachers work together? How do you know?
9. Does your family work with your teachers? How is your family involved in your education at CCHS?
10. What is one thing that you would change about the school to make it better?
11. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Department Chair and Support Staff Focus Group Questions

1. Are you a general education, special education teacher or other support staff? Other roles? How long have you been teacher? A department chair? An intervention provider? A guidance counselor? … other roles at this school?
2. What are the primary functions of your position?
3. How are you and your team supporting post-secondary success for CCHS students?
4. How are you and your team supporting intervention to struggling learners and students with disabilities at CCHS?
5. What are the entry and exit criteria for these programs? What data is used to determine when interventions are needed? What data is used to determine when they are no longer needed?
6. What is the process for students who are not improving despite intervention instruction? Is there a pre-referral process that uses intervention data to determine that there is a lack of response to intervention?
7. How are you and your team supporting inclusive practices at CCHS? How often does co-teaching occur? What co-teaching practices do you see used most often?
8. Describe the high-quality core instruction and any interventions options that are in place. Are there specific research-based instructional strategies in use?
9. Do you observe teachers using specific strategies and scaffolds to support struggling learners including ELs and students with IEPs?
10. How do struggling learners with and without IEPs get help when they need it?
11. What processes are in place for students who are struggling despite intervention instruction? What do teachers do when students continue to struggle? Who is involved in bringing the student to a study team's attention? What data is used when making decisions about further intervention?
12. To what extent do general, special education and other staff have the opportunity to meet regularly to review data, problem solve and plan instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners?
13. What data is collected that reflect academic and social emotional skills/growth?
14. What data are you sharing with school leaders?
15. In what ways and how often do you collaborate with teams to plan or evaluate student progress and/or work? What is your role in facilitating the collaboration?
16. What data is used to determine if students are making progress in their classes or in intervention? What data is used to inform instructional planning?
17. Describe the ways in which you have acquired the knowledge and skills you have to support differentiated instructional practices that support all learners.
18. How do school and district administrators know if teachers implement what was learned through professional development? Who does observations/walk-throughs, how often, and do you get useful feedback? Are you involved in these observations?
19. Anything else you would like to share about your role in supporting all learners at CCHS?

Tutor Focus Group Questions

Background:
How long have you been a Tutor at CCHS?

1. Do you support students with IEPs in a general education, intervention or special education classroom?
2. What role do you play in supporting students with IEPs in their classrooms? What do you do in a typical class period?
3. How do you learn about the instructional and behavioral needs of the students with whom you work?
4. What data do you have access to informing you on can best support the students with whom you work?
5. How do you become aware of the classroom accommodations and modifications of the students with whom you work?
6. Regarding staffing, how do you support the intervention instruction in most intervention classes? Are specific research-based interventions in place to accelerate the learning of students in those classes? If so, how have you or the teachers been trained in the implementation of those programs?
7. How do general education, special education and paraprofessional collaborate in order to provide instructional support and scaffolding to students in their classes?
8. What training have you had around "inclusive practices" to support instruction in general education classrooms?
9. From your perspective, what strategies or practices are teachers using in their classrooms that support struggling learners in their classes?
10. What practices have you observed that need to be modified in order to better support students to be successful in their classes?

Guidance Counselors Focus Group

Background:
How long have you been working at CCHS?
How long have you been a Guidance Counselor?
What other roles have you had in your career?

1. What are the primary functions of your position as a Guidance Counselor?
2. How are you supporting post-secondary success for CCHS students?
3. How are you supporting students in need of intervention at CCHS?
4. Do you play a role in students accessing the current intervention programs at CCHS?
5. If yes, what are the entry and exit criteria for these programs? What data is used to determine when interventions are needed? What data is used to determine when they are no longer needed?
6. What is the process for students who are not improving despite intervention instruction? Is there a pre-referral process that uses intervention data to determine that there is a lack of response to intervention?
7. What programs or interventions at Concord Carlisle High do you think are the most effective for students at risk? What is it about these programs that you think is effective?
8. About what programs or interventions do you have concerns regarding effectiveness? Why?
9. How are you working with special educator to support successful transition for students with disabilities into post-secondary programs?
10. What processes are in place for students who are struggling despite intervention instruction? What do teachers do when students continue to struggle? Who is involved in bringing the student to a study team's attention? What data is used when making decisions about further intervention?
11. What role do you play on student study teams?
12. Anything else you would like to share about your role in supporting students as a Guidance Counselor at CCHS?

APPENDIX C: OBSERVATION TOOL

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Concord Carlisle High School- Special Education Review
Classroom Observation Record

1. Date:			2. Observer:						
3. Start Time	**4. End Time**	**5. Place in period**	**6. Number of Staff**				**7. Number of Students**		
		Beg Middle End	0 1 2 Teachers (GE)	0 1 2 Teachers (SE)	0 1 2 IAs	0 1 2 Other	Total	with IEPs	with 504 plans
8. Grade	**9. Content Area**	**10. Setting**	**11. Special Education Service Delivery**	**12. Co-Teaching Models**		**13. Instructional Assistants/Other Adults**		**14. Student Engagement/Participation (Students are: speaking, writing, signaling, performing, thinking/responding)**	
❑ 9th ❑ 10th ❑ 11th ❑ 12th	❑ ELA ❑ Math ❑ SS ❑ Science ❑ Other:	❑ General Education ❑ Special Education ❑ Intervention ❑ Other	❑ Co-Teaching Supports ❑ Push-in with IA Support ❑ Resource Room Pull-out Support ❑ Other intervention support ❑ Inside General Education <40% (Special class) ❑ Other:	❑ 1 teach, 1 observe ❑ 1 teach, 1 assist ❑ Parallel teaching ❑ Station teaching ❑ Alternative Teaching ❑ Team Teaching		❑ Assisting student(s) ❑ Observing instruction ❑ Supporting Instruction ❑ Non-instructional ❑ Not work related		❑ 0-50% ❑ 51-75% ❑ 76-90% ❑ 91-100%	
15. Instructional Delivery: **Whole Class** ❑ Teacher talk (lecture, model) ❑ Teacher-led (Q&A) ❑ Teacher modeling/students practice			**Small Group/Centers** ❑ Teacher/Adult-led ❑ Student-led cooperative group ❑ Working in pairs			**Class Seating Arrangement** ❑ Students sit in rows ❑ Students sit in clusters ❑ Other			
Notes/Evidence:									

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19. Higher Order Thinking: Depths of Knowledge: ❑ Level 1 – Recall	❑ Level 2- Skill/Concept	❑ Level 3 – Strategic Thinking	❑ Level 4 – Extended Thinking
Notes/Evidence			
20. Evidence of Grade appropriate, standards-based instruction			
❑ Grade level standards posted ❑ Grade level objectives posted		❑ Teacher connects objectives or standards to instruction and/or assessment ❑ Assessment is aligned to standard ❑ Assessment is aligned to objective	
Notes/Evidence			

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21. Effective Instructional Strategies		
Multiple means of representation ("what" of learning) ❑ Activation of prior knowledge ❑ Multiple media/formats (Interactive Smartboard) ❑ Graphic Organizers ❑ Visuals (pictures, video clips) ❑ Use of strategies and tools that help students make meaning of their learning	Multiple ways of expression ("how" of learning) ❑ Multi-media for student expression (laptop, iPad, video, audio, text, drawing) ❑ Concept mapping tools/notetaking guides ❑ Verbal and written scaffolds and prompts (e.g. sentence stems or frames, use of protocols) ❑ Checklists/ Assessment rubrics for students ❑ Checks for understanding/formative assessments used through-out	Multiple ways of engagement ("why" of learning) ❑ Age appropriate activities ❑ Culturally relevant activities and/or materials ❑ Student choice ❑ Group work/collaboration ❑ Student monitoring own progress/self-assessment practices
Notes/Evidence		

22. Physical Space			
❑ Physical arrangement encourages engagement in student learning	❑ Teachers use physical resources skillfully to increase access to learning for all students	❑ Evidence that special education classroom is located near general education classrooms of same grade/age level	❑ Not applicable
Notes/Evidence			

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23. Managing Student Behavior	
❑ Evidence of clear classroom management policies and procedures ❑ Classroom procedures promote student learning, social development and group responsibility (use of norms, routines, "sponge activities", transitions, systems of recognition, consequences v. punishment)	❑ Teachers implement and support the classroom policies ❑ Teachers response to behavioral errors is appropriate yet reflects dignity
Notes/Evidence	

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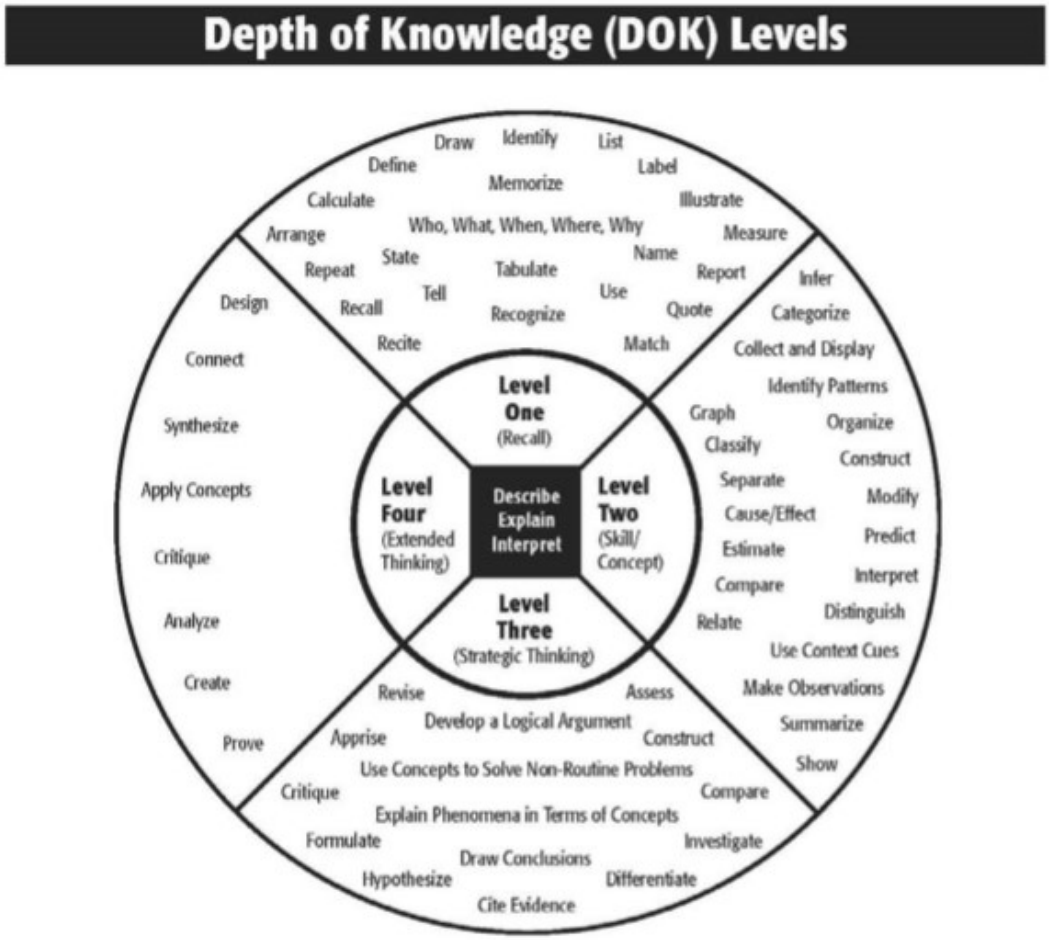
APPENDIX D: TOOLS FOR OBSERVATIONS



Level One Activities	Level Two Activities	Level Three Activities	Level Four Activities
Recall elements and details of story structure, such as sequence of events, character, plot and setting.	Identify and summarize the major events in a narrative.	Support ideas with details and examples.	Conduct a project that requires specifying a problem, designing and conducting an experiment, analyzing its data, and reporting results/ solutions.
Conduct basic mathematical calculations.	Use context cues to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words.	Use voice appropriate to the purpose and audience.	Apply mathematical model to illuminate a problem or situation.
Label locations on a map.	Solve routine multiple-step problems.	Identify research questions and design investigations for a scientific problem.	Analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources.
Represent in words or diagrams a scientific concept or relationship.	Describe the cause/effect of a particular event.	Develop a scientific model for a complex situation.	Describe and illustrate how common themes are found across texts from different cultures.
Perform routine procedures like measuring length or using punctuation marks correctly.	Identify patterns in events or behavior.	Determine the author's purpose and describe how it affects the interpretation of a reading selection.	Design a mathematical model to inform and solve a practical or abstract situation.
Describe the features of a place or people.	Formulate a routine problem given data and conditions.	Apply a concept in other contexts.	
	Organize, represent and interpret data.		

Webb, Norman L. and others. "Web Alignment Tool" 24 July 2005. Wisconsin Center of Educational Research. University of Wisconsin-Madison. 2 Feb. 2006. <http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/WAT/index.aspx>

THE THREE PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL)

Three primary principles, which are based on neuroscience research, guide UDL and provide the underlying framework for the Guidelines:

Principle I: Provide Multiple Means of Representation (the "what" of learning)

Perception Language, expressions, and symbols Comprehension

Learners differ in the ways that they perceive and comprehend information that is presented to them. For example, those with sensory disabilities (e.g., blindness or deafness); learning disabilities (e.g., dyslexia); language or cultural differences, and so forth may all require different ways of approaching content. Others may simply grasp information quicker or more efficiently through visual or auditory means rather than printed text. Also learning, and transfer of learning, occurs when multiple representations are used, because it allows students to make connections within, as well as between, concepts. In short, there is not one means of representation that will be optimal for all learners; providing options for representation is essential.

Principle II: Provide Multiple Means Of Action And Expression (The "How" Of Learning)

Physical action Expression and communication Executive function

Learners differ in the ways that they can navigate a learning environment and express what they know. For example, individuals with significant movement impairments (e.g., cerebral palsy), those who struggle with strategic and organizational abilities (executive function disorders), those who have language barriers, and so forth approach learning tasks very differently. Some may be able to express themselves well in written text but not speech, and vice versa. It should also be recognized that action and expression require a great deal of strategy, practice, and organization, and this is another area in which learners can differ. In reality, there is not one means of action and expression that will be optimal for all learners; providing options for action and expression is essential.

Principle III: Provide Multiple Means of Engagement (the "why" of learning)

Recruiting interest Sustaining effort and persistence Self-regulation

Affect represents a crucial element to learning, and learners differ markedly in the ways in which they can be engaged or motivated to learn. There are a variety of sources that can influence individual variation in affect including neurology, culture, personal relevance, subjectivity, and background knowledge, along with a variety of other factors presented in these guidelines. Some learners are highly engaged by spontaneity and novelty while other are disengaged, even frightened, by those aspects, preferring strict routine. Some learners might like to work alone, while others prefer to work with their peers. In reality, there is not one means of engagement that will be optimal for all learners in all contexts; providing multiple options for engagement is essential.

The pedagogical, neuroscientific, and practical underpinnings of UDL are also discussed at greater length in books such as Teaching Every Student in the Digital Age by Rose & Meyer (ASCD, 2002), The Universally Designed Classroom (Rose, Meyer, & Hitchcock, Eds.; Harvard Education Press, 2005), and A Practical Reader in Universal Design for Learning (Rose & Meyer, Eds.; Harvard Education Press, 2006).