Evaluation of the Special Education Program

Frederick County Public Schools
Stakeholder Kickoff

January 2023
Public Consulting Group
Agenda

Introductions

• Project Team
• PCG Overview

Project Approach

Questions
Introductions
Our Core Project Team

Dr. Jennifer Meller  
*Project Director*

Dr. Mauria Uhlik  
*Special Education Subject Matter Expert*

Matthew Scott  
*Project Manager, Research and Data Analysis*

Mary Baker-Boudissa  
*Equity and Inclusion Specialist*
We partner with over 4,000+ school districts in the US in various capacities, including 18 of the 25 largest districts.
Project Approach
PCG’s Special Education Effectiveness Domains

- **Human Capital** – Investing in people from recruitment to retirement
- **High Expectations** – Increasing expectations of students with disabilities by presuming competence
- **Systems and Structures** – Defining expectations for service delivery, resource allocation, and data management infrastructure to guide data-driven decisions
- **Family and Community Engagement** - Coordinating efforts with families and community organizations to improve results
- **Learning Environment and Specialized Services** - Delivering instruction and interventions within an inclusionary framework and IEP fidelity
- **Leadership** – Embracing partnerships to make informed decisions and provide equitable opportunities for all students
To PCG, a review is not just about identifying the challenges and offering recommendations - it’s about creating an intentional, ambitious, and urgent path forward for the FCPS community to improve the outcomes of students with disabilities.
A Collaborative Approach To Program Reviews

Our reviews are **collaborative** by design, and we work side-by-side with districts to help define the challenges, specify goals and develop effective, outcome-driven strategies.

We help you to answer **essential questions** about student progress and program effectiveness, pinpoint specific areas of strength, and identify improvement targets.

Our review approach is **multidimensional**, emphasizes the participation of multiple stakeholders, and includes both quantitative and qualitative data collection. It is grounded in our experience and research in best practices.

Our aim is to continue to strengthen district culture by leading the way with **accountable solutions** that support:

- Enhanced collaboration and stakeholder engagement
- Continuous improvement efforts in special education with measurable academic and functional outcomes and compliance
- Greater efficiencies
Research Areas

The comprehensive program review will include understanding:

Learning Environment and Specialized Services
1. How is the District’s continuum of services organized to support a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for students with disabilities? To what degree do students have access to the general education curriculum? How are inclusive practices employed?
2. To what extent is there disproportionate representation?
3. What are current behavioral practices?
4. Specifically, how do the following specialized programs operate?
   a. Specialized self-contained
   b. Transportation and facilities

High Expectations
5. To what extent does FCPS implement a rigorous process to systematically monitor educational benefit? How do IEP teams determine services and placement?

Leadership
6. How does FCPS organize leadership to support special education and foster a culture that is focused on improving outcomes and post-secondary preparation?
Research Areas

Family and Community Engagement
  7. To what extent are parents/guardians of children with IEPs satisfied with their child’s educational program?

Human Capital
  8. How does FCPS organize and utilize human capital resources, and what staffing services are required to support the special education program Pre-K to graduation?

Systems and Structures
  9. How does FCPS allocate financial resources in a way that facilitates maximum student outcomes, and how are data used to support decision making?
  10. What is the appropriate organizational structure for FCPS?
Project Methodology

Phase 1: Project Initiation
- Execute Contract
- Communications Plan and Work Plan
- Initial Meeting with District
- Establish Project Management Process
- Conduct Stakeholder Kickoff Meeting

Phase 2: Customizing the Approach
- Identification/Approval of Data to be Collected
- Refinement of Essential Questions/Focus of Review, Project Goals
- Development and Approval of Data Instruments

Phase 3: Collecting and Analyzing the Data
- Confirm Sample
- Establish Logistics
- Collection and Organization of Data
- Data Analysis and Gap Identification

Phase 4: Developing Useful Reports
- Develop Draft Report
- Stakeholder Validation
- Finalize Written Report
- Prepare Executive Summary

Phase 5: Presentations and Action Planning
- Present Findings and Recommendations
- Facilitate Action Planning
Starting a Strong Foundation

- Bring together key stakeholders during a project kickoff to further explore the expectations and visions for the review.
- Present workplan for broader stakeholder input.
- Finalize communication plan with FCPS project team to manage all phases of the project.
- Develop data collection schedule and review data collection protocols.
- Finalize the data collection participant lists and approach to outreach and communication to all participants.
PCG will partner with FCPS to complete an independent, comprehensive review, including:

- **Current State Analysis:** Assess quality of FCPS programs in order to recommend improvements

- **Inventory of Promising Practices:** Review and document promising practices employed in FCPS and benchmarked against comparable school districts

- **Stakeholder Outreach:** Focus groups, interviews, classroom observations, and surveys with FCPS staff and families
Data Collection Activities

Data, Document & Policy Review

Organizational Interviews and Focus Groups (3 days virtual)

Student File Review Focus Groups (2 days virtual)

Staff and Parent Surveys

Classroom Observations (3 days onsite)
Preliminary power point and report to include overall findings, strengths, and recommendations and inform improvement planning

Stakeholder review of preliminary report

Develop executive summary

Submit final report
Present Findings and Recommendations Report

Facilitate Action Planning Sessions

Initiate Development of Implementation Plan
## Timeline

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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder Kick-off Session</td>
<td>1/26/23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Round 1 Data/Document Request &amp; Submission</td>
<td>January 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Round 2 Data/Document Request &amp; Submission</td>
<td>February 2023</td>
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<td>Schools Visits (3 days onsite)</td>
<td>January 2023 - February 2023 (1/31/23 – 2/1/23)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interviews &amp; Focus Groups (3 days virtual)</td>
<td>February 2023 (2/7/23 – 2/9/23)</td>
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<td>February 2023</td>
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<td>Student File Review Focus Groups (2 days virtual)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCG Writing and Analysis</td>
<td>March – April 2023</td>
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<td>Preliminary Findings PowerPoint</td>
<td>March 31, 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action Planning and Board Presentation (1 day onsite)</td>
<td>June 2023</td>
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What’s Next: Ways to Be Involved

- Participate in a focus group
- Complete an online survey
- Send the review team an email at: programreviewfeedback@pcgus.com Subject: FCPS Special Education Review