

SPECIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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INTRODUCTION

In the previous special services board reports the focus was on a broad level of reflection related to departmental philosophy/goals as well as some specific programs and interventions. These past reports were meant to provide an overview of our department and the variety of services that are available to our students with disabilities. Conversely, this report will focus on an important aspect of the Woodbury City Public Schools mission statement that identifies our school district as a “leader in personalizing education”. Therefore, the following are personal stories which highlight some of the life changing growth our students experience here in the Woodbury schools. Contributions from faculty, child study team personnel, related service individuals and the entire Woodbury family have changed many lives. You will get a sense of these inspiring individuals and the end result of the aforementioned programs and interventions cited in past reports.

OUT OF DISTRICT TO INCLUSION

A transfer student entered Woodbury in the process of a full Child Study Team evaluation and placed in a behavioral health center program. Personnel at the Behavioral Center at Inspira recommended an out of district placement upon discharge. Upon review of academic and behavioral records, as well as services which could be provided within our school system, the Woodbury Child Study Team provided a series of intense interventions through a multi-systemic team approach. Over the course of a year-long period the student received:

- Specialized academic instruction in a self-contained class
- An individualized behavioral intervention plan designed and supported through our partnership with a Gloucester County Special Services Behavioral Specialist
- In-district psychiatric services/medication management through our partnership with Robin’s Nest Inc.
- Social Story/Skills group through our speech department
- Sensory motor integration activities developed by our district occupational therapist

All of these services were coordinated by our district case manager and currently the student is placed in a hybrid self-contained program with opportunities for inclusion built into the daily schedule. At this point in the year, the recommendation for the 2015-2016 school year will be for this child to attend a general education program with support in his neighborhood home school.

IS THIS THE RIGHT PLACEMENT? . . . TO AVID SUCCESS

This case is a longitudinal success story that highlights an innovative intervention that has now become a regularly utilized strategy in our district. As a kindergarten student, this child struggled with finding success in the general education setting. It was evident that intellectual abilities were an area of strength; however, social skills and behavior towards other students and staff were interfering with the ability to be successful in the school setting. By the time this student was in third grade, the behaviors had escalated from moderately disruptive to potentially interfering with the education and safety of other students and staff in the room.

Conventional thinking at that time was to shift to placement in a self-contained or an out of district placement. This case, however, really challenged us to question the efficacy of that placement due to a myriad of factors. As a result, this was the first time a 1-1 aide position was created to help support a child in the general education setting that was successful academically but had emotional/behavioral difficulties interfering with overall school success. This “new” level of support was initially questioned by staff and parents, however, the result of this approach and the success and growth that was demonstrated by this child cannot be refuted. Today, this same student is experiencing success, not just in a general education setting, but also in advanced coursework through our high school AVID program. It is my belief that without this “outside the box” philosophy, this student would have been placed in an out of district program and would have never experienced the current success with non-disabled peers and advanced level rigorous classes.

YES, HE WILL WALK!

This feature is one of triumph and the determination of one teacher to defy the odds and inspire a child to climb the highest mountain. A student classified as Preschool Disabled began our program with the medical opinion that walking independently was an unreachable goal. Over the course of a two year period, however, our instructional staff, district physical therapist and occupational therapist worked tirelessly to prove medical personnel wrong. With the use of a true collaborative and creative approach, combining traditional therapies with non-traditional ideas such as using noodles from a swimming pool as a supplemental guide on a walker, this child was able to walk independently for short distances without the assistance of a walker or support. There were a host of other academic and physical gains across the board but witnessing this child literally take steps independently for the first time brought tears of joy, not only to our staff, but to the parents of this student when it occurred.

THE CHALLENGES OF A NONAMBULATORY STUDENT

Our students have a host of disabilities ranging from learning difficulties that may go unnoticed to the untrained eye, to more overt physical difficulties such as being confined to a wheelchair. The following success story emanates from a nonambulatory student that required the entire system to design strategic interventions to afford the ability to successfully navigate the world in an independent fashion. As a freshman transfer, the student had been placed in a self-contained multiply disabled classroom. After a few weeks in our district and review of records, it was determined that this student had the ability to find success in a general education setting. Through collaboration across departments that included the nursing office to address medical concerns, the building and grounds department to ensure secure access throughout the school, and case management services that literally advocated with insurance companies to secure an appropriate school based personal transportation device, this student has been afforded access to curricular and extra-curricular activities commensurate with same age non-disabled peers. A true success story -- inclusion, peer support from our Woodbury students and cross departmental teamwork created a personalized educational experience for this student.

FROM SOCIALLY ISOLATED TO PEER LEADER

This final anecdotal story involves a student that transferred to us several years ago as a sixth grader. At the time the child was extremely isolated socially, with tendencies to create imaginary friends and relationships in his/her mind that required mental health intervention. The district provided counseling services, social skills groups and collaborated with community supports including a psychiatrist. As these services were implemented, the student slowly became more open with staff and more confident in academic abilities. The child transitioned from a self-contained program to an inclusion program and became involved in extra-curricular activities. At this point, this child is experiencing incredible academic and social success -- including playing an integral role on a sports team. Possibly the most compelling piece of the story is that the parents of this child have shared with our staff that they never in their wildest dreams imagined their child would flourish like this and truly fit in as a contributing member of a school community

CONCLUSION

The above are only a small sample of the important, individualized work that happens in all corners of our special services world in the Woodbury City Public Schools. There are many more success stories that could be added –each is a reward for the hard work of the dedicated staff that support our children on a daily basis. We are proud to be able to emphasize the true, least-restrictive emphasis of our program and help Woodbury achieve the status of “leader in personalizing education.”

SPECIAL SERVICES PLACEMENT DATA

OVERALL DISTRICT PLACEMENT DATA

A Four Year Comparison						
<i>Year</i>	<i>Gen Ed With ICS and Resource Center Support</i>	<i>Self-Contained</i>	<i>Out of District</i>	<i>WHS Alt Sch</i>	<i>SC Pre-School Disabled</i>	<i>ICS Pre-School Disabled</i>
2014-2015 (256 students)	139 (54%)	69 (27%)	29 (11%)	6 (2%)	12 (5%)	1 (1%)
2013-2014 (258 students)	133 (51%)	74 (29%)	33 (12%)	6 (3%)	9 (4%)	3 (1%)
2012-2013 (257 students)	127 (50%)	79 (31%)	33 (12%)	3 (1%)	10 (4%)	5 (2%)
2011-2012 (276 students)	137 (49%)	93 (34%)	30 (11%)	1 (1%)	12 (4%)	3 (1%)

NEW REFERRAL DATA

The following tables highlight the total number of new referrals to the child study team, outcome of those referrals and final placement recommendations. They also include specific individual data on a student by student basis.

Summary of New Referral Data since June 2014 – Feb 2015

<i>Number of New Referrals Since June 2012 – Feb 2013</i>	<i># Completed Evaluations</i>	<i># of Students Classified</i>	<i>% Classified of those tested</i>	<i>Pending Evals</i>
45	34	21	61%	4
Placement Types for those 21 Newly Classified Students				
<i>Reg Ed With Resource Center Support</i>		<i>Self-Contained</i>	<i>SC Pre-School Disabled</i>	<i>Out of District</i>
11 (52%)		5 (24%)	5 (24%)	0

NEW REFERRALS JULY 2014 – FEB 2015

Student SID	School	Ethnicity	Grade	Reason for Referral	Outcome
2238876584	Evergreen	AA	PS	Developmental Delays	Preschool Disabled/Self-Contained
5744788056	West End	Multi	1	Academic	Not Eligible
1589308040	Evergreen	White	PS	Developmental Delays	Preschool Disabled/Self-Contained
9127267344	Evergreen	Hispanic	4	Academic	Not Eligible
6425642644	Evergreen	White	2	Academic	Multiply Disabled/Resource
2018319390	Walnut	White	K	Developmental Delays	Multiply Disabled/Self-Contained
3868839965	Walnut	AA	2	Academic	Not Eligible
4497557736	West End	AA	PS	Developmental Delays	Not Eligible
2949408338	Senior High	AA	9	Academic	Specific Learning Disabled/ICS
3426706189	Walnut	AA	5	Academic	SLD/Self-Contained LD
1509219907	Evergreen	AA	PS	Developmental Delays	Not Eligible
9939067060	West End	AA	K	Academic	Multiply Disabled/Resource
1083529429	Evergreen	AA	4	Academic	Not Eligible
1290548251	West End	AA	4	Academic	Communication Impaired/Resource
5660603614	Evergreen	Hispanic	K	Academic	Not Eligible
6459952893	West End	AA	1	Academic	Specific Learning Disabled/Resource
4039525108	Evergreen	Hispanic	PS	Developmental Delays	Preschool Disabled/Inclusion Preschool
8816239054	Senior High	AA	9	Academic	Specific Learning Disabled/ICS
3690312352	West End	Hispanic	4	Academic	Multiply Disabled/Resource
2523323049	Evergreen	AA	2	Academic	Not Eligible
3564586985	Walnut	White	K	Developmental Delays	Autistic/Self-Contained MD
5811484168	Junior High	White	8	Academic	Multiply Disabled/ICS
3301087497	Evergreen	Hispanic	PS	Developmental Delays	Preschool Disabled/Self-Contained
4221581740	Evergreen	White	PS	Developmental Delays	Preschool Disabled/Self-Contained
9459374978	Evergreen	Hispanic	4	Academic	Communication Impaired/SC LD
5591309247	Evergreen	AA	1	Academic	Not Eligible
1577230028	Evergreen	Hispanic	1	Academic	Not Eligible
8907369259	Evergreen	Hispanic	PS	Developmental Delays	Not Eligible
9137093421	Evergreen	Hispanic	1	Academic	Communication Impaired/Resource
9255481920	West End	White	4	Academic	Not Eligible
7644788741	West End	White	PS	Developmental Delays	Preschool Disabled/Self-Contained
3211331589	Junior High	White	7	Emotional/Academic	Emotionally Disturbed/SC BD
5254741042	Evergreen	AA	4	Academic	Specific Learning Disabled/Resource
5673843921	Evergreen	AA	4	Behavior	Not Eligible