



Special Education Stakeholder Engagement Report

October 23, 2024

Purpose and Goals of Engagement Opportunities

In an effort to analyze strengths, needs, and concerns, we provided parents and staff engagement opportunities regarding special education services.

These engagement opportunities will guide future items for the district work plan to allow for continuous improvement of services for our students with disabilities.

This is aligned with the Vision 2026 tactic, “Engage our community on an ongoing basis to determine its priorities, foster partnerships, and promote learning”.

Guiding Questions

1 How was stakeholder feedback collected?

2 What insights can we gather from the feedback provided by parents and guardians?

3 What insights can we gather from the feedback provided by staff?

4 What are the next steps based on the insights gathered from the feedback?

Stakeholder Engagement: Parents/Guardians

1) **Survey for all parents/guardians**

- a) 240 in district responses
- b) 29 out of district responses
- c) Survey was available in Arabic, Urdu, Spanish, and Burmese

2) **Listening sessions**

- a) Parents were selected by principals with analytics to match the demographics of our special education population
- b) 4 listening sessions
- c) 38 parents/guardians participated

Stakeholder Engagement: Staff

1) **Survey for all staff**

- a) 400 Certified staff responses
- b) 41 Classified staff responses

2) **Listening sessions**

- a) 243 staff members participated
- b) All building administrators
- c) All related services providers: OT/PT/APE, Social Workers, Psychologists, Speech Pathologists
- d) Small groups based on level that included a mixture of general education staff and special education staff
- e) Program specific: Essentials, Early Childhood, Transition

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In District Parent/Guardian Survey: Key Factors for Growth

Parents/guardians most often identified the following items as most beneficial to their child's growth/progress:

- Individualized and specialized support
- Life skills training
- Strong relationships and collaboration
- Inclusion opportunities
- Speech and language services

In District Parent/Guardian Survey: Areas of Strength

Four areas were identified by parents as strengths:

- Being considered an equal partner with teachers and professionals in planning for their child's education
- Having a clear understanding of the evaluation process
- Being involved in decisions about their child's services
- Being satisfied with the services provided by staff

In District Parent/Guardian Survey: Areas for Improvement

The following were identified as areas for improvement:

- Communication and collaboration
- Training for staff
- Inclusion opportunities
- Shortage of aides
- Parent engagement in the IEP process
- Sense of belonging in the school community

Information from Parent/Guardian Listening Sessions

Each listening session was scheduled for 90 minutes and structured to learn more about the following topics:

- Communication and collaboration
- Facilitation of IEP meetings
- Sense of belonging in the school community

Area for Improvement: Communication and Collaboration

Top themes from the listening sessions regarding communication and collaboration

- Determine a cadence for more frequent informal updates
- Ensure all staff are able to collaborate
- Improve communication when students change building levels

Area for Improvement: Facilitation of IEP Meetings

Top themes from the listening sessions regarding facilitation of IEP meetings

- Recognize and value the importance of parental input
- Educational jargon can be overwhelming
- Regular updates beyond the formal IEP meetings would assist parents and guardians in being more prepared

Area for Improvement: Creating a Sense of Belonging

Top themes from the listening sessions regarding a sense of belonging in the school community

- Consider equity in school events
- Education and awareness for staff, students and the community
- Support networks for parents

Out of District Parent/Guardian Survey: Key Factors for Growth

Parents/guardians most often identified the following items as most beneficial to their child's growth/progress:

- Access to specialized therapies and support services
- Individualized attention and understanding unique needs

Out of District Parent/Guardian Survey: Areas for Improvement

The following areas were identified as areas for improvement:

- Sense of involvement in the decision making process when a child is recommended for an out of district placement
- Feeling a part of the district and child's home school community
- Addressing parent concerns and recommendations at the IEP meeting

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Classified Staff Survey: Areas of Strength

The following areas were identified as strengths by classified staff:

- Opportunities for professional learning
- Effectiveness of the training opportunities
- Feeling connected to their team within the special education department
- Feeling valued for their contributions

Classified Staff Survey: Challenges Faced

Classified staff identified the following challenges faced in their role:

- Staffing and support needs
- Communication and integration within the school community
- Training for behavior management

Certified Staff Survey: Areas of Strength

The certified staff survey identified the following areas as strengths:

- Staff understanding of their role in and of the IEP development process
- Developing IEPs that target skills for grade-level progress
- Valuing staff input and ideas within the IEP team

Certified Staff Survey: Areas of that Need Attention

The certified staff survey identified five areas that need attention and improvement.

For each of these areas the staff listening session provided more insights.

Area for Improvement: Opportunities for Collaboration

Top themes from the staff listening session:

Strengths:

- Strong emphasis on a culture of collaboration existing among staff to address student needs.
- Teamwork within the special education team.
- Positive communication and collaboration within departments to support problem solving.
- Collaboration exists across departments (special education, related services, and general education)

Opportunities:

- Increased opportunities for collaboration across levels (i.e. EC to Elem, Elem to Middle, & Middle to High)
- Opportunities for inclusive discussions.
- Establishing protocols for collaboration between special education and other departments can lead to more cohesive support for diverse student populations.

Area for Improvement: Communication

Top themes from the staff listening session:

Strengths:

- Positive communication and collaboration within departments to support problem solving.
- Effective communication among staff, departments, and with administration fosters collaboration and a supportive environment, enhancing student outcomes.

Weaknesses:

- Insufficient communication across various levels (between departments, special education, general education, and administration).
- Inconsistent communication when students move from building levels.
- Inconsistent communication and practices across buildings.

Area for Improvement: Professional Learning

Top themes from the listening sessions

Strengths:

- Ample opportunities for professional development and mentorship to enhance the effectiveness of staff.
- Experienced and skilled staff with longevity within the district.

Weaknesses:

- Inconsistent messaging and professional development opportunities impact effectiveness and compliance.
- Inadequate support for new staff and teaching assistants particularly in training and professional development.
- Need for consistencies across the district in training and processes.

Opportunities:

- Targeted training opportunities for staff on behavior management and special education processes.
- Mentoring and retention of new staff.
- Professional development opportunities for staff dependent upon their roles.

Area for Improvement: Access to Materials and Resources

Top themes from the staff listening sessions

Strengths:

- Availability of consistent core instructional materials contributes to improving student performance.
- Variety of internal and external resources.
- Availability of monetary resources through grant funding to purchase equipment and tools so students are able to access instruction.
- Integration of technology through AAC devices to help enhance student learning.

Weaknesses:

- Limited intervention options that are aligned with core curriculum and able to meet diverse student needs (i.e. multilingual learners and special ed students)
- A need for updated curriculum materials for special education courses to support effective intervention.
- Ambiguity regarding intervention guidelines can impede student support and progress.
- Staffing challenges.

Certified Staff Survey: Challenges Faced

The certified staff survey identified some common challenges faced:

- Staffing and support needs
- Time management and workload
- Curriculum and instructional challenges
- Communication and collaboration
- Inclusive practices

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Alignment Between Staff & Parent Feedback

Top Trends	Parent	Staff
Improve Communication & Collaboration	X	X
Increase Training/Support Needs	X	X
Inclusion Opportunities (including staffing for)	X	X
Address the Aide Shortage	X	X
Increase Parent Engagement in the IEP Process	X	
Time Management & Workload		X
Curriculum & Instruction		X

Priorities: This Year

Currently on this Year's Work Plan

- Begin the review process for elementary Resource and PISA programming and intervention resources
- Expand elective opportunities to foster inclusivity for Essentials students in middle school
- Support the implementation of Enhanced Core Reading Instruction for Bookworms

Additional New Areas of Focus

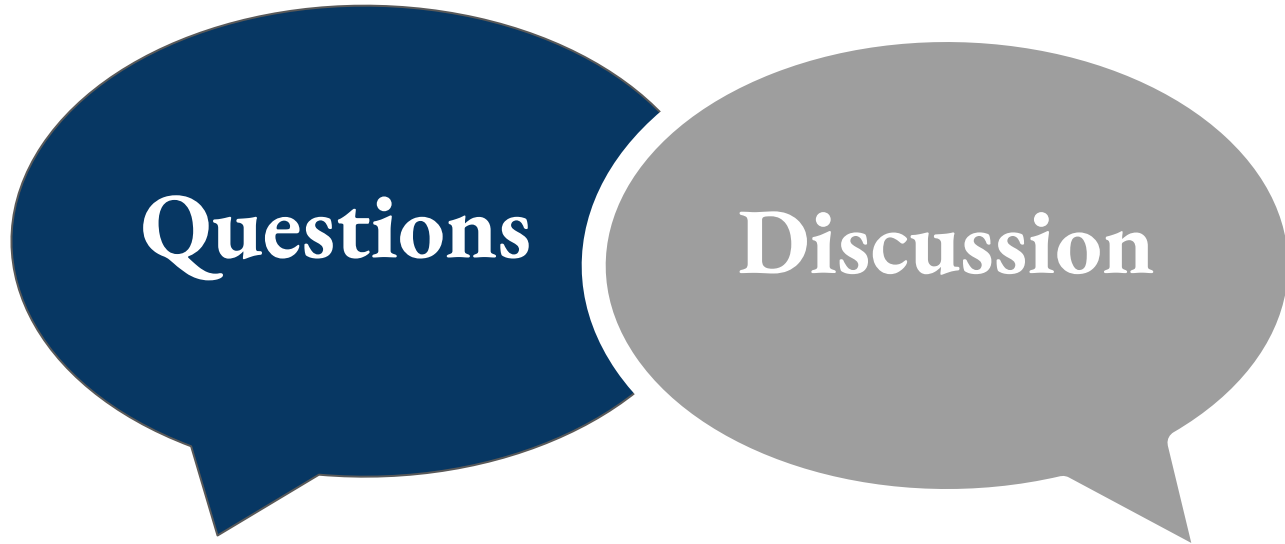
- Review and begin to enhance planning for when students change building levels
- Increase professional learning for the entire organization
- Build opportunities for school & community engagement for students in and out of district placements

Future Priorities Based on Stakeholder Feedback

- Expand professional learning opportunities for all staff (General Education, Special Education, and Teaching Assistants)
 - Increase department meetings
 - Leverage Institute Days for professional learning
- Review staffing allocations and workload processes
- Establish a framework for ongoing department-wide communication
- Conduct IEP training for staff

Future Priorities Based on Stakeholder Feedback

- Craft a vision statement for the department
- Enhance the process for students as they change building levels
- Promote programming transparency
 - Create comprehensive program guides
 - Improve the department website
 - Increase community awareness and engagement
- Increase the partnership between Multilingual Support & Special Education Services
- Form a Special Education Parent Advisory Council



Questions

Discussion