

Special Education Issues, Actions, & Promising Practices: A Work in Progress

North Brunswick Township Special Services

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District Issues and Challenges:

- Diverse Student Population
- Instructional Staff not representative of our student body
- Disproportionate classification
- Least Restrictive Environment
- Discipline
- Achievement Gaps

Shared Beliefs:

- Every student can learn
- Every student wants to be successful
- Every student has the right to learn in the **least restrictive environment** with the necessary supports
- Administrative, instructional and support staff want ALL students to succeed and act with the best interest of the students in mind

Common Goal:

- To steadily increase the achievement of students with disabilities and at-risk students by providing a variety of evidence based interventions that align directly to the areas of need.

Barrier:

Special Education classification was viewed as the only way to access specialized supports and services

Essential Question:

- What support is needed to reduce referrals and increase academic achievement?
 - What does the staff need?
 - What do the students need?

Actions:

Bridge the gap between general and special education so that ALL struggling students (classified and at-risk) have access to maximum supports and services in pre-referral and inclusive settings;

- 15% of IDEIA funds allocated for CEIS
- Intensified collaboration between special education and general education departments
- Increased direct service interventions and access to evidence based practices
- Intensive targeted and embedded Professional Development
- Increase opportunities for success within the Least Restrictive Environment

Promising Practices:

1. Multisensory Reading Instruction for Classified and at-risk students using Orton-Gillingham and Project Read
2. iPads for Specialized Programs and Inclusive Settings for an intended use of communication, remediation, generalization, skill acquisition, or collaboration
3. Intensive and Embedded Multi-Year Differentiated Instruction Training at the Middle School
4. Increased Opportunities for Supplemental Instruction
5. Intensive Behavioral Support: BCBA/Sp Education Teachers

Multisensory Reading Instruction

- Intensive Training Program
 - Consortium with FDU Center for Dyslexia Studies
 - IMSLEC Accredited Orton Gillingham Teacher Certificate
 - Integration of Project Read
 - Financial Support
 - Continuing Education
- Direct Service
 - Classified and at-risk students
 - Weekly evening 1:1 sessions
 - Integrated into Resource, Inclusion, and Academic Support
 - Pre-referral intervention

iPads for Specialized Programs and Inclusive Settings

- Participants:
 - Specialized programs and therapists
 - Inclusion pilot classes
- Intensive PD
 - iPad Basics, Apps overview & selection
 - Augmentative communication
 - Implementation planning
- Intended Use:
 - Communication, remediation, generalization, skill acquisition, or collaboration
- Modeling and Consultation
- Written Consultation Reports
- Program Evaluation

A graphic of a spiral-bound notebook with a dark blue cover and a white page. The spiral binding is on the left side, with black rings visible. The page is mostly blank, with a URL centered in the upper half.

[www.incredibilities.com/nbts-ipad-
initiative/](http://www.incredibilities.com/nbts-ipad-initiative/)

Differentiated Instruction Training at the Middle School

- Multi-Year (completing year 2)
- Every staff member trained
- Embedded into PLC and Dept work
- Integrated with school, district and state initiatives
- Emphasis on practical applications and specific strategies
- Content specific strategies
- Differentiated: Tailored to skill level and need of teachers
- Scaffolded: large grp, small grp, & individualized sessions
- Non-evaluative
- Collaborative planning with admin & teacher leaders

Increased Supplemental Instruction

- Expanded existing before/after school and summer programs (Tier 2)
- Offered additional funds for more intensive “specialized” before/after school and summer programs (Tier 3)

Intensive Behavioral Support:

- BCBA with Special Education Teacher Background
- Expanded and enhanced specialized programs in District
- FBAs & BIPs
- Consultation and collaboration
- Student Modifications
- Intensive Teacher and Aide training with modeling

Next Steps in Promising Practices

- Increase Culturally Responsive Practices through Courageous Conversations (RIISA)
- Improve effectiveness and integrity of the I&RS Process through tracking and progress monitoring procedures

Culturally Responsive Practices: Courageous Conversations (RIISA)

- Disproportionality Task Force formed
- Training Task Force- Building cultural awareness through Courageous Conversations PD series
- Overview with Leadership Team
- Next steps: Summer Institute, continue PD, & examining practices

I&RS Tracking & Progress Monitoring Procedures

- Improved Tracking and Progress Monitoring procedures
- Next steps: further training on measurable goal writing and progress monitoring tools and techniques