

**IMPROVING
SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES In the
Clark County School District
Submitted to the Board of School Trustees of the
Clark County School District
by the
Strategic Support Team
of the
Council of the Great City Schools**



Spring 2020

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Jesus F. Jara May 14, 2020

COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS REVIEW OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Improving Special Education Services in the Clark County School District

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<p>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</p>

The Council of the Great City Schools thanks the many individuals who contributed to this review of special education programs in the Clark County School District (CCSD). Their efforts were critical to our ability to present the district with the best possible proposals for

improving special education and related services in the school system.

First, we thank Dr. Jesus Jara, the school district’s superintendent. It is not easy to ask one’s colleagues for the kind of review conducted by the Council’s teams. It takes courage and openness and a real desire for change and improvement.

Second, we thank the CCSD school board, who approved having this review done. We hope this report meets your expectations and will help improve special education services across the school system.

Third, we thank staff members of the school district who contributed to this effort, particularly Deanna J. Jaskolski, assistant superintendent for the student services division and Brenda Larsen-Mitchell, Chief Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Officer who organized and facilitated the interviews and ensured that data and documents requested by the team were provided. Most people have no idea how much time and effort are required to organize a review such as this, much less the time to conduct it and write up the draft and final reports. The details are numerous and time-consuming. Thank you.

Fourth, the Council thanks the parents and advocates with whom we met. They work passionately to support children with disabilities and ensure the school district serves these students in the best possible manner.

Fifth, the Council thanks Janice James-Mitchell, senior director of learning support for special education services, Norfolk Public Schools, and Maria Witrado-Maldonado, consultant and former assistant superintendent of the English learner programs, Fresno Unified School District. Their contributions to this review were enormous. We also thank the Norfolk Public Schools for allowing Ms. James-Mitchell’s participation in this project. The enthusiasm and generosity of these individuals and districts that have supported this review serve as further examples of how the nation’s urban public-school systems are banding together to help each other improve performance for all students.

Finally, I thank Julie Wright Halbert, the Council’s legislative counsel, who facilitated the work of the team prior to and during the team’s site visit; and Sue Gamm, a nationally known expert in special education and long-time Council consultant, who worked diligently with Ms. Halbert to prepare the final report. Their work was outstanding, as always, and critical to the success of this effort. Thank you.

Michael Casserly
Executive Director
Council of the Great City Schools

Clark County School District (CCSD) Superintendent Dr. Jesus Jara asked the Council of the Great City Schools to review the district's services for students with disabilities and provide recommendations to improve teaching and learning. It was clear that the superintendent and his staff have a strong desire to improve student outcomes for this group of students and all students generally. This report was written to help CCSD achieve these goals and maximize the district's capacity to educate all students effectively.

The Work of the Strategic Support Team

To conduct its work, the Council assembled a team of experts who have successfully administered and operated special education programs in other major urban school districts around the country. These individuals also have firsthand expertise with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and are well versed in best practices in the administration and operation of special education.

The Council's Strategic Support Team (the Council team or the team) visited the district on November 20-22, 2019. During those three days, the Council team pursued its charge by conducting interviews and focus groups with district staff members, parents, community members, and many others. (A list of individuals interviewed is presented as an appendix to this report.) In addition, the team reviewed numerous documents and reports, analyzed data, and developed initial recommendations and proposals before finalizing this report. (See the appendices for a list of documents reviewed.) Following the team's visit, the superintendent and staff members responsible for special education were provided with a summary of the team's initial conclusions and preliminary recommendations.

This approach of providing technical assistance to urban school districts by using senior managers from other urban school systems across the nation is unique to the Council and its members. The organization finds it to be effective for several reasons.

First, it allows the superintendent and staff members to work with a diverse set of talented, successful practitioners from around the country. The teams are made up of experts who superintendents and staff can call on for advice as they implement the recommendations, face new challenges, and develop alternative solutions.

Second, the recommendations from urban school peers have power because the individuals who developed them have faced many of the same challenges encountered by the district requesting the review. No one can say that these individuals do not know what working in an urban school system is like or that their proposals have not been tested under the most rigorous conditions.

Third, using senior urban school managers from other urban school communities is faster and less expensive than retaining large management consulting firms that may have little to no programmatic experience. The learning curve is rapid, and it would be difficult for any school system to buy on the open market the level of expertise offered by these teams.

Members of the Strategic Support Team for this project included the following

individuals:

<p><i>Sue Gamm, Esq.</i> Former Chief Specialized Services Officer Chicago Public Schools</p>	<p><i>Dr. Janice James-Mitchell</i> Senior director of Learning Support, Special Education Services, Norfolk Public Schools</p>
<p><i>Dr. Maria Witrado-Maldonado</i> Former Assistant Superintendent, Department of English Learner Programs and Services, Fresno Unified School District</p>	<p><i>Julie Wright Halbert, Esq.</i> Legislative Counsel Council of the Great City Schools</p>

Methodology and Organization of Findings

The findings in this report are based on multiple sources, including documents provided by CCSD and other sources; electronic student data provided by CCSD; group and individual interviews; email documents; and legal sources, including federal and state requirements and guidance documents. A list of CCSD staff members, parents/community members, and other individuals who were interviewed for this report is provided in the Appendix. No one is personally referred to or quoted in the report, although school district position titles are referenced when necessary.

Chapter 2 of the report presents a brief background on the school district and an overview of the team's work. Chapter 3 presents an executive summary of the report and a brief discussion.

Chapter 4 of this report presents the Strategic Support Team's findings and recommendations. These observations and proposals are divided into five broad categories: I. Multi-tiered Systems of Supports and Implications for Child Find

II. Disability Demographics

III. Achievement Outcomes, Educational Environments, Suspensions, and

Absenteeism IV. Promoting Achievement and Wellbeing of Students with Disabilities

V. Supporting Teaching and Learning for Students with Disabilities

Each category contains a summary of relevant information, along with observations that outline areas of strength, opportunities for improvement, and recommendations. Finally, Chapter 5 lists all recommendations for easy reference and provides a matrix showing various components or features of the recommendations. The appendices include the following information:

- Appendix A compares incidence rates and staffing ratios in 78 major school systems across the country.
- Appendix B lists documents reviewed by the team.
- Appendix C lists individuals the team interviewed individually or in groups and presents the team's working agenda.
- Appendix D presents brief biographical sketches of team members.

- Appendix E presents a brief description of the Council of the Great City Schools and a list of the Strategic Support Teams that the Council has fielded over the last 20 years.

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Improving Special Education Services in the Clark County School District

CHAPTER 2. BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

The Clark County School District (CCSD) is the nation's fifth largest and the largest school system in Nevada, educating 67 percent of the state's students. The district has some 320,000 students in 336 schools, including 4 special schools attended solely by students with disabilities. According to its website, CCSD has 226 elementary schools, 56 middle or junior high schools, and 50 high schools.¹ Some 24 percent of the district's students are white, 46 percent are Hispanic, 14 percent are African American, six percent are Asian American, seven percent are multiracial, and the remaining two percent are Native American and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. English language learners (ELLs) account for 17 percent of the district's total student enrollment. Of all CCSD students, 12.5 percent receive special education services. And of all ELLs, 18.2 percent have an IEP and of all students with IEPs, 26 percent are English learners.²

In 1956, the Nevada legislature consolidated all state school districts into 17 county systems, forming CCSD with some 20,000 students formerly enrolled in 14 separate school districts. With the large number of families moving into the Las Vegas area, the school district experienced unprecedented growth in student enrollment. By the 1990-91 school year, student enrollment reached nearly 122,000, and has since nearly tripled to its current 320,000 students. For the first time, the district's overall enrollment decreased in the 2017-18 school year by a few thousand students. However, CCSD continues to experience growth in several outlying suburbs and in the southwest valley as housing developers resumed building after the economic downturn. The district's growth and long-term increase in student enrollment has presented challenges unlike those of other districts. The strain is apparent in significant ways, such as school overcrowding, reliance on portable classrooms, and teacher shortages. The district narrowly avoided a teacher strike at the beginning of the 2019-20 over the system's limited finances.

School Funding

Nevada ranks in the bottom five states in funding its public schools. Furthermore, the state has used an antiquated funding formula from the 1960s that has failed to adjust for Southern Nevada's growing and changing population.

Nevada's current per-pupil funding level of \$9,185 per pupil is well below the nation's average of \$12,756. This disproportionately low amount is consistent with a December 2018 Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) review of the district's business operations that compared CCSD's expenditures per student³ in several key financial categories to other CGCS urban school districts nationwide. In all areas described below, CCSD expenditures per students were below comparison groups.

- **Students.** CCSD's total expenditure per student of \$8,964 was much lower than the adjusted

¹ Retrieved from <https://www.ccsd.net/district/directory/schools-directory.php>.

² Students with disabilities who have individualized education programs (IEPs) and receive special education services are also referred to as students with IEPs.

³ Source: source U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) latest available data charts (2014-15), retrieved at <https://nces.ed.gov>, and the Council of the Great City Schools KPI project.

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\$13,730 median per student amount across all CGCS districts in 2014-2015. The CCSD expenditure per student was the lowest of all CGCS reporting districts;

- **Instructional.** CCSD's average instructional expenditure per student was \$4,796, compared to the CGCS median of \$6,656 per student, which placed the district near the bottom of all CGCS reporting districts
- **School-Site Administration.** CCSD's school-site administration expenditure per student of \$614, was smaller than the CGCS median of \$673 per student, which was somewhat lower than the adjusted CGCS median; and
- **Central Office Administration Staff.** CCSD's central office administrative staff expenditure per student of \$84 was less than CGCS's median of \$136 per student, which was also somewhat lower than the adjusted CGCS median.

While a newly established state formula will include weighted funding for English learners, special education, and other educational needs that students in large urban districts tend to have, the plan does not include any additional funding and will not go into effect for two years.⁴

Overcrowded Classrooms

Nevada's public schools have the largest average class sizes in the country. On August 24, 2019, the state's department of education published a report confirming that overcrowded classrooms continue to be a persistent problem in the state. For CCSD, in particular, elementary schools do not have an adequate number of classrooms to hire additional teachers even if the district were able to hire the number of teachers needed to meet the prescribed class-size ratios. Additionally, many schools do not have enough physical space to allow for needed portable units without affecting playgrounds and parking spaces.⁵

Exacerbating this problem, national postsecondary education enrollment figures dropped 35 percent between 2009 and 2014. Nevada's higher education teacher candidate programs reported 768 program completers in 2014-2015, a decrease from 950 completers in 2010-2011. The district relies heavily on recruitment from Nevada to fill shortages created within the state.

With its use of property taxes, CCSD had been able to build new schools to accommodate its student enrollment growth. Since 1998, the district has built more than 100 new schools, becoming at one point the fastest-growing school system in the country. However, with the 2009 recession, capital funds decreased. Voters rejected a much-needed tax initiative in 2012 by 2-to-1. The initiative would have generated up to \$720 million over six years to fund high-priority renovations and technology upgrades at 40 of the district's oldest and most dilapidated schools.⁶

⁴ Las Vegas Sun Nov. 3, 2019, retrieved from <https://lasvegassun.com/news/2019/nov/03/clark-county-school-district-does-admirable-work-w/>.

⁵ Retrieved from

http://www.doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/ndedoenvgov/content/Boards_Commissions_Councils/State_Board_of_Education/2019/August/ITEM10-FY19Q3CSRReport.pdf.

⁶ The Las Vegas Sun, Sept. 24, 2013, retrieved from <https://lasvegassun.com/news/2013/sep/24/record-number-students-packing-clark-county-school/>.

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In 2015, the Nevada legislature authorized modest funding to extend the district's Capital Improvement Program for the next 10 years.

Overall Comments

The Council team was impressed by the district's leadership team, and the collaboration and good will among assistant superintendents. Academic and student services leadership was open to CGCS feedback. Student services division personnel provided very timely and high quality responses to CGCS data requests. The team also recognized the unique parent culture of Las Vegas. The 24-hour/7 day-a-week working community requires extraordinary outreach and challenges that are different from other major urban school districts.

Superintendent's Concerns

Prior to the beginning of this review, the Council team met with the superintendent to learn about areas of concern for the team to address. These concerns included–

- Principal leadership for core instruction and inclusion of students with disabilities;
- Instructional *versus* compliance focus in support of special education;
- Special education demographics and instruction, including the increased need for separate classrooms for students with autism;
- Parent engagement;
- Professional learning related to special education for principals and teachers;
- Student services supports to schools, including use of regional coordinators;
- Compliance issues involving state/federal complaints and due process hearing requests;
- Special education related staffing demographics across urban school districts and implications for CCSD; and
- Fiscal management.

These issues, as well as others, are included in the Council's report, which is organized around the following five sections –

I. Multi-tiered Systems of Supports and Implications for Child Find

II. Disability Demographics

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CHAPTER 3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dr. Jesus Jara, superintendent of the Clark County School District, asked the Council of the Great City Schools to review the district’s special education programs and to make recommendations on how to improve services for students with disabilities. To conduct its work, the Council assembled a team of special education experts with strong reputations for improving services in their own districts. Members of the Council team visited CCSD in November 2019, conducted numerous interviews and focus groups, reviewed documents, and analyzed data. Shortly after the visit, the team formulated preliminary observations and recommendations and presented them to the superintendent. This report constitutes the Council team’s full review.

The reader should keep in mind that the review was conducted and the report was written largely before the current COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the team did not have the opportunity to collect or review information about how the district’s operations during this extraordinary and unprecedented time, and how special education and related services are being managed and provided to students with disabilities.

Overall, there were a considerable number of positive features in the Clark County school district’s program for students with disabilities. For instance, the eligibility rate among students pre-k to grade 12 is about the same as the state’s, the nation, and the average big-city school system. In addition, its rates among students with emotional disabilities, and intellectual disabilities is about the same as the state and nation. Moreover, while there were racial disparities in the numbers of students identified for special education, they did not meet the state’s risk ratio criteria. Furthermore, English learners were not disproportionately identified as having autism, speech/language disabilities, other health impairments, or emotional disabilities—like one often finds in other school systems.

Academic performance, while not high, among students with disabilities compared favorably with that of similar students in large city school districts nationwide in reading and math at the fourth-grade level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). In addition, the district has seen an increase in the graduation rate among students with disabilities, although some of this improvement might be attributable to changes in state definitions. And

students with disabilities did not receive in-school suspensions at disproportionate rates compared with students without disabilities.

The district also has a wide variety of programming compared to many other city school systems that the Council reviews. The district's Focus 2024 strategic plan provides a strong framework for improvement, although it devotes little space explicitly to the needs of students with disabilities; and its English Language Master Plan is excellent. Over the last several years, the district has also improved its cross-functional teaming, which is critical if the multi-faceted needs of students with disabilities are to be met successfully. Positive behavior programs have expanded and suspensions appear to have decreased as a result. The assistive technology program is one of the better programs that the Council team has seen anywhere. The district has a wide variety of work programs under its special education transition program. The community has an array of support groups with extensive expertise. And the school system has very talented and dedicated people.

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In all, the Clark County school districts has an extensive number of assets it can use to provide a stronger program. At the same time, the district has many serious challenges that it will need to address. First, the district's general instructional program appears to be mostly defined at the individual school level and the school system itself has not articulated a portfolio of interventions to address the needs of students who are starting to slip behind. The combination of factors often contributes to the identification of students with disabilities. Moreover, the district does not have a Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) that integrates student academic and behavioral needs. In addition, expertise and credentialing of the district's literacy specialists appear to be uneven. And the district's specific attention to English learners with disabilities is not always explicit.

The school system also does not have a professional development program that systemically builds the capacity of its people to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that the district does not have the staffing levels that other big-city school systems have and there are significant vacancies in almost all staffing areas. Some of this is solvable by how the district contracts for services, but much of it is attributable to unusually weak state funding of the school district. Moreover, the district does not have a clear monitoring or accountability system for special education. And its data dashboard system does not seem capable of tracking the use of interventions or the progress of individual students in the ways one sees in other systems.

While disability rates, in general, reflected state and national numbers overall and in specific disability categories, its autism rates appeared higher than other state and national levels. In addition, while not meeting state thresholds of disproportionality, African American students were identified in the areas of emotional disability, speech/language disability, and intellectual disability at rates that were higher than other groups. Moreover, while NAEP performance of fourth graders with disabilities was above other cities, the performance of eighth graders was not. And while graduation rates had increased among students with disabilities, it remained below state targets.

School district data also showed that students with disabilities in Clark County were

educated in general education classes at a much lower rate than others. Conversely, students with disabilities were more likely to be isolated. They were also more likely to be suspended out-of-school more often than students without IEPs. And the system exceeded the federal 1 percent threshold for alternative testing.

The Council team also saw several organizational inefficiencies that the district might consider addressing. The report contains numerous recommendations and proposals to strengthen programming, boost professional development, improve data systems, and address staffing issues. Overall, however, the district has considerable assets it can use to improve academic and behavioral services for students with disabilities in the county. There is no reason that over time the district cannot have one of the strongest special education programs in the nation.

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CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the Council team’s findings in four areas described in Chapter 1:

- I. Multi-tiered Systems of Support and Implications for Child Find
- II. Disability Demographics
- III. Achievement Outcomes, Educational Environments, Suspension, and Absenteeism
- IV. Promoting Achievement and Wellbeing of Students with Disabilities
- V. Supporting Teaching and Learning for Students with Disabilities

Each section includes a summary of the team’s findings and concludes with overall strengths, opportunities for improvement, and recommendations.

I. Multi-tiered System of Supports: General Education Instruction and Intervention

A multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) involves the systematic use of multi-source assessment data to efficiently allocate resources and improve learning for all students through a series of integrated academic and behavioral supports.⁷As described in the Council of the Great City Schools’ report, *Common Core State Standards and Diverse Urban Students*,⁸ MTSS is designed to improve educational outcomes for *all* students. It focuses on prevention and early identification of students who might benefit from instructional or behavioral interventions. The framework is a merger of response to intervention (RTI), which typically has focused on academic achievement, and systems to improve positive student behavior, such as positive behavior intervention and supports (PBIS). When the term MTSS is used in this report, it denotes a comprehensive approach to supporting instruction that applies to academics, social/emotional learning, and behavior. It also applies to every student, including students with disabilities,

English learners, and students who are gifted.

MTSS, as described in the CGCS report, has significant implications for identifying students suspected of needing special education and for the process of screening evaluation referrals.

Factors other than a disability may account for students having difficulty in language and literacy (as well as numeracy). Such factors may include the nature of a student's educational opportunity, as well as teaching practices or assessment tools that are insensitive to cultural or linguistic differences, for example. Other circumstances might include family circumstances, e.g., children who grow up without access to nutritious food, who live in chaotic households, and who have no written materials in the house. When implemented with fidelity, however, MTSS

⁷ Florida's Multi-tiered System of Supports, retrieved from <http://florida-rti.org/floridaMTSS/mtf.htm>.

⁸ Retrieved from <https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/87/77--Achievement%20Task%20Force--RTI%20White%20Paper-Final.pdf>.

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can help ensure that these factors are not blocking the way for students as staff members who consider making a special education referral or determining eligibility for special education services.⁹

Given the importance of having a framework designed to provide all students with a foundation of high-quality instruction and positive behavior support, the information below describes the research basis for MTSS, Nevada's MTSS guidance, and CCSD practices.

Essential Components of MTSS

Based on current research, the essential components of an MTSS framework include:

- Well-defined district- and school-based leadership and organizational structure;
- District policies and practices that align with and support a multi-tiered system;
- Technology that is adequate to support instructional decision making and implementation of instruction (e.g., Universal Design for Learning or UDL);
- Robust and valid core or Tier I instruction delivered to all students;
- Assessment of expected rates of progress;
- The use of three tiers of increasingly intensive (time and focus of instruction) instructional supports and strategies;
- Professional development to ensure fidelity of implementation of MTSS methodology and of the Common Core State Standards;
- An evaluation process that monitors both implementation and outcomes; and
- The engagement of parents and caregivers.¹⁰

In a functioning MTSS framework, schools have systems in place to identify the needs of all students and monitor and evaluate progress throughout the school year, using multiple data measures (e.g., district assessments, attendance, suspensions, grades, numbers of office referrals, etc.). Data are analyzed, and differentiated instruction and interventions are delivered based on results. Teachers and leaders regularly review and monitor student progress to determine trends and identify instructional adjustments needed for remediation, intervention, and acceleration.

When a student fails to make adequate progress after robust core or Tier I instruction has been delivered, then instructional interventions are put into place, and their effects are tracked. Without this monitoring system in place, it is unlikely that schools will have the documentation needed to determine whether underachievement is due to ineffective core instruction and interventions or something else that might trigger a special education referral. Nevertheless, when teachers and parents observe students who are struggling to learn and behave appropriately, there is a predictable desire to seek legally protected special education services.

⁹ *Id.* at page 18.

¹⁰ *Id.*

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To make this system work, it is imperative that districts and schools have processes in place to help educators determine why a student is not performing or when they might need acceleration. When implemented as intended, MTSS focuses on rigorous core instruction and provides strategic and targeted interventions without regard to disability status. In addition, MTSS can lead to better student engagement and lowered disciplinary referrals—and fewer students requiring special education services. It can also help reduce disproportionate identification of students from various racial/ethnic groups and those with developing levels of English proficiency who might otherwise fall into the ranks of those needing special education services.

In fact, MTSS is recognized in the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA)¹¹ as an appropriate framework for supporting student achievement and positive behavior, and it is a permissible use of federal Title I funds. The Act defines MTSS as “a comprehensive continuum of evidence-based, systemic practices to support a rapid response to students’ needs, with regular observation to facilitate data-based instructional decision-making.”

To provide a context for Clark County’s MTSS practices, Nevada’s framework and guidance is described below. Also provided is information about the state’s *Read by Grade 3* initiative, which includes the legislature’s expectations for district practices in the important area of reading and critical MTSS elements. This information is followed by a description of CCSD’s implementation of MTSS and *Read by Grade 3*. Also, information is included that addresses the district’s approach to identifying and educating English language learners. The final subsection summarizes how the district’s implementation activities and outcomes affect student special education referrals and eligibility.

Nevada Requirements and Guidance

In accordance with ESSA, the Nevada Legislature, in 2017 passed Assembly Bill 275 to establish the *Nevada Integrated Student Supports* (NISS). To support implementation of NISS, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) published on December 1, 2018 a *Framework for Equitable Integrated System of Student Supports*.¹² NISS is designed to be an equitable integrated Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework

that builds systems for strong, effective, and sustainable implementation of evidence-based practices to ensure Nevada's students receive the most impactful services, practices, and resources based upon responsiveness to effective instruction and intervention. In this system, high quality instruction, strategic use of data, and collaboration interact within a continuum of supports to facilitate student success. Schools provide various supports at differing levels of intensity to

¹¹ The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized in 2015 as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

¹² Retrieved from

<http://www.doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/ndedoenvgov/content/SafeRespectfulLearning/MTSSGuidanceDoc508.pdf>

The Council team notes that the state department's MTSS initiative is housed in the Office of Safe and Respectful Learning Environments. Although this report is not intended to critique the state department of education's practices, we note that housing this initiative within a department that otherwise focuses on areas within the social/emotional domain detracts from the framework's purposeful holistic approach that is inclusive of academic instruction/intervention and support.

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proactively and responsively meet the needs of the whole child. These include the knowledge, skills, and habits learners need for success beyond high school, including developmental, academic, behavioral, social, and emotional skills. Equitable and integrated MTSS helps states and districts organize resources aligned with academic standards and behavioral expectations to help students achieve success.¹³

In his introduction to the framework, Dr. Steve Canavero, Nevada's former superintendent of public instruction wrote:

Implementing a systemwide equitable and integrated multi-tiered system of supports will help address the unique needs and assets within each school community to foster greater educator and student success.

Our data also reveal that significant opportunity and achievement gaps persist between students of color and white students, native and non-native English speaking students, and students with and without disabilities. NDE commits to an open and honest dialog around these systemic issues and to Equitable Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) as a way to begin to systematically address these disparities. MTSS helps schools and districts provide students with supports at increasing levels of intensity based on the students' responsiveness to instructional procedures and practices expected to be in place to support each of these seven

core elements with training and resources.¹⁴

According to the state's MTSS Framework, schools provide various supports at differing levels of intensity to proactively and responsively meet student needs. The Framework does not reference interventions and practices districts and charters should use. Rather, it sets forth an integrated and coherent framework of academic, behavioral, social, and emotional supports for staff and students resulting in a single delivery system of interventions. The document sets forth seven interdependent core elements that are equally essential to MTSS's success and sustainability:

1. Teaming with shared decision-making and leadership
2. Problem solving models and data-based decisions
3. Systemic implementation and progress monitoring
4. Tiered continuum of supports
5. Regular screening
6. Evidence-based interventions and improvement
7. High quality instruction

¹³ *Id.* at page 8.

¹⁴ Note that several states have developed MTSS webpages with resources and information that are extremely comprehensive. See, for example: Nevada (<https://www.NDE.ca.gov/ci/cr/ri/mtsscomprti2.asp>); Colorado (<http://www.NDE.state.co.us/mtss>); Florida (<http://www.florida-rti.org/floridamtss/index.htm>); Iowa (<https://www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/learner-supports/multi-tiered-system-supports-mtss>); Nebraska (<https://www.education.ne.gov/nemtss/>); Kansas (<https://www.ksdetasn.org/mtss>); and Tennessee (<https://www.tn.gov/education/student-support/student-supports-in-tn.html>).

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The MTSS Framework describes these core elements with information that coincides with common MTSS literature. The Framework emphasizes use of evidence-based approaches as they pertain to interventions.

- Evidence-based approaches proven to be effective through scientifically based research studies are essential to determine which interventions or practices to implement. Using national registries for evidence-based practices can introduce successful practices that have been implemented long-term and in which contexts the practices are most effective.
- The ability to select evidence-based interventions and improvement tools in partnership with data-driven decision making and problem solving requires that school and district personnel have the knowledge and skills to select, interpret, and implement interventions that meet student needs.

The framework also suggests three assessments that districts may use to ensure interventions and practices are implemented with fidelity: District Capacity Assessment (DCA), Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI), and the Schoolwide Implementation Review (SIR). According to NDE, many Nevada districts utilize such assessments for school-based MTSS teams to facilitate professional development, resource allocation, and continual improvement through action planning. The Council team was not aware that the district was using any of these with fidelity.

Read by Grade 3

Using MTSS's important component of "high quality instruction," Nevada's *Read by Grade 3* Act provides funding and evidence-based guidance designed to ensure that all state students will be able to read proficiently by the end of the 3rd grade – the key predictor of school success and high-school graduation. Since July 1, 2015, all Nevada school districts and charter schools have been required to develop plans to improve K-3 grade students' literacy. Prior to the 2019-20 school year, the Act was revised to include:

- **Retention.** Remove a grade three retention requirement and, instead, extend reading intervention services and intensive instruction to include all grades in an elementary school for a student who is not reading proficiently; and
- **Continuous Monitoring.** Require a student's reading plan to regularly assess reading growth to ensure that programs and services are effective.¹⁵

¹⁵ Understanding AB 289: Nevada's Newly Revised Read by Grade 3 Act presentation by NDE to the Nevada State Board of Education, August 29, 2019, retrieved from

<https://us.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?hspart=rotz&hsimp=yhs001&type=mdru1743d9c2b3fb744afea3¶m1=ArFaIWJoNqArQGMVInobADAevXFbMnMqOGMVEENoNqAdBHFalT8qzT0py6RoNqAqAXFalWQBvmE4ICILNopcGWUlvvmFcG6IYNERcFaUHvFI3vqUJwVRcFqUGNEY9J6oVwVRcFGUivFE4J6oWwVYcEWUKvFE3vCoUvFE4JmoUwVM4J6IVNEO9JCIWvFO4ISoXNEY3vCILNFEdclaUXNEBcGqQANFdcFCk8NoM9J6oWvFI9JGYVvmlJCoWwVw3vmIWwVU3vmlSvFFdJCoUvFM9IaYXvFFdJmoWwVw3vCIYvFJdICIWwVRdJmIXNVQ9JGYUwVRbFCILNEVbDmk8NUM9JmoXvmo4ISILNFdbDSk8wVU9ImoVwVA9J6IVvFO9ImIWwV5cGWUWvmFcHWUINFM9J6ITwVU4ISITwVM9ImIWwVO9GqUFNFo3wCoUwV5cJqQzNEBcEWUGNF43wHFbMnMbOGMVMMapdMqB6MqF6OGR7BHFalT8pxo0aCaV4CaN8C78qvU0gAT8sB81cLU1cLU1c¶m2=¶m3=¶m4=&p=Understanding+AB+289%3A+Nevada%E2%80>

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Importantly, the statute also requires every Nevada elementary school to designate a "reading learning strategist" to provide literacy-based professional learning, coaching, and guidance for all K-4 teachers at the site. In addition, the measure emphasizes the implementation of early intervention measures in reading achievement for all K-3 students who are determined to be struggling in reading. Other highlights of the law include the following components:¹⁶

- **Literacy Specialist.** Administrators shall designate a licensed teacher to serve as a literacy specialist who must:
 - Demonstrate the ability to improve the literacy of pupils;
 - Demonstrate competency in effective instruction in literacy and the administration of assessments;
 - Demonstrate an understanding of building relationships with teachers and other adults;
 - Collaborate with the administrator of the public elementary school to develop a schedule of professional development and assist in providing such professional development; and

- Assist teachers at the school by implementing a system of supports, which include various methods to provide intervention services and intensive instruction for pupils who have been identified as deficient in reading.
- **Student Growth Monitoring.** Elementary schools must establish a plan to monitor the growth of a student who is reading below grade level to assess the extent to which the student is moving toward grade level reading performance. The plan must:
 - Describe the intervention and intensive instruction that will be provided to improve reading proficiency;
 - Include interventions and intensive instruction that will be provided until the student reads at grade level; and
 - Include programs and services approved by NDE and included in the LEA literacy plan.
- **Intensive Reading Services.** Intensive reading services may be provided by the same teacher who provided such services during the preceding school year if the teacher has been determined to be highly effective, as determined by student performance data and performance evaluations, and the student has an IEP. (As discussed in Section III below, the district has a high number of special educator vacancies. This has significant implications for the provision of reading interventions for students with IEPs, such as those with learning disabilities, who are reading below proficient levels.)
- **Notice to Parents.** Parents/guardians must be given written notification of a student in grades K-3 who is reading below grade level within 30 days after the deficiency is discovered, and must:
 - Receive an explanation of the programs and services the school will provide, including

[%99s+Newly+Revised+Read+by+Grade+3+Act+9%2C+Nevada+Department+of+Education%2C+Aug.+29%2C+2.019](#)

¹⁶ Assembly Bill 289 guidance, Nevada Department of Education, retrieved from http://www.doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/ndedoenvgov/content/Read_by_Three/AssemblyBill289GuidanceDocument.pdf.

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- programs/services approved by NDE and included in the LEA literacy plan;
- Receive an explanation indicating that if the student does not attain adequate proficiency in reading by the end of third grade, the school will provide intervention services and intensive instruction each year that the student is enrolled in the school, unless it determined that such services are no longer necessary;
 - Receive a description of the policies and criteria adopted by the LEA for providing intervention services and intensive instruction;
 - Receive an explanation of the plan to monitor reading proficiency growth; and
 - Receive an explanation of how services and programs will be adjusted to improve reading proficiency.

NDE has also identified the professional development that literacy specialists must

complete and the training literacy specialists must facilitate/deliver for K-4 classroom educators. These areas include: the Nevada State Literacy Plan contents; data-driven and standards-based instruction and intervention (evidence-based best practices for literacy instruction/intervention and methods for screening/intervening for dyslexia and other reading disabilities); and literacy assessment.

Clark County's MTSS Framework and Practices

According to information provided by CCSD staff members, the district has a comprehensive, school-based, MTSS framework for addressing the academic, behavioral, and social/emotional needs of all students. The academic portion of the MTSS framework has traditionally been referred to as response to instruction (RTI) and the behavioral portion has been referred to as positive behavior intervention and supports (PBIS).

Response to Instruction

The RTI model was developed with active collaboration across CCSD divisions, departments, and schools. To support its RTI implementation, the district has published the document, "Response to Instruction: A PK-12 Multi-Tiered System of Support, A General Education Initiative." The document, which was provided to the Council team, was labeled as Master RTI Operations Manual 2013-14 (RTI Manual). The cover indicates that the Manual was first published in 2008. According to CCSD, the document's formal revision was completed in January 2014,¹⁷ and the psychological services department continues to use this resource to guide school psychologists in the field. In 2017 the Literacy Department's Curriculum and Professional Development Division initiated activity to review the RTI Operations Manual and revise it as an MTSS Manual with a focus on response to instruction and intervention. That manual was never finalized, but it gave rise to RTI services and supports to schools through Literacy Department personnel.

The CCSD RTI Manual was designed to provide a common understanding of RTI tenets and to assist educators with implementation. Overall, the RTI Manual is exceptionally

¹⁷ The Council team was unable to find any copy of or reference to this document on the district's website.

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comprehensive and provides valuable information for school personnel to support the model's implementation. For example, the following subjects are covered in detail:

- Use of a standard treatment model and problem-solving model of interventions.
- Structures for supporting problem-solving, such as structured teacher planning time, professional learning community meetings, and grade-level meetings.
- Use of an RTI school assessment rubric tool to conduct a school needs assessment and to determine effective implementation of RTI. The CCSD RTI school assessment indicator includes seven areas of evaluation: leadership, high-quality standards-based instruction, intervention, assessment, professional development, behavior, and parent/ community involvement.

- Additional sections in the Manual include:

- High quality instruction, including standards-based curriculum that is grounded in research (systematic explicit instruction, differentiated instruction, flexible grouping strategies, maximizing time, components of an effective lesson);
- Inclusive school practices in all tiers of instruction;
- Balanced assessment systems (types of assessments, making assessments complementary and purposeful, universal screeners, diagnostics, progress monitoring measures, curriculum-based measurement, cut scores and decision points);
- Early childhood education instructional models with descriptions of tiers;
- Elementary instructional models, including K-5 models and schedules for tiered intervention;
- Secondary instructional models, with secondary master schedule models;
- K-12 instructional writing framework; and
- K–12 positive behavioral interventions and supports models.

In addition, the appendix includes additional information and resources.

Read by Grade 3

CCSD shared with the Council team several documents the district had produced to implement the state’s “Read by Grade 3” initiative. The team made the following observations.

- ***Literacy Specialists and Special Education.*** One document on an administrator webinar described the role of literacy specialists and their professional learning requirements. The information did not reference any expectations about the relationship between literacy specialists and students with IEPs or special educators.
- ***CCSD K-5 Literacy Plan.*** The district’s Revised Kindergarten-Fifth Grade Literacy Plan stressed the district’s commitment to ensure all students are reading on grade-level. The introduction referenced CCSD’s percentages of students with IEPs (14 percent) and English learners (24 percent), seemingly to reinforce the plan’s inclusionary nature. However, the plan makes no further reference to either of these two student groups.

- ***Instruction/Intervention.*** Under the section on data-driven and standards-based instruction/intervention, Tier 1 literacy instruction, the plan calls for uninterrupted reading instruction (110 minutes for first through fifth grade, and 120 minutes for kindergarten). A general education teacher is expected to deliver Tier 1 instruction in the regular classroom for all students. The Literacy Plan provided to the Council team did not include any information on supplementary interventions.
- ***Professional Learning for Literacy Specialists.*** A 2019-20 list of professional development offerings referenced 16 session topics along with several dates for each topic. The document does not include information on the lengths of each session. Only one session, which will take

place in March 2020, referred to intensive instruction. In that session, literacy specialists will learn to analyze data, prepare and deliver small-group instruction using student data, and teach elementary educators how to replicate the process. None of the sessions explicitly addressed information pertinent to students with disabilities or English learners.

- **Student Growth Monitoring.** CCSD staff members did not provide the form the district uses to develop plans for students reading below grade level to assess the extent to which they are moving toward grade level proficiency. The components NDE sets forth are specific, particularly with respect to the interventions and intensive instruction that will be provided to improve a student’s reading proficiency. The literacy plan provided to the Council team, however, did not identify any specific programs or services.
- **Letter to Parents.** The form letter provided to parents of students in grades three through five who are reading below grade level indicates that a student will receive specific interventions that the school’s literacy team will review and select. The parent is further advised that the interventions are offered in a small group format; emphasize the primary five elements of reading; will be monitored for student growth; and will continue/may be modified until the child is reading at grade level. Note that some students may not require interventions in all five reading elements, e.g., some may only require fluency or comprehension intervention. Also, the information provides no further information about the type of intervention(s) to be provided other than that they will be given in a small group format. Information provided to the parent does not address students with IEPs and the relationship between the interventions and the IEP, or any specifics for English learners.

Social/Emotional and Positive Behavior Support.

CCSD personnel provide various supports to schools, teachers, and students in the areas of social/emotional learning and positive behavior.

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports

The student services department’s psychology division actively partners with the curriculum/professional development division to support schools involved with the district’s positive behavior intervention and supports (PBIS) initiative. The psychology division prepared a very detailed 2018-19 annual report describing the district’s positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) program and outcomes. All participating schools receive monetary and technical support from a School Climate Transformation Grant (SCTG) and the Nevada PBIS Technical Assistance Center. Professional development is provided during the summer to newly participating

schools and during the school year. Tier 1 professional development is provided to school staff choosing to attend.

- **Level of School Participation.** Seven project facilitators provide ongoing training, coaching, and technical assistance to some 90 schools actively involved in the district’s school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) initiative. In the 2018-19 school year, 21 schools were implementing Tier II interventions, including six schools added during the school year. In addition, four schools began implementing Tier III interventions during the

school year. Due to the district's reorganization and many newly hired project facilitators, the CCSD PBIS initiative did not formally recruit and screen schools for the 2019-2020 school year as in the past. Five schools that previously expressed a desire to participate in the initiative began to implement Tier 1 practices during the fall of 2019.

- **Fidelity Assessment.** The district's PBIS team assesses the strength of schools' Tier 1 systems twice a year to determine areas of support and coaching needed. Based on the June 2019 assessment, 18 schools (24 percent) were emerging, 36 (48 percent) were developing; and 21 schools (28 percent) were sustaining Tier 1 schoolwide PBIS practices. Generally, school factors, such as the following influence the success of school practices: administrator support and school team functioning, staff buy-in, use of data, resources, fidelity of implementation, parent involvement, and integration into school culture.
- **Outcomes.** Based on data from the psychological services unit, elementary and secondary schools that consistently implement PBIS with high fidelity show better discipline rates compared to schools with poor practices. Similarly, schools implementing PBIS with increasing fidelity have a significant decrease in exclusionary practices, such as out-of-school suspensions and suspensions-with-instruction. Also, data show positive outcomes related to Tier II implementation in schools with fidelity and increasingly faithful Tier III implementation. The Board of the Nevada Association for Positive Behavior Support recognized 25 CCSD schools for one of five levels of PBIS implementation and dedication to PBIS.

For the 2019-20 school year, four project facilitators were hired to replace staff members taking different positions within the district. A new coaching model is being developed to support sustainable practices and increase school support capacity within CCSD.

Student Threat Evaluation/Crisis Response

SSD's psychological services department has a student threat evaluation/crisis response (DOSTECCR) unit that is staffed with seven school psychologists and four counselors. These individuals provide services, such as training to school-based intervention teams (SBIT) on a protocol for suicide intervention; consultation on threat assessments, evaluations and counseling for individual students; and other mental health-related training.

Mental Health Transition Team

The department also has a mental health transition team (MHTT) with two social workers and a counselor for students placed in local hospitals/treatment centers for mental health reasons to help them transition back to CCSD schools. CCSD has had about 1,500 students per year hospitalized in a treatment facility, with many having been admitted from two to seven times. Some 26 percent of hospitalized students have an IEP.

Crisis Prevention Institute

SSD's Linking Instruction Needs and Key Supports (LINKS) team, in collaboration with

the Crisis Prevention Institute, provides districtwide professional development on non-violent crisis intervention. This 8-hour program is designed to give participants the skills and confidence necessary to handle crisis situations with minimal anxiety and maximum security.

Focus 2024

As will be discussed further throughout this report, CCSD's Focus: 2024 Strategic Plan sets forth priorities/strategies that place students at the core of all work. This document is comprehensive and represents a collaborative and thoughtful effort to impact student achievement and well-being. The plan has five priorities. Relevant to this report is the first priority, student success, which has four objectives.

1. Increase student achievement in English language arts, mathematics, and science
2. Decrease student proficiency gaps in English language arts, mathematics, and science
3. Increase access and equity to rigorous curriculum and instruction for all students
4. Ensure students and staff are safe and engaged at school

The plan identifies a group of strategies designed to help students meet specified targets. The strategies incorporate several Tier 1 and other MTSS-related strategies previously discussed to improve the achievement of all students. For example:

- **Professional Learning.** Implement professional learning opportunities for educators to strengthen their delivery of Tier I instruction for all students.
- **Dashboard.** Implement and utilize a comprehensive data dashboard to analyze student achievement data and early-warning indicators on attendance, behavior, and course completion to guide data driven decision-making at the school level.*¹⁸
- **MTSS.** Deploy districtwide MTSS to promote students' success in both academics and behavior.

As will be discussed in Section III below, Focus: 2024 also includes strategies related to the provision of intensive interventions to help close achievement gaps between students with IEPs and the highest performing student group.

English Learners

Overall, CCSD enrolls some 55,097 ELs, which comprise 21.1 percent of the student population. About 98 percent of the district's schools enroll English learners. In October 2014, the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) initiated ongoing technical assistance and support to the district for the purpose of reviewing the district's instructional support for English learners. At the time, CCSD did not have a language development program or noticeable structures in place focused on this area. In lieu of conducting a program review, CGCS experts in the area of ELs worked with district staff to develop an RFP for the purpose of selecting an outside consultant to work with a range of stakeholders and develop an ELL Master Plan. This task was accomplished

¹⁸ Items with an asterisk (*) are based on additional funding availability.

with the guidance of a 75-member leadership team representing key constituencies of the district and community, along with ELL students, families, teachers, principals, district administrators, and support staff. Simply stated, the result was a very comprehensive document, the 2016 ELL Master Plan. It is thoughtful, carefully constructed, and standards based, and was developed with a high level of expertise. Moreover, while designed for English learners, the Master Plan's instructional strategies are inclusive of all students in "first teaching."

When reviewing data on English learners and students with IEPs, the Council team noted that only one student at the prekindergarten (PK) level was identified as being an English learner. When asked about this circumstance, CCSD's staff explained that PK students are not assessed for English language proficiency until late spring for the following year.

Under the *Every Student Succeeds Act*, states/school districts are not obligated to identify potential ELs prior to kindergarten. Yet, a growing number of states have included these young children in their policies/procedures for the identification and instruction of English learners. New York and Illinois, along with their CGCS member districts, have had many years of experience and information to support these activities. Although Nevada has not yet joined this effort, it is imperative for CCSD to recognize the value of early learning and act accordingly.

Professional Learning

The ELL division developed the Academic Language and Content Achievement Model (ALCA-M) to support professional learning for school-based personnel as part of the Master Plan. ALCA-M is based on an approach developed by Stanford University, which considers language development in a comprehensive manner. Twenty-four two-hour sessions, including an hour of debriefing or follow-up, were designed to provide all teachers with the skills they need to support ELs, as well as other students in need of academic language development with Tier I instruction. School-based leaders can download presentation materials and lead training in alignment with the needs of their schools. PowerPoint materials with presenter notes and suggested scripts, a facilitator guide, and participant handouts are also available. In addition, content sessions are available online *via* Canvas for teachers to complete independently when they request it. Furthermore, ELL division staff are available to assist with presentation preparation and delivery.¹⁹ Finally, WestEd's Quality Teaching for ELs (QTEL) training program, supported by nine CCSD apprenticeships, has been made available to provide training that extends ALCA-M's reach.

ELL Master Plan School Cohorts

The ELL Master Plan was designed to be implemented in three cohorts of schools. The first cohort began in the 2016-17 school year and included 80 schools having the highest percentage of ELLs, including 38 with ZOOM funding. The second cohort (2017-18) comprised 120 schools and the third cohort (2018-19) comprised some 130 schools. About 80 percent of the ELL team worked regionally and 10 members worked centrally to support these schools.

¹⁹ Retrieved from <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cjZbMfK48DPx-B7in7m62dMjpDbj-jZdI3PPE8-9BJU/edit#!>.

At the beginning of the 2019-20 school year, the superintendent and cabinet decided to terminate the Master Plan cohort training, leaving 250 schools incompletely trained.

Focus Group Feedback

Focus group participants provided valuable feedback on and context for the district's practices with respect to PBIS, RTI, and MTSS. Generally, in spite of the district's early work in these areas, including publication/revision of its RTI Manual, it does not appear that information in this Manual was consistently communicated to school personnel and updated over the past few years to maintain understanding of and reflect the nation and state's movement toward the MTSS model. As a result, focus group participants indicated that the district lacks a common language for MTSS, and the CCSD community does not have a consistent understanding of the interrelationship between academics and behavior under this framework or the awareness of systems and structures to support necessary practices. Consequently, the absence of a comprehensive MTSS framework, including a standardized core curriculum, affects students in a highly mobile environment and results in instructional inconsistencies that hinder student growth systemwide.

Because of the district's PBIS initiative, however, a strong structure has been in place to support behavior. A similar initiative has not been in place to support an academically focused RTI system. As a result, there has been a tendency for school personnel to address a student's issues as one or the other, rather than addressing academics and behavior comprehensively and interactively. The Council team noted that a major reason for the district's focus on behavior is likely the availability of state funds for this purpose. Importantly, focus group participants consistently indicated the need for CCSD to have a systemwide MTSS framework and support structure in place, including high quality professional learning. There was also a strong desire among interviewees to move beyond the current "Islands of Excellence" approach in CCSD and, instead, to have every school exhibit excellence.

Common feedback from the focus groups is highlighted below.

- **Previous Efforts.** Various efforts were made during the 2018-19 school year to implement MTSS, however, it faltered because a common language and framework had not been developed; behavioral supports were emphasized but little attention was given to academic supports; principal training rolled out too fast, was provided in large auditoriums, and participants were allowed to participate in sessions that were not sequential in nature and were not designed around content in a logical way. In response, the initiative was put on hold for a redesign.
 - **Administrative Support.** The curriculum/instruction unit now houses activities designed to develop and implement MTSS. This initiative is being performed collaboratively and relies on the leadership of a cross-functional team that brings together all departments involved with teaching and learning. One challenge, which is typical in urban school districts, is the development of cross-departmental expertise so that staff members can better support each other and school-based personnel with students having multi-dimensional needs. One example pertains to administrative support for English learners with disabilities. Personnel need to have at least a working knowledge of instructional strategies and compliance requirements for both English learners and special education.
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- **Regional/School-based Teams.** There does not seem to be any expectation that cross functional MTSS leadership teams will operate at regional and school levels.
 - **First Teaching, Generally.** A major tenet of MTSS is the importance of “first teaching” to increase the probability that students receive high quality Tier I instruction and will not require supplemental interventions with any intensity to compensate for poor teaching the first time around.²⁰ A common focus group theme was the lack of an articulated core curriculum and guiding documents that would lay out a systemwide scope/sequence. Interviewees indicated that the district’s current instructional system does not consistently comport with evidence based practices. The district’s 2012 web-based curriculum included standards and targets, but it has not been updated electronically or enhanced with training. As a result, standards-based instruction is inconsistent, student mobility undermines the trajectory of student learning, and teachers do not have the knowledge they need to be successful. There was a perception that principals/teachers were working “really hard” but that this effort was not producing significantly improved academic outcomes.
 - **Funding Availability.** Schools have varying amounts of funding to purchase core or intervention reading (as well as other content) materials. If a school does not receive supplementary funding through Title I, Victory,²¹ or ZOOM,²² very little other funding is available. Also problematic was the fact that some schools received Victory funds, saw their achievement levels increase, and then lost the funding for the very programs and staffing that made their success possible in the first place.
 - **Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction.** Focus group participants had little knowledge or recognition of Universal Design for Learning²³ principles, which are defined around instructional relevance for all students. Furthermore, very little professional learning has been provided to support differentiated instruction for students needing this approach to learn.
 - **Use of Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs)** Speech language pathologists (SPL) have developed a program to improve phonemic awareness through a research-based multisensory approach for kindergarteners through grade 2 students. The use of SPLs to provide teachers support for core reading strategies for all students, however, is not

²⁰ It is important to note that student misbehavior and removal from class also interferes with first teaching, contributing to the need for reteaching and supplemental interventions. This circumstance reinforces the interaction between academics and behavior.

²¹ In consultation with the board of trustees, schools are identified as Victory schools based on a relatively high poverty level and poor performance (one of the two lowest possible ratings issued by NDE). Funding for a Victory school is available to support implementation of strategies from a list of six, including reading proficiency by the end of third grade. Retrieved from

<http://www.doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/nde.doe.nv.gov/content/VictorySchools/VictorySchoolsGuidanceDocument.pdf>.

²² State funding is provided for intensive services to increase academic achievement and improve English language proficiency for English learners. Retrieved from [http://www.doe.nv.gov/English_Language_Learners\(ELL\)/Zoom/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/English_Language_Learners(ELL)/Zoom/).²³ UDL is an educational framework based on research in the learning sciences, including cognitive neuroscience, that guides the development of flexible learning environments and learning spaces that can accommodate individual learning differences. UDL principles give teachers a structure for developing instruction to meet the diverse needs of all learners. For more information see: <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/for-educators/universal-design-for-learning/understanding-universal-design-for-learning>.

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systemic and is based on individual SPL and host schools.

- **First Learning for English Learners.** Overall, support for language acquisition for ELs is not consistent across schools and is driven by principal leadership. Personnel appear to lack knowledge about federal legal requirements on language acquisition instruction.
 - **Positive Feedback.** Various focus group participants appreciated their receipt of Master Plan-related training and recognized the umbrella nature of the plan for all students. This feedback indicated that school personnel had a high need for information relevant to good teaching. Anecdotally, schools with staff receiving professional learning and were implementing plan components reported higher achievement growth and better ELL exit outcomes.
 - **Cessation of Master Plan Related Activities and Training.** Although Master Plan-related activities were intended to improve Tier I instruction, some principals complained about the amount of training required and did not understand how learned-language development was universal or could be generalized for all students. Instead, some schools saw it more as a compliance activity and did not understand the activities' relationship with research based Tier I instruction. Some administrators seem to believe that they have the choice of whether and how to proceed with training. Some believe that the plan is now irrelevant because formal training has ended. In one of the Council's focus groups, only four of 20 individuals indicated that their school was continuing any Master Plan-related activities.
 - **Lessons Learned.** Based on experiences with Master Plan implementation and focus group feedback, several lessons for the future were identified –
 - Implementation activities should not depend just on the ELL department alone. A broader base of instructional leaders is needed to model the systemic nature of language development. Professional learning should be cross functional, and it should be highly relevant across departments and school-based personnel.
 - There is a need to ensure that language development is embedded throughout Tier I instruction and should not be taught in isolation.
 - Collaboration across all education departments needs to be strengthened.
 - Professional learning needs to be differentiated for participants who have varying knowledge, experience, and learning needs.
 - New initiatives should begin with training at the trustee, cabinet, and regional leadership levels to promote buy-in. Although the Master Plan was developed with strong leadership support, it is perceived that it was not leveraged to implement and institutionalize practices.
- **Literacy Specialists**
 - **Prior Knowledge and Training.** Other than being licensed teachers, literacy specialists do not require a reading endorsement. Last school year, the district screened applicants and found that only a few individuals were qualified for the position. As a result, district

personnel had to “coach up” individuals who have been hired. Although the specialists must attend monthly training sessions, there was concern about the extent to which their learning was being transferred into practice. And there was concern about the amount of

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training available to compensate for the lack of prior knowledge on such instructional strategies as those needed for students with dyslexia and on the provision of intensive interventions.

- **Prep Buyouts.** In some schools where there were concerns about the continuation of the literacy specialist position, a workaround was being used to give teachers “prep buyouts” to perform the literacy specialist function but not actually hire anyone. These workarounds make it more difficult to identify individuals who meet state criteria on the ability to improve literacy, provide effective literacy instruction, and administration of assessments. The buyouts also make it more difficult to account for effective practice and its relationship to student outcomes or to coordinate training and coaching for school staff.
- **Practices.** The district does not seem to have models for using literacy specialists to best effect. As a result, different approaches are used throughout the district.
- **Interventions.** There was a strong perception that teachers do not have enough understanding of interventions; how to select them based on research; how to target their use to meet students’ identified needs; and the supplemental nature of their use. No protocols existed to support the use of tiered interventions with teachers. Exacerbating these circumstances is that CCSD does not have any district-sponsored intervention programs in place. This approach can provide necessary supports to leverage professional development, coaching, monitoring, and consistency among students moving between district schools. Also, this approach supports more efficient strategic purchasing, and it provides a safety net for all students needing interventions. Instead, CCSD teachers use a variety of interventions that are not always comprehensive, research-based, or effective.
- **Behavior Support.** Overall, focus-group participants indicated their need for schools to improve social/emotional-behavioral supports for students so that PBIS extends to all schools, including wrap-around services for students exhibiting aggressive behavior or having serious social/emotional needs. There also appeared to be a strong need for better coordination with community-based mental health agencies. Also, interviewees expressed a need to embed social/emotional learning curriculum and materials into daily lessons.
 - **Fragmentation of Support.** There were also concerns that personnel with expertise in behavioral supports were housed under the student services department and the equity department. Focus group participants indicated their desire to have a single officer accountable for a well-coordinated and effective team approach that was comprehensive, collaborative, and interactive.
 - **Restorative Practices.** Interviewees also expressed the need for more systemwide restorative practices with professional learning supports. The newly developed educator pipeline for aspiring leaders will include more information about restorative practices.

- **Threat Assessment.** The current case management data base is antiquated and there is need for a comprehensive data base to better support threat-determination decision-making, documentation, and threat assessments. Interviewees indicated that such a data base was necessary to merge threat assessment and mental health transition team data.
- **Interim Assessments.** To address the lack of common interim assessments across the district, the CCSD Board of Trustees approved new assessments for ELA, math, and science, and is

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progressively moving towards consolidating practices by using a balanced assessment system model.

- **Data Dashboard.** There was considerable frustration about the district's lack of a data dashboard that was user-friendly and allowed for entering and tracking specific interventions used or student progress data to better support instructional decision-making. The lack of a central data source can negatively affect students moving between teachers and schools without a recorded history of their instructional interventions and responses to them. Development efforts to produce such a dashboard are occurring, but according to the Focus 2024 strategic plan implementation is dependent on additional funding. Participants also underscored that a dashboard, when developed and implemented, would require training.
- **Professional Learning.** In this school year, new professional learning for MTSS has been developed for principals and is continuing for assistant principals/deans and central office personnel. Materials and documents supplemented by videos are being used to reinforce presented information. Principals are expected to lead training for their staff and use a self evaluation guide with school personnel to reflect on the learning. Making this challenge more difficult will be the differing levels of knowledge across the district and schools among both leaders and school personnel. Information will need to be better differentiated to account for these factors. Although MTSS-related materials may be available on the district's Intranet, it is not widely available on its website, which limits access to the school community and stakeholders
 - **Core Reading Academy.** The district has resumed its core reading academy that was in place but terminated several years ago. The academy takes place over five Saturdays to improve the quality of reading instruction. The academy's curriculum includes teaching/learning for students with disabilities and for English learners.
 - **Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).** Staff are working to develop PLCs focusing on the use of needs assessments and job embedded coaching. Protocols have not yet been developed, however, to support PLC activities to promote alignment with evidence-based practices across the district.
 - **Instructional Rounds.** CCSD's leadership team is beginning to improve the instructional rounds process to develop systems, structures, and protocols, and to support discourse that is aligned with core curricular standards. Also, instructional rounds are now including cross-functional instructional experts, including personnel from student services and English learner divisions to better address teaching and learning issues.

MTSS and Special Education Implications

Nationally, 38.2 percent of all students with IEPs from first through twelfth grades have a primary disability in the area of a specific learning disability (SLD). At 52 percent, Clark County's percentage is 13.8 percentage points higher than the national rate. Both nationally and in CCSD, SLD comprises the largest primary disability area.²⁴ Although MTSS plays a role in the determination of eligibility for varying disabilities, the fidelity of MTSS implementation has the

²⁴ Additional data is provided in Section II. Disability.

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greatest influence on SLD decision-making where a student's response (or lack thereof) to increasing levels of intervention is a necessary prerequisite for eligibility. To determine whether a student is eligible for special education under the category of SLD, documentation must show the student received at least eight weeks of interventions and their performance failed to sufficiently improve in response. However, when interventions and progress monitoring are not used as intended, it is possible that a school team inadvertently will find that the lack of progress was due to a disability requiring special education rather than it being a failure to faithfully implement MTSS.

Dyslexia

It is estimated that 85 percent of students with learning disabilities have dyslexia.²⁵ Dyslexia is defined in the Nevada Administrative Code 388 as--

a neurological learning disability characterized by difficulties with accurate and fluent word recognition and poor spelling and decoding abilities that typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language.

Nevada Administrative Code Provisions

Because of the benefits of early identification, instruction, and intervention, the state's Administrative Code requires each school district to administer an early literacy screening assessment to students enrolled in kindergarten through grade 3 who exhibit dyslexia indicators. The assessment used to make these determinations must include screening in the following areas:

- Phonological and phonemic awareness;
- Sound-symbol recognition;
- Alphabet knowledge;
- Decoding skills;
- Rapid naming skills; and
- Encoding skills.²⁶

If the literacy screening assessment confirms dyslexia indicators, school personnel are required to address the student's needs with scientific, research-based interventions (or MTSS).²⁷ Among students who do not show sufficient growth in reading achievement, the school team would refer the student for a comprehensive special education evaluation.

Each school is required to designate at least one licensed teacher to receive training in effective methods of intervention for students with dyslexia. If the principal has designated a licensed teacher to serve as a learning strategist, the learning strategist must be the person to receive such training. Also, principals must designate at least one teacher educating students in kindergarten-grade 3 to receive training by the school's learning strategist on methods for recognizing indicators of dyslexia, and the science of teaching a student with dyslexia.²⁸ Students with dyslexia should receive an appropriate, specialized dyslexia instructional program that is

²⁵ Decoding Dyslexia TN, retrieved from <https://decodingdyslexiatn.org/about/why-is-this-important/>

²⁶ NRS § 388.439.

²⁷ NRS § 388.441.

²⁸ NRS § 388.445.

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delivered by a professional in consultation with a person(s) that has received training in methods to recognize indicators of dyslexia and the science of teaching a pupil with dyslexia.²⁹

State Dyslexia Resource Guide

In September 2015, the Nevada Department of Education published a Dyslexia Resource Guide. The document was exemplary in describing the needed components of instruction for students with dyslexia, including elements that constitute research-based interventions. Particularly useful information included the following—

- **Effective Tier I core instruction** is the first line of defense. It is critical that classroom teachers build skills in effective, research-based reading instruction that includes the five essential components of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary) and provides differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students.
- **Components of effective dyslexia intervention** include instruction in phonemic awareness, graphophonemic knowledge, language patterns, and strategies for decoding, encoding, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension. In addition, important elements include structure of the English language and linguistic instruction.
- **Tier II/III Interventions.** Without supplemental, intensive, and targeted interventions through Tier II or Tier III, successful responses from some students may be unlikely. Supplemental and intensive reading interventions for students with dyslexia include a multisensory approach³⁰ that involves reading, spelling, and writing. Effective interventions also consider instructional delivery that includes individualization of content and supports; extended time in small group instruction; explicit, direct, and systematic instruction; multisensory inputs; and a focus on meaning-based instruction. These intensive interventions differ from core instruction in that they are targeted on the specific skills and components of instruction that are preventing students from making adequate reading progress. In addition, the instructional delivery provides higher levels of support for students to accelerate their reading growth. However, no one remedial reading method works for all dyslexic students.

The Dyslexia Resource Guide emphasizes the importance of understanding that students

can display characteristics of SLD as defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) but may not be eligible for an IEP because (s)he does not require special education and related services to make meaningful educational progress. However, if Tier I and more intensive supplemental interventions are not implemented as intended, a student's failure to respond and make progress could instead be mischaracterized as a need for special education.

The district's revised Kindergarten-Fifth Grade Literacy Plan does not mention dyslexia and its related requirements for screening, assessment and intervention, including the value of multisensory instruction. Furthermore, while the 2019-20 Read by Grade 3 professional learning

²⁹ AB341 § 13-2.

³⁰ Multisensory instruction incorporates the simultaneous use of two or more sensory pathways (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile) during teacher presentations and student practice.

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sessions for literacy specialists may incorporate information about dyslexia, the learning made no reference to this important area.

RTI Data Outcomes

Since the 2003-04 school year, psychological services staff have been tracking RTI referral and outcome data with various indicators, at numerous grade levels, performance zones and regions. RTI has had the greatest utility at the elementary level, with "usage" percentages in the 90 percent range through the years. Several other data indicators have been monitored and are highlighted below.³¹ *Note that although the district bifurcated RTI and PBIS in the past, the data below includes RTI teams that have been attending to students with academic and/or behavioral needs.*

- **Students Referred to RTI Teams.** In 2018-19, 20,124 students were referred to RTI teams, including 4,094 English learners. This figure was 18.8 percent lower than the prior year, and it was the lowest reported figure since 2013-14. The number of ELL students referred in 2018- 19 represented the lowest number (4,335) and percentage (22 percent) of referrals for this group since the first report of 5,363 (34 percent) in 2011-12.
- **Successful Completions.** This indicator reports the number of student cases dismissed from RTI after their intervention needs were fully addressed. In 2018-19, 3,853 students or 19 percent of all referrals were successful. Although the number of successful RTI cases was lower than the prior school year, the percentage of successful cases has been consistent during the 16 years of reported data. Data were not provided on English learners.
- **Referrals to MDT for Evaluation.** This indicator reports the number of students suspected of having a disability and needing special education who are referred to a school's multi disciplinary team (MDT) for evaluation.
 - **All Students.** In 2018-19, 2,183 (10.8 percent of RTI cases) students were referred. The number of students in this category has been relatively stable over the years, ranging from

1,550 (2008-09) to 2,399 (2017-18). Percentages of RTI students referred have ranged from 34.2 percent (2004-05) to 10.0 percent (2017-18).

- **ELs.** For this group of students, 645 (15 percent) were referred to an MDT in 2018-19. The number of referred students was lower than the seven prior years, which reached a high of 802 in 2014-15. Percentages ranged from 11 percent (2013-14) to 16 percent (2016-17).
- **MDT Referrals Resulting in Special Education Eligibility.** This indicator refers to students involved in RTI who were referred for an evaluation and found eligible for special education. Generally, school districts desire to have a high percentage (80 to 90 percent) of students referred for a special education evaluation to be found eligible. High percentages typically reflect effective screening processes and avoidance of false positive referrals. However, high percentages could also reflect RTI processes that are not effective and result in false positive evaluation outcomes.

³¹ Data indicators pertaining to RTI referrals for special education evaluations and evaluations resulting in special education eligibility are discussed further below under MTSS and Child Find Implications.

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- **All Students.** Since 2003-04, the number of students increased almost continually from 1,256 to 1,844 in 2017-18, but the figure decreased last school year to 1,758. However, the percentage of students eligible for special education has continued to increase from a low of 60.7 percent (2003-04) to 80.5 percent (2018-19).
- **ELLs.** In 2018-19, 491 ELL students were referred by RTI teams and found eligible for special education. This figure is the lowest since the first report of 525 in 2011-12. The percentage of students found eligible has ranged from 72 percent (2011-12) to 81 percent (2013-14) and was 76 percent in 2018-19.

Information reviewed by the Council team did not clarify how psychological services' extensive RTI data analysis has been shared and used by district leadership and school-based administrators. This and other data should be used to assess school and regional practices that are exemplary or need improvement/support.

AREAS OF STRENGTH

CCSD has had a long history with RTI and PBIS frameworks, and stakeholders recognize the need to move toward blending them into a strong and cohesive MTSS structure that includes high quality professional learning. Under the Curriculum/Instruction department, a district level cross-functional team that includes all departments involved in teaching/learning is in place and working to establish common language and support materials. Although the district's RTI Manual has not been updated recently, this excellent document provides a comprehensive foundation to support this effort. Principals have begun to receive professional learning, and additional sessions are planned for assistant principals/deans and central office staff.

There is a strong desire for CCSD to move beyond having "Islands of Excellence" to a

more systemic approach to improvement. The following points illustrate actions to implement Focus 2024's strategy of deploying districtwide MTSS to promote students' success in both academics and behavior.

- **RTI Outcome Data.** Since the 2003-04 school year, psychological services staff have been tracking RTI referral and outcome data using various indicators, English learner status, grade levels, and performance zones/regions. Numbers/percentages are provided on indicators that include students referred to RTI teams; successful completions; referrals for special education evaluations; and evaluations resulting in special education eligibility.
- **PBIS.** This initiative has been supported by the student services' psychology division, which has a long history of working collaboratively with other departments to support MTSS practices at the individual student and systems levels. Data show that schools participating in the district's PBIS initiative have decreased suspensions/expulsions and other removals of students from class. A new coaching model is being developed to support sustainable practices and to increase the district's school support capacity. Assessments show that student outcomes improve as schools implement expected intervention practices with fidelity. The newly developed educator pipeline for aspiring leaders will include information about restorative justice practices, which is an evidence-based Tier I practice.
- **2016 Master Plan for ELL Success.** The 2016 ELL Master Plan is a thoughtful document, and it was carefully constructed and standards based, with a high level of expertise from a 75-

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member leadership team, as well as a broad and diverse group of stakeholders. Although specifically addressing the needs of English learners, the Master Plan was intended to provide first teaching strategies that are relevant for all students. The district's extensive ALCA-M professional learning program provides 24 two-hour sessions, which include an hour for debriefing and follow-up. Using a trainer of trainer model, principal leadership is essential and supported by an array of materials and resources. This training is supplemented by WestEd's Quality Teaching for ELL (QTEL) program and nine CCSD apprentices. The Master Plan continues to provide a firm foundation of practices that can be leveraged into future guidance and planning documents.

- **Interim Assessments.** The CCSD Board of Trustees has approved various common interim assessments for ELA, math, and science.
- **Professional Learning.** New MTSS professional learning has been developed for principals, and it is continuing for assistant principals/deans and central office personnel. Scripted materials and documents supplemented by videos are available to support presentations. Principals are expected to lead training for their staff and use a self-evaluation guide for school personnel to reflect on their learning. The district's core reading academy has resumed and offers extensive training to teachers to improve reading instruction for all students, including those with disabilities and English learners. Staff members are working to develop PLCs focusing on the use of needs assessments and job embedded coaching.
- **Instructional Rounds.** CCSD's leadership team has initiated steps to improve instructional rounds and embedded discussions. The use of cross-functional instructional experts has improved the value of this activity.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

CCSD has not developed and implemented a comprehensive framework for MTSS. Although various elements exist from prior RTI and PBIS practices, first teaching of core curriculum aligned with state standards and evidence-based practices does not exist in every school and class across the district. The district's 2012 web-based curriculum that included standards and targets has not been updated or supported through training. There is a perception that principals/teachers are working "really hard" but that this effort has not produced significantly improved academic outcomes. The lack of guiding curricular documents or a scope/sequence to support instruction has resulted in instructional inconsistencies, affecting student achievement systemwide. The district's MTSS-related activities, including the provision of intensive interventions, appear to be mostly one of form over practice. This circumstance has enormous implications not only for all students but for vulnerable groups of students that include those with disabilities, English learners, and African American students.

The following areas constitute additional opportunities for CCSD to improve MTSS implementation and reliability of special education referrals.

Early Reading

CCSD needs to step up its activities to ensure all students will be able to read proficiently by the end of third grade, which according to NDE is the key predictor of school success and high

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school graduation. Although this initiative has state requirements that are based on sound literacy principles, the district is falling short in various ways.

- **Literary Specialists.** Because of the small applicant pool of individuals with the skills necessary to be literacy specialists, district staff have made efforts to "coach up" teachers hired for this position. The value of a school's literacy specialist is directly related to that individual's knowledge about reading instruction and interventions, especially in elementary schools with teachers who are not practicing high quality Tier I instruction. Although a literacy specialist does not require a reading licensure or other endorsement in Nevada, most states follow the criteria for reading specialists set forth by the International Reading Association (IRA) Standards. Under this framework reading specialists must have 21+ semester hours in reading, language arts, and related courses, and a supervised practicum experience working with students who struggle in reading, along with collaborative experiences with teachers.³²
 - **CCSD Literacy Specialist Training Program.** The district's 2019-20 professional learning for literacy specialists comprised 16 sessions. Although abbreviated, none of the sessions described contents specifically related to English learners, students with IEPs, or dyslexia. Only one session--to be held in March--related to the provision of intensive instruction. This training model for literacy specialists was not calculated to provide all participants with the information and skills they needed to carry out their responsibilities with a high degree of proficiency and to compensate for any lack of prior knowledge and experience.
 - **Models for Literacy Specialist Usage.** The district does not have a document to guide

effective ways for principals to manage and use literacy specialists based on models in exemplary schools.

- **Support for English Learners and Students with IEPs.** Nothing articulated the role of literacy specialists with respect to special educators and students with IEPs or English learners. This relationship appears to be a function of principal leadership, his/her literacy specialist, and teachers within the school.
- **Use of Speech Language Pathologists.** The use of SPLs to provide teachers with effective strategies for supporting core reading is not systemic and is based on individual SPL and host schools.
- **Interventions.** The district does not have any districtwide-sponsored interventions that would ensure all students have access to the research-based instruction necessary to meet their needs. Such models could support training across schools, and they could leverage strategic purchasing to reduce costs. Instead, schools individually purchase intervention programs that are not consistent across CCSD. Also, the district does not have protocols to support tiered intervention practices or a universal data base to document interventions and progress monitoring. These deficiencies negatively affect the achievement of students moving from school to school.
- **CCSD Literacy Plan.** The district's Kindergarten-Fifth Grade Literacy Plan does not make any reference to Nevada's requirements for dyslexia screening, assessment, and intervention activities; students with disabilities or English learners; or the provision of increasingly

³² Retrieved from <https://www.teaching-certification.com/reading-specialist-certification.html>.

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intensive research-based interventions.

- **CCSD Letter to Parent.** The letter to parents of students in grades three through five who are reading below grade level provides vague information about students' needs and the interventions that will be provided to meet those needs. Also, the information does not address whether the student has an IEP and how the provision of reading interventions relates to this instruction. In addition, it does not describe for English learners how a student's language acquisition and reading instruction will interact.
- **Funding.** Schools have varying amounts of funding to purchase core or intervention reading (as well as other content) materials. Absent supplementary state or federal funding, very little funding is available for this purpose. (The issue of funding available to schools applies to other areas as well; yet the issue is included under early reading because of the critical nature of this activity.)

English Learners

School instructional support for English language development is not consistent across schools and, as with other areas discussed above, depends on principal leadership. When such support is present, school personnel appeared to understand the relationship between the 2016-17 ELL Master Plan for Success's training and overall student achievement. The Master Plan was

designed to have three cohorts of schools, each receiving three years of support and training. At the beginning of the 2019-20 school year, the superintendent and cabinet decided to terminate the Master Plan cohort training, leaving 250 schools incompletely trained.

The decision to end this requirement was based on feedback from individuals who were concerned about the extensiveness of mandatory training across the district and the perception that such training and other related activities were more compliance oriented than helpful in improving instruction. It does not appear that the district took steps to review the Master Plan with multi functional stakeholders to obtain their feedback or to get recommendations about training, implementation, and communications issues. For example, focus group participants shared several school-based anecdotes about positive student outcomes from Master Plan training, and questioned the end of these process.

The move to end requirements sent the message to some that the Plan no longer had instructional relevance. The step removed important accountability tools meant to ensure that some unmotivated principals would take the steps necessary for ELs to receive the language development they need to be successful. Exacerbating these circumstances was the perception that personnel do not have a clear understanding of federal requirements on language acquisition instruction. As will be discussed in Section III, English learners (closely followed by students with IEPs) had the lowest average scores of all student groups in ELA at the 6-8 and 11 grade levels. A similar pattern was found in math and science.

Social/Emotional Supports

There was a huge need for schools to improve social/emotional-behavioral supports for students, especially with wrap around services for students exhibiting aggressive behavior or having serious social/emotional needs. There was also a need for increased usage of restorative practices (with systematic training support), and a user-friendly threat-assessment case

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management system. Staff working on student behavioral issues outside of the student services department are housed under the “Equity” unit rather than under curriculum/instruction. A preference was expressed to have all personnel supporting students’ social/emotional needs and behavior to work under one common officer to maximize coordination and collaboration.

Professional Learning

The use of principals to lead training for staff (with district resources) is complicated by varying knowledge/experience levels of school leaders, and the associated need to differentiate training. Protocols have not been developed to support PLC activities or instructional rounds, which would promote alignment with expected practices.

Accountability

In addition to the district’s incorporation of MTSS in the Focus 2024 plan as a strategy for improving student achievement, various aspects of accountability were raised during the team’s review.

- **Fidelity Assessments.** The Nevada MTSS framework identified three assessments that districts could use to ensure interventions and practices were implemented with fidelity. Although the framework indicated that many Nevada districts utilize such assessments for school-based MTSS teams to guide professional development, resource allocation, and continual improvement, it does not appear that the district is using any of these or other comprehensive assessments with any fidelity.
- **Data Dashboard.** CCSD does not have a user-friendly data dashboard for tracking specific student interventions and student progress over time. Such a dashboard is necessary to develop a history of students involved in MTSS, especially as they move between schools. A dashboard is also useful in tracking performance across schools/regions, and it can be used to determine the extent to which schools are using expected strategies. According to Focus 2024, the implementation of a data dashboard and related training was contingent on future funding.
- **Outcome Data.** 2018-19 data collected by psychological services staff show a decrease in the referral of students and English learners to RTI teams compared to the prior year. Of the 20,124 students referred in 2018-19, 19 percent were dismissed from RTI because their intervention needs were thought to be fully addressed. The vast majority (16,271) of these students, however, were not yet successful. Of this group, 13.4 percent were referred for an evaluation and 80.5 percent of referred students were found to be special education eligible, as were 76 percent of ELL-evaluated students. High eligibility percentages could mean effective screening processes, but they could also suggest RTI processes that are not effective, resulting in false positive outcomes. It is not clear how the extensive data produced by psychological services has been shared and whether it is being used by district, regional, and school teams to answer questions such as those raised by the Council team.

MTSS and Special Education Implications

The faithful implementation of MTSS has enormous implications for school-based multidisciplinary teams in determining whether a student has a disability and needs special education. For instance, to be eligible for special education under the category of SLD, which

constitutes more than half of all CCSD students with disabilities, documentation should show that a student received at least eight weeks of intensive interventions that did not produce satisfactory reading improvement. It is estimated that 85 percent of students with SLD have dyslexia. Using the MTSS framework, Nevada has established legal requirements for dyslexia screening and assessment of students from kindergarten through grade 3, and for the provision of instructional interventions for students with dyslexic characteristics. These requirements, as well as specified dyslexia training for literacy specialists and others, are closely aligned with the state's Read by Grade 3 initiative. The state's Dyslexia Resource Guide provides research-based descriptions of effective Tier I core instruction, as well as intensive interventions that are specific and include a multisensory reading approach. Neither the district's Kindergarten-Fifth Grade Literacy Plan nor the 2019-20 Read by Grade 3 professional learning sessions for literacy specialists mention dyslexia or refer to any of the state's guidance in this area. For a student with dyslexia characteristics reading below grade level, only when taught with high quality reading instruction

and supplemental research-based interventions aligned with student needs – implemented with fidelity – is it possible to accurately determine whether a student’s limited response to instruction is determinative of a disability/need for special education or is the result of the failure of adults to carry out their responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to improve CCSD’s implementation of first teaching and its system of tiered interventions for all students.

□ *Expedite development/implementation of CCSD’s multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS).*

a. MTSS Vision. To inform the school community about the importance of and the district’s commitment to implementing MTSS for all students, work with the CCSD Board of Trustees to establish a cohesive MTSS vision and statement about the significance of this work. Emphasize MTSS as a foundation for high-quality Tier I instruction that is linguistically appropriate/culturally competent, and that when implemented as expected would result in less reliance by teachers on interventions and special education to meet student needs.

b. Central, Regional, and School Leadership Teams. Use the cross-functional MTSS leadership team in place at the district level to articulate expectations and guidance for similar teams to be in place at regional and school levels. These teams could collaborate with other such teams to carry out the work.

- **Regional MTSS Leadership Teams.** Have each regional superintendent establish an MTSS leadership team with principals/school-based personnel who would be responsible for implementation. Have these teams review data and provide feedback from instructional rounds as well as other differentiated professional learning, technical assistance, and support provided for school and personnel.
- **School-Based Leadership Teams.** Establish school-based leadership teams to guide each school’s MTSS work to ensure a common understanding of the framework. Define team responsibilities, including coordination of professional development, technical assistance, implementation/support, data review/problem-solving, facilitating assessments, etc. Obtain feedback from exemplary schools on how teams are developing guidance.

c. Implementation Plan. With the districtwide MTSS leadership team, develop a multi-year action plan that includes written expectations, professional learning, data analytics, and accountability. Consider the development and implementation of a core curriculum or scope and sequence for the district.³³ Identify an aggressive time frame of three to four years for implementing short and long-term objectives. Engage relevant union representatives during framework development to address concerns and maximize buy-in. Disseminate the draft framework to stakeholders, including parents of students with diverse learning needs, to obtain their feedback prior to the framework’s finalization. Use the following resources to guide development of the implementation plan: Nevada’s MTSS framework, Focus 2024, Read by Grade 3, Nevada’s Dyslexia Resource Guide, CCSD’s RTI Operational Manual, and other exemplary resources. ³⁴ Adapt as necessary school-based planning protocols for local

implementation based on the MTSS framework and plan.

Plan implementation activities, including the following –

- **MTSS Framework.** Establish a well-defined MTSS framework based on state guidance and supplemental literature.
- **MTSS Support Personnel.** House under curriculum/instruction and assessment all personnel with responsibility for implementing/ supporting MTSS activities, including those currently in the Equity division,
- **Literacy Specialist Usage.** Develop models for the effective use of literacy specialists;
 - **Universal Design for Learning (UDL).** Develop with instructional technology personnel the use of UDL principles in core instruction at all grade levels and for all students.
- **SLPs.** Use skilled speech language pathologists to support teachers with reading instruction/intervention strategies.
- **Parent Information.** Revise CCSD’s letter to parents for students in grades three through five who are reading below grade level to provide more specific information on student needs and the instruction/interventions they will receive. Also, determine how the information to parents will correspond with IEPs and instruction to English learners.
- **PreK Screening/Instruction for ELs.** With assistance from the Council’s expert team on English learners and information from such Council member districts as New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles, include prekindergarten students in CCSD’s identification and instructional supports for English learners. Establish screening/assessment protocols and English language development strategies appropriate for young children. As part of this process, include information/protocols for identifying young English learners needing special education.
 - **Master Plan for ELL Success.** Review the Master Plan and designate steps to ensure

³³ See “Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum.” Washington, D.C.: Council of the Great City Schools, July 2017.

³⁴ For example, see the Florida’s Multi-Tiered System of Supports, retrieved from <http://www.florida.rti.org/floridamtss/index.htm>.

training includes components necessary for effective English language development for English learners and all other students.

- **Social/Emotional Learning.** Develop/expand social/emotional learning (SEL) curriculum with related professional learning and models for embedding SEL in core curriculum areas.
- **Threat Assessment.** Purchase (as funding is available) a data platform to house protocols for threat assessments, including consistent determinations across schools, documenting decisions, considering/documenting interventions, and analyzing patterns across schools.

- **Community-based Mental Health Agency Coordination.** Discuss with Clark County community-based agencies strategies for expanding wrap-around services for students exhibiting aggressive behavior or having serious social/emotional needs. Where space is available, expand the use of CCSD facilities as school-based health centers and enable neighboring schools to access services.
- **Funding.** Determine how schools with low funding bases will be able to purchase/implement evidence-based core and intervention materials that are not district subsidized.

Also, include mapping and analysis of district resources referenced below.

d. Map and Analyze/Address District Resources. As part of the MTSS planning process, assess instructional materials purchased by individual schools to ascertain their effectiveness and return-on-investment in terms of improved student outcomes. Consider resources made specifically available for students receiving special education and/or who are English learners. Compare the value of resources and materials currently in use with other evidence-based resources in the marketplace and replace low-value resources with high value ones. Establish a menu of increasingly intensive interventions and resources, which should be vetted against current evidence on effectiveness and alignment. Identify evidence-based reading interventions that include multi-sensory (e.g., Orton-Gillingham) instructional approaches. There are numerous programs widely available throughout the country that have received strong support from CGCS member districts. Generally, identify interventions (academic and behavior) with strong evidence for district sponsorship and support.

Ensure that the menu of interventions differentiates levels of intensity, criteria for use based on student needs, and contains strategies that are linguistically/culturally appropriate for a diverse student population. If necessary, phase in new interventions over a reasonable number of years but make sure that the outcome will provide all CCSD students with the interventions they require at each school.

e. Web-based MTSS Expectations/Guidance. Develop web-based guidance to support the district's MTSS framework that is specific enough to engender universal understanding, expectations, and effective practices that address academics and behavioral, social/emotional needs.³⁵ Ensure that all CCSD documents on MTSS (e.g., Literacy Plan, Focus:2024, etc.)

³⁵ Use as sources Nevada's MTSS framework, Focus:2024, Read by Grade 3, Nevada's Dyslexia Resource Guide, CCSD's RTI Operational Manual, and other exemplary resources.

align with and reference the web-based guidance as an anchor for universal language. Have streamlined text references/links to detailed content and materials designed to help implement the district's MTSS implementation plan, e.g., guidance for UDL. Have a broad group of stakeholders review the draft guidance to ensure that it is user-friendly and that it minimizes unintended consequences.

As part of the guidance, provide user-friendly texts and links to additional information, resources, forms, etc. Have the guidance include the following –

- **Core Teaching.** Beginning with reading for pre-kindergarten through grade 3 (and expanding to other grades and subjects), delineate curricular standards, scope/sequence guidance, protocols, etc.
- **Increasingly Intensive Interventions.** Use source material referenced in this report as well as other sources to articulate the differences between core instruction and evidence-based interventions, including protocols to guide implementation.³⁶
- **Literacy Specialists**
 - **Expert Support.** Until all literacy specialists have knowledge/skills comparable to International Reading Association (IRA) standards, provide the group with a support network of individuals with knowledge/skills to coach, provide technical assistance, model, and help problem-solve.
 - **Specialist Pool.** Establish a professional learning summer boot camp for prospective literacy specialists who do not yet meet IRA standards to enter an expert applicant literacy specialist pool.
 - **Roles/Responsibilities.** Expect that literacy specialists will support special educators and teachers of English learners. Describe the role of literacy specialists when teaching positions are filled with long-term substitute teachers who lack knowledge/experience in the teaching of reading.
- **Problem-Solving and Progress Monitoring.** Clarify expectations to review student data and identify appropriate interventions and document interventions and progress monitoring.
- **Regional/School-based MTSS Teams.** Describe roles and responsibilities for these teams on data review, technical assistance, and oversight responsibilities.
- **Instructional Rounds.** Describe expectations and protocols, including observations of classrooms that include or solely enroll students with IEPs (taking regular or alternate assessments) and/or English learners.
- **Professional Learning Committees.** Describe expectations for using PLCs to promote MTSS practices, and link protocols for PLC use.

³⁶ See, for example, the National Center for Intensive Intervention, retrieved from https://intensiveintervention.org/sites/default/files/User_Guide_Sample_Reading_Lessons-508v2.pdf; and The Florida Center for Reading Research's Just Read, Florida!, retrieved from <http://fldoe.org/academics/standards/just-read-fl/reading-intervention.stml>.

- **Consideration of Special Education Evaluation Need.** Provide explicit guidance and protocols for reviewing the quality of Tier I instruction and supplementary Tier II/III interventions to validate they were of high quality and were aligned with expected

practices for determining if a student should be referred for a special education evaluation. Also –

- ***Absence of Expected Instruction/Intervention.*** Provide guidance on corrective and compensatory action principals should take if a targeted student does not receive needed instruction/intervention when being considered for an evaluation.
- ***Referral to Evaluation Timeline.*** Establish time frames from a referral decision to parental consent for evaluation.

f. Differentiated Professional Learning. Based on the district’s MTSS framework, implementation plan, and written guidance, put into place a professional development program to support it. Target critical audiences, e.g., general/special educators, related-services personnel, paraprofessionals, and parents. Provide at least four to five days of training for school-based MTSS leadership teams during the phase-in. Base training on the Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning. Consider how training will be funded, e.g., through stipends, funds for substitute coverage, incentives for after-school and Saturday training, or summer training.

In addition, address –

- ***Potential Literacy Specialist Boot Camp.*** Content based on IRA standards for a summer boot camp for potential literacy specialists who do not yet have enough knowledge/expertise.
- ***Interim Assessments.*** Curriculum for all personnel involved with the implementation of interim assessments.
- ***Operational Considerations***
 - ***Access to Differentiated and Sustained Learning.*** Ensure that professional learning is engaging and differentiated based on each person’s individual skills, experience, and need. Have professional learning and technical assistance continue with new personnel and those needing additional support.
 - ***Multiple Formats.*** Use multiple formats (e.g., videos, webinars, and narrative text) and presentation approaches (e.g., school-based, small groups).
 - ***Coaching/Modeling.*** Develop a plan to provide coaching, modeling, and technical assistance to principals and school-based leadership teams on practices covered in the training sessions.
 - ***Cross-Functional Teams.*** Cross-train individuals in all departments working with schools to ensure a common language and understanding of MTSS. This will help align and support schools as they work on implementation. Provide direct support, mentoring, coaching, and technical assistance to principals and teachers on implementation.
 - ***High-Quality Trainers.*** Identify staff members who are knowledgeable about and experienced in the components of MTSS and deploy them as professional developers. As necessary, supplement these staff members with experts from outside the school

district.

g. Data Analysis and Reports. Review current data collection, analyses, and reports, and supplement them with indicators/metrics that are useful in tracking and supporting MTSS use and student achievement, e.g., growth based on appropriate instruction and intensive interventions.

- **Data Dashboard.** To the extent feasible, expedite development of a data dashboard, which would include data about student interventions and student responses to them.
- **Psychological Services RTI Longitudinal Data.** Consider the data that has been collected by psychological services, other indicators that would be beneficial, a platform for collecting the data, and avenues for assessments and follow-up.

h. Monitoring and Accountability. Evaluate the implementation, effectiveness, and results of MTSS, and include the following in the assessments—

- **Baseline Data and Fidelity Assessments.** Identify one or more assessments to gauge MTSS implementation in schools. Allow schools to self-assess their own practices as well. Have network and districtwide leadership teams periodically review implementation of assessments for reliability. Establish a process for incorporating assessment results into school planning and monitoring processes.
 - **Data Checks.** Use data and charts such as those provided in this report, and have the superintendent, educational and student services leaders, and others host regular data conversations with departments, regional directors, principals, and PLCs to discuss results, anomalies, needed supports, follow-up activities, and outcomes.
 - **Timely Communication and Feedback.** Assign responsibility for communicating the MTSS work to stakeholders. Design feedback loops involving central office, regional and school personnel, parents, and the community to assess problems and successes on the ground. Use this feedback to determine where and how schools might require additional assistance. Consider submitting a bi-annual report to the board on MTSS.
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II. Disability Demographics

This section presents demographic data on CCSD students with individualized education programs (IEPs).³⁷ When available, we compare district students with those in the state and at national levels and with other urban school districts across the country. In addition, data are analyzed by grade, race/ethnicity, and English learner (ELL) status. Finally, information on Section 504 is included.

Disability Prevalence Rates

In this subsection, we compare the percentage of CCSD students receiving special education services to the state, other urban school districts across the country, and to the nation. Also, incidence rates are disaggregated for children ages three through five years, and school-age students by disability area, grade, race/ethnicity, and English learner status.³⁸ This information helps to determine the extent to which school practices produce outcomes that are similar to or different from the state and nation. Although rates that are different from state, national, or urban averages are not inherently problematic, they provide a basis for asking questions and considering follow-up action.

Overall, CCSD enrolls 319,917 students in grades PK through 12. Of this number, 40,020 students (12.5 percent) have IEPs. The district's percentage is lower than the nation's 13.7 percent, is the same as the state's rate, and is similar to urban rates.

Rates by Disability Areas for District, State and Nation

Data in exhibit 2a show the percentage of students in the district, state, and nation by the six most common disability areas, which comprise about 95 percent of all students with IEPs. These disability areas are specific learning disability (SLD), speech/language impairment (S/L), other health impairments (OHI), autism, emotional disturbance (ED), and intellectual disability (ID). Similarities and differences are described below.

CCSD's disability rates are similar to the state's in the areas of SLD (52 percent and 50 percent, respectively), S/L (13 percent and 15 percent, respectively), OHI (10 percent and 11 percent, respectively), ED (both at 4 percent), and ID (5 percent and 4 percent, respectively). District rates are higher than both state and national rates in the area of autism, higher than the national rate for SLD, and lower than the national rate for S/L. Data for ED and ID show comparable rates for the district, state, and nation. (See exhibit 2b.)

- **SLD.** The district's 52 percent rate is 14 percentage points higher than the nation's rate. Some focus group participants attributed the CCSD's higher SLD rate to Nevada's criteria for the developmental disability (DD) category, which ends when a child is six years of age, compared

37 Students with IEPs are also referred to as students with disabilities. These data are limited to students with a disability under IDEA and does not include students with Section 504 plans. Also, the data does not include students who are gifted in the category of disability.

38 Unless otherwise stated, all CCSD data were provided by the district to the Council team and are for the 2017-18 school year. The district's data includes students in charter schools for which CCSD is the local educational agency.

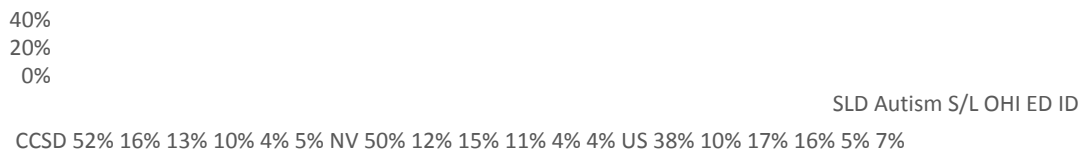
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to many other states that allow eligibility to continue through the age of nine years.

- **Autism.** The district's 16 percent rate is 6 percentage points higher than the nation's rate and 4 points higher than the state's rate.
- **S/L.** The district's 13 percent rate is 4 percentage points lower than the nation's rate.

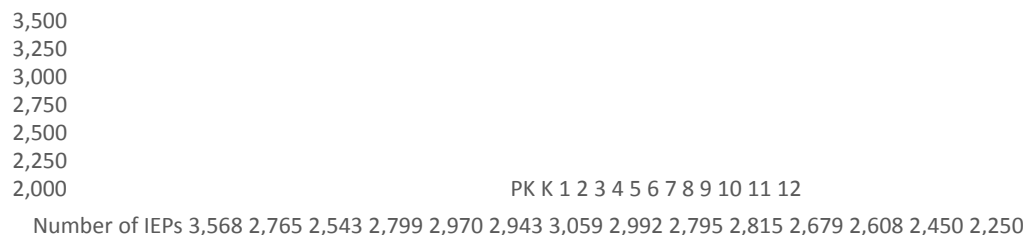
Exhibit 2a. Percentage of Students with IEPs by District, State, and Nation³⁹



Number of Students with IEPs by Grade

Exhibit 2b shows the number of CCSD students with IEPs by grade. Generally, the number of students with IEPs at PK (3,568) is larger than at any other grade. The number of students with autism (714) is more than double the number at grades 11 and 12 (292 and 293, respectively). This increase is likely due to an enhanced process CCSD put into place to find and identify young children needing special education. Most of these students have a developmental disability (69 percent) but a relatively high percentage have autism (21 percent).

Exhibit 2b. Number of Students with IEPs By Grade



As exhibit 2c shows, there are 714 PK students with autism. In other grades, the number ranges from 581 (grade 1) to 293 (grade 12), and 485 students in kindergarten. The total number of PK students and the number of those with autism have significant implications for the district as these children pass from grade to grade.

Exhibit 2c. Number of Students with Autism by Grade



³⁹ National and state data are based on the U.S. Department of Education’s IDEA Part B Child Count and Educational Environment database, (2017-18), retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/static-tables/index.html>. Unless otherwise stated, CCSD data is for 2017-18 and provided by the district.

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Change in Disability Categories by Grade and Grade Levels

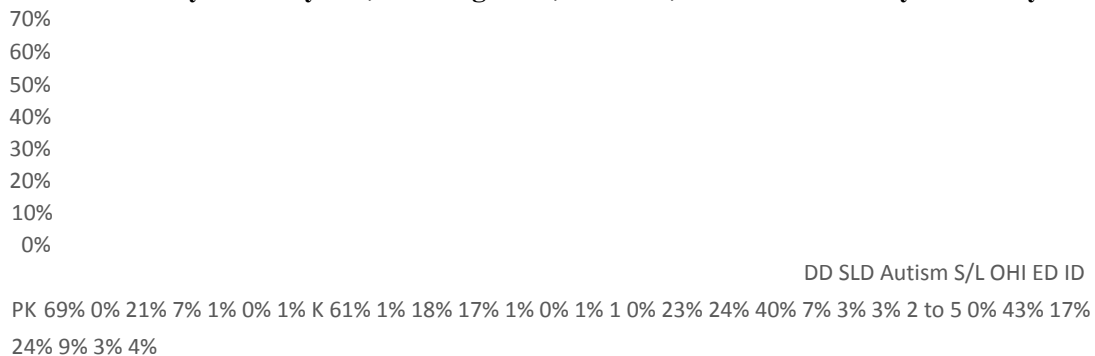
The Council team also examined the percentage of all students receiving special education by the six most common disability areas by grade level. These patterns change significantly for students in the early grades most notably due to the eligibility criteria for developmental disability that ends for children turning six years of age and the emergence of SLD at first grade. The exhibits below show data for young children (PK, K, grade 1) and grades 2-5, and for students at the three grade bands of elementary, middle and secondary. Another exhibit also shows enrollment changes among students with autism from PK through grade 12.

Disability Composition for PK, Kindergarten, Grade, 1 and Grades 2-5

Exhibit 2d shows the composition of students by disability area in grades PK, 1, and 2-5.⁴⁰

- **DD, SLD and S/L.** As high rates for DD at PK (69 percent) and K (61 percent) disappear at first grade (0 percent), rates for SLD and S/L increase at grade 1 (23 percent and 40 percent, respectively). At second through fifth grades, the SLD rate almost doubles to 43 percent while the S/L rate begins to fall to 24 percent.
- **OHI, ED and ID.** All three areas have very low PK and K rates, ranging between 0 and 1 percent. OHI’s rate increased to 7 percent (grade 1) and again to 9 percent (grades 2-5). ED’s rate increased to 3 percent (grades 1 and 2-5), and ID increased from 3 percent to 4 percent.

Exhibit 2d. Disability Rates by PK, Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grades 2-5 by Disability



Disability Composition by Grade Level

Exhibit 2e shows by grade level the percentage of students in common disability categories.⁴¹ These figures show that the areas of OHI and ID are relatively stable, and ED increased by a few percentage points over the grade levels. Consistent with national data, rates for S/L decreased from a high of 90 percent at the elementary level to 0.5 percent at the high school level. The areas of SLD and autism merit more attention.

⁴⁰ Each grade/grade level has disability rates that total 100 percent.

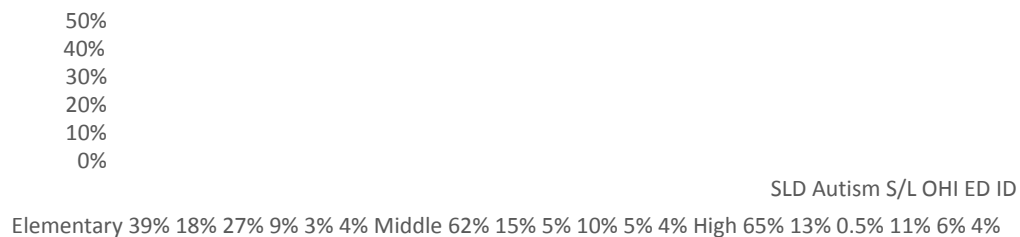
⁴¹ For this exhibit, the elementary level comprises grades 1 through 5, middle comprises grades 6 through 8, and high comprises grades 9 through 12. Each grade/grade level has disability rates that total 100 percent.

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- **SLD.** The average elementary level rate of 39 percent is affected by the barely present 1 percent kindergarten rate and low 23 percent first grade rate. (See exhibit 2d.) The rate jumps to 62 percent at the middle school level and 65 percent at the high school level.
- **Autism.** The average 18 percent elementary rate, which is also affected by the higher first grade 24 percent rate, falls at middle school to 15 percent, and again at high school to 13 percent.

Exhibit 2e. Composition of Grade Level by Disability



Composition of Disability by Grade Level

The pattern of disability is different when looking at the data by grade level.⁴² As exhibit 2f shows, in the area of S/L, about 90 percent of students are at the elementary level. Rates for SLD and ED, however, are consistent across grade levels.

- **SLD.** Rates range from 35 percent at the elementary level to 31 percent at the high school level.
- **ED.** The elementary (35 percent), middle (29 percent), and high school (36 percent) rates are proportional.

Figures for disability categories by grade level show higher percentages for autism, OHI, and ID at the elementary level. These rates decrease significantly from middle to high school.

- **Autism.** Elementary, middle, and high school rates are 54 percent, 26 percent and 20 percent, respectively.
- **OHI and ID.** The OHI and ID rates are similar at each of the three grade levels: elementary (41 percent and 42 percent, respectively), middle (30 percent each), and high school (29 percent and 28 percent, respectively).

Exhibit 2f. Percentage of Students by Grade Level and Disability

60%
40%
20%
0%

SLD Autism S/L OHI ED ID

Elementary 35% 54% 90% 41% 35% 42% Middle 33% 26% 9% 30% 29% 30% High School 31% 20% 1% 29%
36% 28%

⁴² Each disability has rates that total 100 percent for each grade level.

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Disability Incidence by Race/Ethnicity

This subsection covers the extent to which CCSD students from each of the most common racial/ethnic groups are proportionately identified as having a disability. The U.S. Department of Education includes two indicators that are required in state performance plans (SPPs) to assess this issue. Indicators 9 and 10 concern disproportionate representation for all students with IEPs and the six most common disability areas, respectively.

IDEA also requires states to identify school districts having significant disproportionality by race/ethnicity (for all students and by the six disability areas). According to federal regulation, states must now use a non-weighted risk ratio measure with separate minimum race/ethnic student sizes for each disability and the general education comparison group. NDE has not published its measurement parameters on significant disproportionality.

CCSD's latest FY2017 State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report was published on January 20, 2020. For indicators 9 and 10, which concern disproportionate representation, NDE uses a weighted risk ratio of 3.0 or greater for three consecutive years for any racial/ethnic group in which there are at least 25 students receiving special education.⁴³ The department found that no Nevada school district met this criteria for students with disabilities or met the criteria on one of the six most common disability groups.⁴⁴

Over the last 16 years, CCSD has used a risk ratio threshold of 2.0 or more to identify significant disproportionality.⁴⁵ Using CCSD data (2018-19), the Council team incorporated both percentages and risk ratios to compare the prevalence of students with disabilities by race/ethnicity and by English language status.⁴⁶ Risk ratios over 1.50 were identified.

On July 31, 2019, Daniel J. Reschly from Vanderbilt University, submitted a comprehensive report to the student services assistant superintendent and psychological services director on CCSD's special education data over the last 16 school years (2003-04 through 2018-19). The report's findings were consistent with the Council team's review. Dr. Reschly's findings are included here where they promote further understanding of this important area.

All Students Receiving Special Education by Race/Ethnicity

Overall, among all students receiving special education, no student groups met NDE’s criteria for disproportionality. As exhibit 2g shows, rates for African American students (16 percent), Asian (6 percent), and Hawaiian (9 percent) students were most disparate.

⁴³ The IDEA regulation does not require states to use the significant disproportionality measurement for state performance plans’ disproportionate representation analysis. While Nevada does not use a common approach for both disproportionality measurements, other states have chosen to do so.

⁴⁴ Retrieved at <https://osep.grads360.org/#report/apr/2016B/Indicator10/CurrentData?state=CA&ispublic=true>

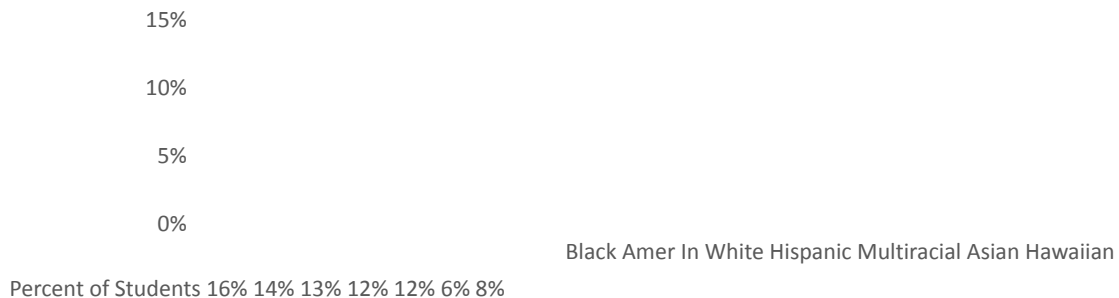
⁴⁵ July 31, 2019 report by Daniel J. Reschly, Vanderbilt University, Analysis of Clark County School District (CCSD) Special Education Representation: 2003/2004 through 2018/2019.

⁴⁶ Abbreviated racial/ethnic group references: black (black/African American); Amer Ind (American Indian/Alaskan); white (white/Caucasian); Hispanic (Hispanic/Latino); and Hawaiian (Hawaiian/Pacific Islander).

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Exhibit 2g. Percentage of Students with Disabilities by Race/Ethnicity



Using the risk ratio methodology under the IDEA regulations, where one racial/ethnic group is compared to all other racial/ethnic groups, exhibit 2h shows that no single racial/ethnic group of students was significantly disproportionate relative to others. Although Black students were most likely to have an IEP, their 1.38 risk ratio was far below the threshold level of 2.

Exhibit 2h. Race/Ethnicity Risk Ratios by Disability Area



Most Common Disability Areas by

Race/Ethnicity

Several disability categories show disparities between racial/ethnic groups. Exhibit 2i shows differences by percentage rates and exhibit 2j shows risk ratios that exceed 1.50. The following summarizes areas with the greatest disproportionality according to these criteria–

- **Autism.** White and multiracial students each comprise 2.5 percent of the autism category. This figure is 1.3 percentage points above the lowest 1.2 percent rate for Hawaiian students. Risk ratios for white and multiracial students are 1.72 and 1.56, respectively.
- **ED.** Black students comprise 1.0 percent of the emotional disturbance category, compared to the lowest rate of 0.1 percent for Asian students. Black students are 3.44 more likely than other students to be identified as ED.
- **SLD.** Black students comprise 8.0 percent and American Indian students comprise 7.1 percent of the specific learning disabilities category, compared to the lowest rate of 1.3 percent for Asian students. The risk ratio for Black students is 2.02 and for American Indian students is 1.6.
- **ID.** Black students comprise 0.8 percent of the intellectual disability category, compared to the lowest 0.3 percent for Asian students. The risk ratio for Black students is 2.13.
- **S/L.** White students comprise 2.2 percent of the speech/language impairment category,

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compared to the lowest rate of 0.8 percent for Asian students. White students’ risk ratio is

2.05.

Exhibit 2i. Percentage of Students by Disability and Race/Ethnicity

	Autism	ED	OHI	SLD	ID	S/L
Black	1.8%	1.0%	1.6%	8.0%	0.8%	1.3%
Amer In	1.7%	0.3%	1.1%	7.1%	0.4%	1.7%
White	2.5%	0.5%	1.5%	4.1%	0.4%	2.2%
Hispanic	1.7%	0.2%	0.7%	5.8%	0.5%	1.3%
Multiracial	2.5%	0.6%	1.3%	4.0%	0.4%	1.8%
Hawaiian	1.2%	0.2%	0.7%	3.7%	0.3%	1.0%
Asian	2.1%	0.1%	0.2%	1.3%	0.3%	0.8%

Exhibit 2j. Highest Race/Ethnicity Risk Ratios by Disability Area

3.5
3
2.5
2
1.5
1
0.5
0

Autism ED SLD ID S/L

Black 3.44 2.02 2.13

Amer In 1.6

White 1.72 2.05 Multiracial 1.56

The Reschly report indicated that CCSD’s disproportionality patterns over the last 16 years have been largely stable, and that some improvement was apparent in the representation of African American students receiving special education, including intellectual disability. Black students have been overrepresented in the ED category for 15 of 16 years. Dr. Reschly wrote, “The latter finding is due primarily to the large underrepresentation of Asian and Hispanic students in this disability category rather than an excessive number of Black students identified as having ED.”⁴⁷

⁴⁷ 2018-19 Reschly Special Education Disproportionality report, page 5.

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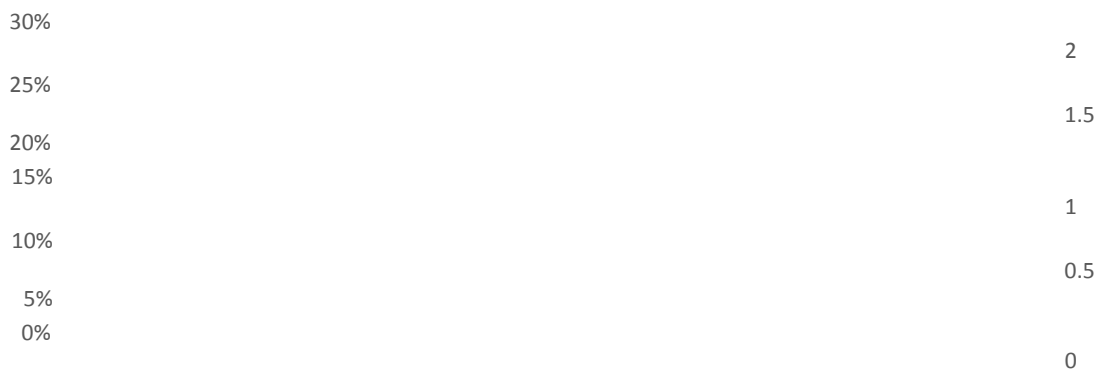
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English Learners and Disability

Overall, English language learners in grades K through 12 comprise 16 percent of the total student enrollment and 26 percent of all students with disabilities. ELs are 1.78 times more likely than students who are not English learners to have an IEP. (See exhibit 2k.)

Exhibit 2k. Prevalence of English Learners



EL of Total Enrollment EL of Disability Total Risk Ratio

Although neither the U.S. Department of Education nor NDE monitor this area for significant disproportionality, this analysis is important to understand identification patterns among English learners. CCSD did not provide data on long term ELLs, which would provide important information on the extent to which such students have a disability and in which disability category.

Percentage of ELs and Risk Ratios by the Most Common Disability Areas

Overall, ELs comprise 27 percent of students in one of the six most common disability categories. Exhibit 2l shows the percentage of ELs in these disability areas and their respective risk ratios. ELs are more likely than non-ELs to be identified as having SLD and ID, and to a lesser extent, autism. Their composition and risk ratios are low in the areas of S/L, OHI, and ED.

- **SLD.** With a 34 percent rate, ELs are 2.63 times more likely than non-ELs to have SLD.

- **ID.** With a 37 percent rate, ELs have a risk ratio in ID of 3.1.

- **Autism.** With a 24 percent rate, ELs are 1.61 times more likely than non ELs to have autism.

Exhibit 2l. Percentage of ELs and Risk Ratios by the Most Common Disability Areas



Percentage of ELs of All Students by Disability Area by Grade/Grade Level

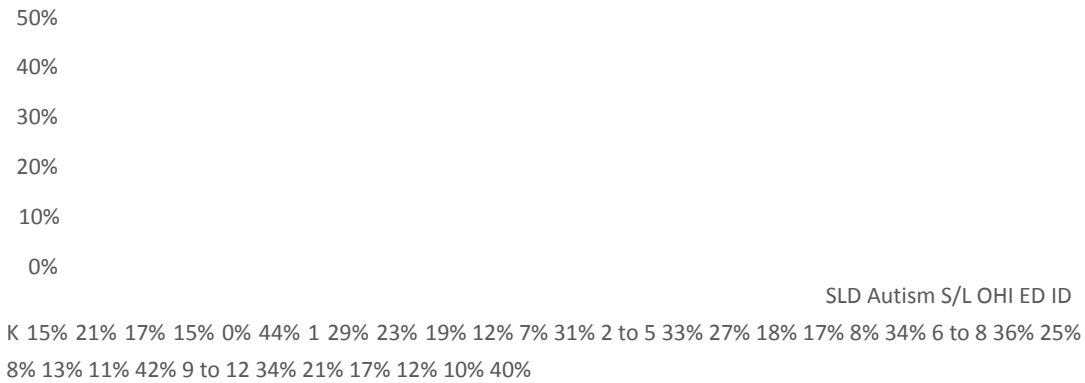
Exhibit 2m shows ELL students as a percentage of all students by disability and grade.⁴⁸ Several highlights from this information include –

- **SLD.** ELLs make up a much smaller percentage of the SLD category at kindergarten (15

percent) and first grade (29 percent), compared to grades 2 through 12 where the rates hover in the 30 percent range.

- **S/L.** The composition of ELs in the area of speech/language varies between 17 percent and 19 percent, except it is as low as 8 percent in six through eighth grades.
- **ID.** The ELL composition is highest in kindergarten (44 percent) and then drops to 31 percent in first grade. The rate then increases to 34 percent in the remaining elementary grades, and it jumps at the middle and high school levels (42 percent and 40 percent, respectively).

Exhibit 2m. Composition of ELs for the Most Common Disability Area by Grade/Grade Level



Risk Ratios for ELs to Non-ELs by Disability and Grade/Grade Level

Exhibit 2n shows the likelihood that ELs compared to non-ELs will be found to have one of the six most common disability areas by grade level.⁴⁹ Overall ELL risk ratios (RR) are highest in the areas of SLD, ID, and autism.

- **SLD.** With an overall 2.63 RR, the likelihood of ELL students having SLD begins at a low 0.33 RR in grade 1, but it significantly increases thereafter: 2.03 RR (grades 2 to 5), 3.50 RR (middle school), and 3.24 RR (high school).
- **ID.** With a 3.1 RR, the likelihood that ELL students will be identified for ID steadily increases from first grade through middle school: grade 1 (1.81 RR); grades 2 through 5 (2.06 RR); and

⁴⁸ Data are not shown for ED and SLD students attending kindergarten because of the very small numbers of all students and ELLs with this disability category.

⁴⁹ Cells for SLD, OHI, and ID in kindergarten, and ED in kindergarten and grade one were too small to compute a risk ratio.

middle school (4.59 RR). The likelihood remains significant at the high school level but decreases somewhat to a 4.19 RR.

- **Autism.** With an overall RR of 1.61, the likelihood that an ELLs will be identified with autism is significant only at middle school (2.05 RR).

Exhibit 2n. Risk Ratios for ELLs to Non-ELs by Disability and Grade/Grade Level

5.0
4.5
4.0
3.5
3.0
2.5
2.0
1.5
1.0
0.5
0.0

SLD Autism S/L OHI ED ID

K 1.08 0.80

1 0.33 1.24 0.98 0.58 1.81 2 to 5 2.03 1.49 0.86 0.82 0.37 2.06 6 to 8 3.50 2.05 0.54 0.96 0.75 4.59 9 to 12
3.24 1.65 0.83 0.73 4.19

Exiting from Special Education to General Education

Once students receive special education in CCSD, they rarely exit solely into general education, even with the provision of accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. In 2018-19, only 76 of 9,987 high school students or 0.76 percent exited special education by transferring to general education. The U.S. Department of Education publishes an annual report to Congress on the implementation of IDEA, including the percentages of students across the nation and the states ages 14 through 21 who exited from special education to general education. According to the most recent 40th Annual Report, the exit figure for Nevada was 7.0 percent in 2015-16 and the national figure was 9.3 percent.

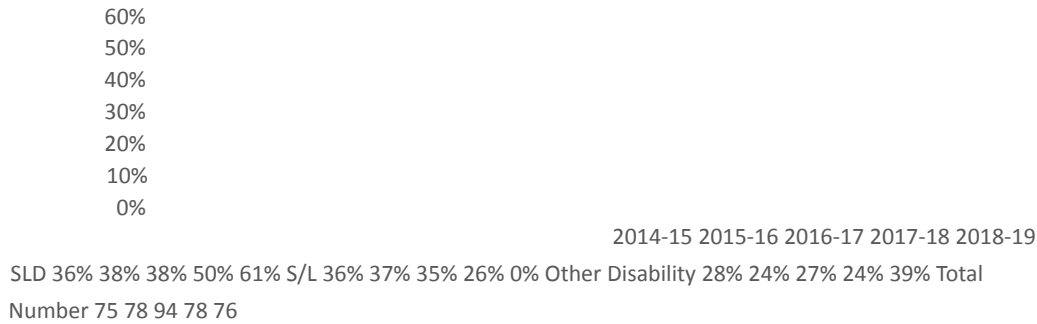
Exhibit 2o shows the number of students with IEPs who exited from special education to general education between 2014-15 and 2018-19. These figures show that the numbers of exited students continued to be small, ranging from 75 (2014-15) to 94 (2016-17). The figures also show that over the five years the percentages of exited students with a primary SLD identification increased steadily from 36 percent in 2014-15 to 61 percent in 2018-19. In years prior to 2018-19, students with a speech/language impairment constituted the second highest exit group, ranging from 36 percent in 2014-15 to 26 percent in 2017-18. However, no students exited from this group in 2018-19. The remaining students who exited were identified with a variety of disability areas,

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Exhibit 2o. Total Number and Percentage of Students Exiting from Special to General Education



Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504 or 504) is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability in any program or activity that receives federal financial assistance. Section 504 eligible students have a physical or mental impairment that substantially impacts a major life activity. These students are not required to need special education instruction to meet eligibility requirements. For students eligible only under Section 504 (i.e., not eligible under IDEA), Section 504 regulations define an appropriate education to be the provision of regular education and related services that are designed to meet the individual educational needs of a student as adequately as the needs of a nondisabled students are met. Related aids also include accommodations, which are adjustments that enable the student to learn and demonstrate what he or she knows. Generally, accommodations do not affect course content or curriculum. Examples include sign language interpreters in classrooms, materials in alternate formats, testing accommodations, etc.

As recipients of financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education (ED), school districts must comply with ED’s regulations. The number of students eligible for services and protection under Section 504 has grown significantly as a result of the amended Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which became effective on January 1, 2009. The amendments broadened ADA’s application of disability, and they specified that its provisions also applied to Section 504. According to the Civil Rights Data Collection, more than twice as many students were identified as 504 eligible in 2011-12⁵⁰ as were eligible in 2001. The increase will grow as more recent data are reported.

Although the Council team requested data on CCSD students eligible to receive services under Section 504, district representatives indicated that data were not available pending development of a data management system. We note that the district is required to report these data to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, for its civil rights data collection regardless of whether the district has a data base.

⁵⁰ The school year 2011-12 is the latest year for which data are available from the Civil Rights Data Collection website.

The district did report that 72,640 students had a health plan in grades PK through 12. Given the broadened eligibility standards under Section 504, it is probable that a large percentage of these students may meet Section 504 disability criteria.

Focus Group Feedback

Focus group participants provided the following feedback on the identification of students with disabilities in CCSD.

- **Young Children.** There were significant concerns about the increasing numbers of young children eligible for special education, including in the area of autism. Participants reported the increase among young children was associated with student services' child find improvements, including turnaround times for evaluations and decentralized assessment centers.
- **Early High-Quality Instruction.** Participants cited poor instruction in the early grades as leading to students needing special education. When students need foundational skills in middle school, teachers are not prepared or skilled enough to intervene. This same concern also applies to English learners. With a lack of viable alternatives, parents seek evaluations for special education, hoping that specially designed instruction will meet their children's needs.
- **Specific Learning Disability.** There is a perception that SLD eligibility is inconsistently applied from school to school, and it is influenced by the quality of a school's reading instruction and parent advocacy.
- **ELL Special Education Eligibility.** Concerns were expressed about the identification of English learners for special education where the number of identified students was increasing even though enrollment was decreasing. Questions persisted about the fidelity of evaluations to tease out differences between language acquisition and disability. Also, concerns were shared about the backlog of ELL students waiting for an evaluation.
- **Section 504 and Special Education.** There was a lack of knowledge about the differences between Section 504 and special education eligibility, and variations in instructional/service models.

AREAS OF STRENGTH

The following are areas of strength in CCSD related to the demographics of students with disabilities.

- **Disability Rates.** CCSD students with IEPs make up 12.5 percent of student enrollment in grades PK through 12 and ungraded students. This figure is about the same as the state's rate but lower than the nation's 13.7 percent. The rate falls to 11.3 percent among students from K through 12. At the elementary, middle and high school grade levels, the rates are 12.0 percent, 11.6 percent, and 10.1 percent, respectively.
- **Disability Category Rates.** District disability rates are like the state's in the areas of specific learning disability (SLD), speech/learning impairment (S/L), and other health impairment (OHI). Figures are also like the state and nation in the areas of emotional disturbance (ED) and intellectual disability (ID). (Exhibit 2a)

- **ED.** In the area of emotional disturbance, elementary school (35 percent), middle school (29 percent) and high school (36 percent) rates are proportional. (Exhibit 2f)
- **Racial/Ethnic Disparity.** NDE found CCSD did not meet the state’s weighted risk ratio criteria of “3” for racial/ethnic disproportionality among students with IEPs or the six most common disability categories. Over the last 16 years, CCSD has used a risk ratio measure with a threshold of 2.0 or more to measure and identify significant disproportionality.⁵¹ Using this measure, no single racial/ethnic group of students was significantly disproportionate to others. Although Black students were most likely to have an IEP, their 1.38 risk ratio was far below the level of 2. (Exhibit 2j) As noted below, this assessment changes with disability category. The Reschly report indicated that CCSD’s disproportionality patterns over the last 16 years have been stable, and that some improvements were apparent in the representation of Black students receiving special education.
- **English Learner Status.** Compared to non-ELs, English learners were not disproportionately identified as having autism, speech/language impairment, other health impairment and emotional disturbance as one often sees in other cities. (Exhibit 2l)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Of significant concern was the perception of focus group participants that poor instruction in the early grades had led to students needing special education. When students continued to need foundational skills (especially in reading) in middle school, teachers were not prepared or skilled enough to intervene, according to interviewees. This same concern applied to English learners. With a lack of viable alternatives, parents often seek evaluations for special education, hoping that specially designed instruction will meet their children’s needs.

Disparate Disability Category Rates (Exhibit 2a)

- **SLD.** The district’s 52 percent specific learning disability rate is 14 percentage points higher than the nation’s rate. There was a perception that SLD eligibility was inconsistently applied from school to school, and it is influenced by the quality of a school’s reading instruction and parent advocacy. Some focus group participants attributed the CCSD’s higher SLD rate to Nevada’s criteria for the developmental disability (DD) category, which ends when a child is six years of age, compared to other states that allow eligibility to continue through the age of nine. However, district rates in the areas of ED and ID were comparable to national rates.
- **Autism.** The district’s 16 percent rate was 6 percentage points higher than the nation’s rate and 4 points higher than the state’s rate.
- **S/L.** The district’s 13 percent rate was 4 percentage points lower than the nation’s rate.

Special Education Variances by Grade

- **Prekindergarten.** The number of students with IEPs is higher at PK (3,568) than at any other grade. By comparison, there were only 2,765 kindergarteners with IEPs and fifth graders were

⁵¹ The IDEA regulation now requires the use of a risk ratio measure to assess significant disproportionality.

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second in size at 3,059. The number of students with autism (714) was more than double the number at grades 11 and 12 (292 and 293, respectively). With 714 students, the category of autism has the largest number at PK. In other grades, the numbers ranged from 581 (grade 1) to 293 (grade 12), with 485 students in kindergarten. This growth was due to improved processes that the student services office put into place to find and identify young children needing special education, including shorter turnaround times for evaluations and more decentralized assessment centers. The total number of PK students and numbers of those with autism have significant implications for the district as these children pass from grade to grade. (Exhibits 2b-d)

- **SLD.** The average elementary level rate of 39 percent was affected by the nearly nonexistent 1 percent kindergarten rate and low 23 percent first grade rate. (See exhibit 2d.) The rate jumps to 62 percent at the middle school level and 65 percent at the high school level. (Exhibits 2d and 2e)
- **Composition of Disability by Grade Level.** Figures for disability categories by grade level show much higher percentages for autism, OHI, and ID at the elementary level. These rates decrease significantly at the middle and high school levels. (Exhibit 2f)

Disability Disparities by Race/Ethnicity and by English Learner Status

- **Race/Ethnicity.** Black students were much more likely than other students to be identified as having ED (3.44 RR), SLD (2.02 RR), and ID (2.13 RR), while white students were 2.05 times more likely to be identified as having an S/L impairment. (Exhibits 2i and 2j) According to Dr. Reschly, Black students were overrepresented in the ED category for 15 of the last 16 years. “The latter finding is due primarily to the large underrepresentation of Asian and Hispanic students in this disability category rather than an excessive number of Black students identified as having ED.”⁵²
- **English Learner Status.** Compared to non-ELs, English learners were significantly more likely to be identified as having SLD and ID. (Exhibits 2l-n)
- **SLD.** With an overall 2.63 RR, the likelihood of ELs having SLD begins at a low 0.33 RR in grade 1, but it significantly increases thereafter: 2.03 RR (grades 2 to 5), 3.50 RR (middle school), and 3.24 RR (high school).
- **ID.** With an overall 3.1 RR, the likelihood that ELL students will be identified for ID steadily increases from first grade through middle school: 1.81 (grade 1); 2.06 RR (grades 2 through 5); and 4.59 (middle school). The likelihood remains significant at the high school level, but it decreases somewhat to a 4.19 RR.
- **Autism.** With an overall RR of 1.61, the likelihood that ELLs are identified with autism is significant only at middle school (2.05 RR).

Questions persist about the how well evaluations can tease out differences between language acquisition and disability. Also, there were some concerns about a backlog of ELL students waiting for an evaluation.

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- **Long Term ELs.** Although the Council team requested data on long term ELLs (LTELs), these data were not provided. These data would be useful in understanding the composition of students with IEPs according to English learners who are and who are not long term.

Exit from Special Education to General Education

Once students receive special education in CCSD, they rarely exit to solely receive general education even with the provision of accommodations under Section 504. In 2018-19, only 0.76 percent of CCSD's 9,987 high school students exited, compared to Nevada's 7.0 percent and the nation's 9.3 percent.⁵³ (Exhibit 2o)

Section 504

District staff informed the Council team that CCSD data on Section 504 were not available pending development of a data management system. We note that the district is required to report these data to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, for its civil rights data collection and report. The district did report that 72,640 students had a health plan in grades PK through 12. Given the broadened eligibility standards under Section 504, it is probable that a large percentage of these students may meet Section 504 disability criteria. Focus group participants cited concerns about the general lack of school-based knowledge on the differences between Section 504 and special education eligibility, and variations in instructional/service models.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to address CCSD's demographic patterns among students with disabilities and its identification of students suspected of needing special education/related services.

Improve referral, evaluation and eligibility determination practices for special education.

Consider the following suggestions designed to help CCSD improve the overall consistency and appropriateness of special education referrals, assessments, and eligibility decisions.

- Data Review.*** With the district's cross-functional MTSS leadership team, along with individuals having a high level of understanding of special education prevalence, review exhibits 2a-n, including related text from the Council team's report. It is important for district leadership to have high-level understanding of this information to better formulate MTSS's design, implementation, and implications. Have the leadership team develop hypotheses about patterns in the data presented in this section. To the extent possible, include in the data review different disability rates by region. Repeat this practice at least yearly and compare to the previous year. As part of this review consider —

- ***Disparate Disability Rates.*** Possible reasons for the district's disparate disability rates where they exist and how they are significantly disproportionate for young children and by grade level. (Exhibits 2a-f)

⁵³ U.S. Department of Education's most recent 40th Annual Report to Congress on IDEA Implementation included for the nation and states the 2015-16 percentages of students 14 through 21 years of age who exited from special education to general education.

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- ***Prevalence of Young Children.*** The district's readiness for the high number of PK and K children with IEPs as they pass into later elementary grades is uncertain. Consider Recommendations 3 and 4 below that address the educational environments in which students have been placed and suggestions for educating more students in general education classrooms with the support they need to learn and be successful.
 - ***Disparities by Race/Ethnicity.*** Risk ratios for Black students identified with ED, SLD, and ID are higher than others. (Exhibits 2i-j) Examine risk ratios by grade level, along with other useful data by student race/ethnicity. This issue has been a concern of and addressed by student services for over a decade. However, only by having all educational leaders understand and invest in comprehensive strategies will the district be able to change these demographic patterns.
 - ***English Learner Disparities.*** Examine risk ratios for English learners identified with SLD, ID, and autism. (Exhibits 2l-n) Also, disaggregate and analyze data for ELs who are long term and not long-term to determine the impact the length of time a student continues to be an English learner contributes to special education eligibility.
 - ***Evaluation Processes, Eligibility Criteria, and Implementation.*** Examine current practices related to evaluation and eligibility and revise them to ensure they align with the best research, especially on English learners. As part of this review, consider current practices regarding timelines between the first determination when a student should be referred for an evaluation and when parental consent is requested.
 - ***Exit from Special Education to General Education.*** Consider practices for supporting high school students who could move from an IEP to a Section 504 program that would provide them with accommodations to support learning within a general education setting. Such considerations are especially relevant for students who will be moving from high school to postsecondary education where IDEA and special education does not apply. For such students, learning to advocate for services that meet their needs and taking advantage of such accommodations are critical skills for later success.
 - ***Section 504.*** Look at current school-based implementation of Section 504 procedures and practices, including a web-based operational guide and data management system.
- b. Implementation Plan.*** Based on the above data review, hypothesize about why these data look like they do, consider the need for additional information, and embed in MTSS implementation efforts necessary steps to address identified issues. (Coordinate this activity with Recommendation 1c.)
- c. Web-based Expectations/Guidance.*** Based on implementation plan components, identify those areas that require written expectations and guidance. Link information to an updated CCSD special education procedures manual and other relevant documents. Obtain feedback to the

draft guidance to ensure they are clear and do not create unintended consequences. (Coordinate this activity with Recommendation 1e and Recommendation 8A on SSD's Special Education Procedures Manual.

d. Differentiated Professional Learning. Plan for and provide all relevant district stakeholders with the professional development they need to implement activities the district develops pursuant to Recommendation 2. (Coordinate this activity with Recommendation 1f.)

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e. Data Analysis and Reports. Develop and provide regular user-friendly reports to district leadership showing data like those in exhibits 2a through 2o. If possible, show data related to disability determinations based on a student's school at the time of eligibility to determine any school-based factors affecting referrals and eligibility determinations. Also, share data by region to support follow-up action. (Coordinate this activity with 1g.)

f. Monitoring and Accountability. Develop a process for ongoing monitoring of expected referrals, evaluations, eligibility practices, and data to determine if the district's strategies are effective. Rather than using a traditional record-review compliance model, initiate this review with schools so they are aware of problems and are better prepared to implement follow-up action. Enable staff to observe best practices and receive coaching that will improve their knowledge and skills. (Coordinate this activity with Recommendation 1h.)

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III. Achievement Outcomes, Educational Environments, Suspension and Absenteeism

For more than a decade, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) has relied on 14 performance and compliance indicators that every state educational agency (SEAs) uses to establish targets and collect and report outcome data. Before that, ED issued local and state Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) determinations based on compliance outcomes alone. This compliance focus changed seven years ago when ED's Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP) announced its vision for results-driven accountability (RDA),

which is primarily focused on improving outcomes for students with disabilities.⁵⁴

Under RDA, IDEA determinations now include the following:

- Statewide reading and math assessment participation rates (4th and 8th grades);
- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) participation rates and percentage of basic/above scores (4th and 8th grades); and
- Graduation and dropout rates.

In addition, Nevada's state performance plan includes the following areas. • Participation and performance on statewide assessments in reading and math; • Significant discrepancies in suspension/expulsion rates of more than 10 days; • Percent of young children and students educated in different educational environments; and • Outcomes for young children.⁵⁵

The information below focuses on district results in the above areas along with absenteeism.

Young Children Achievement Outcomes

One SPP indicator involves the achievement of young children with disabilities between three and five years of age. The indicator has three components: 1) appropriate behavior; 2) acquisition and use of knowledge and skills; and 3) positive social/emotional skills. For each component, calculations are made of the percentage of children in two areas:

- **Substantially Increased Skills.** Children who entered an early-childhood program below developmental expectation for their age but who have substantially increased developmentally by age six when they exit a program with substantially increased skills, and

⁵⁴April 5, 2012, RDA Summary, U.S. Department of Education at www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osep/osep/rda_summary.doc

⁵⁵ Additional SPP indicators addressing disproportionate representation of racial/ethnic groups of students with IEPs and in six disability categories are addressed in Section II of this report. Indicators concerning transition outcomes are addressed in Section IV, below.

- **Functioned Within Age Expectations.** Children functioning within expectations by age six or who attained those expectations by the time they exit the program.

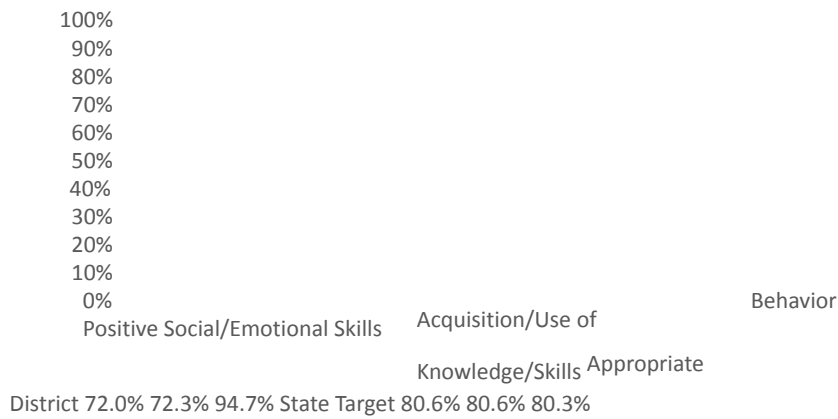
CCSD outcomes in these areas are very high among children exhibiting use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs. This is true for children who substantially increased their skills and who turned 6 years of age or exited with age-appropriate behavior. In the area of acquisition/use of knowledge and skills, however, children barely exceeded state targets for children functioning within age expectations. In the other three areas, CCSD children did not meet SPP targets.

Substantially Increased Skills

Data in exhibit 3a shows rates of CCSD children who entered early childhood programs below developmental expectations for their age but who increased developmentally by age six when they exited the program. The district missed the state targets in two of three areas. (See Exhibit 3a.)

- **Positive Social/Emotional Skills.** 72 percent met standards, which was 8.6 percentage points below the state target.
- **Acquisition/Use of Knowledge/Skills.** 72.3 percent met standards, which was 8.3 percentage points below the state target.
- **Appropriate Behavior to Meet Needs.** 94.7 percent met standards, which was 14.4 percentage points above the state target.

Exhibit 3a. Children Three to Five Years of Age with IEPs: Substantially Increased Skills



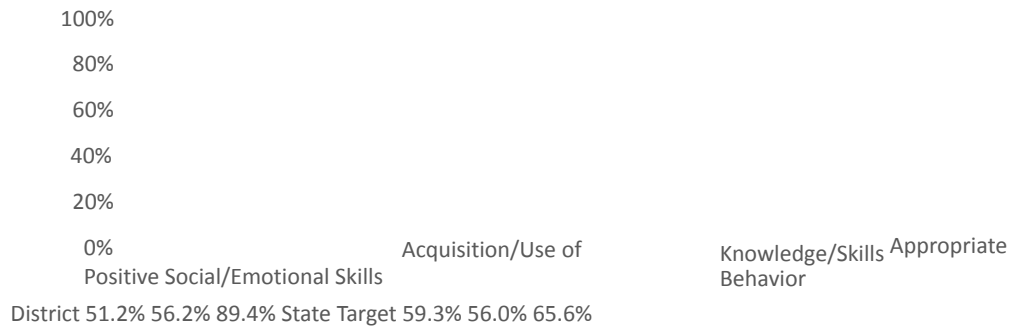
Functioning Within Age Expectations

Data in exhibit 3b show rates of CCSD children functioning at age-level expectations by six years of age or who met those expectations by the time they exited the program. District children substantially exceeded the state target for appropriate behavior, met the target for acquisition/use of knowledge/skills, but missed it in the area of social/emotional skills. (See Exhibit 3b.)

- **Positive Social/Emotional Skills.** 51.2 percent met standards, which was 8.1 percentage points below the state target.

- **Acquisition/Use of Knowledge/Skills.** 56.2 percent met standards, which was 0.2 percentage points above the state target.
- **Appropriate Behavior to Meet Needs.** 89.4 percent met standards, which was 23.8 percentage points above the state target.

Exhibit 3b. Children Three to Five Years of Age: Functioning Within Age Expectations

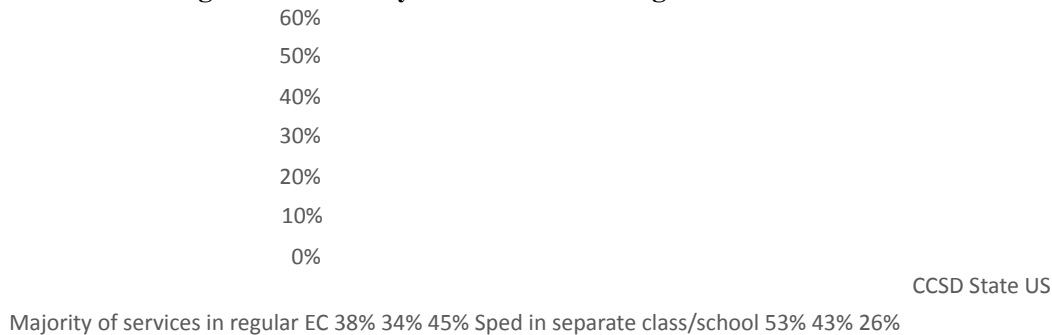


Educational Settings for Young Children Three to Five Years of Age

Data in exhibit 3c show the percentages of CCSD students receiving most of their special education services in general education and in special or separate classes/schools, compared to students at state and national levels during the 2017-18 school year. These figures show that district children are educated in more restrictive settings, compared to their national peers.

- **Regular Preschool Setting.** Some 38 percent of young CCSD children with IEPs were educated with their nondisabled peers in a *regular* early childhood setting, compared to the state’s 34 percent and the nation’s 45 percent.
- **Separate Classes/Schools.** Some 53 percent of young children with IEPs were educated in *separate* classes/schools, compared to the state’s 43 percent and nation’s 26 percent rate.

Exhibit 3c. Percentage of Students by Educational Setting



Student Achievement

This subsection provides information on the achievement of CCSD students with IEPs on NAEP and statewide assessments.

NAEP Achievement Rates for Fourth and Eighth Grade Students with IEPs

In partnership with the National Assessment Governing Board and the Council of the Great City Schools, the Trial Urban District Assessment (TUDA) was created in 2002 to support

and measure student achievement in the nation's large urban school districts. In 2019, 27 urban school districts voluntarily participated in TUDA and were able to track achievement by subgroup on a single comparable assessment. Clark County has participated in TUDA since 2017.

Exhibits 3d-g show the percentage of students with IEPs scoring basic or above in descending order for all national public schools and TUDA cities. Data show percentage point differences for each between 2017 and 2019.⁵⁶ Generally, in 2019, CCSD's reading scores at fourth and eighth grade were 27 percent and 21 percent at or above basic levels, respectively, and math scores were 36 percent and 14 percent at or above basic, respectively. The fourth-grade figures exceeded state rates by 2 points in reading and 3 points in math and exceeded national public-school rates by 1 point.

Three Florida districts posted reading/math scores in 2019 at both grades that exceeded national public-school rates: Duval County, Hillsborough County, and Miami-Dade. The following districts joined this group in exceeding national rates in noted grades and content areas: CCSD and Guilford County (reading, grade 4), San Diego and New York City (math, grade 8), Austin (math, both grades) and San Diego (math, grade 8).

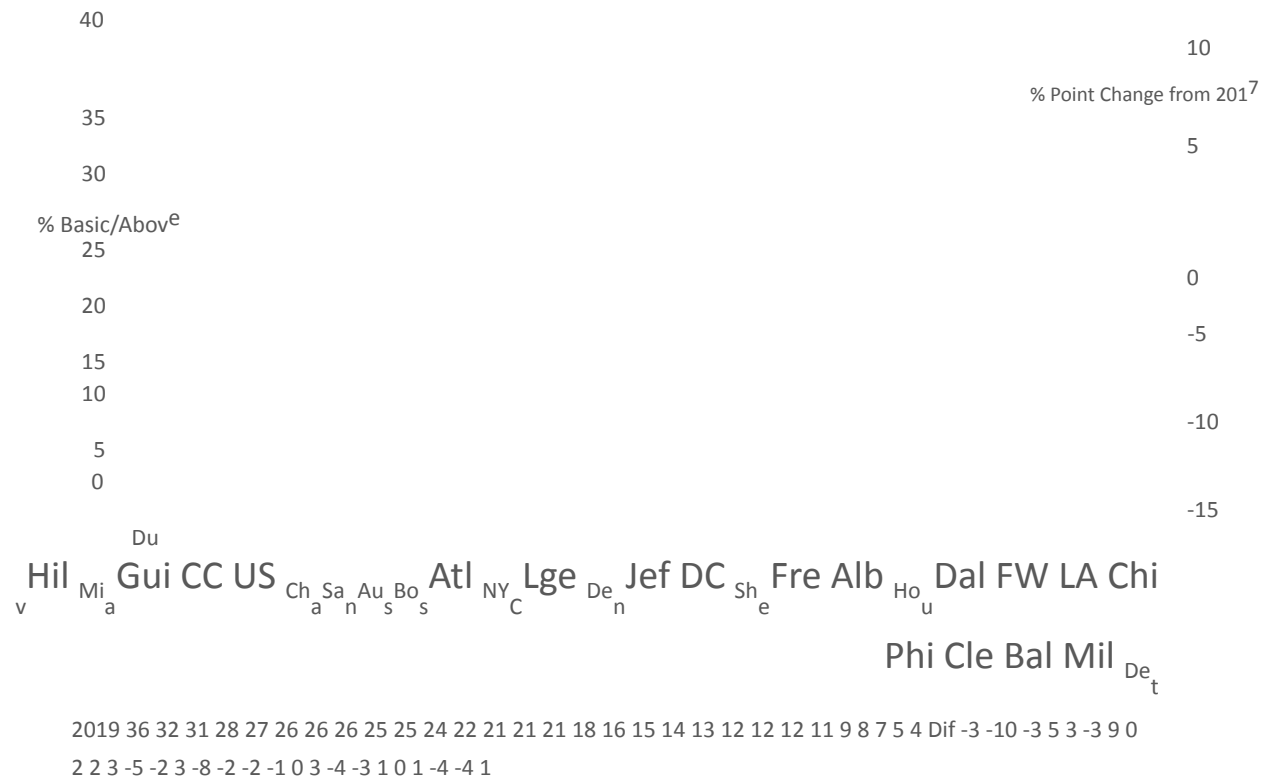
In addition, CCSD's fourth grade results in reading and math exceeded Nevada's statewide achievement. Summaries below provide additional information on NAEP. The information also features the highest achieving TUDA districts in each area and those showing the most growth by content and grade.

Reading: Grade 4

For students with IEPs in fourth grade, the national public-school reading average was 26 percent at basic or above, compared to 21 percent among large cities overall. Five cities, including CCSD, had rates that were 1 to 10 percentage points higher than the national rate. CCSD's 27 percent at or above basic reflected a 3-percentage point increase from 2017. Charlotte Mecklenburg, with a lower score of 26 percent, had the largest percentage point increase of 9 points between 2017 and 2019. (See exhibit 3d.)

⁵⁶ These scores exclude students with disabilities under Section 504. Abbreviations used are: Alb (Albuquerque), Atl (Atlanta), Bal (Baltimore City), Bos (Boston), Cha (Charlotte), Chi (Chicago), CC (Clark County), Cle (Cleveland), Dal (Dallas), Den (Denver), Det (Detroit), DC (District of Columbia), Duv (Duvall Cty, FL), FW (Ft. Worth), Fre (Fresno), Gui (Guilford Cty, KY), Hil (Hillsborough Cty, FL), Hou (Houston), Jef (Jefferson Cty, KY), Cit (TUDA large cities), LA (Los Angeles), Mia (Miami-Dade), Mil (Milwaukee), US (National Public Schools), NYC (New York City), Phi (Philadelphia), San (San Diego), and She (Shelby Cty, TN). Source: SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2019 and 2017 Reading and Mathematics Assessment, retrieved January 17, 2020, from the Main NAEP Data Explorer.

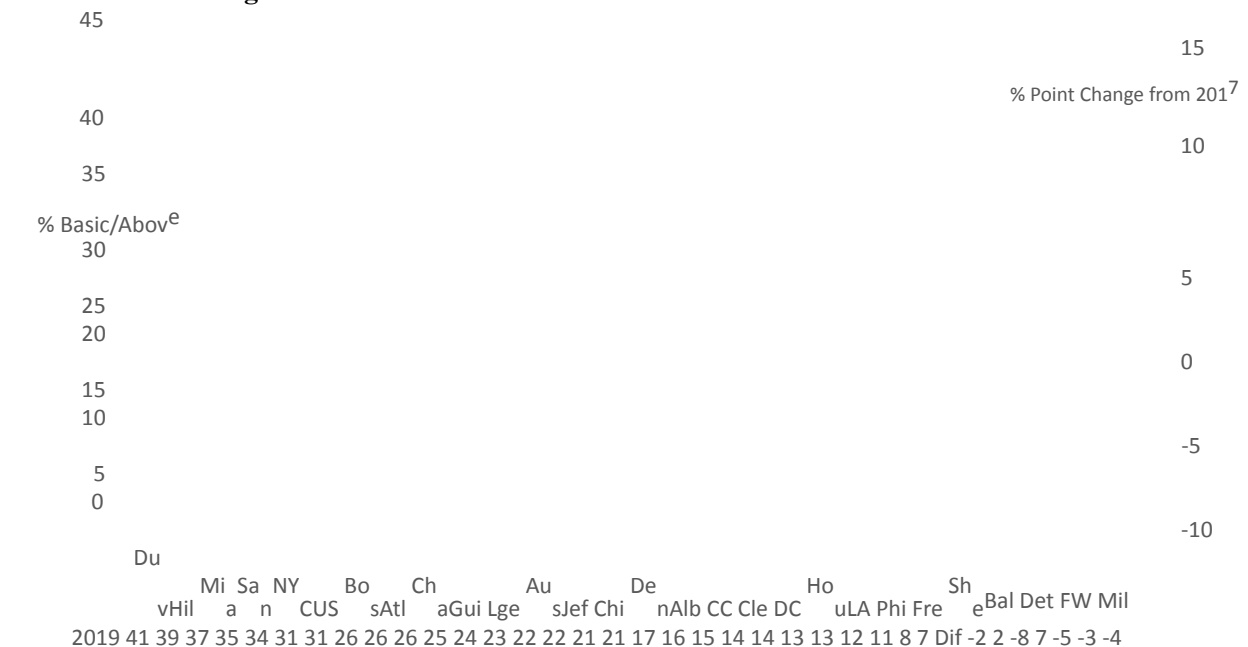
Exhibit 3d. Reading Grade 4



Reading: Grade 8

For students with IEPs in eighth grade, the national public-school reading average was 31 percent at basic or above levels, compared to 25 percent among large cities generally. Five cities had rates that were 3 to 10 percentage points higher than the national rate. CCSD’s rate of 21 percent was 4 percentage points below its 2017’s rate. Atlanta, with a rate of 26 percent, had the largest increase (12 percentage points) between 2017 and 2019. (See exhibit 3e)

Exhibit 3e. Reading Grade 8



Math: Grade 4

For students with IEPs in fourth grade, the national public-school math average was 45 percent at basic or above levels, compared to 38 percent among large cities overall. Four cities had rates that were 1 to 19 percentage points higher than the national rate. CCSD’s rate of 36 percent was 3 percentage points above its 2017’s rate. Miami-Dade, with a score of 58 percent, had the largest increase (8 percentage points) between 2017 and 2019. (See Exhibit 3f.)

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Exhibit 3f. Math Grade 4

% Basic/Above

10
70

8
60

-2
-4
20

% Point Change from 2017

6
50

4
2
40

-6
10

0
30

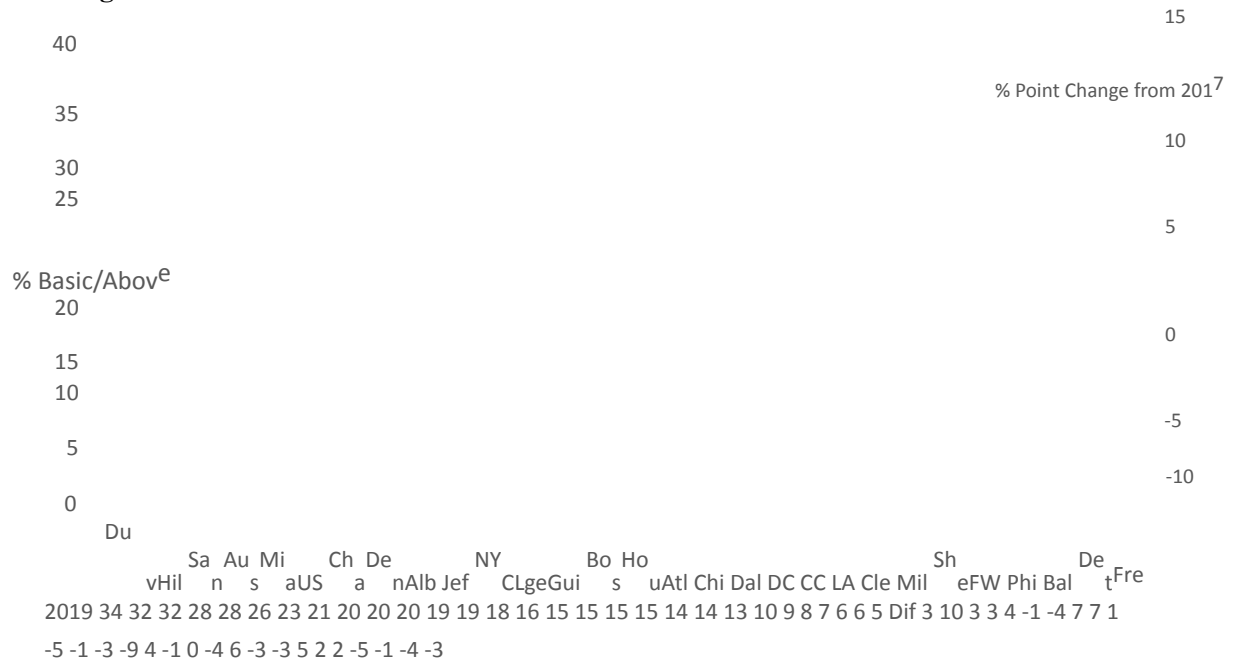
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Math: Grade 8

For students with IEPs in eighth grade, the national public-school rate in math at basic or above was 26 percent, compared to 19 percent among large cities. Five cities had rates that were 2 to 8 percentage points higher than the national rate. CCSD’s rate of 14 percent was 3 percentage points below its 2017’s rate. Hillsborough County, with a score of 32 percent, had the largest increase (10 percentage points) between 2017 and 2019. (See Exhibit 3g.)

Exhibit 3g. Math Grade 8



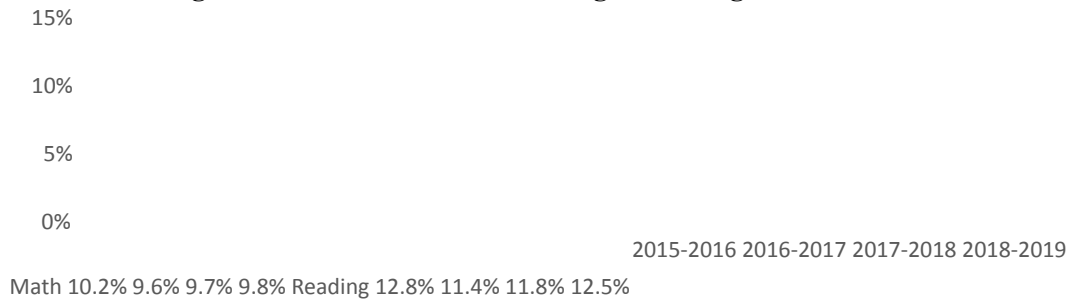
Statewide Assessments

The Nevada state assessment system uses the Smarter Balanced Assessment for students in grades 3 through 8, and the College and Career Readiness Assessments (ACT) for grade 11. Exhibits 3h-j below show percentages of students with IEPs who met/exceeded standards on reading/math assessments between 2015-16 and 2018-19. Also shown are 2017-18 percentages by grade, compared to corresponding SPP targets.

Four-Year Assessment Results

The percentage of CCSD students with IEPs who met/exceeded statewide assessment standards decreased in math and remained relatively steady in reading. In math, the 2015-16 rate of 10.2 percent decreased in 2018-19 to 9.8 percent. In reading, the earlier year's rate of 12.8 percent rebounded to 12.5 percent in 2018-19 after falling to 11.4 percent in 2016-17 and 11.8 percent in 2017-18.

Exhibit 3h. Percentage of Students with IEPs Meeting/Exceeding State Standards Statewide



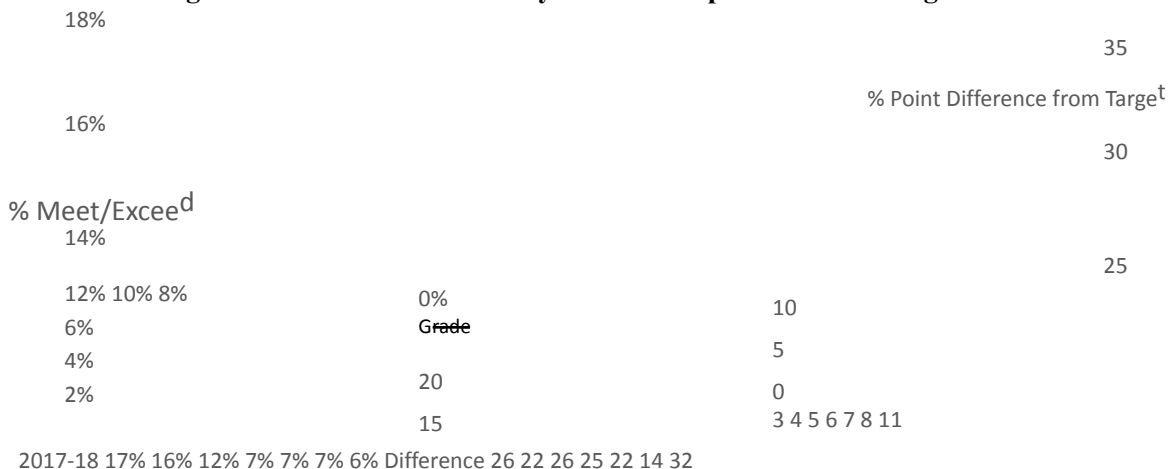
2017-18 Assessment Results by Grade Compared to SPP Targets

Nevada's SPP for 2017-18 shows CCSD's percentages of students with IEPs who met/exceeded state standards by grade along with state targets in each grade. Generally, meet/exceed percentages were higher in reading (17 percent to 6 percent) than for math (22 percent to 3 percent), except in third grade (i.e., math's 22 percent rate exceeded reading's 17 percent rate). Gaps in CCSD's state targets were larger in math than reading, except in grade 11 reading.

Reading

The percentage of CCSD students with IEPs meeting/exceeding standards in reading was highest at 17 percent and 16 percent in grades 3 and 4, respectively. The percentage decreased to 12 percent at fifth grade, and then falls significantly to 7 percent (grades 6 through 8) and to 6 percent at grade 11. The gap between these figures and SPP targets ranged from 14 percentage points (grade 8) to 32 points (grade 11). (See exhibit 3i.)

Exhibit 3i. Reading: Meet/Exceed Standards by Grade Compared to SPP Targets



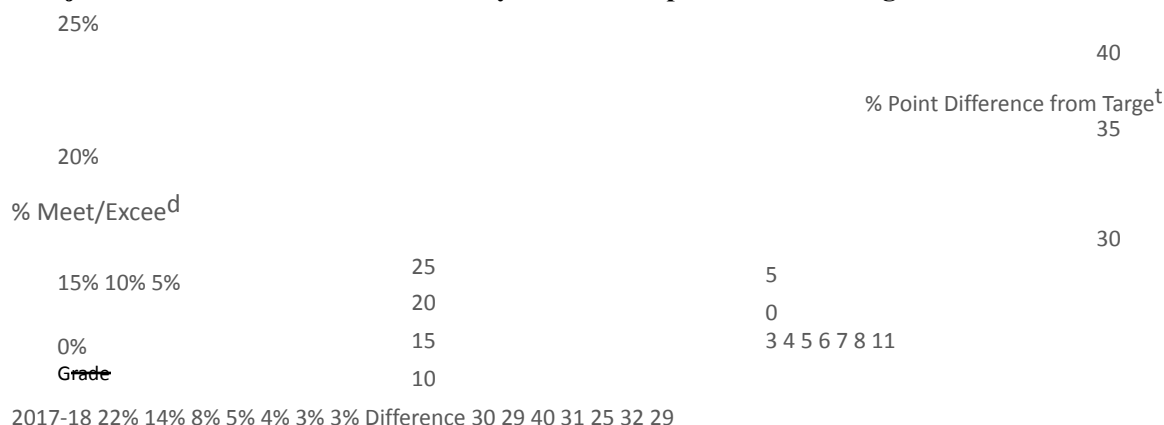
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Math

The percentage of CCSD students with IEPs meeting/exceeding standards in math was highest at 22 percent in grade 3. The percentage decreases to 14 percent at fourth grade, and then continued to decrease to 3 percent in grades 8 and 11. The gaps between these figures and SPP targets ranged from 25 percentage points (grade 7) to 40 points (grade 5). (See exhibit 3j.)

Exhibit 3j. Math: Meet/Exceed Standards by Grade Compared to SPP Targets



Alternate Assessments

The *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) established a one percent threshold, statewide, on the number of students with significant cognitive disabilities taking alternate assessments. This threshold is based on one percent of the total number of students taking a standardized assessment in any curriculum area. If an LEA exceeds the threshold, the LEA is required to notify NDE and provide information on its reason for doing so. According to CCSD data, 1.2 percent of students participating in statewide assessments took an alternate assessment in reading and in math. The number exceeding the 1 percent standard amounts to some 248 students. In the three prior school years, the alternate assessment rate was 1.1 percent, except in 2016-17 when it increased to 1.2 percent in math. The district did not provide a copy of its waiver request to NDE, the basis for the waiver, whether it was approved, or steps being taken by the district to address the issue.

The district also did not provide achievement data on students taking an alternate assessment.

Focus:2024

One of CCSD’s Focus 2024 strategic plan priorities is student success. One of the priority’s four objectives related to the achievement of students with IEPs is to decrease studentproficiency gapsinEnglishlanguagearts, mathematics, and science. Under each objective,

the strategic plan sets forth relevant objectives, measures, benchmarks, and targets for January 2024. In addition, the plan includes strategies designed to meet the specified targets.

Decrease Student Proficiency Gaps Data

The strategic plan's appendix includes data on each objective and its subcomponents. Benchmarks for subgroups furthest apart are provided in English Language Arts (ELA), math, and science,

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along with percentage point increases necessary for the lowest performing student groups to meet 2024 targets. In every subject and grade, Asian students had the highest proficiency rates. Students with IEPs had the lowest rates in ELA (grades 3-5) and math (grades 3-8). English learners had the lowest rates in ELA (grades 6-8 and 11) and science (grades 5, 8 and 10). In all areas, either students with IEPs or English learners had the second lowest proficiency rates. Black students had the lowest proficiency scores of all race/ethnicities.

The information below provides data on ELA.

- ***ELA Grades 3-5.*** In 2017-18, the largest proficiency gap was between students who are Asian American (70 percent) and students with IEPs (13.9 percent)--a gap of 56.1 percentage points. To meet their 2024 target, students with IEPs must increase their proficiency rate by 29 percentage points. With a score of 21.3 percent, LEP students had the next largest proficiency gap and the need under the plan to increase their achievement by 31 points to attain 2024 targets.⁵⁷
- ***ELA Grades 6-8.*** In 2017-18, the largest proficiency gap was between students who are Asian American (71 percent) and LEP (6.2 percent, 64.8 percentage point gap), closely followed by students with IEPs (6.5 percent, 64.5-point gap). The 2024 targets for LEP and IEP categories require increases of 32.1 and 29.9 percentage points, respectively.
- ***ELA Grade 11.*** In 2017-18, the largest student proficiency gap was between students who are Asian American (67.6 percent) and LEP (3.2 percent, 64.4 percentage point gap), closely followed by students with IEPs (7.1 percent, 60.5-point gap). The 2024 targets for LEP and IEP categories require increases of 29.6 and 24.2 percentage points, respectively.

Graduation and Dropout Rates

Two state performance plan indicators measure graduation and dropout rates.

Graduation Rates

The SPP measures the percentage of students with disabilities in 12th grade and exiting ungraded students who are 18 years of age or over who graduate from high school with a regular diploma. Data in Exhibit 3k show four years of CCSD graduation data (2014-15 to 2017-18) for all students and students with IEPs. The graduation rate for students without disabilities increased from 72 percent to 85 percent over the four-year period, and the graduation rate for students with disabilities increased from 28 and 27 percent in the first two years of the period to 69 percent in 2016-17 and 68 percent in 2017-18.

The increase in the disability graduation rate is likely associated with changes in Nevada’s criteria for high school graduation. For students entering the ninth and tenth grades in the 2014-15 school year, the Nevada High School Proficiency Examination was replaced with end of course exams. While students are not required to earn a passing score on the end of course exams, they must pass a correlating class. This requirement affects the classes of 2017 and 2018. Based on IEP

⁵⁷ Although data was provided by race/ethnicity for ELA, grade 3, no data was shown for students with IEPs or English learners.

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team determinations, students with disabilities may opt out of college and career readiness assessments.⁵⁸

Also, effective July 1, 2017, Nevada authorized an alternative diploma for students with IEPs who are assessed on the Nevada Alternate Assessment. Nevada’s requirements for the Alternative Diploma align to the academic coursework and the College and Career Readiness assessment (ACT) requirements for students working to achieve a standard diploma. By specifying standards-based alignment, Nevada seeks to ensure that students with significant cognitive disabilities are educated on a similar trajectory as their typically developing peers who are earning a standard diploma. High school students receiving an alternative diploma are counted as a successful graduate and included in the district and state adjusted cohort graduation rates.⁵⁹

The gap in the high school graduation rate between students with and without IEPs fell from a high of 48 points (in 2015-16) to 17 points (2017-18). The 2017-18 graduation rate of 68 percent is 23 percentage points below the state’s performance plan graduation target for students with IEPs.

Exhibit 3k. Graduation Rates for Students with IEPs and All Students (2013-14 to 2017-18)

Percent Graduated	Percentage Point Gap	
		20
		10
		0
		2014-15 2015-16 2016-17 2017-18
with Diploma	40	
100% 80% 60% 40% 20% 0%	30	
60		
IEP 28% 27% 69% 68%		
No IEP 72% 75% 83% 85%		
IEP/No IEP Gap 44 48 14 17		

Dropout Rates

The SPP also measures the percentage of students in 9th grade and higher, who exit special education by dropping out of school. Data in Exhibit 3l show CCSD-provided dropout rates among students with IEPs and all students over a five-year period (2014-15 to 2018-19). Dropout rates for students with IEPs increased from 4.0 percent (2015-16) to 4.7 percent (2017-18), and rates were highest in 2016-17 and 2017-18 (5.3 percent and 5.5 percent, respectively). The rates

for students without IEPs were less varied, but they increased from 2.9 percent (2014-15) to 3.6 percent (2018-19). The gap between students with and without IEPs began and ended at 1.1 percentage points.

Note that NDE’s published SPP annual performance report for CCSD shows that 2016-17 as the latest dropout data available. The report indicates that the dropout rate for students with IEPs

⁵⁸ Retrieved from CCSD’s website at <http://ccsd.net/students/grad-requirements>.

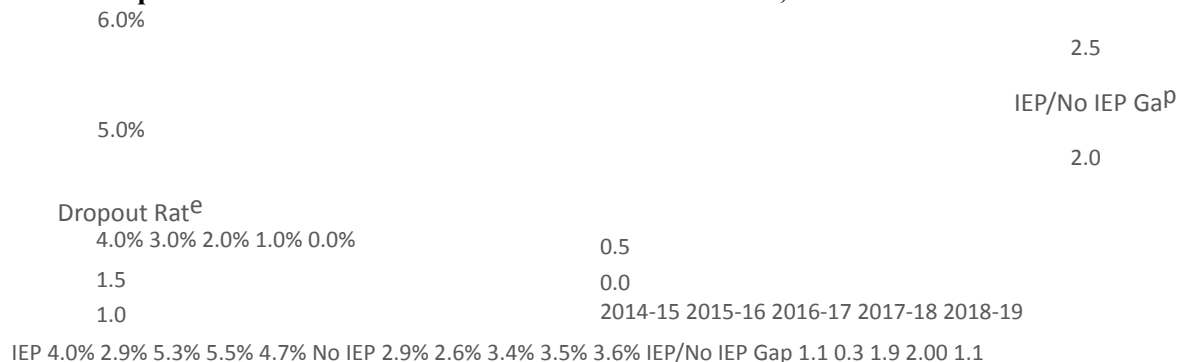
⁵⁹ Nevada Department of Education webpage, retrieved at http://www.doe.nv.gov/Inclusive_Education/Alternative_Diploma_Guidance_Documents/.

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was 6.1 percent, above the state’s target of 5.1 percent. CCSD provided the Council team with a 5.3 percent dropout rate figure, which is lower than the NDE reported dropout rate of 6.1 percent.

Exhibit 3l. Dropout Rates for Students with IEPs and All Students, 2013-14 to 2017-18



Educational Environments for School-Aged Students with Disabilities

The state performance plan tracks school-aged students educated in one of three educational settings and sets targets for each: (1) students in general education classes 80 percent or more of the day, (2) students in general education classes less than 40 percent of the day, i.e., in separate classes, and (3) students in separate schools. States are expected to collect data on a fourth educational setting (i.e., students in general education between 79 percent and 40 percent of the time), but the SPP indicator does not monitor this setting.

Comparison of Rates for District, State, and Nation

Data in Exhibit 3m show the composition of district students (K through twelfth grade) with IEPs in the four educational settings established by the U.S. Department of Education and collected by NDE. The data also show the three settings with targets.

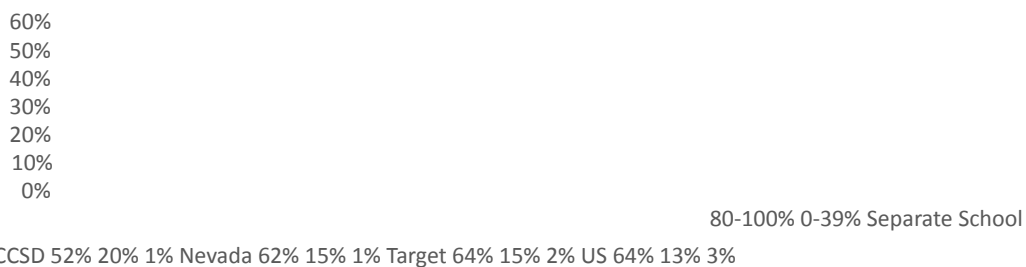
- ***In General Education At least 80 Percent of the Time.*** The district’s 52 percent rate for students in this setting is 12 percentage points lower than the state’s SPP target and the nation’s rate. It is also 10 points lower than the actual state rate.

- ***In General Education Less than 40 Percent of the Time.*** This measure is generally considered to be an indicator of self-contained special education settings. The district’s 20 percent rate is 5 percentage points higher than the SPP target and the state rate, and it is 7 percentage points higher than the nation’s 13 percent rate.
- ***Separate Schools.*** The district’s 1 percent rate for separate schools is the same as the state’s rate and both are below the SPP’s 2 percent target and the nation’s 3 percent rate.

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Exhibit 3m. Percentage of Students by Educational Setting



Educational Setting Rates by Grade Level

Generally, students with disabilities begin kindergarten with a high percentage being educated inclusively. This pattern changes in first grade and continues to seventh grade as more students are educated for less of the time in general education. Beginning at eighth grade and continuing through high school, an increasing proportion of students are educated in general education more of the time.

Data in exhibit 3n shows more specifically how patterns among the four educational environments change by grade level.

- ***At Least 80 Percent of Time.*** Some 73 percent of kindergarteners are educated at least 80 percent of the time in general education. However, this rate falls to 63 percent in first grade and decreases to 53 percent by fifth grade. At the middle school level, the rate decreases from 47 percent (grade 6) to 41 percent (grade 7), but it increases again to 43 percent (grade 8). At the high school level, the rate steadily increases from 49 percent (grade 9) to 59 percent (grade 12).
- ***40% to 79% of Time.*** Kindergarteners also have a low 16 percent of students educated in general education between 40 percent and 79 percent of the time. This rate varies between 27 percent and 21 percent at the elementary grade level. As middle school student rates for time

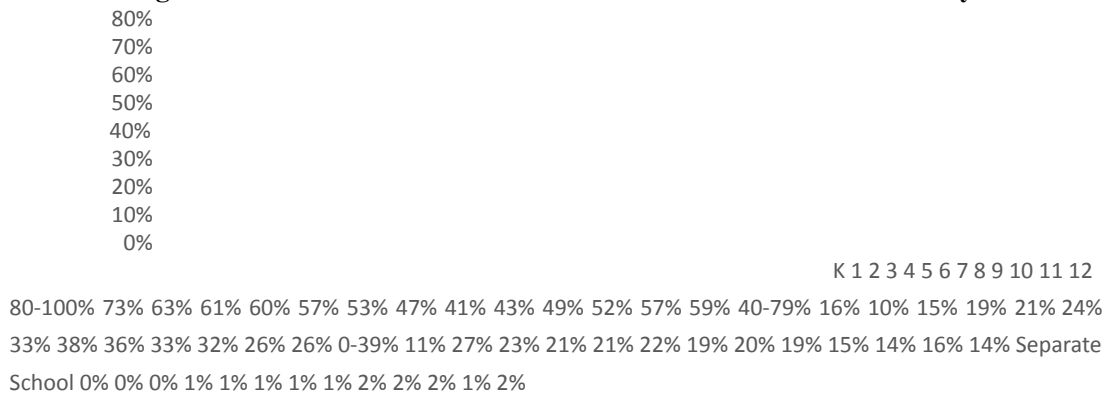
spent in general education at least 80 percent of the time increase and decrease between grades 6, 7, and 8, the rates for the three grades increase and decrease correspondingly at the more restrictive setting (33 percent, 38 percent, and 36 percent, respectively).

- **0- 39% of Time.** The 11 percent rate of kindergarteners who are educated in general education less than 40 percent of the time increases to a high of 27 percent in first grade and then falls to 21 percent in third and fourth grades. The rate remains relatively low through middle school when it varies between 19 percent and 20 percent, and high school when it hovers between 14 and 16 percent.
- **Separate Schools.** The percentage of students educated in separate schools does not reach the 1 percent level until third grade, when the rate moves to 2 percent through high school except for eleventh grade when it dips back to 1 percent.

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Exhibit 3n. Percentage of Students Educated in Various Educational Environments by Grade



CCSD Educational Setting Rates by Disability Areas

Data in exhibit 3o shows the extent to which students in the five most common disability areas are educated in general education settings in CCSD, the state, and nation. In all areas, especially for SLD and ID, district students are placed in general education at least 80 percent of the time at lower rates than are students at the state and national levels.

Exhibit 3o. CCSD, State and National Educational Environment Rates by Disability Area

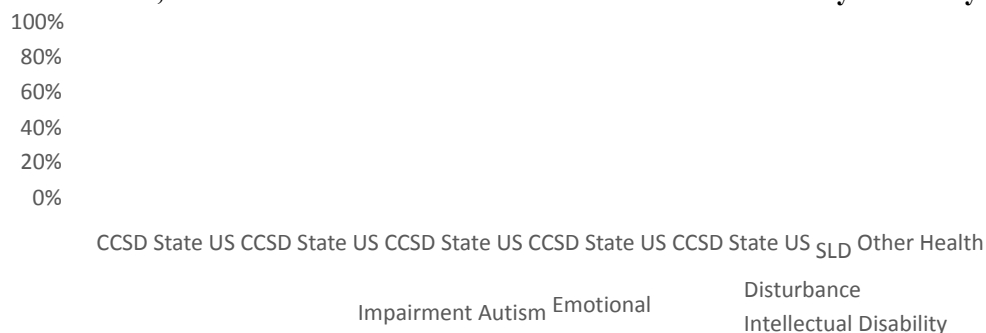


Exhibit 3o does not include the area of speech/language where virtually all students are educated in general education at least 80 percent of the time in the district, state, and nation. Exhibits 3p through 3r below provide more detail on the three general educational settings by disability in CCSD, compared to the state and nation. The SPP does not provide targets by disability area.

General Education At Least 80 Percent of the Time

As shown in exhibit 3p, compared to students in the state and nation, a smaller percentage of CCSD students in each of the five disability areas are educated in general education classes at least 80 percent of the time;

- **SLD.** Fifty-four percent of CCSD students with a specific learning disability are in this setting,

⁶⁰ 2017-18 Part B Child Count and Educational Environment, retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/osepidea/618-data/static-tables/index.html>.

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compared to state and national rates (66 percent and 72 percent, respectively). The district’s rate is 12 percentage points and 18 percentage points below state and national rates, respectively.

- **OHI.** Fifty-seven percent of CCSD students with an other health impairment are in this setting, compared to state and national ratings (66 percent and 67 percent, respectively). The district’s rate is 10 percentage points and 9 percentage points below state and national rates, respectively.
- **Autism.** Thirty-two percent of CCSD students with autism are in this setting, compared to the state and national rates (40 percent and 39 percent, respectively). The district’s rate is 8 percentage points and 7 percentage points below state and national rates, respectively.
- **ED.** Thirty-seven percent of CCSD students with an emotional disturbance are in this setting, compared to state and national rates (43 percent and 48 percent, respectively). The district’s rate is 6 percentage points and 11 percentage points below state and national rates, respectively.
- **ID.** One percent of CCSD students with an intellectual disability are in this setting, compared to state and national rates (5 percent and 17 percent, respectively). The district’s rate is 4 percentage points and 16 percentage points below state and national rates.

Exhibit 3p. Students by Disability in General Education At Least 80% of the Time

80%
 60%
 40%
 20%
 0%

General Education 79 Percent to 40 Percent of the Time

As shown in exhibit 3q, compared to students across the state and/or nation, except in the area of intellectual disability, a smaller percentage of CCSD students in each of the five disability areas are educated in general education classes between 40 percent and 79 percent of the time.

- **SLD.** Thirty-six percent of CCSD students with a specific learning disability are in this setting, compared to state and national rates (27 percent and 22 percent, respectively). The district’s rate is 9 percentage points and 5 percentage points above state and national rates, respectively.
- **OHI.** Twenty-seven percent of CCSD students with an other health impairment are in this setting, compared to state and national rates (22 percent and 20 percent, respectively). The district’s rate is 5 percentage points and 7 percentage points above state and national rates, respectively.
- **Autism.** Twenty percent of CCSD students with autism are in this setting, compared to state and national rates (19 percent and 18 percent, respectively). The district’s rate is 1 percentage point and 2 percentage points above state and national rates, respectively.
- **ED.** Twenty-five percent of CCSD students with an emotional disturbance are in this setting,

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compared to state and national rates (23 percent and 17 percent, respectively). The district’s rate is 2 percentage points and 8 percentage points above state and national rates, respectively.

- **ID.** Ten percent of CCSD students with an intellectual disability are in this setting, compared to state and national rates (16 percent and 27 percent, respectively). The district’s rate is 6 percentage points and 17 percentage points below state and national rates.

Exhibit 3q. Students by Disability in General Education 40% to 79% of the Time

40%
35%
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%

CCSD State US CCSD State US CCSD State US CCSD State US CCSD State US SLD Other Health

General Education Less than 40 Percent of the Time

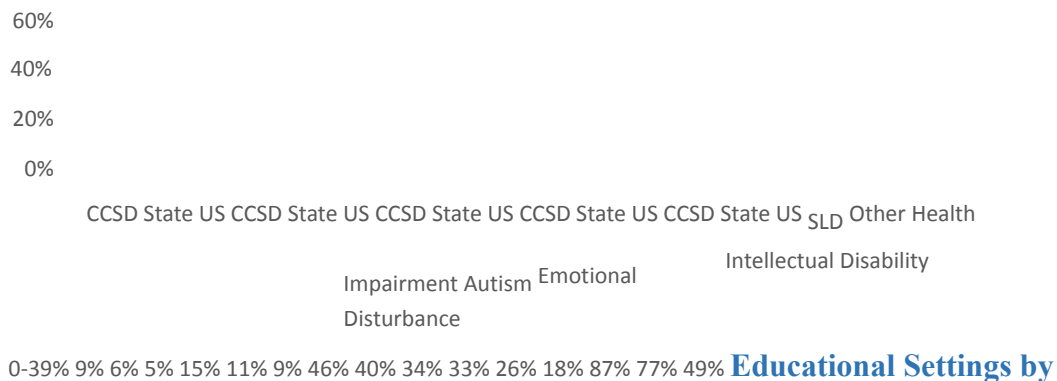
As shown in exhibit 3r, compared to students across the state and nation, a larger percent of CCSD students in each of the five disability areas are educated in general education classes less than 40 percent of the time. These students are educated in separate classrooms for most of the school day.

- **SLD.** Nine percent of CCSD students with SLD are in this setting, compared to state and national rates (6 percent and 5 percent, respectively). The district’s rate is 3 percentage points and 4 percentage points above state and national rates, respectively.
- **OHI.** Fifteen percent of CCSD students with OHI are in this setting, compared to state and national rates (11 percent and 9 percent, respectively). The district’s rate is 4 percentage points and 6 percentage points above state and national rates, respectively.
- **Autism.** Forty-six percent of CCSD students with autism are in this setting, compared to the state and national rates (40 percent and 34 percent, respectively). The district’s rate is 6 percentage points and 12 percentage points above state and national rates, respectively.
- **ED.** Thirty-three percent of CCSD students with ED are in this setting, compared to state and national rates (26 percent and 18 percent, respectively). The district’s rate is 7 percentage points and 15 percentage points above state and national rates, respectively.
- **ID.** Eighty-seven percent of CCSD students with an intellectual disability are in this setting, compared to state and national rates (77 percent and 49 percent, respectively). The district’s rate is 10 percentage points and 38 percentage points below state and national rates.

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Exhibit 3r. Students by Disability in General Education Less Than 40% of the Time 80%

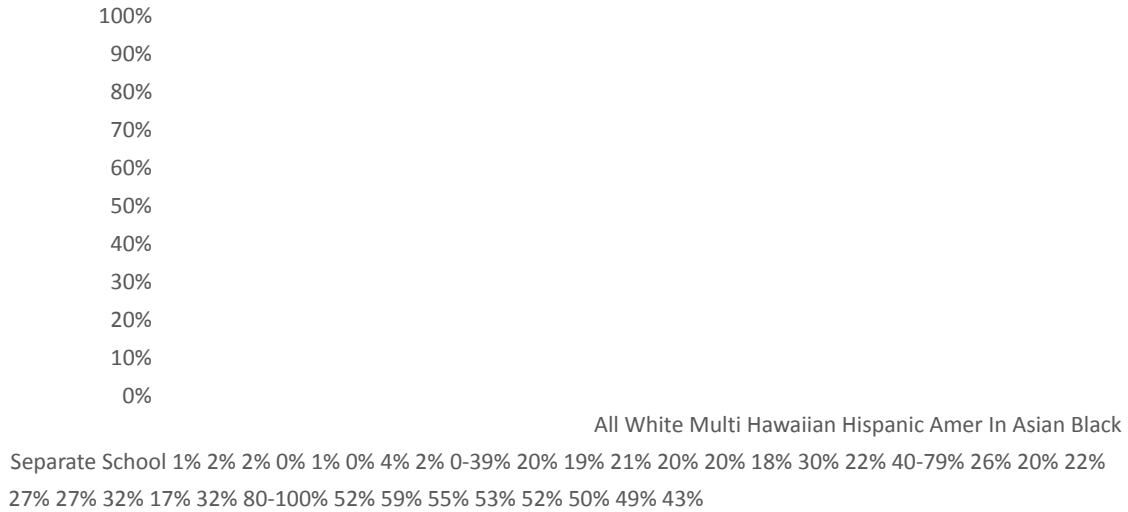


Race/Ethnicity

Exhibit 3s shows rates in the four educational environments by race/ethnicity. Although

percentages by race/ethnicity and setting vary somewhat. no single group of students is more than twice as likely as any other group to be placed in a particular educational setting.⁶¹

Exhibit 3s. Educational Setting Percentages by Race/Ethnicity



Race/Ethnicity Disproportionality by Grade Level

The Reschly report analyzed racial/ethnic disproportionality by educational setting and by grade level using a risk ratio measure. That analysis found no disproportionality at the elementary or middle school levels. However, Black students at the high school level were more likely than other students to be educated in general education from 40 percent to 79 percent of the time, and they were educated in general education less than 40 percent of the time (2.5 RR and 2.9 RR, respectively).

⁶¹ 2018-19 Reschly Special Education Disproportionality report, page 28.

Educational Settings by English Learner Status

As data in exhibit 3t show, percentages of all students with IEPs and those who are English learners and non-English learners are about the same in each educational setting. The rates for these groups in the four educational environments are presented below. Although there are some variations among all students, and among those who are and who are not ELL, English learners are not significantly more likely to be placed in any particular educational environment.

Exhibit 3t. Educational Setting Percentages by English Learner and Not-English Learner Status

60%
50%

40%
30%
20%
10%
0%

80-100% 40-79% 0-39% Separate School

All 52% 26% 20% 1% EL 47% 30% 22% 1% Not EL 55% 24% 20% 2%

ELL/Not-ELL Disproportionality by Grade Level

The Reschly report also analyzed placement data by grade level and ELL status. This analysis revealed no disproportionality at the elementary school level; however, disparities were present at the middle and high school levels.

- **Middle School.** ELLs were more likely than students who are not ELLs to be educated in general education 40 percent to 79 percent of the time, and less than 40 percent of the time (3.2 RR and 2.9 RR, respectively.)
- **High School.** Compared to non-ELLs, English learners were most likely to be instructed in general education from 40 percent to 79 percent of the time (2.8 RR) and in a separate school (2.5 RR).

Suspension Rates and Unexcused Absences

Another critical issue that affects the achievement of students receiving special education is their time out of school due to suspensions and/or unexcused absences. In both areas, students with IEPs were missing time in school at rates higher than their nondisabled peers, and Black/African American students (with and without disabilities) were missing school due to suspensions at rates higher than other racial/ethnic groups.

Suspensions

Data below show risk ratios among students with IEPs who receive an out-of-school suspension (OSS) or in-school suspension (ISS), and risk ratios among students with IEPs by race/ethnicity.

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Students with IEPs

Exhibit 3u shows risk ratio data for students with IEPs, compared to those without IEPs who received an OSS or ISS by the number of days suspended. The district has two models for in-school suspension. The in-house suspension (HIS) model is for less than 10 days. It can be in a room located within the school building and includes instruction. The temporary education program (TEP) may be housed in a separate building on school campus (e.g., a portable) and is for 10 days or more. According to a district representative, “Teachers come in every hour to

provide instruction.” However, this is site specific and not generalized across schools.

- **OSS.** Students with IEPs are more likely than students without IEPs to be suspended, and the risk is highest for suspensions lasting more than 30 days: 1 to 10 days (2.05 RR), more than 10 days (2.08 risk ratio), 21-30 days (2.60 RR), and 31-50 days (4.10).
- **ISS.** Students with IEPs do not receive an in-school suspension at disproportionately high rates. However, at 1.78 the risk ratio is highest for ISSs of 31-50 days.

Exhibit 3u. IEP Risk Ratios for Out-of-School Suspensions and In-School Suspensions



Students with IEPs by Race/Ethnicity

Data in exhibit 3r show risk ratios for students with IEPs by race/ethnicity and by total number of OSSs and ISSs. ⁶² For both OSS and ISS, Black students are suspended at a disproportionately higher rate, compared to other students. No other racial/ethnic group of students is nearly at risk.

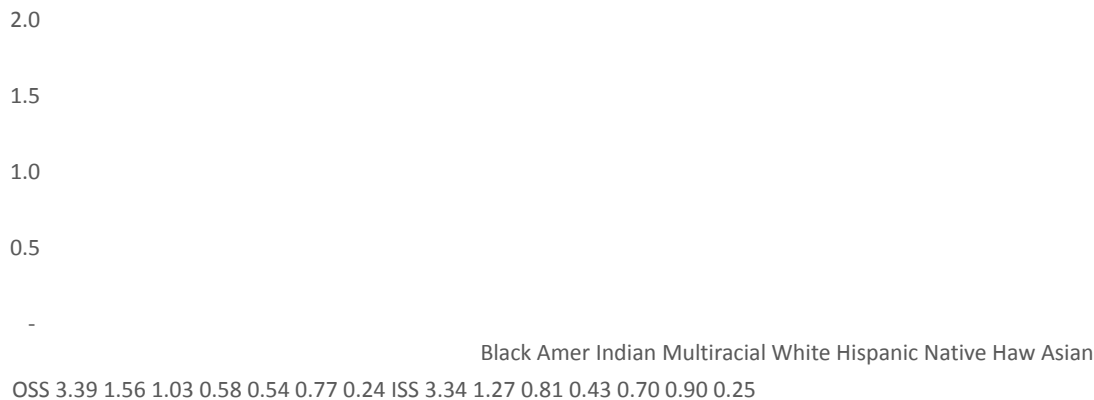
- **OSS.** Black students are 3.39 times more likely than other students with IEPs to receive an out-of-school suspension. American Indian students have the next highest risk ratio at 1.56.
- **ISS.** Black students are 3.34 times more likely than other students with IEPs to receive an in-school suspension. American Indian students have the next highest risk ratio of 1.27.

⁶² The district did not provide the Council team with data grouped by the number of days of suspension. OSS includes “out-of-school with instruction.” Under this model the student is not on the school campus but instruction is still provided. The Council team considered this model to be an OSS as under the IDEA students with IEPs must continue to receive educational services according to legal parameters. Abbreviations: Native Haw is Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Exhibit 3v. IEP Racial/Ethnic Risk Ratios for Out-of-School Suspensions and In-School

Suspensions 3.5

3.0
2.5



Percentages of Students with/without IEPs by Race/Ethnicity

Data in exhibit 3w show the percentages of students by race/ethnicity who received an OSS or an ISS by IEP or no IEP. By far, a much larger percentage of Black students with IEPs and Black students without IEPs received an OSS or ISS, compared to students from other racial/ethnic groups.

- **OSS/IEP.** Forty percent of Black students with IEPs received an OSS, compared to the next highest rate of 26 percent among American Indian students with IEPs.
- **OSS/No IEP.** Twenty-four percent of Black students without IEPs received an OSS, compared to the next highest rate of 10 percent among American Indian students without IEPs.
- **ISS/IEP.** More than half (51 percent) of Black students with IEPs received an ISS, compared to the next highest rate of 28 percent among American Indian students with IEPs.
- **ISS/No IEP.** Thirty-nine percent of Black students without IEPs received an ISS, compared to the next highest rate of 15 percent among multiracial students without IEPs.

The percentages among Black students with/without IEPs in each of the four above categories are higher than students of any other race/ethnicity. Rates for American Indian students are also higher in all four categories than the remaining race/ethnicities: OSSs for American Indian students with/without IEPs are 26 percent and 10 percent, respectively. In-school suspension rates for American Indian students with/without IEPs are 28 percent and 13 percent, respectively.