

Rhode Island Department of Education Office of Student, Community and Academic Supports

# **School Support System Report and Support Plan**

# Pathways Strategic Teaching Center March 2021



#### SCHOOL SUPPORT SYSTEM A Collaborative System of Focused Monitoring

#### Introduction

The purpose of the School Support System (SSS) is to provide a means of accountability for delivery of programs and services for students with exceptionalities. The School Support System model is designed to promote the involvement of the whole school district, general educators as well as special educators and parents. It is designed to learn if the district meets the regulations and what effects programs and services have on student outcomes. Finally, the SSS develops a school support plan for training and technical assistance.

To accomplish this the SSS includes these components:

- <u>The Orientation Meeting</u>: The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) staff meets the Local Education Agency (LEA) to plan the site review and identify issues or initiatives that may influence programs or service delivery.
- Data Analysis Meeting: The RIDE staff meets to review LEA demographic information on selected reports including: the LEA annual plan, census information, and information collected through record review, staff questionnaires and parent interviews. To ensure that the child is at the center of the study, all analyses begin with the child. Thus, a sample of approximately 20 students with exceptionalities is selected; the records of these students are reviewed; their parents, teachers and related service providers are interviewed, and their classrooms are observed. The result is an in-depth, unified examination of the actual provision of programs and services for students with exceptionalities. The RIDE staff compiles a preliminary summary of their analyses of this data.
- <u>Presentation by the LEA and School Site Review</u>: The on-site review begins with a presentation of programs by teachers and staff. The presentation provides the review team with general and specific information on delivery of programs and services to students. Following this presentation, on-site reviews to all schools are made. The team embers interview school administrators and teaching staff. Parents and central office staff are also interviewed. The team gathers sufficient information and works with the LEA personnel to generate a report, covering the following:
  - o The district's compliance with the state and federal regulations, relative to the education of students with exceptionalities.
  - $_{\odot}$  The quality and effectiveness of programs and services provided by the district.
  - The need for professional development and technical assistance that will enable the LEA to improve programs and services.
- <u>The Support Plan</u>: The Ride team, LEA central office and building administrators meet to review the data and complete a report of results. The group designs a professional development/technical assistance support plan with timelines for implementation. This plan enables the school and district to correct areas of non-compliance and to strengthen promising programs and correct areas of weakness in order to improve services and programs for all students.
- <u>The SSS Report:</u> The report summarizes the findings from the various data sources. The format of the report uses four divisions: Indictors, Findings, Documentation, and Support Plan. Indicators describe either performance or compliance. Findings can include a variety of some six categories, from School Improvement to Free Appropriate Pubic Education in the Least Restrictive Environment. The documentation section of the report distinguishes the source of the finding. The support plan reflects the response to the described findings. The support plan describes the corrective action by the district as well as resources and time lines to improve programs and services.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- 2. Evaluation/Individual Education Program (IEP)
- 3. IDEA Transition

Nonpublic School School Support System Review

**Team Member** 

<u>Team A</u> – Susan Wood, Sandra Cambio Gregoire

The RIDE, Office of Student, Community & Academic Supports School Support System process was facilitated to provide a means of accountability for delivery of programs and services to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. The following pages reflect the findings of that process.

#### 1. FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (FAPE/LRE)

Indicator		Findings	Support Plan
Result	1	The RIDE, Office of Students, Community & Academic Supports School Support System process was facilitated to provide a means of accountability for delivery of programs and services to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. The following pages reflect the findings of that process.	
Result	2	Program Overview	
		<b><u>VISION</u></b> Pathways Strategic Teaching Center is an education and treatment program designed to maximize independence and enhance the lives of children with autism and other developmental disorders.	
		<b><u>MISSION</u></b> Pathways Strategic Teaching Center is dedicated to providing state-of-the-art, scientifically validated, educational and treatment services.	
		Pathways Strategic Teaching Center relies on evidence based, humane and ethical reinforcement-based teaching and treatment procedures to maximize learning outcomes for the children served.	
		Pathways Strategic Teaching Center assists families and educators in pursuing success for their children in home, school, and community settings.	
		Pathways Strategic Teaching Center is committed to training education and human services professionals in state-of-the art education and treatment practices and contributing to the scientific literature in autism education and treatment.	
		Intake Process All referrals to Pathways should be made in writing by the local educational agency (LEA) of the city or town in which the child resides.	
		Upon receipt of the referral from the Local Education Agency (LEA), the	

admissions team will review the information to determine if the child is suitable for the program. After information is reviewed, an intake screening will be scheduled with the potential student and parents/guardians. The team will schedule an observation of the child at home or in their educational program. If the student is eligible, they may be invited for an in-class visit before a final decision is made on appropriate placement.	
If the team is in agreement that the child's educational/therapeutic needs can best be met by Pathways, the Director of Clinical and Educational Services or Special Education Director will notify the LEA. Notification will be made by telephone as well as in writing to expedite the starting date and transportation. The telephone call will be followed by a letter of acceptance indicating the schools hours of operation, school calendar, and tuition costs. The intake person will notify the parents of their child's acceptance and set up the records.	
If the program is fully enrolled at the time of referral, the student may be placed on a waiting list after the information review. Pathways will notify the appropriate school district of the waiting list. When an opening occurs, the student and parent/guardian will be invited to complete the intake process.	
If the team finds that Pathways Strategic Teaching Center is unable to best service the child, the Director of Clinical and Educational Services or Special Education Director will so inform the LEA.	
Brogram Description	
Program Description Pathways Strategic Teaching Center (Pathways) is fully certified by the Rhode Island Department of Education and approved by the Massachusetts Department of Education as an out-of-state special education school. Pathways is a comprehensive education and treatment program serving children with autism spectrum and other related disorders.	
Founded in 1998 through a collaborative effort between the J. Arthur Trudeau Memorial Center and local parents of children with autism, Pathways is committed to utilizing scientifically validated teaching strategies to improve the lives of individuals with autism and their families.	
Education and treatment strategies are based on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), an organized, data driven and systematic approach that has been demonstrated effective in building skills as well as treating challenging behavior. Individually tailored curricula address speech and language, pre-academic and academic skills, daily living and self-care skills,	

	play and social skills, as well as the assessment and treatment of challenging behaviors. The Pathways program offers the following components:	
	<ul> <li>Collaboration with Public School System to incorporate learning in typical educational environments.</li> <li>Intensive staff to student ratios.</li> <li>Scientifically based teaching methods implemented by Board Certified Behavior Analysts, Certified Special Education Teachers and Related Service Providers.</li> <li>A comprehensive system of student assessment and evaluation that allows for daily refinement of individualized student lessons.</li> <li>Continuous staff training and supervision to maintain a high level of staff performance and yield maximum outcomes for students.</li> <li>Collaboration with parents to maximize student outcomes in natural environments, the home and the community.</li> <li>Consultation to local education agencies serving children with autism and other developmental disorders.</li> <li>Educational and training opportunities for families and others in the community, addressing challenges common to children with autism and other developmental disabilities.</li> </ul>	
Result 3	Student Support and Intervention         Related services include speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. Students receive related services as prescribed in their IEPs. Revisions or requests for additional services to the IEP may be initiated through a referral process, which involves a formal team meeting with the LEA. Related services are provided using a trans- disciplinary collaboration model. Staff work together as a team, across disciplines, to provide effective services. This approach is considered best practice for serving individuals with special needs. The unique environment at Pathways provides each student with one-on-one attention. Through this collaborative approach, staff are trained to work on skills that address each students' individual needs in multiple settings throughout the day. Collaboration involves team planning and implementation. The team process enables students to receive more practice each day than would occur using a pull-out model. It also ensures skills learned and practiced are functional, occurring in natural situations, and generalized across multiple settings.	

#### Speech and Language Therapy

Speech-language therapy focuses on a broad range of verbal and non-verbal communication skills. Goals are determined through collaboration with staff and family. Therapy is two-fold: speech therapy and language therapy. Speech therapy may focus on proper sound, syllable or word production, as well as sound combinations in order to verbally express one's thoughts, wants and needs. Language therapy may focus on verbal and/or non-verbal language in the areas of social language, language comprehension and expression, grammar and vocabulary. All individual goals are set to increase a student's independence in developing new skills and practicing learned skills throughout their day.

#### **Occupational Therapy**

Occupational therapy focuses on helping people function to their fullest potential in their environment. It consists of the examination of a student's participation in school-related tasks. A plan is developed to increase participation through task or environmental adaptation, remediation of skills and consultation with service providers in order to promote maximum independence. Some of the schoolrelated skills that the occupational therapist addresses are: fine motor skills, visual motor skills, social skills, self-help skills, self-modulation and gross motor skills.

#### **Physical Therapy**

Physical therapy consists of the examination of students in the school environment to determine what limits their ability to move and perform functional activities. A plan is then developed to help promote maximum independence with all activities, improve function, and increase age-appropriate skills within a school day. Some of these skills may be: riding a bike, climbing stairs, accessing all playground equipment, or participating in physical education class with peers.

#### **Curriculum**

The curriculum is aligned to the Common Core State Standards and the Essential Elements. The Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills-Revised, the Verbal Behavior Milestones and Placement Program, the Assessment of Functional Living Skills, the Unique Learning Curriculum and News2you are also used as curriculum guides and tracking systems. Curricula are individually tailored using the latest research to address speech and language, pre-academic and academic skills, daily living and self-care skills, play and social skills, and the assessment and treatment of challenging behavior.

Currici	ulum Domains	
	Academics – Focus on applied skills within the English Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Art, Health and Adapted Physical Education.	
	a. Mathematics – The math curriculum focuses on functional application of math skills and is aligned to the CCSS/EE.	
	<ul> <li>English Language Arts – The English Language Arts curriculum focuses on the acquisition of reading and written language skills and is aligned to the CCSS/EE.</li> </ul>	
	c. Science – The science curriculum focuses on acquisition of literacy skills in science knowledge for students and is aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards/Essential Elements (Physical, Life and Earth/Space Science). The alignment tools from the unique curriculum and news2you are used to provide differentiated instruction to address skills from students in grades K through 12.	
	d. Social Studies/History – The curriculum focuses on the acquisition of literacy skills in social studies/history. The alignment tools from the unique curriculum and news2you are used to provide differentiated instruction to address skills from students in grades K through 12.	
	e. Art – The art curriculum is aligned to the Rhode Island Arts Grade Span Expectations K-12 Visual Arts & Design. All students in grades pre-K through grade 12 received small group art instruction once a week from a certified art teacher.	
Training teachei	assessment data og on Aligning IEP goals to the Essential Elements was provided to all rs and SLPs in January 2021. Gap analysis and use of tested essential ots (DLM) provide guidance on prioritizing areas to be addressed/IEP	
Pathwa langua	entions and supports ays utilizes a variety of intervention techniques to improve skills in ge arts and math to include :Reading A to Z, Orton Gillingham, IXL Math, Math as well as the intervention resources within the Unique Learning	

System.	
Instructional techniques (discrete trial, naturalistic teaching, direct instruction, modeling, self-management, behavioral interventions, visual schedules and functional communication) utilized are evidenced based and proven to be effective in increasing skills for students with autism.	
Students also have access to a variety of low tech and high tech augmentative and alternative communication systems based on method of communication identified through assessments and trials (PECS, PODD, Flip- n-Talk, topic boards, object symbol systems, Lamp Words for Life, Proloquo,2go, Lamp, GoTalk Now, Clicker and Touch Chat)	
<b>Clinical Supports and Services</b> The clinical staff consists of a trans-disciplinary group including the Special Education Director, Board Certified and Licensed Behavior Analysts, Supervising Educators, Lead Behavior Technicians, Behavior Specialists, one- to-one staff to student ratio of Behavior Technicians. Outside clinical consultation is also utilized for when requested and determined appropriate by the treatment team (BCBA-D and licensed clinical psychologist). The Behavior Analysts are nationally credentialed by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board as Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) and licensed in MA and RI. Behavior Analysts are responsible for crisis intervention, staff training, behavioral assessment, behavior intervention plan development, treatment integrity, and data analysis. Data collection occurs on a daily basis. This enables the trans-disciplinary team to regularly monitor and evaluate effectiveness.	
Social Emotional Learning Pathways Strategic Teaching Center is comprehensive education and treatment program based on the principles of applied behavior analysis. The Behavior Analysts conduct a thorough Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) which includes reviewing background information, consulting with parents and teachers, collecting behavioral data, and conducting functional assessments. Treatment is conceptualized according to the hypothesis about functional relationships formulated during the assessment process. Intervention procedures are detailed in an individualized behavior protocol known as a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). The BIP is developed to prevent and decrease problem behavior while maintaining and increasing appropriate behavior. Interventions are based on the sound principles of behavior analysis.	

		Pathways utilizes proactive positive interventions and behavior reductions strategies. Interventions are described in detail in each student's Behavior Intervention Plan. Zones of Regulation - The Zones curriculum is a systematic, cognitive behavior approach used to teach self-regulation by categorizing all the different ways we feel and states of alertness we experience into four concrete zones. The Zones curriculum provides strategies to teach students to become more aware of, and independent in controlling their emotions and impulses, managing their sensory needs, and improving their ability to problem solve conflicts. Social Thinking Curriculum (Michelle Garcia Winner), which utilizes evidence- based strategies to improve their social competencies, including self-regulation, social-emotional learning, executive functioning, perspective taking and social problem solving. Use of grade level SEL standards and indicators (self-awareness, self- management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making) to develop goals based on identified needs. <b>School Removals/Disciplinary Policies</b> Policies and practices for behavior management are outlined in the parent handbook. <b>Crisis Management</b> All staff working directly with students are required to be trained in the <b>Safety</b> <b>Care®</b> program. <b>Safety Care® is a verbal and physical de-escalation</b> <b>program developed by *QBS, Inc.</b> All strategies and procedures utilized in Safety Care® are implemented in a precise fashion according to specified criteria designed to maintain the highest respect for human dignity. The focus is on prevention, and Safety Care® utilizes a least to most restrictive model for implementing crisis management.	
Result	4	Program Continuum Pathways Strategic Teaching Center provides comprehensive treatment and education services to special education students age 3 through 22 grades PK through 12/Transition. Programming is offered in the Coventry site for grades preschool through 8 and in the Warwick location for high school and transition students. Students currently enrolled are diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Down Syndrome, Landau-Kleffner Syndrome and TBI. The current enrollment is 83 students, with a maximum class size of 10 students. All staff are trained in the principles of applied behavior analysis and provide evidence-	

	<ul> <li>based programming in 1:1 and small group settings.</li> <li>Related services (Speech and OT) are usually provided utilizing a push in model in small groups and individualized sessions. APE and PT services are typically provided utilizing a pull-out model within the gymnasium/multipurpose room for individual and group sessions. Co-treat models of support are often provided across disciplines.</li> <li>Decisions regarding placement in a less restrictive environment are made by the IEP team and based on careful analysis of data in the following areas: academic, behavioral, social/emotional, communication, daily living skills and vocational. The transition assessment from the Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP) is one of the measures used to assess a student's readiness for placement in a less restrictive environment. As students transition from Pathways back to their home school district, Pathways provides support to assist in this process. Transition to a least restrictive environment. Support services are provided in the form of direct 1:1 staff from a Consulting Behavior Technicians (CBTs). The CBTs also train the staff within the district to allow for fading of the additional support when appropriate. Additional clinical support form BCBAs is available as needed.</li> </ul>	
Result	<ul> <li>Adaptive Physical Education (APE)</li> <li>Pathways Strategic Teaching Center employs two full-time Adaptive Physical Education/Health Teachers. The staff are certified by the Rhode Island Department of Education.</li> <li>Adaptive Physical Education – The adapted physical education curriculum focuses on the development of knowledge and skills necessary to maintaining physical fitness and the participation in physical activity. The curriculum addresses the 3 content areas – Movement, Personal Fitness and Personal and Social Responsibility and the six standards which include: <ul> <li>Competency and proficiency in movement forms</li> <li>Learning and development of motor skills</li> <li>Implications and benefits of physical activity</li> <li>Maintain a physically active lifestyle</li> <li>Responsible personal and social behavior in physical activity settings</li> <li>Understand internal and external environments influence physical activity</li> </ul> </li> <li>Health Education – The Health curriculum focuses on the development of functional skills necessary to maintain a healthy lifestyle and are aligned to the RI Health Education Standards which include the following outcomes:</li> </ul>	

		<ul> <li>Personal Health</li> <li>Mental and Emotional Health</li> <li>Nutrition</li> <li>Sexuality and Family Life</li> <li>Disease Prevention and Control</li> <li>Substance Use and Prevention</li> </ul>	
Result	6	Extended School Year (ESY)Pathways is a full year nonpublic special education program. There are five weeks the program is closed for students during the school year in December, February, April, July and August. Decisions regarding Extended School Year are made by the IEP team during the annual IEP review. The ESY schedule mirrors the school year program providing special education services 5 days a week, 6 hours a day.Documentation:Data Analysis; Interviews	
Result	7	Parent Engagement         Pathways currently continue to provide parent support groups through a virtual format. Open discussions as well as topic specific trainings have been provided to parents. Options for families to interact socially will be explored once the COVID restrictions are lifted. Information is provided to parents on SELAC meetings within their community/district at IEP meetings.         Pathways emphasizes the importance of parent communication and provides daily updates on students' progress to parents through home notes. In addition, monthly parent meetings are scheduled with parents and home-based staff to review progress and coordinate services in both settings.         Pathways also provides parent training on crisis intervention techniques. This training includes prevention and responsive strategies, as well as the development of a Family Safety Plan and a subset of Safety-Care physical skills to assist families with managing challenging behaviors in the home.	

### 2. EVALUATION / INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

Indicator		Findings	Support Plan
Indicator Result	1	Findings         Student Accommodations and Modifications         Pathways Strategic Teaching Center utilizes PowerSchool as its special education case management system. Most IEP documents are created within this web-based program and accessible by all teachers, related service professionals and behavior analysts. In addition, Pathways utilizes a few other web-based IEP programs assigned to students by the sending district (Aspen, Frontline). The MA documents are shared with team members on the network as well as through Microsoft Teams. In addition, team members meet to collaborate on the IEP development prior to the meeting and meet monthly to follow up on their caseload as well as to provide the consultation services noted in the IEP.         Documentation: Data Analysis; Interviews; Document Reviews	Support Plan
Compliance	2	Specific Compliance Issues         The hands on/tactile cueing component of PROMPT speech services have         been temporarily placed on hold due to COVID restrictions. Awaiting additional         guidance from the PROMPT institute, CDC and DOH to resume services.         Compensatory services will be revisited at that time.         Documentation:       Interviews; Record Review	Compensatory services for hand on cueing via PROMPT will be provided as soon as the CDC allows for hand on cueing to occur once. <b>Timeline</b> : Immediately and ongoing <b>Progress Check:</b> February 2022 <b>FOLLOW-UP FINDINGS:</b> Compensatory services for hands on cueing via PROMPT were implemented as of 8/4/21 through an increase in speech services. PROMPT services were added and total service delivery increased from 3 times a week to 5 times a week. This increase in speech services was addressed through an IEP amendment.

### 3. IDEA TRANSITION

Indicator		Findings	Support Plan
Result	1	IDEA Transition Planning	
	1		Support Plan
		determined eligible, contract with a vendor to conduct vocational assessments	

		process for ORS and BHDDH in conjunction with the transition coordinator. Both agencies are invited to transition IEP/CDP meetings. BHDDH/RIPIN packets are sent to the families of students ages 14-16/17 (which also include the ORS brochure). The transition coordinator also reviews the information in the packets with families. A representative from BHDDH attends IEP/CDP meetings for students 16 years 10 months through age 20. The assigned BHDDH social case worker attends at age 20 until the students exits. The referral and application process is tracked and monitored by the transition coordinator, who attends all transition IEP/CDP meetings. ORS referrals are typically completed at age 18 for students enrolled through age 22. Pre-ETS application is completed for students once they are able to benefit from employment services and supports. Pathways staff provide some of the Pre-ETS services (job exploration).	
Result	3	Summary of Performance (SOP) is facilitated by the case managers as appropriate. The Summary of Performance meeting is scheduled for students prior to exiting the program. The IEP team is invited to this meeting to include ORS, BHDDH and adult service agency representatives. The special education director and designee are directly responsible for scheduling the SOP meeting prior to students exiting the program. The special education teacher/case manager completes this document with input from all team members. Documentation: Interviews; Document Review	