



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

School Support System Report and Support Plan

Sheila C. “Skip” Nowell Leadership Academy

October, 2014

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:

- **The Orientation Meeting:** 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 30 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.

- **Presentation by the LEA and School Site Review:** 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 members 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:
 - The district's compliance with the state and federal regulations, relative to the education of students with exceptionalities.
 - 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.

- **The Support Plan:** 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.

- **The SSS Report:** The report summarizes the findings from the various data sources. The format of the report uses four divisions: Indicators, 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 Public 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

**Sheila C. “Skip” Nowell Leadership Academy
School Support System Review**

Team Members

Team A – Susan Wood

Team B – Jane Keane

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	<p>Least Restrictive Environment Data (State Performance Plan Indicator #5)</p> <p>Based on the FY July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012 State Performance Plan information on Nowell Leadership Academy Placement is as follows:</p> <p>The percentage of students educated 80 to 100% of the time in general education settings is 100% (RI District Average is 63.12%)</p> <p>Percentage of students educated for less than 40% of the time in general education settings is 0% (RI District Average is 16.60%)</p> <p>Percentage of students educated in private separate schools, homebound/hospitalized and private residential schools is 0% (RI District Average is 6.76%)</p> <p><i>Documentation: Data Analysis; State Performance Plan</i></p>	
Result	2	<p>Participation and performance of children with IEPs on statewide assessments (State performance Plan Indicator #3):</p> <p>As the Nowell Leadership Academy is a relatively new charter school with a small “n” size, thus, this information is not available for public reporting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The district (disability subgroup that meets the State’s minimum “n” size) did meet the state’s AYP targets for the disability subgroup. B. Participation rate for children with IEPs na%. C. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade level, modified and alternate academic achievements standards na% [Note: State has individual grade and content area targets (28%). State target is average target across grades and content areas. District target is average percent of students proficient across content areas (na%).] <p><i>Documentation: Data Analysis; State Performance Plan</i></p>	

Result	3	<p>Mission and Instructional Approach</p> <p>The mission of the Shelia C. "Skip" Nowell Leadership Academy is: "...to increase the educational achievement of at-risk high school students in Rhode Island by providing a comprehensive high school program that addresses and breaks down the barriers to high school attendance and completion that are related to teenage pregnancy and parenting, family care-taking responsibilities, domestic abuse, lack of family support and other family-related challenges. Nowell Leadership Academy is sponsored by the YWCA Rhode Island."</p> <p>Students at the both campuses are in very small groups with individualized learning plans per the needs and schedules of the students. If students need academic interventions it is very individualized. Grad Point is the technology platform that is used for the online aspect of the curriculum. The content online is at grade level so if a student is struggling it can be challenging to access the grade level materials. To this end, the lead math teacher has developed supplemental study guides and note taking vehicles for students to access the math content. This is reported to be very helpful for students.</p> <p>School faculty are engaged in analyzing student data such as the STAR, NECAP, teacher generated assessments, student work and performance along with classroom observations to discuss instructional strategies and cross content area planning.</p> <p><i>Documentation: Data Analysis; Interviews; Observation</i></p>	
Result	4	<p>Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Response to Intervention (RTI)/ Academics</p> <p>High School Level</p> <p>At both Central and Capital the MTSS process is in the beginning stages of development. School administrators along with staff have recently redesigned their multi-tier system of support which includes the development of protocols, procedures and practice. Documents have been established to address referral, documentation of specific data that's been collected over the last six weeks, a Likert Scale addressing student characteristics, interventions, recommendations and follow up.</p> <p>A "Tier I Intervention Checklist" of suggested core engagement and teaching strategies has been developed although it is unclear why this is referred to as "intervention checklist" when they are best practice elements of the core (proactive and preventative). The Tier II and III spreadsheet document lists measurements as interventions (Example: STAR is a measurement not an intervention and should not be listed as such.). Interventions should be tied to an individual student goal, typically narrow in scope and tied to a specific ongoing measurement. Tier II measurements can occur monthly with Tier III measurements occurring weekly or every other week.</p>	<p>Staff at Nowell will revise and refine their MTSS protocols, procedures and practices as appropriate. Professional development will be provided to staff on the revisions and refinements.</p> <p>Timeline: November 2015</p> <p>Progress Check: April 2015</p> <p><u>FOLLOW-UP FINDINGS:</u></p>

		<p>Clarification of this document is suggested.</p> <p>The MTSS team meets weekly to address both academic and behavioral interventions planning. MTSS professional development is ongoing. Staff noted that students were referred to the MTSS team last year yet no one reviewed the referrals or made follow up plans.</p> <p>Use of student assessment and performance data such as standardized testing and reporting (STAR) was seen in the some of the student’s files and teachers spoke about the STAR testing in general. This progress monitoring tool is facilitated for both math and reading in January, April and June. This school year Star will be administered four times. Teachers are required to do literacy for 30 minutes per week (per subject) and a literacy specialist was contracted from the Learning Community to assist in this endeavor. Plans are underway to revamp the literacy interventions this year. Using the STAR data, PLPs will be developed for students as that had not occurred last year. The literacy specialist will be working with the teachers this October to finalize the PLP implementation process.</p> <p>Math interventions last year included 30 minutes per week literacy intervention with a math vocabulary focus and a math teacher co-teaching with a special educator. This year a “Go College Go Math Success” is the targeted math intervention class. Currently there is one math interventionist/teaching partner* at Central campus that assists with this endeavor. The other math interventionist/teaching partner* was emergency certified as a math teacher at Capital campus. A math specialist has been contracted with the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth to work with the math team. Math intervention class occurs during the first block in the afternoon at Central and in the morning at Capital.</p> <p>“*Teaching partner” is the term Nowell uses for a teacher assistant. These individuals all have college degrees but they are not certified as educators and may or may not have a degree in the core content area in which they provide support and/or intervention.</p> <p><i>Documentation: Data Analysis; State Performance Plan</i></p>	
Result	5	<p>SPP Disproportionate Representation (State Performance Plan Indicator #9 and #10)</p> <p>As the Nowell Leadership Academy is a relatively new charter school with a small “n” size, thus, this information is not available for public reporting.</p> <p><i>Documentation: Data Analysis; State Performance Plan</i></p>	

Result	6	<p>Suspension (State Performance Plan Indicator #4): Significant discrepancy in the rate of suspensions (for students with IEPs) greater than 10 days as compared to the rate of suspensions (for students without IEPs) greater than 10 days.</p> <p>As the Nowell Leadership Academy is a relatively new charter school with a small “n” size, thus, this information is not available for public reporting.</p> <p><i>Documentation: Data Analysis; State Performance Plan</i></p>	
Result	7	<p>Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS)/Social Emotional Supports/Social Emotional Resources/Positive Behavioral Supports</p> <p>High School</p> <p>Both campuses implement a number of opportunities for students to engage in social emotional learning and character education. The school community has implemented the student focused SKIP (strengths, knowledge, integrity and purpose) initiative. To that end activities supporting this philosophy include but are not limited to the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The advisory program / relationship development • Block two activities - Healthy Relationship groups which includes expressive writing activities using the Writers Workshop model; Health Instruction and Senior Project /Capstone activities • Individualization/Personalization • Attendance Incentive Program <p>Both Nowell campuses utilize Providence Behavioral Health Associates (PBHA) as the contracted entity for their counseling and social/emotional support services. Twice a month the PBHA psychologist sits in on the MTSS meetings and reviews the student’s social/emotional needs and challenges per PBHA’s testing results. The school has made the decision that PBHA will provide psychological testing (Wechsler Individual Achievement Test) as well as educational testing (Woodcock Johnston Test of Cognitive Abilities) for all students. Teachers reported that these tests were used as the basis for their differentiated instructional practices. Further, there are plans to have PBHA facilitate, for all students, a mental health screening tool to assist in the identification of student anxiety levels and what social/emotional supports may be needed. The PBHA team (clinical psychologist and two psychology interns) in conjunction with the school counselor, provide the wrap-around supports including individual counseling, counseling per the student’s IEP, student advocacy, community agency supports and interventions.</p>	<p>a.) Staff at Nowell will revise and refine their MTSS protocols, procedures and practices as appropriate. Professional development will be provided to staff on the revisions and refinements.</p> <p>b.) Nowell administration will ensure that students are receiving their services per the IEP by individuals who are appropriately certified via RIDE.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediately and ongoing. November 2015</p> <p>Progress Check: April 2015</p> <p><u>FOLLOW-UP FINDINGS:</u></p>

Compliance		<p>Next trimester additional activities will include art, conflict solution groups, and pregnancy and parenting classes with additional topics based on student input and need.</p> <p>a.) It is unclear how the IEP team and evaluation process intersects with this as all students are required to receive these two standardized tests regardless of need determined via the IEP process. The rationale is that the standardized testing and the anxiety screening tool are all part of the schools wrap-around services although the wrap-around services that it provides are primarily connected to the contracted entity that facilitates the testing. Wrap-around services are listed as Tier III (the most intensive level) on the Nowell MTSS spreadsheet so it is unclear why all students would then receive these tests and screenings. Further, there was no evidence in the record reviews or through interviews of an understanding of how to progress monitor to inform instruction versus standardized test information to inform instruction, progress monitor for specific learning disabilities determination or progress monitor in regard to the evaluation and reevaluation process in general RIGL §300.307-§300.311. b.) Further, it is unclear if the individual from PBHA, who is providing on-site psychological services and supports for students with IEPs (at both school locations) has appropriate RIDE certification as a school psychologist. RIGL §300.156.</p> <p>School Removals/Disciplinary Policies. Throughout the district behavioral expectations along with disciplinary action protocols and policies are defined in a student handbook. Behavioral infractions have been aligned to tiered interventions supporting the disciplinary policies and the MTSS.</p> <p><i>Documentation: Data Analysis; Interviews; Observation</i></p>	
Result	8	<p>Preschool Continuum</p> <p>The Nowell Leadership Academy serves high school age students, thus, there is no preschool information to report.</p> <p>Indicator #6</p> <p>A. In this district, the percent of preschool children aged 3-4 with IEPs attending a general education early childhood program and receiving the majority of special education services in the general early childhood program was na%.</p> <p>B. The percent of children aged 3-5 with IEPs attending a separate special education</p>	

		<p>class, separate school or residential facility was na%</p> <p>State Performance Plan Indicator #7</p> <p>Statement 1. Of the preschool children who entered the preschool program below age expectations, the percentage who demonstrated substantial improvements by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships); na% ▪ Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/ communication and early literacy); na% and ▪ Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs na% <p>Statement 2. The percent of preschool children who were functioning within age expectations in each Outcome by the time they exited the program were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships); na% ▪ Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/ communication and early literacy); na% and ▪ Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs na% <p><i>Documentation: Data Analysis; State Performance Plan</i></p>	
Result	9	<p>Program Continuum Elementary Level</p> <p>The Nowell Leadership Academy serves high school age students, thus, there is no elementary level information to report.</p> <p><i>Documentation: Data Analysis; Interviews; Observation</i></p>	
Result	10	<p>Program Continuum Middle Level</p> <p>The Nowell Leadership Academy serves high school age students, thus, there is no middle level information to report</p> <p><i>Documentation: Data Analysis; Interviews; Observation</i></p>	

Result	11	<p>Program Continuum High School Level</p> <p>Nowell Leadership Academy is organized around the following guiding educational principles:</p> <p>“The curriculum is standards-based and incorporates both technology and project-based learning. Open classes with flexible hours and low student-teacher ratios, coupled with an advisory system; provide the personalized guidance needed to ensure student success.” The school engages in Senior Project and Capstone. “Teaching is focused on inquiry-based learning strategies utilizing blended learning that are responsive to the multiple intelligences and which incorporate the arts, technology, and an emphasis on social and emotional learning.”</p> <p>There are two campuses: Capital Campus in Providence and the Central Campus in Central Falls. There are currently approximately 80 students at each site (160 in total) with 42 confirmed as having an IEP, 23 at Capital and 18 at Central Campus. The district targets at risk, parenting and pregnant students. Once a week, in the morning, teachers at both campuses have common planning time when they will discuss student needs and issues. Teachers may refer students to the MTSS team (guidance, nurse, special education director, principal and related support staff). If a student is referred, a teacher represents the team at the MTSS meeting. Once a month they have a Saturday program for both campuses. Art is offered during this time as well as library hours (this is a time when students can get extra help on their academics).</p> <p>Specialized instruction is facilitated through an inclusive model. Students may be provided content area remediation, re-teaching, time to complete test/quizzes and or organizational management skills. Instructional supports are provided individual and/or as a small group instructional opportunity. Plans are underway to see if the special educators can build in a resource period into the schedule. This would be held during the wrap around time when students take electives, received interventions (PBHA behavioral health groups etc.). This time would be used for specialized instruction and transition related planning. Advisory occurs every day in the morning. Students eat breakfast and check in with advisors and do an activity or engage in discussion. Due to the small number of students advisory is usually whole school experience.</p> <p>The Capital campus (Providence) uses the Nickerson Center (located in the same building) as a preschool option.</p> <p>Home Learning. Some students are on home learning due to medical reasons prior to the birth. There also may be a maternity/paternity leave (for 2 weeks after the birth the parent is left alone academically although the school nurse checks in to support as appropriate etc.). After that for approximately 6-8 weeks lessons are delivered to the home.</p> <p><i>Documentation: Data Analysis; Interviews; Observation</i></p>	
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Result	12	<p>Adaptive Physical Education (APE)</p> <p>There is no physical education, per a RIDE waiver, although health is provided via the school/nurse teacher.</p> <p><i>Documentation: Data Analysis; Interviews; Observation</i></p>	
Result	13	<p>Extended School Year (ESY)</p> <p>Nowell Leadership Academy is based on a 16 week trimester. Students continue to receive their individualized instruction throughout the year.</p> <p><i>Documentation: Data Analysis; Interviews</i></p>	
Result/ Compliance	14	<p>Local Special Education Advisory Committee (LAC)</p> <p>At Nowell a LAC is in the process of getting off the ground. This LAC will represent both school sites. Last year there was one meeting at the Capital Campus. (RIGL §300.900).</p> <p><i>Documentation: Data Analysis; Interviews; Observation</i></p>	<p>Administration will ensure that a LAC is established per the Rhode Island regulations (RIGL §300.900).</p> <p>Timeline: Immediately and ongoing. November 2015.</p> <p>Progress Check: April 2015</p> <p><u>FOLLOW-UP FINDINGS:</u></p>
Result	15	<p>School Efforts to Partner with Parents (State Performance Plan Indicator #8)</p> <p>Nowell Leadership Academy is in their second year of existence so there is not yet data in this area.</p> <p><i>Documentation: Data Analysis; State Performance Plan</i></p>	

Result	16	Drop Out / Graduation Rate (State Performance Plan Indicator #1 and #2) Nowell Leadership Academy is in their second year of existence so there is not yet data in this area.	
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2. EVALUATION / INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

Indicator		Findings	Support Plan
Compliance	1	<p>Records of approximately four students were reviewed prior to the on-site review by the team leaders. Students' records were very accessible. The record review process identified by following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The records overall were very limited in content. Various forms invitations, team forms, parent consent for evaluations, vocational assessments and general follow up information was not present in most files. A process for procuring records from the sending districts should (if not already) be formalized and followed. - The student's special education teacher was not at the team meeting (apparently not invited) nor were any excusal forms seen in the file. - Limited information in the strengths and needs section. No measurable specifics provided. (§300.324) <p>The "Considerations" page of the IEP was not completed for all IEPs reviewed. (§300.324)</p> <p>-No progress monitoring information or data seen for student with specific learning disabilities determination. (§300.307-300.311)</p> <p>The school is now engaged with the electronic system "Tienet" so moving forward there will be more of a systemic approach to IEP writing. Professional development is ongoing.</p> <p><i>(RI Regulations Subpart D Evaluations, Eligibility Determinations, Individualized</i></p>	<p>Assurances will be provided to the Rhode Island Department of Education, Office of Student, Community and Academic Supports, that compliance issues are addressed and rectified. This Support Plan is applicable for all compliance findings in this section.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediately and ongoing. November 2015.</p> <p>Progress Check: April 2015</p> <p><u>FOLLOW-UP FINDINGS:</u></p>

		<p><i>Education Programs and Educational Placements)</i></p> <p><u>Documentation:</u> <i>Data Analysis; Interviews; Observation</i></p>	
Result	2	<p>Child Outreach</p> <p>The Nowell Leadership Academy serves high school age students, thus, there is no preschool information to report.</p>	
Result	3	<p>Child Find (State Performance Plan Indicator #11)</p> <p>The Nowell Leadership Academy serves high school age students, thus, there is no preschool information to report.</p>	
Result/ Compliance	4	<p>At the time of the review there was not a formalized process for special educators to provide general educators information on student accommodations, strengths and challenges. Staff interviewed have not received anything in writing for this school year. Administration reported that a template is being established to provide information regarding students' needs for instructional accommodations. RIGL §300.320</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u> <i>Data Analysis; Interviews; Document Reviews</i></p>	<p>A formalized process will be implemented to ensure that the general educators who serve students with IEPs are aware of the student's needed accommodations and modifications per the IEP.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediately and ongoing. November 2015.</p> <p>Progress Check: April 2015</p> <p><u>FOLLOW-UP FINDINGS:</u></p>
Result / Compliance	5	<p>Specific Learning Disabilities Determination (SLD)</p> <p>Staff were unclear with regard to the SLD determination criteria for initial and reevaluation determination and voiced concern that this did not occur late year for eligible students (see also Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS)/Social Emotional Supports/Social Emotional Resources/Positive Behavioral Supports, Section I, item #7 for additional information) RIGL §300.307-§300.311</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u> <i>Interviews; Record Reviews</i></p>	<p>Staff at Nowell will revise and refine their MTSS protocols, procedures and practices as appropriate. Professional development will be provided to staff on the revisions and refinements. In addition, staff will review the process, procedures and protocols for initial and reevaluation of students with specific learning disabilities. Staff will receive professional development in this area.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediately and ongoing. November</p>

			2015. Progress Check: April 2015 <u>FOLLOW-UP FINDINGS:</u>
Result	6	<p>Due Process Information (State Performance Plan Indicators #16, #17, #18 & #19)</p> <p>Nowell Leadership Academy is in its second year of existence and thus far has had no (zero) complaints, mediations or hearings.</p> <p><i><u>Documentation:</u> Data Analysis; State Performance Plan</i></p>	

3. IDEA TRANSITION

Indicator		Findings	Support Plan
Result	1	<p>Part C to Part B Transition (Indicator #12)</p> <p>The Nowell Leadership Academy serves high school age students, thus, there is no preschool information to report.</p>	
Result	2	<p>IDEA Transition Planning at the Middle Level</p> <p>The Nowell Leadership Academy serves high school age students, thus, there is no middle level information to report.</p> <p><i><u>Documentation:</u> Data Analysis; Interviews; Record Reviews</i></p>	

Result/ Compliance	3	<p>IDEA Transition Planning at the High School Level</p> <p>The special educator at the Central Campus attends the Transition Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings and is given time to update his colleagues at both campuses as appropriate. A scope and sequence for transition post-secondary exploration is currently being developed in conjunction the regional transition coordinator and the Nowell staff. Last year students were given the "Future Planning Inventory" and an informal student survey. WaytoGoRI is also used as a school-wide tool. Record reviews did not consistently show vocational assessments as part of the student's file nor were they embedded into the IEP process. (§300.324)</p> <p><i>Documentation: Interviews; Record Reviews</i></p>	<p>A scope and sequence will be developed and implemented at both campus sites. Staff will receive professional development on the scope and sequence.</p> <p>Timeline: Immediately and ongoing. November 2015.</p> <p>Progress Check: April 2015</p> <p><u>FOLLOW-UP FINDINGS:</u></p>
Result	4	<p>At the high school the special education director is the point for the Office of Rehabilitative Services (ORS) and Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) referrals at the school.</p> <p><i>Documentation: Interviews; Document Review</i></p>	
Result	5	<p>Summary of Performance (SOP) is facilitated by the case managers as appropriate.</p> <p>At the high school the case manager is the point for the Summary of Performance.</p> <p><i>Documentation: Interviews; Document Review</i></p>	
Result	6	<p>Measurable postsecondary transition goals (State Performance Plan Indicator #13)</p> <p>Nowell Leadership Academy is in their second year of existence so there is not yet data in this area.</p> <p><i>Documentation: Interviews; Document Review</i></p>	
Result	7	<p>Percent of youth who are no longer in secondary school, has IEPs in effect at the time they left school, and who have been employed, enrolled in postsecondary school, or both within 1 year of leaving high school. The state average was 79% (State Performance Plan Indicator #14)</p>	

		<p>Nowell Leadership Academy is in their second year of existence so there is not yet data in this area.</p> <p><i><u>Documentation:</u> Interviews; Document Review</i></p>	
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