



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

School Support System Report and Support Plan

**Pathways Strategic Teaching Center
March 23, 2016**

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

**Nonpublic School
School Support System Review**

Team Member

Team A – Susan Wood

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>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.</p>	
Result	2	<p>Program Overview:</p> <p><u>VISION</u></p> <p>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.</p> <p><u>MISSION</u></p> <p>Pathways Strategic Teaching Center is dedicated to providing state-of-the-art, scientifically validated, educational and treatment services.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Pathways Strategic Teaching Center assists families and educators in pursuing success for their children in home, school, and community settings.</p> <p>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.</p> <p><u>Intake Process</u></p> <p>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.</p>	

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.

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:

- Collaboration with Public School System to incorporate learning in typical educational

		<p>environments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Intensive staff to student ratios. ➤ Scientifically based teaching methods supervised by Board Certified Behavior Analysts, Certified Teachers and Related Services. ➤ A comprehensive system of student assessment and evaluation that allows for daily refinement of individualized student lessons. ➤ Continuous staff training and supervision to maintain a high level of staff performance and yield maximum outcomes for students. ➤ Collaboration with parents to maximize student outcomes in natural environments; the home and the community. ➤ Consultation to local education agencies serving children with autism and other developmental disorders. ➤ Educational and training opportunities for families and others in the community, addressing challenges common to children with autism and other developmental disabilities. 	
Result	3	<p>Student Support and Intervention:</p> <p><u>RELATED SERVICES</u></p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Speech and Language Therapy</p> <p>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</p>	

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 school-related 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 organized around the Common Core State Standards, the Rhode Island Alternate Assessment Grade Span Expectations for Science, the Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills-Revised, the Verbal Behavior Milestones and Placement Program, the Assessment of Functional Living Skills, the Unique Curriculum/News2you, the upper school curriculum domains developed by Dr. Peter Gerhardt, and the curriculum guide developed by Catherine Maurice, Gina Green, and Stephen Luce (1996) in *Behavioral Intervention for Young Children with Autism*. 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.

Curriculum Domains

- I. 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.

- b. English Language Arts – The English Language Arts curriculum focuses on the acquisition of reading and written language skills and is aligned to the CCSS.
- c. Science – The science curriculum focuses on acquisition of literacy skills in science knowledge for students not on alternate assessment and is also aligned to the following Rhode Island Alternate Assessment Grade Span Expectations for those taking the RIAA in science.
- 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.

Interventions and Supports

Pathways utilizes a variety of intervention techniques to improve skills in language arts and math. Currently we utilize, Reading A to Z, Lexia Core 5, Orton Gillingham, IXL Math, Touch 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 (PECS, PODD, Flip- n-Talk, topic boards, object symbol systems, Tobii, Dynavox, Proloquo,2go, Lamp, GoTalk Now, Clicker and Touch Chat).

Clinical Supports and Services

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, Ph.D. level Clinical advisor and a one to one staff to student ratio of Behavior Technicians. Outside clinical consultation is also utilized when requested and determined appropriate by the treatment team.

The Behavior Analysts are nationally credentialed by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board as Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) and licensed in MA and will be licensed in RI by April 1st. Behavior Analysts are responsible for crisis intervention, staff training, behavioral

		<p>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.</p> <p>Social Emotional Learning Pathways Strategic Teaching Center is comprehensive education and treatment program based on the principles of applied behavior analysis.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Zones of Regulation - The Zones curriculum is a systematic, cognitive behavior approach used to teach self-regulation by categorizing all the different ways to feel and states of alertness to 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.</p> <p>School Removals/Disciplinary Policies Disciplinary policies and practices are clearly defined through the student/parent handbook.</p> <p>Crisis Management All staff working directly with students are required to be trained in the Safety Care® program. Safety Care® is a verbal and physical de-escalation program developed by *QBS, Inc. 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.</p>	
Result	4	<p>Program Continuum</p> <p>Pathways Strategic Teaching Center provides comprehensive treatment and education services to special education students age 3 through 21 grades PK through 12/Transition. Students</p>	

		<p>currently enrolled are diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Down Syndrome, Landau-Kleffner Syndrome and Rhetts Disorder. Our current enrollment is 74 students, with a maximum class size of 10 students. Pathways is a special education day school program and provides instruction in 1:1 and small group settings. All staff are trained in the principles of applied behavior analysis. 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 within the gymnasium/multipurpose room in individual and group sessions. Co-treat models of support are often provided across disciplines.</p> <p>Opportunities for inclusion in public school setting are available within the student's district or neighboring districts. 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: educational, behavioral, social/emotional, communication, gross and fine motor. 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.</p> <p>Pathways currently has a high school classroom located within a public school in Cranston. This setting provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive instruction within a less restrictive environment • Opportunities for students to generalize skills in the natural setting • Increased peer interaction and positive peer network support • A minimum of a 1:2 staff ratio • Individualized, data driven, evidenced-based programming • Daily assessment and evaluation of student progress • Classroom oversight by a Board Certified Behavior Analyst • Comprehensive education and treatment for students with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities ages 14 to 21 <p>As students transition from Pathways back to their home school district, Pathways provide support to assist in this process. Transition meetings are scheduled with the IEP/district team to discuss the plan to 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.</p>	
Result	5	<p>Adaptive Physical Education (APE)</p> <p>Pathways Strategic Teaching Center employs two full-time Adaptive Physical Education/Health</p>	

		<p>Teachers. The staff are certified by the Rhode Island Department of Education.</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competency and proficiency in movement forms • Learning and development of motor skills • Implications and benefits of physical activity • Maintain a physically active lifestyle • Responsible personal and social behavior in physical activity settings • Understand internal and external environments influence physical activity <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Health • Mental and Emotional Health • Nutrition • Sexuality and Family Life • Disease Prevention and Control • Substance Use and Prevention <p><u>Documentation:</u> Data Analysis; State Performance Plan</p>	
Result	6	<p>Extended School Year (ESY)</p> <p>Pathways is a full year nonpublic special education program. The program is in session for approximately 227 days a year. There are four weeks the program is closed for both students and staff in December, April, July and August. Decisions regarding Extended School Year are made by the IEP team during the annual IEP review.</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u> Data Analysis; Interviews</p>	
Result	7	<p>Parent Engagement</p> <p>In order to increase Parent Engagement, Pathways staff and parents were trained by RIPIN to facilitate a parent support group. Surveys were sent out to gather data from parents on topics of interest. Open discussions as well as topic specific trainings have been provided to parents. In</p>	

	<p>addition, the program offers multiple opportunities a year for families to interact socially (Art Show, Family Fun Night, and Summer Fun Day). Parents are provided with information regarding FEAT Training conducted throughout the state. Information is provided to parents on LAC meetings within their community/district at IEP meetings.</p> <p>Pathways emphasizes the importance of parent communication and provides daily updates on students' progress to parents through home notes. In addition, monthly parents meetings are scheduled with parents and home-based staff to review progress and coordinate services in both settings.</p> <p>Pathways also provides parent training on crisis intervention techniques. This training includes prevention and minimization 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.</p>	
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2. EVALUATION / INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

Indicator	Findings	Support Plan
Result	<p>1 Student Accommodations and Modifications</p> <p>Pathways Strategic Teaching Center utilizes TIENET as its special education case management system. Most of the IEP documents are created within this web-based program and accessible by all teachers, related service professionals and behavior analysts. In addition, Pathways also utilizes a few other web-based IEP programs assigned to students by the sending district (easyIEP, Aspen and Semstracker).</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u> Data Analysis; Interviews; Document Reviews</p>	

3. IDEA TRANSITION

Indicator	Findings	Support Plan
Result	<p>1 IDEA Transition Planning</p> <p>Pathways recently hired a Transition Coordinator/Special Education Teacher to assist with the</p>	

	<p>provision of transition services for students age 14-21. This individual completed the ACRE certification training offered through the Sherlock Center, as well as the mini certificate in vocational assessment, job development and job coaching.</p> <p>Pathways starts addressing the needs of our students at age 14. Interest inventories, person centered planning meetings, CDPs.</p> <p>Pathways has been working with the Sherlock Center on the three part longitudinal project to increase opportunities for competitive integrated employment for students with intellectual/developmental disabilities. The three components of the project include family employment awareness training, self-determination training, and discovery/provision of a variety of integrated employment experiences.</p> <p>Technical Assistance was provided by staff from Northern RI Collaborative to address indicator 13. A sample of IEPs from all of the special education teachers working with transition students were reviewed and analyzed using the rubric. 91% of the IEPs reviewed were given a rating of exemplary.</p> <p>TLS Training – Special Education Teachers have participated in the TLS trainings offered on the CDP, consent decree, person centered planning, etc. at the middle and high school level.</p> <p>Transition Assessments – The process starts at age 14 and consists of the following components:</p> <p>Unique Learning System – The Transition Band of the Unique Learning contain a variety of transition assessment appropriate for students within our program.</p> <p>Self-Determination – Our transition coordinator is currently working on modifying a self-determination curriculum for use with students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Pathways utilizes and modifies resources such as Unique Learning System, Air Self-Determination Scales, Arc Self Determination Scale, Personal Preference Indicators, and Self-Determination Checklists.</p> <p>Vocational Assessments – Students are referred to ORS at age 18. Once determined eligible, they contract with a vendor to conduct vocational assessments.</p> <p>Situational Assessments – ORS assists with the coordination and scheduling of situational assessments based on the results of information gathered through PCP, transition assessments and vocational assessments.</p>	
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		<p>The BRIGANCE Transition Skills Inventory is another transition assessment used to help educators easily assess skills in the areas of education & training, employment and independent living/community participation to support the transition planning for middle and high school students. This assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine present level of performance in transition skills • Develop transition goals and objectives for IEPs that meet IDEA requirements • Assess a wide range of student abilities • Monitor and report progress toward transition goals • Deliver data-driven instruction <p>Integrated Work Trials – Students have been exposed to the following sites for work trials - Meals on Wheels, Pets Supplies Plus, Residence Inn, Chili’s,</p> <p>Job Tours – RI Resource Recovery, RIPTA and Whole Foods.</p> <p>Volunteer opportunities – Students age 14-21 are provided with a variety of volunteer opportunities throughout the state of RI.</p> <p>Travel Training – Our staff has received travel training and provide training for those identified with this need during IEP/CDP meetings.</p> <p>Certificate Transcripts in all three areas (Citizenship, Work Readiness and Self-Determination) and are utilized to assist in targeting areas of need for IEP goals and are shared with agencies (ORS, BHDDH, adult service providers) to assist with transition into adulthood.</p> <p>Letters and brochures were mailed home to parents regarding the Employment First policy, consent decree, BHDDH and ORS in August of 2015. General introductions and discussions take place starting at age 14. Referrals are made to ORS and BHDDH at age 18. Both agencies are invited to transition IEPs and CDP meetings, but typically are not in attendance until after a student turns 18. The Transition coordinator attends is invited to all transition meetings and prioritizes her attendance for those 18 and older.</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u> Data Analysis; Interviews; Record Reviews</p>	
Result	2	<p>The nonpublic special education school works with the sending districts in assisting with referrals to the Office of Rehabilitative Services (ORS) and to the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals (BHDDH).</p> <p>The special education director directly oversees the referral process for ORS and BHDDH in conjunction with the transition coordinator. Both agencies are invited to transition IEP/CDP</p>	

		<p>meetings with an emphasis on their participation at age 18 and older. The referral and application process is tracked and monitored by the transition coordinator, who attends all transition IEP/CDP meetings.</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u> Interviews; Document Review</p>	
Result	3	<p>Summary of Performance (SOP) is facilitated by the case managers as appropriate.</p> <p>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 is directly responsible for scheduling the SOP meeting prior to students exiting the program.</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u> Interviews; Document Review</p>	