



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

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**School Support System Report and Support Plan**

**The Spurwink School  
February 2023**

## **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 stratified random sample of students with IEPs are 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.
  
- **School Site Review:** On-site reviews to all school sites occur. The team members interview school administrators, 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/challenges 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/result or compliance. Finding areas include Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment, Evaluation /Individual Education Program (IEP) and IDEA Transition. The documentation section of the report distinguishes the source of the finding as either compliance or result. 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 timelines to improve programs and services.

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# **The Spurwink School School Support System Review**

## **Team Members**

**Team A – Susan Wood, Sandra Cambio Gregoire**

The RIDE, Office of Student, Community & Academic Supports School Support System process is 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	<p>1 The RIDE, Office of Students, Community &amp; Academic Supports School Support System process is 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	<p>2</p> <p>Program Overview</p> <p>The Spurwink School is a licensed and accredited private special education school for students in grades K-12 whose emotional and behavioral needs significantly interfere with their ability to make progress in a less restrictive and specialized setting. The school has provided individualized education and clinical supports to Rhode Island children in a community-based setting since 1982. Therapeutic principles and techniques are integrated throughout the program by a collaborative team of professionals including special educators, mental health clinicians, behavioral specialists, a child psychiatrist, a clinical psychologist, a speech pathologist, an occupational therapist and a full-time nurse. In addition, the school has a unique Expressive Arts Program with artists in residence in Music, Drawing/Painting and Dance/Movement</p> <p>The goal of the program is to assist LEAs (currently 10) by providing interventional strategies, techniques, modifications, accommodations and tools to enable students to return to a less restrictive educational setting, to transition from school to the workplace or to improve upon a student's overall ability to function independently and functionally.</p> <p>In accordance with RI State Regulations, The Spurwink School curriculum follows the Common Core State Standards with individualized accommodations and modifications, as needed. There is an emphasis on the integration of project-based, experiential learning as well as technology (blended learning) across grade levels. Students fully participate in the State Assessment Program.</p>	

In addition to the academic curriculum, the program addresses the area of social/emotional learning in a variety of ways. Individual students are assessed (quarterly) to identify and quantify specific skills to include in IEP goals. These skills are addressed by clinicians during individual sessions and during weekly group sessions. Topics such as “Growth Mindsets”, “Team Building” and “Coping Strategies” are explored over several weeks to immerse students in these concepts. A Trauma- Informed approach is used in the classrooms to support the needs of students who have been diagnosed with anxiety, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, etc., or who have a lengthy history of school failure.

The speech/language pathologist works on SEL skills through a programmatic language program called “Social Thinking” which categorizes behaviors as “expected” or “unexpected” in relation to communication in the school community. The occupational therapist utilized a program called “Zones of Regulation” which provides a tool for students to identify their level of arousal/internal stimulation at any given time. A sensory room and a large variety of Sensory tools are available for all students.

The Spurwink School’s curriculum also emphasizes functional/daily living skills and school to career transition skills from grades 7-12. Students in grades 7-8 are able to apply for jobs within the school community (like collecting attendance, serving lunch, managing the recycling program) which can increase in complexity according to successful performance. Students in grades 9-10 take a Career Exploration class where they create accounts on “Virtual Job Shadow” and explore areas of interest, complete formal Interest Inventories, tour local businesses and develop resumes. By grade 11, students job shadow and participate in internships with the school’s local business partners. During the summer, students work/volunteer at a local farm, where food is grown and distributed to the RI Community Food Bank and other similar sites.

A unique program for Arts Education is provided through the collaboration of an Artist in Residence model that includes well-known local working artists who rotate (on a quarterly basis) through all of the age groups. Students create and perform in Music, Cartooning, Fine Arts and Dance/Movement. Students are referred to The Spurwink School by their local school districts after evaluations for special education eligibility and documentation about the need for a therapeutic environment has been collected. Students who are

		<p>admitted participate in an Initial Assessment period (approximately 8 weeks in length) when data is collected by teachers and clinicians in a highly specialized environment. At the end of the assessment period, a meeting is held with parents, the LEA and other providers to discuss the data and to develop IEP goals that are based on the Initial Assessment in the new setting</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u> Data Analysis; Interviews; Document Review</p>	
Result	3	<p><b>Student Support and Interventions</b></p> <p>The structure of the program emphasizes collaboration and integration of multiple disciplines that are necessary for the school to operate at its best and to individualize services to the students. Communication is a key element for the success and is prioritized daily in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily Briefings – Administrators, clinicians, behavior specialists, classroom staff attend a meeting at the start and the end of each day to share information about the status of each child and the status of the school as a whole. At these meetings, planning is done for the need for extra staff support, safety measures, business of the day, etc.</li> <li>• Educational Staff Meeting – Tuesday’s at 1:00 - Educators and the Special Education Administrator/Director discuss various topics such as curriculum materials, state testing, professional development, news, great ideas, etc.</li> <li>• Clinical Staff Meeting –Tuesdays at 9am– Clinician’s (social workers, the school nurse, speech pathologist, occupational therapist, the behavioral specialists) and the Associate Director meet to go over student cases, review referrals, plan for transition needs, design interventions to remediate specific classroom or student issues. This enables them to prioritize appointments with the consulting Psychiatrist.</li> <li>• Full Staff Meeting – Tuesday’s 3:00-4:00 – A variety of purposes are targeted, such as agency business, upcoming events, professional development, team problem solving, etc.</li> <li>• Community Meeting – Thursday’s at 2:00 – On Thursday afternoons, the whole school gathers in the central common area and the Special Education Administrator leads a meeting where students are recognized for weekly accomplishments (student of the week awards), new students are welcomed and announcements are made by the</li> </ul>	

principal, the staff and the students. Classrooms put on demonstrations or exhibit projects for the school community. This is a tradition and ritual that enhances the sense of community and continuity for the students.

### **Clinical Services and Supports**

The Spurwink School's Clinical Team is led by a licensed clinical social worker who supervises the clinicians and related service providers. The Associate Director/clinical supervisor maintains a small caseload of students who have been prioritized for a variety of factors as "high need", manages the services of a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, and creates/ presents Professional Development opportunities for all staff members related to Trauma Informed practices, Restorative Justice plans and other topics that arise from the ongoing behavioral interventions. These professional development sessions are sometimes related to the Self-Care that is needed for the staff who work in a high stress environment.

Therapeutic goals (which align with common Core State Standards) are incorporated into all IEPs and are reviewed 2-4 times per year by each student's team, as needed. Clinicians provide case management and support to parents and deliver individual counseling sessions and ongoing check-ins and crisis management to students on their caseloads.

### **Social Emotional Learning**

In addition to individual therapy sessions, the Clinicians lead weekly groups in the classrooms on topics such as "Creative Problem Solving", "Conflict Resolution", "Anger Management Techniques", "How Make and Keep a Friend", and other issues that may present themselves in the classrooms.

This is an essential component of Spurwink's curriculum the students are referred for services at the school due to maladaptive coping skills and unsafe expression of their feelings in less restrictive school settings. Daily in the classrooms, teachers make great efforts to blend Social Emotional Learning into academic lessons by reading and discussing stories and characters who face similar situations or who struggle to cope with obstacles in historical contexts.

### **Academic Interventions and Supports**

For students in grades K-3, all instruction requires a multi-sensory approach to meeting their learning and attentional needs. Teachers follow the principles of "The Science of Reading" to address Phonemic Awareness/Phonics, Comprehension, Fluency and Written Expression through the use of the Lively Letters" program (which was developed by an Educator and a Speech/Language Pathologist). There are mouth, hand and body cues as well as music in each lesson where students learn songs, and funny mnemonic



		<p>stories to enhance short- and long-term memory. Teachers have been trained in Orton-Gillingham methods for students as they progress. 1:1 instruction is provided to struggling readers. During recent years (since Distance Learning was required), we have utilized computer-based services from Renaissance Education, which provides Assessments (aligned to RI Standards) such as “STAR” and strategic lessons and progress monitoring tools. STAR Assessments and all of the components (Renaissance for Reading and Freckle for Math) as well as IXL and Generation Genius are used in K-8 classrooms. High School students use IXL, Khan Academy and Edgenuity to address grade level appropriate instruction in an academically diverse group. All students, K-12, have access to a personal Chromebook to assist them. Teachers have a program called “Go Guardian” to assist them in monitoring each of the student devices as they are being used.</p> <p><b>School Removals/Disciplinary Policies</b></p> <p>Disciplinary policies and practices are clearly defined through the Spurwink School Behavior Intervention Program. (Updated in September of 2022). Suspension and Expulsion are not used in the program. If a safety incident occurs that requires the police and/or rescue must respond, a parent and the LEA would meet with Spurwink Administrators to discuss the appropriate supports that would be needed to allow the student to be successful.</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u> Data Analysis; Interviews; Document Review</p>	
Result	4	<p><b>Program Continuum</b></p> <p>The Spurwink School has the capacity to service up to 36 students attending grades K-12.</p> <p>Classroom placement is determined by age, academic development and social/emotional needs. Currently, there are 4 self-contained classrooms (1 Early Elementary, 1 Upper Elementary, 1 Middle, 1 Secondary) and 1 Resource room that is used to support the need for small group instruction for all of the classrooms. Each class has 1 Certified Special Educator and 1 to 2 Certified Assistants.</p> <p>In the Early Elementary classroom, the emphasis is on “readiness” for learning. Often, students in this class have developmental needs and require individualized and group speech/language and occupational therapy. Due to high levels of anxiety, rigidity and lack of self-control, these students have difficulty functioning as a member of a group. They are sometimes academically lagging due to time away from their classrooms. A great deal of creative playtime is built into the break schedule in this classroom. Students learn to use words (or symbols) to ask for what they need.</p>	

		<p>In the Upper Elementary classroom, the emphasis is on “increased expectations” as students from grades 4-6 face more rigorous academic demands and learn to work as partners in learning. Students learn to rely on themselves to make an effort before they seek assistance from staff.</p> <p>In the Middle School classroom, there is an emphasis on “increased independence” and the application of strategies to solve both academic and social problems for grades 7 and 8. Many of the Middle School students/parents have goals to transition to a less restrictive environment for High School, so the need for independence is critical.</p> <p>The Secondary classroom (grades 9-12) has an emphasis on “transition” from Middle School to High School and from High School to College or careers. Curriculum is aligned to specific district graduation requirements and the student’s complete portfolios and Senior Projects which are reviewed and attended by LEAs. Work/Study options are available in school and in the community.</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u> Data Analysis; Interviews; Document Review</p>	
Result	5	<p><b>Adapted Physical Education (APE)</b></p> <p>Currently, the school does not have any students who have adapted physical education in their IEP. If the school ever has students who require APE, it would be provided per the IEP.</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u> Data Analysis, Interviews, Document Review</p>	
Compliance	6	<p><b>Extended School Year (ESY)</b></p> <p>The Spurwink School has offers an eight-week Summer Program to the students. IEP goals are addressed through thematic units that involve the Arts, the Environment and Community Field Trips. In recent years, many parents and LEAs do not feel that the eight weeks are needed or wanted for their children and choose to shorten it or opt for keeping their child home for the summer or to enroll them in camp programs. Attendance can also be very poor during the summer. The school is in the process of reviewing and refining the ESY programming. §300.106</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u> Data Analysis; Interviews, Document Review</p>	<p><b>Timeline:</b> Immediately</p> <p>The Spurwink School will ensure that ESY is evaluated on an individual basis and is aligned to the specific needs of the students per their IEP based on data (Example: regression and recoupment data). A “summer program” does not automatically equate to an extended school year program. Verification will be provided to RIDE.</p> <p><b>Progress Check:</b> June 2023</p>

			<p><b><u>FOLLOW-UP FINDINGS:</u></b></p> <p>The Spurwink School has made significant adjustments to the method of providing ESY Services according to Rhode Island requirements. At each IEP meeting with parents and the LEA in attendance, the options and the factors determining the eligibility for an individualized ESY plan are discussed. The criteria/data that is provided to assist with that decision is a measurement of IEP daily behavioral data collection, and clinical needs assessment. This allows the team to design a plan for academic needs and for social/emotional instruction and activities.</p>
Result	7	<p><b>Parent Engagement</b></p> <p>Every day, teachers and parents communicate through emails, texts, notebooks and phone calls as each parent prefers. Teachers and teacher assistant's report on the events of the day and provide information about the schedule and any upcoming needs to prepare for. Clinicians are in frequent telephone contact with parents to discuss issues related to medication, safety concerns or to provide support to them. The school nurse is also in frequent contact with parents regarding individual or school-wide matters. The Office staff have been very helpful in communicating with Spanish speaking parents. A set of questions is sent out to parents with the IEP invitations to allow them to think about anything that they would like to have included, or to let us know about their child.</p> <p>Events such as Parent's Night, Art Show or a Science Fair had to be postponed due to Covid-19 restrictions. Spurwink is hopeful that they can find safe alternatives to bring these and other events back in the near future.</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u> Data Analysis; Interviews; Document Review</p>	

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

Indicator		Findings	Support Plan
Result	1	<p><b>Student Accommodations and Modifications</b></p> <p>All of the students have extensive lists of Accommodations and Modifications in their IEPs, and all staff members have access to these documents. Since all of the teacher assistants accompany the students to physical education, art, etc., they can assist other staff in providing consistency for the students. Many of the accommodations for the students are related to their emotional needs, so consistent intervention from staff is essential.</p> <p>There is a team meeting for each classroom on a set day of each week when all staff who work in any capacity with those students are included. Each student is discussed in detail, which allows all staff to have the same information in order to work successfully with each student.</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u> Data Analysis; Interviews; Document Reviews</p>	

## 3. IDEA TRANSITION

Indicator		Findings	Support Plan
Result	1	<p><b>IDEA Transition Planning (at the middle and high school levels)</b></p> <p>The Spurwink School incorporates the ideas of School to Career preparation to students K-12. The Virtual Job Shadow/ Pathful Explore website offers ideas that are applicable for elementary and middle school children to think about their goals and dreams for the future. From grades 7-12, the students create their own accounts on the site which can follow them and keep a long running record of exploration. The Spurwink School's own program begins with pre-vocational opportunities to learn about and perform jobs that need to be done in the school community (collecting attendance, emptying trash and recycling, etc.).</p> <p>For students in grade 9-12, students participate in a Careers class where they explore interests and aptitudes using formal and informal tools. They explore what training or education could be required, salary scales, etc. These students tour local businesses and attend statewide events designed to help them expand their knowledge base.</p>	

		<p><u>Documentation:</u> Data Analysis; Interviews; Record Reviews</p>	
Result	2	<p><b>Office of Rehabilitative Services (ORS)</b> and to the <b>Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities &amp; Hospitals (BHDDH)</b>.  The Spurwink School Clinical team works with sending districts to refer students in grade 10 and 11 to the Office of Rehabilitative Services (ORS) and The Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH).</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u> Interviews; Document Review</p>	
Rest	3	<p><b>Summary of Performance (SOP)</b> is facilitated by the secondary special educator teacher as appropriate.</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u> Interviews; Document Review</p>	