

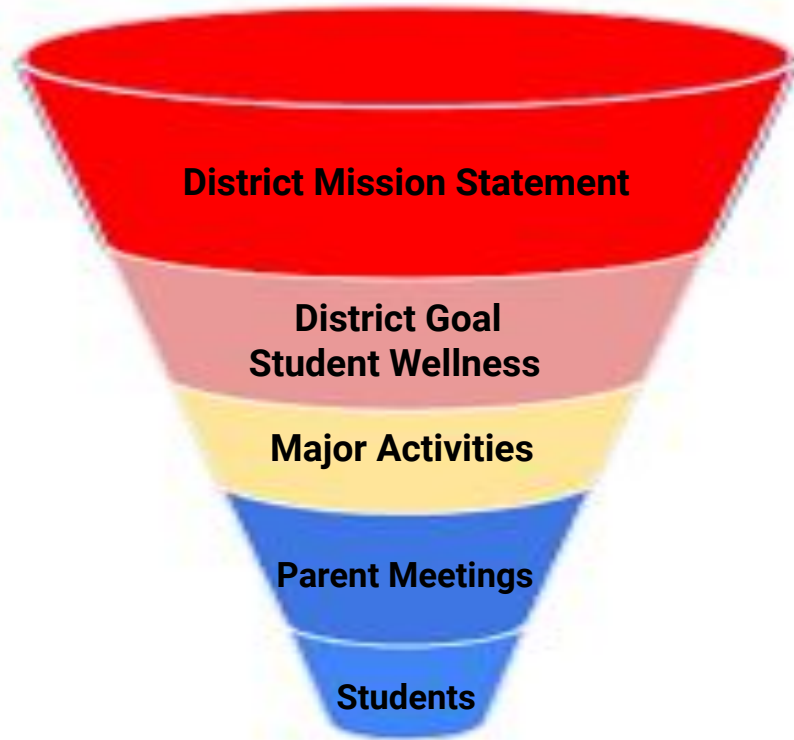
Update on Spring 2022 Meetings with Families of Classified Students

Presented by:

Dr. Joseph Meloche

**Board of Education Meeting
August 9, 2022**





The Goal

Major Activity

Assess and support populations with Special Needs (IEP, 504, ELL) or State-identified populations (homeless, low income, LGBTQIA+, home language(s)).

Indicator of Success

The Superintendent and Board Members will meet with at least 20 families of students with identified special needs or state-identified special populations.

The Process

The focus was on students with an IEP/504.

Late in the winter of 2022, families were nominated by the building principals & Office of Special Education.

38 families were invited via email and regular mail to participate in a meeting with the superintendent and a member of the Board of Education, to discuss their experiences with a classified student in Cherry Hill School District.



The Process

Families from all 19 schools were contacted.

There were 11 different classifications represented.

Families/children identified as: African American, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Mixed Race & White.

English was not the first language for all families/children.

Meetings were scheduled with families - in person in the superintendent's office, in person in family homes, via Zoom, via telephone.

Meetings lasted from 30 minutes to a little more than 60 minutes.

The Students

Classification Categories for Special Education

ASD - Autistic Support

BES - Behavior and Emotional Support

Co-Teaching - Two teachers, one Sp.Ed certified & one regular ed certified, in the classroom together.

ICR - In Class Resource

LLD - Learning/Language Disability

MD - Multiply Disabled

OHI - Other Health Impaired

OOD - Out of District

POR - Pull Out Resource

PSD - PreSchool Disabled

Resource Replacement - Pull Out Resource



The Students

School - Classification	School - Classification
Malberg(Barclay) ECC - PSD	Cooper ES - LLD
Harte ES - POR - ELA	Johnson ES - ICR
Kilmer ES - ICR	Kilmer ES - POR - Math/ELA
Kingston ES - ASD	Knight ES - LLD
Knight ES - Co-Teaching	Mann ES - ASD
Sharp ES - LLD	Stockton ES - Co-Teaching
Stockton ES - LLD	Woodcrest ES - ICR

The Students

School - Classification	School - Classification
Beck MS - POR - Math/ELA	Carusi MS - MD
HS East - ICR/Social Skills	HS West - OHI
HS West - MD	HS West/OOD - ASD

The Meetings

The following information was recorded prior to the meetings:

- **Date**
- **Meeting Location**
- **Parents/Guardians**
- **Children ***
- **Program**

* Some families have more than one child with an IEP/504 - whom they discussed during the meeting. Some families have other children enrolled without an IEP/504.

The Meetings

All families were asked the same five, open ended questions:

1. How long has your child(ren) been enrolled in the Cherry Hill School District?
2. Describe the programming/supports your child(ren) receives.
3. Share your experience in acquiring and accessing services for your child(ren)? [initially/yearly]
4. Do you have any suggestions for the district as we move forward?
5. Is there anything else you would like to share?

The Questions & Responses

1. How long has your child(ren) been enrolled in the Cherry Hill School District?

- Range between a few months and 15 years
 - Many children began at the Malberg (Barclay) ECC, transitioning from early intervention
- More than 80% of families had more than one child enrolled in the Cherry Hill School District.

The Questions & Responses

2. Describe the programming/supports your child(ren) receives.

- OT/PT/Speech/Assistive Technology
- Tutoring
- 1:1 Educational Assistant
- Access to an Educational Assistant
- ESY
- Extra Help
- Special Classes
- Job Sampling
- Field Trips
- Effective School Solutions/Wraparound
- Unified Sports
- Door to door transportation

The Questions & Responses

3. Share your experience in acquiring and accessing services for your child(ren)? [initially/yearly]

- A fight
- Positive - supported
- The initial testing process is difficult
- Pandemic created new challenges
 - Disruption of services
- Lack of continuity of staff can be hard for children
- Open communication is necessity - when it has been there, the process has been great. Without it, the process is very trying.
- Feel like we are part of the Team making decisions for our child.
- Very confused the first year.
- Has felt more comfortable as the child has progressed.
- Process was easier here than previous district.
- Feels heard at IEP meetings.
- Experience has been different at different levels (ES, MS, HS).
- Took a couple of years to feel comfortable being part of the process.
- Barclay (Malberg) was great!
- Needed more clarity about where programs are offered and why - implications for school attendance.
- Prepare students to participate in IEP meetings when they are of age.

The Questions & Responses

4. Do you have any suggestions for the district as we move forward?

- More information about transition to college.
- Maintain case managers by level.
- More communication about what happens in related services.
- More communication from related service providers/teachers.
- Expand athletic/extracurricular activities.
- More case manager/student interaction before/after transitions.
- Develop more customized solutions.
- Busing has been a challenge - can it be more consistent with timing?
- Make sure families know what is available to children.
- Work with families in more of a workshop model.
- More opportunities for inclusive activities for students in special classes.
- Examine discipline of special needs students.
- More summer reading options for special needs students.
- Continue with Equity & Inclusion work.
- Better balance between academics & mental health.
- Educate staff on what anxiety is, how to recognize it, and how to support students experiencing it.

The Questions & Responses

5. Is there anything else you would like to share?

- Would like to see case managers reaching out to families more often, to check in.
- Child and family have had a very positive experience!
- The quality of the teaching has been the absolute high point.
- Transitions worry parents, can we do more to provide support?
- Look at HIB and the impact on students with special needs.
- Would like all processes with the district to move faster.
- SEL work must be stronger and more effective.
- Overall, more timely responses.
- Bullying has had a negative impact on the middle school experience.
- Can we do more with social skills for all of the students?
- Would like to see more inclusive opportunities, including social events outside of the school, for children with IEPs and their families.
- Have some place where all families know they can go to find resources that are available

Implications & Next Steps

- Thankful for the time invested and the great information from these 21 families.
- Follow up, deeper dive discussions with:
 - Office of Special Education
 - Office of Curriculum and Instruction
 - Building Principals
 - Staff Members
 - Special Ed Parent Advisory Group (SEPAG)
 - CHSEPTA
- Development of topic specific goals and corresponding activities for the 2022-2023 academic year.

Questions?

