

Southington Public Schools

Special Education Program Review
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Mixed Methods

55 observations
193 staff survey responses
164 parent survey responses
138 staff focus group participants

Data Sources:

CSDE EdSight
CSDE Performance and Profile Reports
Frontline IEP
Student rosters
Training and professional development records
Special education presentation slides
Procedural paperwork for special education programs
Lyman Systems student achievement data
Education Financial System (EFS) DR3 and DR8 reports

Research questions

Domain 1: Resources—To what extent are resources utilized effectively and efficiently to meet the needs of the students with disabilities including personnel, materials, budget and time throughout the special education continuum of co-teaching, pull-out services, and self-contained programs?

Domain 2: Organizational Structures and Processes—To what extent are the organizational structures and the processes for special education effective and efficient at the school, program, and district department levels?

Domain 3: Student Learning—To what extent are students receiving educational benefit from special education services and receiving individualized programming that results in positive outcomes, including transitions from elementary to middle school, and middle school to high school?

Domain 4: Communication and Collaboration —How effective are communication and collaboration between Southington leadership, staff, and families of students with disabilities?

Per Pupil Expenditure

District/ State	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20	
	Expenditures	Enrollment	Expenditures	Enrollment	Expenditures	Enrollment
Southington	\$14,656	6,500	\$15,378	6,385	\$15,706	6,336
Milford	\$19,634	5,792	\$20,457	5,635	\$20,957	5,635
Shelton	\$15,473	4,720	\$15,824	4,713	\$15,773	4,674
Wallingford	\$18,285	5,863	\$18,792	5,770	\$18,924	5,693
State	\$17,153	535,025	\$17,629	530,612	\$17,838	527,829

Share of Special Education

District/ State	Percent of Total Budget for Special Education		
	2017-18	2018-2019	2019-20
Southington[1]	28.5	28.3	28.4
Milford	23.7	23.3	24.3
Shelton	20.2	24.0	23.8
Wallingford	23.4	24.3	24.9
State	24.4	24.6	25.1

Southington dedicates more proportionately of its total budget to special education costs, despite having an overall lower per pupil expenditure than the state and three (3) similar districts.

Expenditures

certified and non-certified

Type	Southington		Milford		Shelton		Wallingford		State	
	Total (\$)	Pct of Total (%)	Total (\$)	Pct of Total (%)	Total (\$)	Pct of Total (%)	Total (\$)	Pct of Total (%)	Total (\$)	Pct of Total (%)
Teacher Salaries	\$8,612,433	29.8	\$10,187,068	34.7	\$7,792,079	42.8	\$10,134,596	37.0	\$722,663,697	29.6
Instruct.-Aide Salaries	\$5,485,444	19.0	\$3,451,589	11.7	\$1,646,872	9.0	\$2,913,362	10.6	\$271,397,226	11.1

Southington spends less proportionally on certified special education teacher salaries, yet spends an average of 10% more proportionally on non-certified staff.

Expenditures

out of district tuition

Type	Southington		Milford		Shelton		Wallingford		State	
	Total (\$)	Pct of Total (%)	Total (\$)	Pct of Total (%)	Total (\$)	Pct of Total (%)	Total (\$)	Pct of Total (%)	Total (\$)	Pct of Total (%)
Special Education Tuition	\$4,862,422	16.8	\$5,899,234	20.1	\$3,371,555	18.5	\$5,742,757	21.0	\$549,977,252	22.5

Other comparable districts and the state spend on average 21% more proportionally on tuition costs for students with disabilities than Southington.

Staffing

In terms of the student population, Southington only experienced a decrease of 110 students over three years, whereas comparison districts experienced decreases of 200-350 students over three years.

Category	Staff Type	2019-20				2021-22			
		Southington	Milford	Shelton	Wallingford	Southington	Milford	Shelton	Wallingford
Admins, Coordinators and Dept. Chairs	District Central Office	12.0	16.0	9.2	11.0	9.4	24.2	8.0	11.0
	School Level	25.1	33	18.2	21.2	25.2	32	17.8	32.8

Southington decreased central office administration while maintaining their school-level administrators.

These changes proportionally increased responsibilities administrators, as the overall workload did not change.

Feedback

Most staff reported that administrators and colleagues were accessible when they had questions or problems, and responsive even if a solution was not readily available.

However, staff expressed a desire for building administrators to have a more visible presence in special education classrooms, resource rooms, and other special education settings so students and staff felt the administrators cared about them, too.

Staffing

Category	Staff Type	2019-20				2021-22			
		Southington	Milford	Shelton	Wallingford	Southington	Milford	Shelton	Wallingford
General Education	Teachers and Instructors	421.5	432.6	281.4	434.8	431.6	410.4	270.5	421.6
	Paraprofessionals	15.5	16	35.8	62.1	20.8	14	20	58.9
Special Education	Teachers and Instructors	72.6	80.2	53.3	66	79.6	73.9	49.7	63.5
	Paraprofessionals	234.2	144.5	103	125	246.2	135.5	90	130.5

Southington is leaner administratively, and increased staffing with students.
Does not simultaneously yield the ability for administrators to be more visible.

Caseload vs Hours

Students with disabilities have vastly different needs
Truer picture: an analysis of hours, not number of students

Students with disabilities per staff member		
2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
3.0	2.9	3.0

Hours of service per staff member		
2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
27.6	29.7	29.2

IEP Development

Indicator	Scoring Range				Southington
	Promising Practice	Progressing	Emerging	Unacceptable	
Gap Analysis of Present Level of Performance	8-9	5-7	2-4	0-1	3
Levels of Support: Supplemental Instruction, Accommodations, Modifications	12-15	8-11	4-7	0-3	4
IEP Goals and Objectives	8-9	5-7	2-4	0-1	3
Types of Support and Placement	8-9	5-7	2-4	0-1	4
Overall	37-42	22-36	8-21	0-7	14

Roles and responsibilities

- ▶ General education staff not entirely clear about paraprofessional roles and responsibilities
- ▶ Paraprofessionals not entirely clear about their roles and responsibilities
- ▶ Inconsistency in use of paraprofessionals - general classroom para or specifically assigned to an individual student

Promising practices

- ▶ Pockets of strong IEP development, aligned instruction and expectations, and efficient use of staff
- ▶ All - readiness, eagerness, growth mindset
- ▶ Training for effective paraprofessional supports in classrooms
- ▶ Continue practices:
 - ▶ IEP Quality Training/CT SEDs training for administrators - CSDE
 - ▶ IEP development and implementation - SERC
 - ▶ Behavior Consult Team initial year - adjust as needed

Contact info

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