

Thompson Public Schools
Pupil Services Department
4 year Strategic Operating Plan

INTRODUCTION-When I joined Thompson Public Schools I informed the Board of Education, Superintendent and School Leadership the importance and my intent to conduct a review of the current structured, systems and functioning of Thompson's Special Education Program and Services. Thompson Public Schools is ready to provide a robust set of supports for all students to ensure success of every child regardless of disability. This Strategic Operating Plan (SOP) is the result of several months of work, including; focus groups with district staff, special education staff team meetings, focus groups with parents, interviews with students, review of IEP records, comparative financial analysis with common districts, review student achievement data and participating in PPT meetings.

It was important to start this process with ensuring the Special Education SOP was not a stand-alone document, but was aligned to and supported by the District's Vision and Mission statements (See Below):

District Vision Statement

The Thompson Public Schools will be the highest performing public school system in Northeast Connecticut.

District Mission Statement

To that end, the Thompson Board of Education is committed to ensuring that every student is prepared for success in life in the 21st century.

We accomplish this by: Providing dedicated leadership; Encouraging community involvement and support; Hiring and retaining an engaged, enthusiastic, focused, and professional staff; Providing state of the art instruction; Maintaining a safe and caring environment that fosters lifelong learning; Embracing our differences; Striving to help every student reach his or her potential.

At Thompson Public Schools we want our Special Education program and services build upon the mission of the district, and the great work that has already been done in the district by solidifying and aligning systems and practice to ensure the achievement of all students. We want to simultaneously RAISE THE BAR for all students (increase in academic expectations); CLOSE THE GAP between Students with Disabilities (SWD) and their general education peers (students who start behind make more academic growth each year because of high quality services); and ensure HIGH EXPECTATIONS WITH COMPLIANCE (PPT systems are high performing, living documents and streamline supports).

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MISSION AND VISION-Our Strategic Plan is guided by a Mission/Vision for the Pupil Services Department (Figure 1) and supported by a Theory of Action (Figure 2). The Pupil Services Office, with support and guidance from the Parent Advisory Council and SPED Strategic Team, have developed five Goals (Figure 3), which will guide the District’s work. These goals require a set of Strategies – the things we will do, or do differently, to achieve each goal – which are described starting on page 3. Strategies are not listed in any prioritized order, and all are viewed as a crucial piece of the SOP. A number of Performance Measures will be used to monitor progress towards realizing each goal, which are embedded in the individual goal breakdowns (starting on page 3).

Figure 1: Mission and Vision Statements

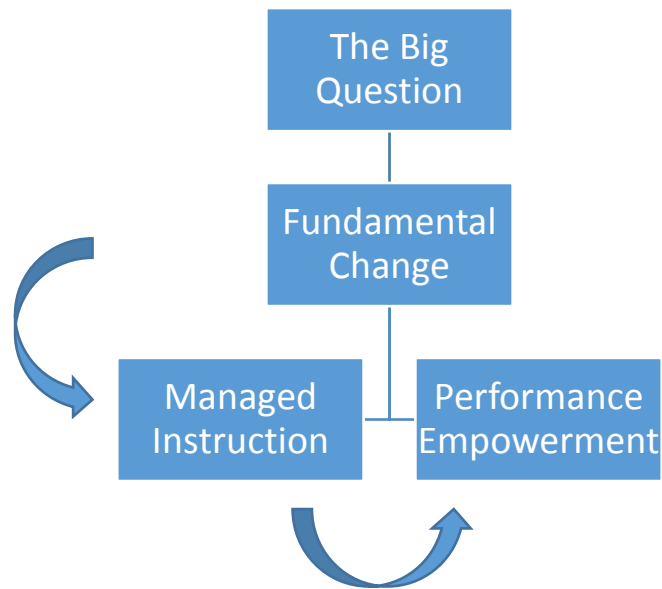
Mission
To provide academic, emotional and related service programming for students of special needs while maintaining and ensuring compliance according to state and federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act regulations
Vision
We are a school district that provides an inclusive education environment for students with special needs by ensuring the maximum amount of our students are spending the majority of the time accessing the curriculum with their general education peers. We meet the unique needs of our learners through a robust and rigorous set of supports that provides high quality academic, emotional and physical support. We engage our parents and community partners as vital members of our children’s successes. Through multi-leveled supports we will decrease the achievement gap between our general education population and our students of highest need.

It is important to note that this SOP is a living document, that it will take at least three academic years to accomplish all the strategies included in the plan. Each year, the Parent Advisory Council and SPED Strategic Team will meet on a quarterly basis to review progress towards our goals and make any mid-course corrections based on current data.

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THEORY OF ACTION-TPS Pupil Services SOP will be implemented through a combined Theory of Actions (TOA): Managed Instruction (centralized approach) moving towards a Performance Empowerment (centralized indicators-school teams can implement differently). It is important to begin the implementation of the SOP through the Managed Instruction TOA. Managed Instruction is the most centralized approach; all schools are the “same” at each level; the “What” and “How” are determined by District for all schools. Intervention involves making changes that increase fidelity to the “one best model.” Beginning here will allow the district to operate at the highest level across the board, but it is important to note that we will move to the Performance Empowerment TOA, which is the most decentralized approach; all schools are different; the “what” determined by District; the “How” determined by school.

Figure 2: Theory of Action Flow Chart

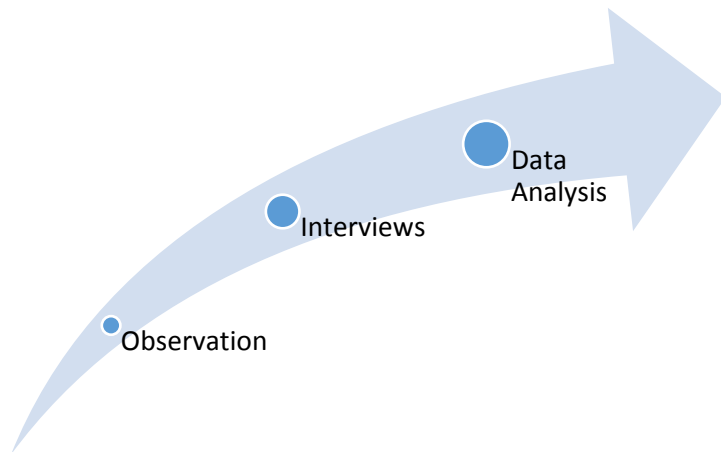


The areas where the “what” will be determined by the district are: IEP compliance structures and systems, academic and compliance goal setting, and district SPED budgeting. The schools will be able to coordinate staffing, scheduling and service implementation that aligns to the SOP goals and objectives.

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GOALS-The goals of the SOP were developed through a triangulation of three different sets of data collections: observation, interviews and data analysis. The Pupil Services Office engaged in multiple and diverse opportunities to collect this data and after analysis in partnership with the SPED Strategic Team and the Parent Advisory Council. When the three points of data revealed a shared analysis this triggered for the team a specific area of need and the following five goals were identified as priority areas to address:

Figure 3: Goals for Pupil Services Strategic Operating Plan



GOALS for Strategic Operating plan

- 1) Alignment of resources, staffing and training in order to provide a high quality and robust educational program for students with special needs
- 2) Development of exemplary special education teachers into case managers for their specific caseloads
- 3) Creation of systems and procedures to ensure the continued and effective special education compliance of students with special needs
- 4) Reduction of the frequency and duration of students with special needs being educated away from their general education environment
- 5) Increase the frequency, effectiveness and diversity of co-teaching instruction within the general education program

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GOAL NUMBER ONE

Goal
Align resources, staffing and training in order to provide a high quality and robust educational program for students with special needs
Theory of Action
If we realign resources to ensure we have fully staffed programs with high quality personnel then our students will succeed at greater levels, access more of their services in a general education environment and have flexible programs that respond to unique needs
Metrics
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Decrease in staff turnover rate2) Increase in students staying in district3) Increase in post-secondary attendance and completion4) Increase in percent of “all K-3 students” meeting benchmark to 85% by 2018 End of Year (EOY) on mCLASS DIBELS.5) 100% of K-3 students not meeting benchmark (on mClass DIBELS) receive appropriate tiered interventions.6) Increase in percentage of special education teachers rated as “exemplary” by CT SEED
Strategies
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) District will have a pre-established PD calendar for Special Education programming2) District will have a planned professional development program for new and existing paraprofessionals3) District will increase staffing for special education, behavioral and emotional support4) District will increase common planning time between special education teachers, general education teachers, paraprofessionals (as needed) and substitutes (as needed)5) District will develop specific staff members as district experts around certain high need areas: social-emotional, dyslexia, autism6) District will hire a combination of BCBA and Social Workers7) District will develop a High School transitional services program8) District will increase early interventions systems for struggling students: Pre-identified universal screeners-Assessments-Specific interventions

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GOAL NUMBER TWO

Goal
Develop exemplary special education teachers as true leaders and case manager leaders of their specific caseloads
Theory of Action
If our special education teachers are developed into leaders of their caseloads then they will be able to more effectively advocate for their students, respond to immediate needs, provide individualized support and communicate with parents more frequently
Metrics
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Increase in students receiving services with Non-Disabled Peers (Below 60% of all students)2) Increase in Co-Taught classroom service delivery (50% increase)3) Over 98% compliance with evaluation timeline4) 95% of general education teachers will understand IEP requirements of individual students (per survey)5) 100% attendance of a general education teacher at PPT meetings
Strategies
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) District will appoint a special education teacher to act as liaison with school administration and general education teachers (1 per school)2) District will decrease caseloads of special education teachers, in order to increase oversight and leadership of caseloads3) District will increase the use of IEP at-a-glance documents so IEPs are active and living documents in the schools4) District will increase communication between PPT team members: Special Education to General Education to Support Staff5) District will provide more targeted individualized support with an increase in program services and offerings

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GOAL NUMBER THREE

Goal
Create systems and procedures to ensure the continued and effective special education compliance of students with special needs
Theory of Action
If we have clear and strong systems across the district for special education compliance then we will further create a program that meets the unique needs of our students across a continuum of needs, grades and disabilities by creating an atmosphere where the IEP is a “living” document in all classrooms.
Metrics
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Increase placement and time with nondisabled peers2) Increase general education class placement3) Decrease separate class placement4) Decrease placements in out-district placements5) Eliminate significant discrepancy in 10+ days OOS suspension rates6) Eliminate disproportionate representation by disability as a result of inappropriate identification
Strategies
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) District will create a checklist of IEP Compliance action steps, which will be monitored by case managers2) District will modernize IEP filing system to provide better access and use of information3) District will systemize and modernize PPT meeting structure and times, in order to provide clarity and predictability of meetings4) District will train case managers to lead PPT meetings5) District will provide additional support to parents regarding the PPT process and legal issues6) District will require general education teachers to use a common report for PPT meetings7) District will expand social and emotional supports to students8) District will reorganizing schedules and staffing in order to provide more flexibility for students

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GOAL NUMBER FOUR

Goal
Reduce the frequency and duration of students with special needs being educated away from their general education environment
Theory of Action
If we create an atmosphere where students are able to be educated more often with their general education peers then we will see student achievement rise across all subgroups of students because of effective differentiation and leveled supports for all students.
Metrics
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Increase number of students being educated in a co-taught classroom by 50%2) Decrease the reading gap (SBAC) between TPS “all students” and the state by 10%, as measured by the percent scoring level 3 and 43) Decrease the math gap (SBAC) between TPS “all students” and the state by 10%, as measured by the percent scoring level 3 and 44) Decrease the percent of students being educated in an out-district placement by 25%5) Decrease the percent of students receiving services in a “resource/pull-out” room setting by 25%6) Decrease the OOS suspension rate by 1 percentile point7) Less than 2% OOS suspension rate for elementary school
Strategies
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Provide professional development and in classroom support around differentiation and implementation of accommodations2) District will develop a co-teaching handbook and program for all grades3) District will increase the social-emotional supports and services4) District will hire a combination of BCBA and Social Workers5) District will continue the implementation of PBIS and begin to implement Restorative Justice program6) District will implement and develop a early elementary social skills curriculum7) District will increase co-taught classrooms through an increase in staffing

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GOAL NUMBER FIVE

Goal
Increase the frequency, effectiveness and diversity of co-teaching instruction within the general education program
Theory of Action
If we effectively implement a robust co-teaching environment that delivers rigorous and relevant instruction to all students then we will decrease the achievement gap between our high need students while increasing the overall achievement of all students.
Metrics
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Increase number of students being educated in a co-taught classroom by 50%2) Decrease the reading gap (SBAC) between TPS “all students” and the state by 10%, as measured by the percent scoring level 3 and 43) Decrease the math gap (SBAC) between TPS “all students” and the state by 10%, as measured by the percent scoring level 3 and 44) Decrease the percent of students being educated in an out-district placement by 25%5) Decrease the percent of students receiving services in a “resource/pull-out” room setting by 25%6) Increase the number of teachers scoring a level 3 or 4 on the co-teaching rubric
Strategies
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Identify common planning time between co-teachers2) Create and implement a common planning agenda3) Create Co-Teacher rubric and observation tool for differentiated support4) Provide differentiated professional development focused on co-teaching groups5) Train teachers on the appropriate documentation of inclusion within the IEP document6) Develop a schedule, across schools, that facilitates the execution of co-teaching