Special Education Program Review

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OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Community Schools, Thriving Students

Ask of the Board

- Gain awareness of changes in eligibility and disability types across the SELPA;
- Understand the current Special Education program continuum and services;
- Understand the staffing allocated to Special Education programs;
- Provide feedback on the articulation of Special Education programs across OUSD schools.

Outline

- Our Students
- Our Programs
  - Program Standards
  - Program Locations
  - Current Enrollment
- Our Staff
  - Investments by Discipline
  - Professional Development Opportunities
- Program SWOT Analysis

Our Students

By the Numbers

- 6800 eligible students
  - 6313 in public placements from PK-YA
  - 5745 in K-12 public placements
  - 103 students in nonpublic placements
- 812 pending initial referrals
  - 350 Early Childhood diagnostic evaluations
  - 462 school aged initials
- Another 1200 students have Section 504 Plans

Percentage of Students with an IEP in OUSD

Subgroup Donut

34,841

18.1%
N = 6,313

81.9%
N = 28,528
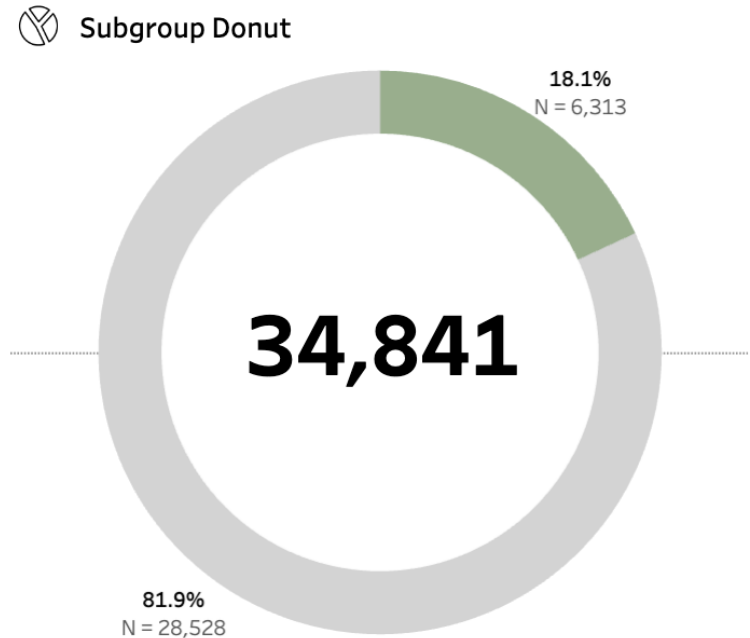
Snapshot as of 4.15.23

Changing Eligibility and Impact Landscape

Enrollment of eligible students over time, 2013-2022

December, 2013	5085
December, 2016	5458
December, 2019	5568
December, 2022	5707

Significant changes in eligibility areas have required changes in our professional development, related services hiring and demand for each setting type. Intellectual and emotional disabilities have declined, while Autism and ADHD eligibility has doubled.

Date	Students Eligible Under Autism (AUT)	Students Eligible Under Other Health Impairment (OHI)
December, 2013	591	389
December, 2016	814	580
December, 2019	997	665
December, 2022	1196	673

What services do our students require?

Specialized Academic Instruction:

5100 students in OUSD public schools require SAI

Speech and Language:

4150 students require some form of speech service (direct or consultative)

Occupational and Physical Therapy:

510 students

Mental and Behavioral Health:

576 students
[does not include students receiving services through general education not related to their area(s) of disability]

Transition Services (college and career awareness, job coaching):

1148 students aged 16-22

Low Incidence Services for the Hearing/Vision Impaired or Orthopedically Impaired:
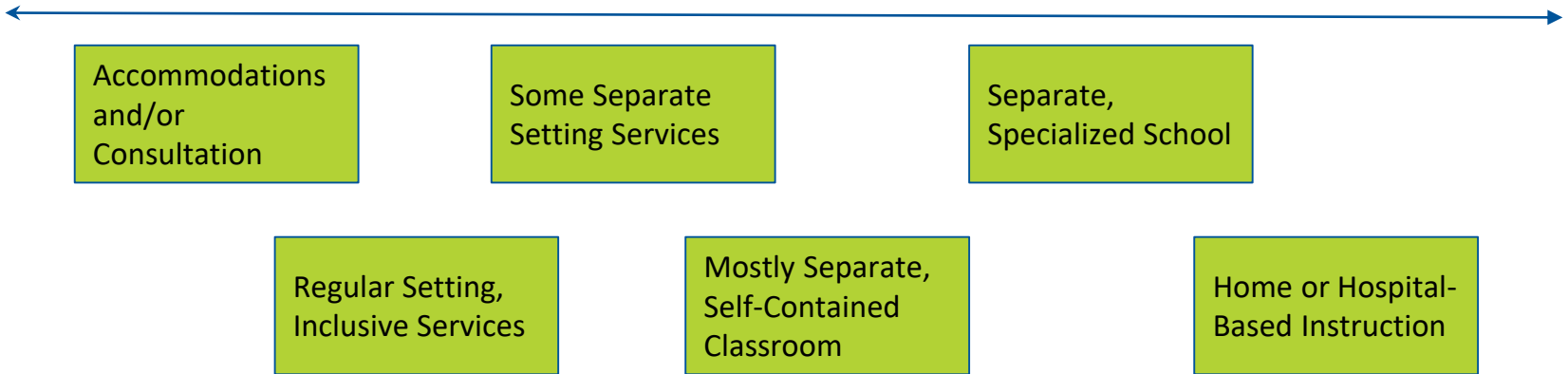
120 students

Our Programs

Disability Support Continuum

Least Restrictive

Most Restrictive

Accommodations and/or Consultation	Some Separate Setting Services	Separate, Specialized School

Regular Setting, Inclusive Services	Mostly Separate, Self-Contained Classroom	Home or Hospital-Based Instruction

Federal law requires us to provide services in the **Least Restrictive Environment,** placing students in self-contained instructional settings only when the unique needs of their disability are such that accommodations or services in the regular classroom setting cannot provide educational benefit.

Additionally, we plan with the following **values** in mind:
- Ensuring there is a continuum of services across the whole grade level band for each school with a self-contained program;
- Adhering to the principles of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE);
- Matching general education feeder patterns to the maximum extent possible;
- Centering parent/caregiver choice as much as possible through the Options process;
- Providing inclusive services sufficient to support most students with IEPs at every OUSD school.

Current Students Enrolled by Program/Grade

Program Type	# Programs Open	# Needed per Current OEA Soft Caps	Avg Enrollment	OEA Soft Cap
ECE MM SCC	15	16	11	10
ECE ESN SCC	14	17	9.5	8
K-5 MM SCC	27	22	10.5	13
K-5 ESN SCC	29	26	8.7	10
6-8 MM SCC	18	16	11.7	13
6-8 ESN SCC	8	8	9.2	10
9-12 MM SCC	19	17	12	13
9-12 ESN SCC	8	9	10.3	10
Young Adult	12 [7 mod, 5 ESN]	11	12 and 8.5	13 and 10

Continuum Changes, 2023-24

- **Bella Vista:** Currently has two ESN SCC programs, moving to one K-2 in June '23
- **Manzanita Community:** Consolidation of one of the three Mild-Moderate SCCs; two will remain for a full K-5 continuum
- **Manzanita SEED:** Phased closure of the MM SCC, starting with stopping kinder enrollment in '23, closing the K-2 in June '24, and closing the 3-5 in June '25
- **Joaquin Miller:** Phased closure of the MM SCC, starting with the 3-5 in June '23, then closure of the K-2 in June '24
- **Brookfield:** Move of the 3-5 SCC to Highland Community to join the K-2 program there and complete the grade level band with a full K-5 continuum
- **Montclair:** Opening the 3-5 SCC to complete the grade level band, going from one ESN SCC to two for a full K-5 continuum
- **Melrose Leadership Academy:** Opening the 3-5 SCC to complete a K-8 grade level band continuum
- **United for Success Academy:** Moving from one MM SCC to no self-contained programs as of June '23
- **Montera:** Moving from five Special Education programs to three. Closure of one MM SCC in June '23 and one mental health program in June '24. One MM SCC, one MOD SCC, and inclusive services will remain.
- **Castlemont**: Currently has five types of programming. Closure of the 9-12 mental health program in June '24. Inclusive services, mild-moderate self-contained instruction, MOD SCC, and ESN SCC will remain

Program Locations after Projected Changes, 2023-24

Mild-Moderate Self-Contained Programs: 15 elementary schools, 9 middle schools, 5 high schools, 1 K-8 school (dual language), and Sojourner Truth Independent Study

Moderate Self-Contained Programs: 3 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, and 4 high schools

Extensive Support Needs Self-Contained Programs: 15 elementary schools, 7 middle schools, 5 high schools, 1 6-12 campus, and Sojourner Truth Independent Study

Mental Health Programs: 2 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, 5 high schools, and Sojourner Truth Independent Study

Programs without a full grade continuum, 23-24: Bella Vista Extensive Support Needs (ESN)- K-2 only

Instructional Materials, Interventions and Curricula

Program Type	Core Curriculum	Core Supplement	Optional Supplements	Notes
ECE Mild-Mod SCC	Creative Curriculum	Sounds Sensible	Kimochis	
ECE ESN SCC	Creative Curriculum	Unique Learning System TEACCH Tasks	Sounds Sensible	
K-5 MM SCC	General Education	SPIRE, Sounds Sensible	Handwriting Without Tears, Superflex	Currently have SpEd-funded tutors supplementing literacy block
K-5 ESN SCC	Unique Learning System	TEACCH Tasks	Handwriting Without Tears, Superflex	Considering change in core to Teach Town
6-8 MM SCC	General Education	SPIRE, Sounds Sensible	Positive Action	
6-8 ESN SCC	Unique Learning System	TEACCH Tasks		Considering change in core to Teach Town
9-12 MM SCC	General Education	Oneder	IXL, Positive Action	
9-12 ESN SCC	Unique Learning System	TEACCH Tasks, JobReady		Considering change in core to Teach Town
Young Adult	Unique Learning System	JobTips, JobReady	IXL	Considering change in core to Teach Town

Instructional Materials, Continued

Program Type	Core Curriculum	Core Supplement	Optional Supplements	Notes
Inclusive Services, TK-8	General Education	SPIRE, Sounds Sensible	Handwriting Without Tears, Superflex	
Inclusive Services, 9-12	General Education		IXL, JobReady, Oneder	
Speech and Language	General Education	Everyday Speech	Social Optics	

Special Education Program Standards

- A core set of observable indicators of quality, used to ensure alignment and uptake of best practices across the continuum
- Program standards with checklist summaries and an aligned observation tool provided to all site leaders
- Special Education personnel ground instructional walks in the observational tool

→ Example of our program standards for Mild-Moderate settings

Mild-Moderate Program Standards

Engaging Instruction

Instruction that makes use of small-group opportunities and is grounded in engaging and relevant content. Staff use adopted, evidence-based, grade level, general education and supplemental curriculum and materials.

Collaborative Community

All adults are actively engaged with students during instruction. Roles are well understood by all adults, and there is evidence of authentic relationships formed between all students and staff.

Inclusive Practices

Students have daily opportunities for meaningful inclusion in general education settings.

Mild-Moderate Program Standards

Student Recognition

There is student work posted and evidence of student ownership and community in the space.

Visual Learning Supports

There are visual supports for learners including learning targets, visual schedules, and agendas posted for each instructional period/block, with a clear connection to standards or goals. Technology is used as a tool to support multimodal understanding.

Language Opportunities

Instruction is planned to balance staff talk and encourage student talk, with multiple opportunities for academic discussion and social skill development.

Professional Development Plan

23–24 Professional Development Structure

Common Foundation

- Teaches the "OUSD way"
- Heavier emphasis on newer staff, with content front-loaded to occur more frequently Aug-Oct
- May be extended to returning staff who demonstrate a need
- Choice of in-person or virtual live sessions with supplemental asynchronous content

Educator-Driven Foci

- Expected for all Special Educators to pick one branch to attend
- Convene 4–6 times per year
- Purpose is to enable educators to self-assess their current tools and skills and dive more deeply into an area aligned to their professional development goals
- Topics can be generated by representatives of the target population and may include: the science of reading; teaching math to neurologically diverse children; explicit supports for executive function; embedding AAC and AT supports for students with complex communication needs; trauma-informed practices; function-based behavior deep dive; evidence-based practices to support learners with ASDs

Practice Spotlights

- 3–4 times per year
- May be discipline-specific, but oriented for 100% of staff within the target discipline(s)
- Used to introduce new procedures or instructional tools or to provide reteaching of core functions/concepts that do not appear to be firmly cemented based on observational data
- Choice of in-person or virtual live

Embedded Coaching and PLCs

- PLCs open to all educators convene 8–9 times per year
- Weekly coaching is provided to approximately 25% of Ed Specialists
- Content is led by educators and facilitated by Instructional Coaches or Leads
- Purpose is to deepen practice through self-reflection and collegial learning, not to introduce material
- Content is delivered live and recommended to be in person

Optional Supplements

- Conferences, webinars, special guest speakers, and resource shares
- Purpose is to offer extension opportunities aligned to educator interests and passions

- Alignment with the principles of adult learning: relevance, self-direction, and goal-oriented work
- Provides a "common trunk" and branches educators can self-select to go deeper
- Expected participation in core offerings, supplements and coaching are optional and encouraged
- Department also publishes 12-15 PD topics per year for general education faculty and staff in our annual PD catalog.

Special Educator Credentials and Retention

Temporary
23.8%

Permanent
50.8%
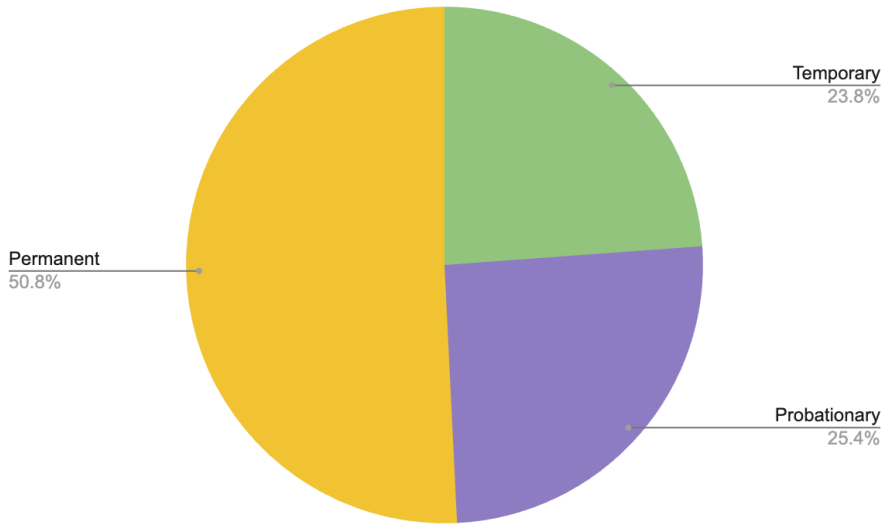
Probationary
25.4%

We need a tiered professional development structure to address the diverse needs of our teachers. Almost 50% of our teachers are new to the work, with **almost ¼ on a temporary staffing permit** and just over ¼ on a probationary contract.

Turnover and attrition: In advance of this year, we filled <u>123 positions for Special Education teachers</u> last year of approximately 380 total Special Education teaching positions. This signals that we need stronger initial professional development and a robust investment in PD that supports our educators to build skills and find the work sustainable.

Our Staff

Special Education K-12 Academic Program Caseloads

Program Type	Caseload Cap	Staffing Articulation
Resource Specialist Program	27	Varies based on the number of eligible students, assessed needs and services at each site. At least 80% of RSs must have support staff. Many programs require more than one staff to implement IEPs
Mild-Moderate Self-Contained Class	13	One teacher and one support staff
Moderate Self-Contained Class	13	One teacher and two support staff
Extensive Support Needs Self-Contained Class	10	One teacher and two support staff. Augmented staff if the classroom has more than three students who are non-ambulatory wheelchair users
Mental Health Program	13	One teacher, one support staff, and one mental health clinician. May augment with 1-2 mental health aides, pursuant to caseload and social-emotional and safety needs

Job Class	FTE 23-24	Key Functions
Resource Specialist	123.2	Leads initial evaluation (child find) process, case manages IEPs, provides direct Specialized Academic Instruction, consults to ensure implementation of accommodations and supplementary aids, monitors progress data
Self-Contained Teacher, MM	111	Case manages IEPs, provides direct gen ed replacement Specialized Academic Instruction, completes re-evaluations, monitors progress data
Self-Contained Teacher, ESN	91	Case manages IEPs, provides direct gen ed replacement Specialized Academic Instruction, completes re-evaluations, monitors progress data
Classroom TSA	22.5	See teacher functions above- at high schools where all teachers are TSAs
Paraeducator	353 at .8 FTE	Provides individual or small-group instructional and physical/custodial support at the direction of a Special Education teacher
ISS	151 at .8 FTE	Provides individual or small-group instructional support at the direction of a Special Education teacher
Psychologist	41.4 OUSD 10 Contracted	Evaluates students to determine eligibility, provides short-term counseling, consults to support psychological needs
Speech-Language Pathologist	58 OUSD 44 Contracted	Evaluates students to determine eligibility, provides direct speech and language services and consultative services
Occupational Therapist	12.8	Evaluates students to determine eligibility, provides motor and sensory services, trains staff on use of specialized tools and equipment
Social Worker	24.8	Provides individual and group therapy, milieu classroom support, and treatment planning

Program SWOT Analysis

Assessed Strengths	Assessed Weaknesses
- Evidence-based curriculum available for each program type and consistent implementation of multisensory literacy intervention, TK-5 - Investments in social-emotional, executive functioning behavioral, and sensory supports to supplement academic core - Consistent, structured tool aligned to program standards to collect observational data - Staff who attend Department PD and PLCs report consistently high levels of satisfaction - Structured and consistent program for IEP ed benefit review and case manager feedback - Collaborative partnerships with several CSI teams (e.g. secondary math, ELLMA, MTSS) - Increases in graduation rate over three years - Decreases in % of students attending nonpublic schools	- IEP timeline challenges - Ed Benefit reviews show a need for greater alignment between student progress monitoring data, goals, and services - Less consistent use of core curricula and benchmark measures in ESN self-contained settings - Only about 50% of Special Education teachers attend central PD consistently - Need to improve investments in PD and differentiated content, especially for support staff - Increased rates of support staff attrition over the last five years and particular challenges filling and retaining ISS roles
Opportunities for Development	Threats to Progress
- Continued development of partnerships with other departments to weave elements of supporting learners with disabilities into all ongoing PD (e.g. UDL) - Development of new, multi-tiered SpEd professional learning plan - MTSS plan implementation will lead to greater Tier I use of social-emotional, pragmatic language and behavioral supports that improve access for SwDs	- Most site leaders have limited or no special education experience and therefore rely on central staff very heavily for support - Over 800 pending initial referrals- persistently high rate creates unsustainable evaluation conditions - Many competing priorities for limited educator time - Mindset of Special Education being outside of the MTSS pyramid persists in some spaces

Ask of the Board

- What additional questions do you have about our services and supports for students with IEPs?
- Please provide feedback on the articulation of programs and staffing investment for Special Education for 2023-24 and beyond.

Thank you

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