

Changes

Questions	Answers
<p>Since parents and teachers were not involved in planning, the new direction of special education, and the executive director of special education has indicated that she is new to her position, who is the driving force behind the current changes to the special education department?</p>	<p>Inclusive practices are a key strategy included in the MPS Academic Plan with direct alignment with the strategic plan, Acceleration 2020. The Academic plan is informed by current data and the application of evidence-based practices to create solutions and apply practices that support all students in closing the achievement gap that plagues MPS. The Strategic Plan was formed through numerous listening sessions and feedback from staff, students, parents and community members. To further define how students who received special education services would benefit, the Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) was engaged as a stakeholder group who provided feedback about the implementation of inclusive practices in MPS schools. SEAC is a committee of parents whose children have received, or currently receive, special education services in MPS.</p>
<p>Who is ultimately in charge of the decision to stop referring to the “Citywide Autism Program” and slowly, through reducing the number of kindergarteners going into the program, discontinue this service option for the majority of FS I/II students? Who has the power to change or amend the implementation?</p>	<p>Decisions regarding the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities are made during IEP meetings, as outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Act. While the special education department and the district strategic plan support inclusive practices, where a student receives their special education services is ultimately decided by the IEP team, which includes input from families.</p>
<p>How does MPS envision inclusive practices at schools in the future for all SpEd students together (e.g., student with Down’s Syndrome in class with ASD sharing resources?)?</p>	<p>Inclusive practices are intended to identify and remove barriers to full acceptance, participation and learning for all children. MPS want all students, regardless of disability, to be viewed as equal members of the school community and have access to the same learning. We will continue to focus on the educational needs of students, rather than the label of a specific disability.</p> <p>Examples of this will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of special education department models at school versus segregated programs • Sharing resources, staffing and interventions, among all students receiving special education services at a site

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive training about all disability types for teachers and special education assistants • Customized interventions based on a student's needs, not solely based on type of disability
<p>Given the changes in the CWAP, how is MPS going to honor my son's IEP and have him be included in his regular education classes if even now there is not enough support - SEAs to help him?</p>	<p>Regardless of whether or not a child receives services through citywide programs or through resource programming, the services outlined on the IEP must be provided to the child. If you have concerns about your child's IEP, then you have the right to request an IEP meeting to discuss your concerns.</p>
<p>Where is the district coming from with these changes? Resource allocation? Program exploitations? Over diagnosis? Lack of measurable objective goals? What was the cause that initiated these changes? Lack of resources? Money? Locations? Qualified teachers?</p>	<p>All decisions regarding special education programming are based on regulations through the Individuals with Disabilities Act and evidence-based practices. Inclusive practices is not a cost savings measure, it is a philosophy of education based on access and high expectations for all students. The Minnesota Department of Education has identified that MPS serves a higher percentage of students in Federal Setting III programs and has set targets for all school district in Minnesota to reduce these numbers.</p>
<p>Is MPS, as a district, moving to cross-categorical classrooms for FS 3 special education students?</p>	<p>The special education department continues to examine and reflect on our programming for students receiving special education services. We currently program for students based on their disability label and have no changes planned for next year. We are in the exploration stage of looking into a pilot classroom for students with communication needs and will work with SEAC and other parent groups to discuss this possibility.</p>
<p>How has the reallocation of resources impacted remaining ASD sites beyond K classrooms?</p>	<p>The reallocation of resources affected 3 sites due to a reduction of students with autism at those sites. The rest of the sites were not impacted.</p>
<p>Do the MPS schools that have an ASD program always have more resources and ASD specific licensed teachers available? Or is this not the case?</p>	<p>Resources are allocated based on individual student need not based on programs.</p>



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