



Hartford Public Schools (DRAFT)
Request for External Independent Review of Special Education Services

Overview

Hartford Public Schools serves one of the highest need student populations in the state. The costs to provide adequate funding programming and support, specifically for students with disabilities, relies heavily on out-of-district special education placements and has been increasing steadily, reaching \$120M in FY17-18.

Hartford Public Schools is committed to ensuring that students access their least restrictive environment. HPS is requesting support to assess the current special education continuum of services, and the district's capacity and readiness to expand in-district special education programming.

Foci for Scope of Services

1. Demographics and Special Education Eligibility

- a. Evaluate the effectiveness of special education referrals, evaluations, and eligibility determinations.
- b. Assess the alignment between the current special education referral evaluation and eligibility process, and the district-wide Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) process.

2. High quality and inclusive instruction

- a. Assess the implementation of the district's MTSS framework and plan.
- b. Evaluate specialized instruction in literacy, inclusive of multiple paths of access to grade-level standards using the Universal Design for Learning framework.
- c. Assess the integration of effective social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum and positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS).
- d. Assess students' access to their least restrictive environment and increase inclusive services where students are involved and progress in grade-level general education curriculum.
- e. Define effective and inclusive special education supports and services.

3. Organizational structures to support student learning relative to special education

- a. Assess programmatic and structural capacity for implementing separate, full-time, and specialized in-district programming.
- b. Assess and propose structures at the central office level that promote greater collaboration among those responsible for the teaching and learning of all students.
- c. Assess and propose structures in the special education central office team to promote more effective and efficient supports to schools.
- d. Assess current systems that support effective management and supervision of special education supports and services.



- e. Assess programmatic and structural capacity for implementing specialized in-district programming, and for transitioning out-placed students with disabilities back into in-district schools and programs.

- 4. **Out-of-district service-provision**
 - a. Assess operations and monitorin of out-of-district service-provision and billing, and make recommendations.