



EDUCATING ALL STUDENTS WELL:

Special Education Reform in New York City Public Schools



Report Prepared by Perry and Associates, Inc. The Fund for Public Advocacy and Perry and Associates, Inc. acknowledge generous support for this study from the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust and the Booth Ferris Foundation.

About Perry and Associates, Inc.

P&A is a national consulting firm that acts on its commitment to social justice and equity by assisting district, school, and teacher leaders improve the academic achievement and performance of all students. P&A has extensive experience in expanding the instructional leadership of district and school leaders, and designing, implementing, and aligning systems of support that contribute to raising student achievement and closing achievement gaps. P&A senior associates, assisting districts across the country, are practitioners with current and/or recent experience working in districts and schools.

For more than a decade, P&A's research-based and experience-driven methods have produced results in improving student achievement within large urban districts. P&A partner districts, which include Broad Prize winners Long Beach Unified School District and Norfolk Public Schools, have been recognized for their efforts to raise student achievement and close achievement gaps. *Almost all 70 schools P&A has supported in the last decade, including those who have been designated Program Improvement schools or schools needing state monitoring, have made and sustained progress in improving student achievement.* P&A's current and former partner districts include Corpus Christi (TX), Flint (MI), Long Beach (CA), Los Angeles (CA), Montgomery County Public Schools (MD), Norfolk (VA), Oakland (CA), San Diego (CA) and Stamford (CT). P&A has worked with districts and schools on behalf of state departments of education, and several national foundations and reform organizations including the Panasonic Foundation, the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, the Gates Foundation and the Stupski Foundation.

The P&A team was led by its Executive Director, Dr. George S. Perry, Jr., who is the primary author and has responsibility for coordinating all aspects of the project. Dr. Perry has designed and executed studies on district level initiatives in Chicago (IL), in Long Beach (CA) and Jefferson County (KY) on behalf of Edna McConnell Clark Foundation and in Boston on behalf of the Panasonic Foundation. Helaine Doran, P&A's Deputy Director – NY, was the lead interviewer and primary author of the background section and professional development matrices. Ms. Doran has been involved with school finance and educational equity reform movements in New York City and nationally for the last two decades. Dr. Martha Musser, former director of the New York State Education Department's data collection unit, authored *Data Compelling Special Education Reform in New York City Public Schools* and *Profile of Schools Participating in Phase One of New York City's Special Education Reform Initiative*, which are found in the appendices. Elizabeth R. Sullivan, Researcher, P&A, contributed valuable research support.

About The Fund for Public Advocacy

The Fund for Public Advocacy was established in 2002 to reinforce and support the Office of the New York City Public Advocate in making government more responsive, accountable, and transparent. Since its establishment, the Fund has supported numerous efforts to help New Yorkers receive necessary services and have a voice in shaping the policies that affect their lives.

Ensuring fair and equal access to government resources remains one of society's greatest challenges in overcoming cycles of poverty. New York's more affluent neighborhoods where schools and social services are abundant have continued to improve year after year. However, the same cannot be said for the city's most needy communities. Rather than seeing government institutions as allies and vehicles by which they can push forward positive social change, community leaders in many of the city's low-income neighborhoods regularly find themselves fighting against the system trying to get equitable access to services and support. As a 501(c), the Fund has the ability to develop and execute projects which further the objectives of the Public Advocate without the budgetary constraints of being a government agency funded by tax dollars.

The work at the Fund is dedicated to changing this dynamic and making government more responsive, accountable, and transparent for all communities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letters from New York City Public Advocate Bill de Blasio &
Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education Dennis Walcott

Executive Summary

Introduction

About this Study

Part One: A Brief History of NYC Special Education Reform from a System Perspective

Part Two: Findings

Part Three: Recommendations

Appendices

- Appendix One: Data Compelling Special Education Reform in New York City Public Schools
- Appendix Two: Names of Interviewees and Interview Protocol
- Appendix Three: Profile of Schools Participating in Phase One of New York City's Special Education Reform Initiative
- Appendix Four: Professional Development Tables
- Appendix Five: DOE Organizational Charts

August 31, 2012

Dear Public School Community and Friends:

The 2012-2013 school year marks the beginning of essential reforms to our special education system that will affect every public school in New York City. For far too long, graduation rates and levels of academic achievement of students with disabilities have been falling persistently and dramatically below those of their peers. In response to this, the Department of Education (“DOE”) committed to a plan of action and reform to ensure that students with disabilities are educated with services that enable them to learn and thrive. I write to you with a shared commitment to ensure our City is serving all New York City’s children and families.

The goals of Special Education Reform are not only to increase the number of students with disabilities who graduate from high school, but to better prepare those students for success beyond high school. These goals will require us to make system-wide improvements that will improve the ability of all school staff to serve students with special needs and give all students the chance to succeed with the General Education and Common Core curriculum.

These reforms will affect students in each of the 1,700 schools in New York City. While the process of reform will undoubtedly present difficulties, moving toward inclusion is in the best interest of New York City’s students with disabilities. Research shows that spending time in inclusive classrooms helps students with disabilities achieve greater academic outcomes.¹

Given the scope of our Special Education system and the breadth of reforms underway, my office has joined with the Fund for Public Advocacy, Perry and Associates and the Department of Education to collaboratively study the impact of Special Education Reform. I believe these studies will be critical in assessing the intended benefit for New York City students, and can provide guidance for millions more across the country. This initial report considers the policy decisions underpinning the reform effort at the DOE’s administrative level, and makes policy recommendations that I believe will improve the DOE’s policies. The next phase will evaluate the implementation of the reforms at the school level.

I am committed to the success of this project. In order to ensure all students with disabilities receive a quality education, the next phase of this impact study will take a hard look at the school-level implementation of reforms, and ensure all stakeholders are involved and listened to. My office and the DOE are committed to the goals of the Special Education Reform and will continue to collaborate on efforts to ensure that best practices are developed and shared in all New York City schools. I sincerely believe that in order for reforms to be successful, school administrators, personnel, parents and students must be engaged in the process.

I hope that you will find this first report on Special Education Reform in New York City to be insightful and motivational. I believe it will serve as a strong baseline to measure our future success for all students.

Sincerely,



Bill de Blasio
Public Advocate for the City of New York

¹ Rea, P., McLaughlin, V., Walther-Thomas, C. (2002). Outcomes for students with learning disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 68(2), 203-223.



**Department of
Education**

Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor

August 30, 2012

Hon. Bill de Blasio
Public Advocate, City of New York
1 Centre Street, 15th Floor New York, NY 10007

Dear Public Advocate de Blasio:

Over the course of the last school year, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) worked with the Public Advocate's office while it conducted an evaluation of the first phase of the DOE's special education reform initiative. The following report outlines that evaluation and the resulting recommendations, and is one step in our continuing to work with the Public Advocate's office to ensure that all NYC students receive a high quality education. And we will continue to collaborate with parents as we roll out our special education reform citywide.

This is also an opportunity to detail the plans DOE has initiated for the next stage of our citywide special education reform, A Shared Path to Success. While this next stage was not a part of the Public Advocate's evaluation, it builds on our shared goals to provide high-quality education to all of our students. The following outlines the steps DOE is taking to engage parents and families, support teachers and hold ourselves accountable for our progress under special education reform.

Supporting Families:

DOE has put in place additional measures to further engage with parents of both students with disabilities and students without disabilities about special education reform. These include:

- A new website with information about the reform and resources for families:
<http://schools.nyc.gov/academics/specialeducation>;
- Special education informational office hours at nine sites across all five boroughs, running throughout August and September (169 sessions offered across the city);
- In addition to 311, we have a special education phone hotline: 718-935-2007, staffed by special educators 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday through Friday;
- An updated Parent Guide to Special Education will be available on our website as of the first day of school, and printed copies will be distributed to schools and district offices this October. The guide will provide families with an overview of the process to set up individual education plans, how to enroll in other special education services, information on parents' rights and definitions of special education terms;
- A guide for principals to engage with parents and families about the special education reforms in their school.

Professional Development:

DOE has added on-site professional development and hired staff with the knowledge and skills necessary to execute the reform of special education:

- Hired 59 special education instructional coaches, one for each network of schools, beginning with the 2011-12 school year;
- Initiated additional training and professional development for parent coordinators and service providers, which will continue throughout the 2012-13 school year;
- Increased professional development funding to train teachers, school leaders, clinical and related service supervisors, and social workers as well as further our relationships with the Teachers College Inclusive Classroom Project and other partners

Accountability:

To ensure we have clear metrics for evaluating students' academic progress under the special education reform initiative, we will continue to rely on our existing accountability measures that capture growth in student achievement. In addition, last year the DOE revised the Progress Report to reward schools for demonstrating implementation of the special education reform initiative by providing additional credit to schools for moving students to less restrictive settings where appropriate.

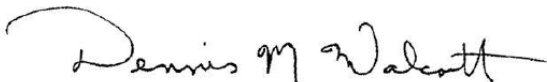
Communication about Enrollment Policies:

During the evaluation process, the DOE recognized opportunities to develop enrollment policies that balance serving students in their zone or choice school with school capacity. The DOE has also improved how we will communicate these policies:

- In February and March 2012, we held 59 principal training sessions, reaching more than 1,500 principals, with a focus on enrollment and other operational policy changes. For example, special education students who will enter a transition grade – kindergarten, sixth or ninth – may now attend their zoned school. Principals were given guidance on how to help with that transition and information on new funding that will be provided per student.

I am confident that the changes underway in special education this year will be beneficial to every student in the New York City public schools. Thank you for your support as we embark on this exciting journey towards A Shared Path to Success.

Sincerely,



Dennis M. Walcott
Chancellor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In February 2010, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) announced Phase One of Special Education Reform – a comprehensive overhaul of the city’s services to students with disabilities. The Reform seeks to address the following goals:

1. Build system-wide instructional and organizational capacity at the central, network, and school levels.
2. Close the significant achievement gap by providing students with disabilities increased access to and participation in the general education curriculum.
3. Promote more flexible instructional programs by using innovative approaches and maximizing the flexibility within the Continuum of Services provided to students, and learn about these designs from schools.



In June 2011, The Office of the Public Advocate and the DOE agreed on a collaborative effort to study and inform Special Education Reform. This initial study, written by Perry and Associates, Inc., is an independent, objective inquiry into DOE’s efforts at implementation from the perspective of central office, cluster and network leaders. The inquiry, which concludes with publishing this report, includes a brief explanation of the purposes and history of Special Education Reform, 13 findings about system support in a two-year initial implementation phase centered on 260 schools, and recommendations for consideration.

The goals of Special Education Reform point DOE and its schools in the direction of significantly increasing the number of students with disabilities who graduate from high school, and graduate prepared for success beyond high school. The goals call attention to three areas in need of improvement system-wide in order for students to be successful. It is necessary for adults (teachers, support teachers, administrators, and those who support schools) to improve their ability to serve students. Students must be allowed access to and to have success with general education curriculum, which includes mastering the common core curriculum. Schools and service providers must provide services that meet the needs of students, not “fitting” students into open seats in special education classrooms.

The intention to begin Special Education Reform was announced in 2003. Several studies inquired into the shortcomings of the special education practices, identified challenges and offered recommendations into the ways students with disabilities are identified, evaluated, and served. DOE considered the recommendations in shaping its design of Special Education Reform, which resulted in changes in DOE offices, structures, responsibilities and resources, and the emergence of five principles to guide implementation.

The Reform’s evolution paralleled the redesign of DOE’s central office and the emergence of a system of clusters and networks. When a two-year initial phase (Phase One) to implement the Reform’s goals in 260 schools was unveiled, four clusters and 10 networks were given the lead. Policies in the areas of funding, enrollment and accountability were reworked to be consistent with the Reform goals and principles implemented in Phase One schools.

About this Report

From August 2011 through April 2012, Perry and Associates, Inc. (P&A) conducted monthly coordination meetings with the DOE’s Deputy Chancellor Laura Rodriguez and DOE staff who oversee the implementation of the Reform to refine and

facilitate the study design and provide feedback. P&A had access to studies, reports, internal communications, and workshop materials, and analyzed demographic data from the Phase One schools in order to provide the chronology and actions during Phase One.

From September 2011 through January 2012, P&A conducted more than 40 structured confidential interviews of deputy chancellors, DOE central office staff, cluster and network leaders in Phase One, and others external to the DOE who have knowledge of Special Education Reform. Most interviews were more than 60 minutes, and several interviewees consented to follow-up interviews. A final draft of the report was reviewed and discussed with DOE central office leaders and staff, who were able to verify the accuracy of our statistical analysis and background information.

The report contains three parts. Part One, the Brief History of Special Education Reform, is a chronological summary of events. The history identifies the important organizational and management changes that elevate Special Education Reform within the DOE hierarchy and result in the reassigning of resources.

Findings

13 findings that emerge from the interviews are organized into five areas;

- Shared Understanding of Goals and Principles;
- Staff Capacity to Achieve Goals and Principles;
- Policy and Management Obstacles;
- Parent and Community Engagement; and
- Early Signs of Encouragement and Progress.

The findings are:

Shared Understanding of Goals and Principles

- **Finding 1:** All interviewees – DOE system leaders, cluster, and network leaders participating in Phase One – understand the importance of Special Education Reform’s goals and principles.

When asked to describe the Reform goals, central office leaders’ and staff’s responses were consistent and aligned with the three goals and five principles of DOE’s Special Education Reform articulated by Chancellor Klein and Deputy Chancellor Rodriguez. Cluster leaders’ responses were consistent and aligned as well. All of the four cluster leaders interviewed mentioned moving students to the least restrictive environment as a goal of Special Education Reform. Likewise, responses from the 10 network leaders were consistent about the goals and principles. The way that interviewees articulated the goals reflected an understanding of the complexity of Reform and its implications for change in day-to-day practices in schools.

- **Finding 2:** Interviewees recognize achieving the goals and principles will require major changes in (1) beliefs and attitudes toward students with disabilities, (2) teaching practices for all students, and (3) ways support providers deliver services.

Central office and cluster leaders more often described the goals in measurable terms that are aligned with the three goals and five principles. Network leaders did not limit their comments to objectively raising student performance and academic achievement only, but included re-imagining school practices. Network leaders were willing to share examples of changes occurring from implementation.

Many central office, cluster and network leaders also recognize that Special Education Reform is more than improving opportunities and instruction only among students with disabilities. Reform attempts, in particular, to break barriers that exist among the adults who serve general education students and students with disabilities and among students. Most of the interviewees identified attitudes toward reform as obstacles to be overcome.

Similarly, interviewees echoed a concern expressed strongly in the Hehir Report of the potential for the provider community to operate in their self-interest in recommending services to students.

Staff Capacity to Achieve Goals and Principles

- **Finding 3:** DOE created positions to support the Reform at the central, cluster and network levels. However, interviewees express concerns that there are too few staff at all levels, including classroom teachers, with adequate knowledge and expertise to lead and implement adequately the goals and principles of Special Education Reform.

Several interviewees reported challenges in identifying and building staff capacity – within and from the central office to the classroom – to achieve the goals. Interviewees recognized capacity building would take time, and that some of the capacity issues have improved.

- **Finding 4:** Several cluster, network, and central leaders express concerns that current agreements with psychologists and service providers present obstacles to access to services, flexibility in responding to student needs and equity, particularly in high-need and high-poverty neighborhoods.

Concerns expressed in the 2005 Hehir report about the psychologists' role in the referral and evaluation process were repeated by some interviewees. In particular, access to psychologists and related service providers is impacted based on the school's location. Current structures, including clustering services, limit flexibility for changes in student populations to be served in their home school, and may impact decisions for student placements.

Interviewees expressed equity concerns about access to quality external supports available especially for high-need, high-poverty communities. Schools, they said, are reporting inconsistencies in services provided to their students and difficulty in securing first-rate providers.

- **Finding 5:** DOE invested considerable resources on professional development and capacity building during Phase One.

Central office, cluster, and network leaders described professional development as necessary to achieving Special Education Reform. They recognized that helping DOE staff understand the background and rationale of Special Education Reform is essential to changing practices as is training staff to meet new expectations for their job responsibilities. Network leaders reported that professional development was provided to principals and teachers on elements and/or practical aspects of implementation. All network leaders indicated that the networks had responsibility for providing professional development, and they were building their capacity to do so effectively. Further, many network leaders said that responsibility for professional development was shared with principals who knew the needs of their schools.

Cluster and network leaders expressed appreciation for the professional development provided from the central office, including support from the partnership with Teachers College. In moving forward, they recognized that more options to support the differentiated needs of schools would be helpful. Further, several network leaders suggested that support for professional development that was designed by networks and schools and delivered in schools would be more beneficial than professional development offered across networks and schools.

When we asked interviewees for their recommendations about improving practices for full implementation, 25 percent of the recommendations were related to professional development.

Policy and Management Obstacles

- **Finding 6:** Central office and cluster leaders rely on the network's capacity to lead and support principals and schools in implementing Reform.

Cluster leaders described their responsibilities as providing oversight and support through the cluster team to address operational challenges and compliance issues, providing professional development and monitoring the review of IEPs. For the most part, they believe primary responsibilities for Phase One implementation fall to the networks and the schools in the initiative.

Network leaders described multiple responsibilities they had individually, and shared with network teams that include the instructional specialists and coaches, operational specialist, and youth development support.

- **Finding 7:** Changes in enrollment policies, when applied only to Phase One schools, created concerns about equity and service delivery to schools.

The experience of Phase One schools was that while they were expected to service students in their zone, other schools in their zone did not have the same, explicit expectation, or were not "playing by the same rules." Most interviewees recognized that the extension of revised enrollment policy to all schools in full-implementation may resolve the challenges raised in Phase One, however, they cautioned that enrollment policies and practices need to be monitored to address equity and service delivery.

- **Finding 8:** Changes in funding formulas and "across the board" budget cuts reduced school-level funding as Phase One implementation began.

Most cluster and network leaders agree that building capacity to address the needs of all students takes increased funding. Yet there was no additional funding to support Phase One at the school level, at a time when schools district-wide were experiencing a third year of budget cuts. A few network leaders also raised concerns about the reductions in Academic Intervention Services funding and its effect on lowering special education referrals. Most interviewees agree it is a priority to develop a system-wide funding formula that allows schools to retain the resources needed to provide supports necessary for students to be successful in less restrictive environments.

- **Finding 9:** Flexible service models of providing support to students in less restrictive environments now exist in each Phase One network.

It is an accomplishment that each network leader reported that there was evidence of flexible service models among network schools. Progress in the other networks, however, is reported as being mixed.

- **Finding 10:** SESIS, which began concurrently with Special Education Reform, had an effect on Phase One.

Introducing SESIS at the same time of Phase One and with the assistance of a few Phase One networks caused confusion as to whether SESIS was part of Special Education Reform. Cluster and network leaders report that schools have made measurable progress in reviewing IEPs and developing systems for more data-driven IEP writing and deeper understanding of students and their needs. Although progress has been made, interviewees cautioned that challenges remain in deepening understanding about flexible scheduling options to meet the needs of students, building in the time to keep up with review and redesign of IEPs that reflect new understandings about how best to meet the needs of students, and addressing the increase in impartial hearings in some networks.

- **Finding 11:** DOE does not require schools to set improvement targets aligned with Special Education Reform. However, school progress reports now “reward” schools for moving students into least restrictive environments.

Central office, cluster and network leaders described how DSwdELL was intentional in applying existing system-wide accountability structures – progress reports, quality reviews – to Special Education Reform. While mention was made of the impact of progress reports, it is less clear how quality reviews have been changed to include supports for least restrictive environments. Two other system-wide accountability systems, Comprehensive Educational Plans (CEP) and Principal Performance Reviews (PPR) were not aligned explicitly to Special Education Reform. Our interviews with cluster and network leaders confirmed that, with exceptions, most school and principals goals related to Phase One implementation were informal, particularly in year one.

Parent and Community Engagement

- **Finding 12:** A system-wide strategy does not exist for engaging parents, or other external stakeholders, as partners in supporting the goals and principles of Special Education Reform.

Consistently, interviewees at all levels recognized that parent engagement is essential to the success of Special Education Reform. Network leaders indicated that school-based parent coordinators are often the first point of contact with parents who have concerns. Several shared that it was a challenge to engage the service providers in the Reform and remained a sizable obstacle in changing “mind sets” and “culture shifts.”

While there is general agreement across clusters and networks that there have been multiple efforts to *inform* parents and *explain* the rationale for Special Education Reform, there are few examples of engaging parents of general education students and of students with disabilities in *planning* or *dialoguing* about the conditions necessary to create schools in which students are in the least restrictive environment. A few interviewees discussed the challenge of “culture change” that requires schools to hear from parents, and work to overcome their fears.

Early Signs of Encouragement and Progress

- **Finding 13:** Central office, cluster, and network leaders indicate progress in implementing practices connected with the goals and principles of Special Education Reform.

Central office, cluster and network leaders indicated progress in building capacity from their investments in professional development. Central office leaders and staff reported “some positive trends” in the data from Phase One schools in reductions in the number of students referred “inappropriately,” and in more inclusion opportunities and moving students to less restrictive environments for students with disabilities. Network leaders described progress in delivering professional development for special education teachers, general education teachers and principals in the areas of writing IEPs, about least restrictive environments and the roles of teachers and principals. Another area of progress indicated by network leaders is in establishing or strengthening exemplary and model programs in some of their network schools.

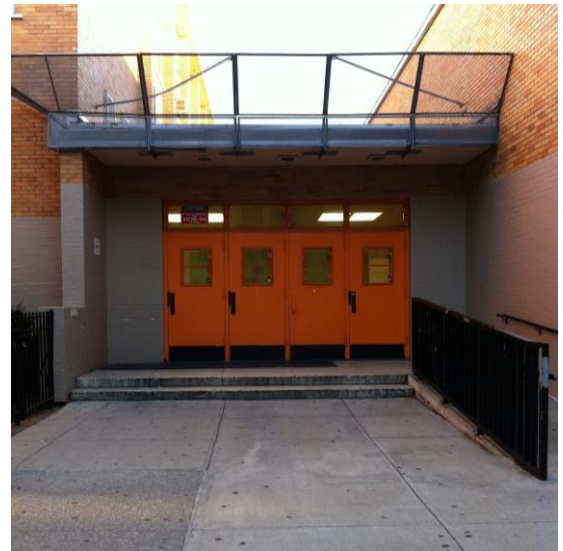
Progress was also reported in increasing the number of students moving to a less restrictive environment and/or creating flexible programs, and increases in student achievement. Networks support schools in analyzing and rewriting IEPs and working with individual parents to deepen their understanding of proposed changes to a least restrictive environment.

An encouraging indicator of progress was from the network leader who reported having “almost no full-time classes with the network of self-contained or ICT classes” and “a majority of our schools are on a part-time basis, based on individual student needs.”

While recognizing progress, almost all network leaders stressed that there was not uniformity in the implementation among principals and schools within their network.

Recommendations

In order to implement Special Education Reform system-wide, DOE has begun to establish direction, build organizational capacity, invest in professional development, and identify and address policy issues in response to the feedback received by way of our preliminary findings and recommendations and from others. We recognize that DOE is seeking ways to redirect and reallocate funding and positions to support Reform. There is much more work to do in order to address equity and access as DOE prepares for full implementation to all 1700 schools in September 2012. Our recommendations are in two parts. We offer 10 recommendations that stem directly from the interviews, and in many instances incorporate suggestions we heard from interviewees. We offer four additional recommendations that suggest ways to deepen support for the Reform based on promising practices and change management research. Both sets of recommendations draw upon all five areas of the findings and should be considered as full implementation approaches.



The first set of recommendations is organized into four areas:

- Communication: Communicate the Message of Special Education Reform Broadly;
- Funding: Provide Adequate Funding to Achieve Meaningful Reform;
- Capacity: Build System-wide Capacity through Improved Placement and Professional Development/Training of Administrators, Teachers and Staff; and
- Policy and Practice: Analyze and Strengthen System-wide Policies that Further the Goals and Principles of Special Education Reform.

The recommendations are:

Communication: Communicate the Message of Special Education Reform Broadly

Recommendation 1: Intensify efforts to communicate goals and principles internally across the system, especially with schools beginning implementation in 2012-13. Although the goals and principles have been communicated, DOE should continue and intensify regular internal communications about the importance and progress of the Reform throughout the school year. In order to continue to demonstrate commitment to the Reform, the goals, principles and the expected changes in practice necessary for deep and meaningful implementation need to be clearly and explicitly stated with examples, such as the leadership necessary from principals, teachers, staff, parents and students.

Recommendation 2: Engage parents of general education students and parents of students with disabilities in systematic dialogue about Special Education Reform. DOE should intensify its efforts to communicate with parents and develop two-way communication with all parents about the benefits to all students in raising graduation rates, reducing dropouts and creating schools in which all students are educated in the least restricted environment.

Funding: Provide Adequate Funding to Achieve Meaningful Reform

Recommendation 3: Provide additional funding for more on-site professional development by clusters and networks. Phase One network leaders strongly expressed that in-school supports were strategic in accelerating implementation. The same is likely to be true all schools. More funding should be available for increased capacity.

Capacity: Build System-wide Capacity through Improved Placement and Professional Development/Training of Administrators, Teachers and Staff

Recommendation 4: Hire additional staff into central office and network positions who have the knowledge and skills necessary to help schools implement Special Education Reform. Strengthen the knowledge and skills of those holding positions with job-embedded professional development and training. It is particularly important, as plans for the new DSWDELL organizational structure are being finalized, that capacity development at the cluster, network and school levels remains a focus, especially by strategically utilizing identified school-level personnel, network-level coaches, cluster senior instructional facilitators, and central support staff.

Recommendation 5: Increase professional development for parent coordinators and service providers. Parent coordinators who have consistent contact with parents need to be extensively trained in the Reform principles and goals. Current efforts are a start, however, more is needed. Several networks indicated they initiated training with parent coordinators to ensure their support in understanding the implementation of the Reform as it affects parents. All networks should do so. Service providers also need training and guidance as to their roles in supporting parents in understanding the revised IEP process.

Recommendation 6: Expand the use the expertise from Phase One Networks to assist other networks within their clusters. Each cluster could benefit from intensifying efforts to systematically document the protocols and experiences of their Phase One networks, and share the protocols across the networks in their cluster. Financial incentives should be provided to Phase One networks to mentor other networks struggling with implementation.

Policy and Practice: Analyze and Strengthen System-wide Policies that Further the Goals and Principles of Special Education Reform

Recommendation 7: Define measures for evaluating progress and holding schools accountable for implementation. DOE should establish reasonable expectations for schools in implementing Reform in addition to measurable student outcomes. Expectations should answer questions, such as: what is adequate school progress in implementing Special Education Reform? What are the consequences for schools that do not make progress increasing student achievement and graduation, and reduce dropouts?

Recommendation 8: Develop and communicate clear and transparent enrollment policies that balance the serving students in their zone/choice school with school capacity to serve students with disabilities. Protocols need to be revised continually to address, at a minimum, placement exceptions, capping classes so schools have the ability to move students with disabilities into part time general education settings and over-the-counter enrollments of students in zone schools, particularly when it would be in the best interest of the student for the student not to be served in the home school. The Office of Student Enrollment must be diligent in balancing policy with inundating schools with the highest need students.

Recommendation 9: Review, and, where appropriate, redesign the clustering process so schools are able to improve access to adequate and high quality psychologists and related services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, and contracted services. The purpose for review should be to increase the quality of services, access among schools, assure equitable support across all areas of the city with particular attention to high need areas, and increase efficient use of limited resources. The review should provide guidance on assignment of psychologists and support services, monitoring and accountability measures, deployment of support services, and support provided for impartial hearings.

Recommendation 10: Monitor and support schools in the development of IEPs that address the needs of students with disabilities. DOE must continue to be proactive in schools and with IEP teams, with principals and teachers, and with psychologists to strengthen the use of data and analysis to determine student needs. Those reviewing and developing IEPs

would benefit from learning about options and examples of alternatives to self-contained classrooms and approaches to providing supports. It remains a priority that students have high-quality IEPs that accurately assess student needs.

We offer the following additional recommendations:

Recommendation 11: *Hold a city-wide Special Education Reform Summit to explore the implications of the Reform on equity and access for all students as the 2012-13 school year unfolds.* The Public Advocate and DOE should collaborate on designing and conducting a public forum or summit in which key stakeholders are provided opportunities to examine and explore actions planned to improve and sustain Special Education Reform, target equity and access, and increase the number of students who graduate high school and are prepared for success in college and careers.

Recommendation 12: *Survey parents, teachers and students to evaluate the implementation of the Reform.* – The Public Advocate and DOE should develop a survey instrument at the end of the 2012-2013 school year that seeks to understand parents, teachers and student’s experiences with Special Education Reform.

Recommendation 13: *Develop and communicate about the implications for adults whose positions are impacted by the Reform.* In an effort to overcome resistance to reform due to fear of change and of losing positions, DOE should develop and communicate a vision for the future positions for adults who provide support to students with disabilities. Simply, the vision may address the questions: what will adults be called on to do less?, and what will they be called upon to do more?

Recommendation 14: *Validate and disseminate effective practices.* The Public Advocate, DOE and network leaders should collaborate to identify practices among schools that meet objective criteria, and prepare and disseminate examples of effective practices to all schools. The Public Advocate should continue its efforts to gather qualitative information and to report on the successes and challenges faced by schools in rethinking service delivery systems and strategies used to change beliefs and create inclusive communities.

Final Word

The time for Special Education Reform is long overdue. Without concerted effort and focused attention on educating students with disabilities, students will fall further behind their peers. Students, and the DOE as a system, would benefit from a careful, thoughtful implementation of Reform. We hope that now that Reform has begun, there is no turning back.

INTRODUCTION

There are 160,000 students with disabilities served in New York City Public Schools². Since the first federal legislation in the 1970s, educating our children with disabilities has meant providing access to services and opportunities to learn in general education classrooms with non-impaired peers.³ It has been long-recognized that New York City's attempts to educate students with disabilities lag behind the nation. New York State, which is heavily impacted by the performance of New York City students, continually fails to meet the requirements set forth by the DOE⁴ and is ranked 51st in the nation in educating students with disabilities with their general education peers in the least restrictive environments⁵.

Even if legislation did not require educating students in the least restrict environment⁶, current practices are not justified. Only 31 percent of all students classified as having disabilities graduate high school, and only four percent of students who are in self-contained classrooms, or students isolated from general education students all day every day, graduate from high school⁷. Current practice is not working, and the system is failing students with disabilities. Reform of the special education systems is long overdue.

Special Education Reform is comprised of the actions taken to realize three goals. The goals are to:

1. Build system-wide instructional and organization capacity at the central, network and school levels.
2. Close the significant achievement gap by providing students with disabilities increased access to and participation in the general education curriculum.
3. Promote more flexible instructional programs by using innovative approaches and maximizing the flexibility within the Continuum of Services provided to students, and learn about these designs from schools

The goals speak to three areas in need of radical improvement. The first goal targets extensive and deep changes in the ways New York City Department of Education (DOE) is structured in order to support schools in implementing change. It recognizes the need for instruction and operational improvement system-wide. The second goal raises expectations for adults and students system-wide by establishing access and participation in the general education curriculum as the standard. It is no longer acceptable to provide curriculum to students with special needs that is inferior to the curriculum offered to general education students. The third goal signals a shift in thinking about what it means to meet the education needs of students with disabilities. It has been the practice to place students into special education programs designed to address their needs. The third requires schools to closely analyze each student's strengths and needs, and design a

² www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/spp/apr2012/ind5.htm. 2010-11 school year.

³ In 1966, hearings before an ad hoc subcommittee of the House of Representatives Education and Labor Committee revealed that only about one-third of the children and youth with disabilities in the country were being provided appropriate special education services. (House Report No. 72-611, June 26, 1975, p. 2). As a result of these hearings, Congress added Title VI to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Public Law 89-750), establishing a two-year project grants program. What followed were a series of amendments and enactments during the 1970s that preceded what we know today as the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*. Source: <http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/OSEP95AnIRpt/ch5a-1.html>

⁴ U.S. Department of Education: Determination Letters on State Implementation of IDEA (June, 2011)
<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/data/report/idea/partbspap/2011/ideafactsheet-determinations063011-revised.pdf>; see also:
<https://www.ideadata.org/StateLevelFiles.asp>

⁵ State comparison includes District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Source: www.ideadata.org, then IDEA data, part b, Educational Environment

⁶ The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) contains the provisions for serving students in the Least Restrictive Environment that states: "...To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities... are educated with children who are nondisabled: and... special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular school environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily." *cf* 300.114(a)(2)(1)

⁷ Data provided by DOE interviewees. There are questions about the accuracy of this statistic. It is possible that interviewees were referring to a statistic from an ARISE Coalition report: *Educate! Include! Respect! A Call for School System Reform to Improve the Educational Experiences of Students with Disabilities in New York City. A Report Issued by the ARISE Coalition.* www.arisecoalition.org, (April 2009) p. 18; also see Appendix One for NYC performance data.

flexible program of support. For example, it is no longer acceptable to separate a student from the general education program for the entire day if he/she needs support only in one content area such as reading.

The goals are accompanied by five principles that describe specific system-wide actions. The principles, modified during Phase One, are:

- The overwhelming majority of children with disabilities should attend the schools they would attend if they did not have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- Hold all schools and students with disabilities accountable for goals that are standards-based. IEPs should reflect New York State learning standards and emphasize long-term educational outcomes.
- Schools should have the curricular, instructional, and scheduling flexibility to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities. In return, schools will be held accountable for improving outcomes.
- Schools must be active partners with parents of students with disabilities.
- School accountability measures, funding formulas, and enrollment policies and practices will be aligned with the foregoing principles.

The first principle was often described as “own your own students” or providing equity of access to students in their home zone or school of choice. Currently, students with disabilities can be assigned and transported to schools anywhere that have openings in programs that meet a student’s needs. Taking responsibility for zone students encourages access to programs in the student’s neighborhood or zone/choice school. The second and third principles more narrowly define the second and third goals. It is important to note that the third principle introduces accountability for improving outcomes, explicitly. The fourth principle recognizes the importance of engaging parents as partners. Finally, the fifth principle speaks to the importance of aligning policies and practices through implementation.

This report tells the story of DOE’s efforts to design policies, create and alter practices and reorganize, to achieve the goals and principles of Special Education Reform. It is a story of a comprehensive, system-wide, complex initiative. It is a story about finally doing what is right, which is complying with the letter *and* the spirit of special education law. It is also a story about transforming teaching and learning system-wide. Experience and student performance scores tell us that many more students than only students with disabilities are struggling to master rigorous academic standards⁸. Therefore, learning “what works” in reaching and supporting students with disabilities will help teachers reach and support all students in their schools.

Learning what works is critically important. Full Special Education Reform began in September 2010 with the first phase of implementation that occurred in 260 schools. As this report is released, all 1,700 public schools in NYC are preparing to implement the Reform. With higher stakes, learning from Phase One makes sense.

It is important also to clarify some misconceptions about Special Education Reform by presenting an accurate description about DOE’s intention about Special Education Reform. The complexity of special education, along with volumes of regulations, policies and decisions made over decades, contribute to resistance to change. State Education Department Associate Commissioner Rebecca Cort explains: “So, when people speak to me sometimes and complain about what they can’t do, I ask them, ‘Why do you think you can’t do that?’ You know? And often it’s because, ‘You told me I couldn’t do it.’ And my response is, ‘Let me see it in writing because if I told you that, I don’t know what I was thinking that day. But I doubt that I ever told you that.’ And there is a lot of confusion about the amount of flexibility that there actually is in providing services to students.”

Our starting point is to articulate the goals and expectations for Reform as described in studies and by DOE leaders over time. Goals and expectations can be found in what leaders say, how they are understood and also what they do. The

⁸ Information regarding New York State 2010-2011 performance scores can be found at: <https://reportcards.nysed.gov/>

report includes details about the actions taken to change policies, to reorganize the management structures and to provide training and support to the 260 schools in Phase One.

We believe it is important to describe implementation of the Reform, objectively and in detail. Our intention is to understand the extent to which Special Education Reform touches every part of the system, through the chancellor's office to classrooms in Phase One, as is implied by the goals and principles. One would hope that in executing a broad and complex Reform much would be set in place and there would be mid-course corrections. Both are indeed the case. One would also expect that not everything would go well. That is also the case. From a relatively small but strategic sample of interviews of central office, cluster, and network leaders, we report on implementation.

The story is told by those whose work is outside of schools and classrooms – central office, cluster, and network leaders. They are the ones charged with leading the Reform. The report provides unique insights about the understandings of DOE central office, cluster, and network leaders as they mobilize around a major system-wide initiative and the lessons learned from early implementation. Previously, opportunities to examine DOE practices from the inside have been rare.

The report sets the stage for further information sharing, information gathering and learning about Special Education Reform. It is the first step in a three-year project to inform and engage policy makers and stakeholders assuring Reform's success. As such, recommendations for next steps include those necessary for the Public Advocate and the DOE to take independently and together.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

In June 2011, the Office of the Public Advocate and the DOE agreed on a collaborative effort to study and inform one of the New York City most ambitious initiatives: Special Education Reform. From the beginning, the study was to be an independent, objective inquiry into DOE's efforts at implementation. The first step, which concludes with publishing this report, records and explains the purposes of reform and "lessons learned" about system support in the initial two-year Phase One of implementation centered on 260 schools.

From August 2011 through April 2012, Perry and Associates, Inc. (P&A) conducted monthly coordination meetings with the DOE's Deputy Chancellor Laura Rodriguez and DOE staff who oversee the implementation of the Reform to refine and facilitate the study design and provide feedback. P&A had access to studies, reports, internal communications, and workshop materials, and analyzed demographic data from the Phase One schools in order to provide the chronology and summary of actions taken.

From September 2011 through January 2012, P&A conducted more than 40 confidential structured interviews of deputy chancellors, DOE central office staff, cluster and network leaders in Phase One, and others external to the DOE who have knowledge of Special Education Reform. Most interviews were more than 60 minutes, and several interviewees consented to follow-up interviews⁹. P&A analyzed the results of the interviews in order to create a database and record of Special Education Reform's growth over time. Each of the interviews were transcribed and sent to the interviewees to verify the contents. In turn, the interviews were coded to track findings and trends, and assist in analyzing results. Once responses were coded, analysis of the statements was synthesized across interviews which led to findings. The full-set of findings and draft recommendations were shared and discussed with Deputy Chancellor Rodriguez and the central office staff in February 2012. A final draft of the report was reviewed and discussed with DOE central office leaders and staff, who were able to verify the accuracy of our statistical analysis and background information. Analysis and findings are intended to be used by P&A to establish a baseline on implementation and will be used to design future data gathering.

The report contains three parts. Part One, the Brief History of NYC Special Education Reform, is a chronological summary of events. Milestone events begin with the 2003 announcement to improve special education services and include summaries of the important studies and report that informed the design of Special Education Reform. The history identifies the important organizational and management changes that elevate Special Education Reform within the DOE hierarchy, and result in the reassigning of resources. The history details the considerable capacity building efforts – in time and money - through professional development offered by the central office or by DOE contractors to networks and schools. Part One concludes with an example of one network leader's actions to support implementation in the network schools and brief descriptions on major policy areas recognized as part of Reform in the principles.

Part Two presents the findings from the interviews. There are 13 key findings, grouped into five topics: a shared understanding of goals and principles; staff capacity to achieve goals and principles; policy and management obstacles; parent and the community engagement; and early signs of encouragement and progress. The five areas are generated from the goals and principles that do not require data gathering from schools or analysis of student data. The five areas and the findings speak to actions taken by central office, cluster, and network leaders, and their perspectives on the impact of their actions and what they have learned from Phase One.

Part Three contains recommendations for moving forward. Interviewees did not hesitate to offer recommendations or examples of policies or practices in need of refinement from their experiences. We attempted to include as many of the recommendations from interviewees as feasible, while protecting their anonymity. Recommendations also come from our analysis and synthesis from the interviews and materials gathered. These are recommendations that may not be stated by interviewees, but emerge as constant themes across the interviews and review of the actions taken during Phase One.

⁹ See Appendix Two for names of interviewees and the interview protocol.

PART ONE: A BRIEF HISTORY OF NYC SPECIAL EDUCATION REFORM FROM A SYSTEM PERSPECTIVE

The ultimate outcome of Special Education Reform is described by Associate Commissioner Cort directly and simply; yet the pathways toward the outcome are not simple. To fix the system, Special Education Reform is intent on untangling and rethinking problems and approaches that have evolved since the first special education legislation was adopted over 40 years ago.¹⁰ It is an oversimplification to imply that the first 30 years of Special Education was focused on compliance with laws and regulations to ensure that students with disabilities appropriate services. In the last decade, there has been increased attention on students with disabilities who (1) are expected to be educated to the same level as their non-disabled peers, and (2) should be educated with their non-disabled peers for their mutual benefit. In other words, it is important that students with disabilities graduate high school prepared for success in careers and college and educating them in the least restrictive environment is the best way to assure their success.¹¹ The challenge for Special Education Reform is to determine what works in the current system and should remain in place and what are barriers to student success and require dismantling. The brief history provides the context and sets the stage for understanding the challenge.

“The goal is higher outcomes, better outcomes, and higher performance for students with disabilities. [We hope for] more students staying in school, more students reaching proficiency, and more students graduating with regular high school diplomas.”

*Rebecca Cort, Associate Commissioner,
P-12 Office of Special Education,
New York State Education Department*

Timeline

April 2003

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and Schools Chancellor Joel I. Klein announce a comprehensive reform agenda to improve special education throughout New York City public schools. The Reform emphasizes home school placements and improving the capacity of general education to serve children with disabilities by: appointing instructional specialists and initiating professional development in nationally recognized instructional strategies; holding schools and principals accountable for improvements in special education; providing services and incentives for better school performance; and streamlining the special education evaluation process.¹²

September 2005

A year after the announcement of the reorganization, the Hehir Report,¹³ is commissioned by the Department of Education, and documents “long-standing, significant problems” in meeting the needs of students with disabilities within state and federal law. The report challenges the DOE’s management systems, student placement/de facto segregation of challenged students apart from general education mainstream students, and lack of access to general education curriculum and related

⁹ Congress enacted the Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA), Public Law 91-230, in July 1971. Source: Federal Funding for Special Education: Historical Overview. Accessed through the U.S. Department of Education ED Publications: <http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/OSEP95AnIRpt/ch5a-1.html>

¹¹ U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Office of Special Education Programs, *30th Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2008*, Washington, D.C., 2011.

¹² As reported in Hehir, T., Figueroa, R. Gamm, S., Katzman, L.I., Gruner, A., Karger, J. Hernandez, J. (September 20, 2005) Comprehensive Management Review and Evaluation of Special Education. Report to the New York City Department of Education. p. 17

¹³ Ibid.

professional development for teachers of learning-challenged students. The Hehir Report additionally questioned an expanded role for psychologists in the referral and evaluation process that emphasized a “medical model” of disability.

June 2008

The Council of Great City Schools, at the request of the Department of Education, evaluates DOE’s District 75, the special, non-geographic district that encompasses schools that serve high-need learning-disabled students who are not enrolled in traditional schools (either in mainstream or special classes). District 75 was created in the 1980s to educate and provide related services to students with the most significant disabilities. High-need students are, accordingly, ‘separated’ from community schools and enrolled in District 75, which has its own superintendent within the DOE. Some District 75 schools function in traditional school buildings (in a dedicated wing or on a separate floor), while others are stand-alone school buildings serving only the highest-need students¹⁴.

The report finds considerable strength and expertise within District 75 – but documents a “bifurcated system” with problems in management, coordination, clarity of purpose, student placement and efficiency.¹⁵ The Great City Schools report additionally challenges Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team referral practices and troublingly low expectations, standards and outcomes for students with disabilities.

2009

In July, Garth Harries, former Chief Executive of DOE’s Portfolio Department and former Chief Executive Officer of the Office of New Schools, is named Senior Coordinator for Special Education. Harries identifies four broad recommendations to improve special education after four months’ study: align short- and long-term educational goals and outcomes; encourage flexible programming (to encourage participation in general-education curricula); better inform and engage parents; and integrate special education as a central element of DOE’s overall reform strategy.¹⁶

Harries’s memorandum also recommends the appointment of a high-level DOE leader to ensure that special education processes are consistent with system-wide reforms – and to assure that the city’s sweeping reforms account for the specialized interests of students with disabilities.

2009

Laura Rodriguez is appointed to Chancellor Klein’s cabinet as Chief Achievement Officer. Chancellor Klein charges Rodriguez with “improving outcomes for New York City’s highest-need children – those with special needs and those who are still learning English” – and realigns the departments of Special Education and English Language Learners under the new cabinet member’s authority.

February 2010

Chancellor Klein announces plans for sweeping Special Education Reform, based in large measure on the Harries recommendations.¹⁷ The first-year Reform implementation is designed to engage 10 “networks” (management organizations for roughly 260 schools) in the 2010-11 school year, with reform expanding system-wide in 2011-12. Additional decisions are made by Klein to integrate funding formulas, enrollment and school progress grades in Special Education Reform accountability measures (and potential performance incentives and rewards for targeted progress).

¹⁴ In SY 2010-11, 19, 101 students were served in District 75, which represents 12 percent of all students with disabilities enrolled in NYC public schools. Among those enrolled in NYC public schools city-wide, almost 73 percent of students with autism attend District 75. District 75 also serves 77 percent of students with multiple disabilities and 58 percent of students who are classified with an Intellectual Disability. (Source: NYC DOE DSwdELL)

¹⁵ Strategic Support Team, Council of Great City Schools (June 2008) Improving Special Education in New York City’s District 75. Council of Great City Schools: Washington, DC.

¹⁶ Harries, G. (July 2, 2009). Recommendations to Improve Services to Students with Disabilities. Internal DOE memorandum to Joel Klein, Chancellor.

¹⁷ Klein, Joel (February 2, 2010). Chancellor’s weekly memorandum to principals.

March 2010

Chief Achievement Officer Laura Rodriguez invites cluster and network leaders to volunteer to engage in Phase One of Special Education Reform. Of the 12 Children First Networks (CFN) that apply to participate in Phase One, nine are chosen. The selection is based on the network's interest, the network's ability to win the support of the network's schools, and the network's capacity to support its schools in implementing the Reform. A tenth non-CFN is included in Phase One, based on its proven strengths in instruction and special education.¹⁸

Approximately 260 schools¹⁹ from the 10 networks agree to participate in Phase One for the 2010-11 school year. Rodriguez writes to participating school communities announcing the program: "Your school, in collaboration with parents and through the IEP process, will soon begin to revise instructional programs by taking a fresh look at the strengths and needs of students with disabilities."²⁰

Rodriguez encourages participating schools to think differently about how they support students with disabilities, particularly in the realm of integrating students into general education classes. She mentions breaking through established practice and entrenched mythology as a persistent challenge, as well as the perception that implementing reforms potentially challenged state education law. (They do not.) Referencing Hehir who said, "the role of special education is to minimize the impact of the disability and maximize the opportunities for participation," Rodriguez asks that special education instruction and related services always focus on the desired outcome: "What is that going to enable the child to do, to learn, to achieve?"

Also in March, Phase One network leaders are convened for monthly meetings with Chief Achievement Office staffers. The office had previously formed a principals' advisory group for school leaders proactive in programming for least restrictive educational environments. Staffers present examples of school-wide strategies to support the design of engaging, rigorous and coherent educational curricula, aligned to state standards, and explore strategic decisions about instructional goals and student learning needs. Monthly meetings continue through the summer of 2010, focused on specific elements of reform, including creating quality IEPs, and sharing knowledge and concrete experience among the Phase One participants. Please see detailed descriptions of professional development in Appendix Four.

April 2010

In a departmental reorganization, the Chief Achievement Office is renamed the Division for Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners (DSwDELL), and Laura Rodriguez is named Deputy Chancellor.

DSwDELL articulates specific goals for Special Education Reform: building instructional and organizational capacity at all levels (district, network, school); closing the achievement gap by improving engagement with the general-education curriculum; and promoting greater flexibility in instruction by cultivating innovation and flexibility within the DOE's Continuum of Services based on federal and state law.²¹

June 2010

Phase One specialists, who are former DOE administrators, are directed to invest 60 percent of their time on implementing Special Education Reform at the network and school level.

Funding models are evaluated. Previous funding practice was based on a per-class model, whether the class was fully enrolled or not. For example, a 12:1:1 class with eight students received equal funding to a 12:1:1 class with 12 students.

¹⁸ Participating networks included CFN 105, 107, 109, 403, 407, 409, 534, 561, 603 and 607.

¹⁹ A complete *Profile of Schools Participating in Phase One of New York City's Special Education Reform Initiative* is included in Appendix Three.

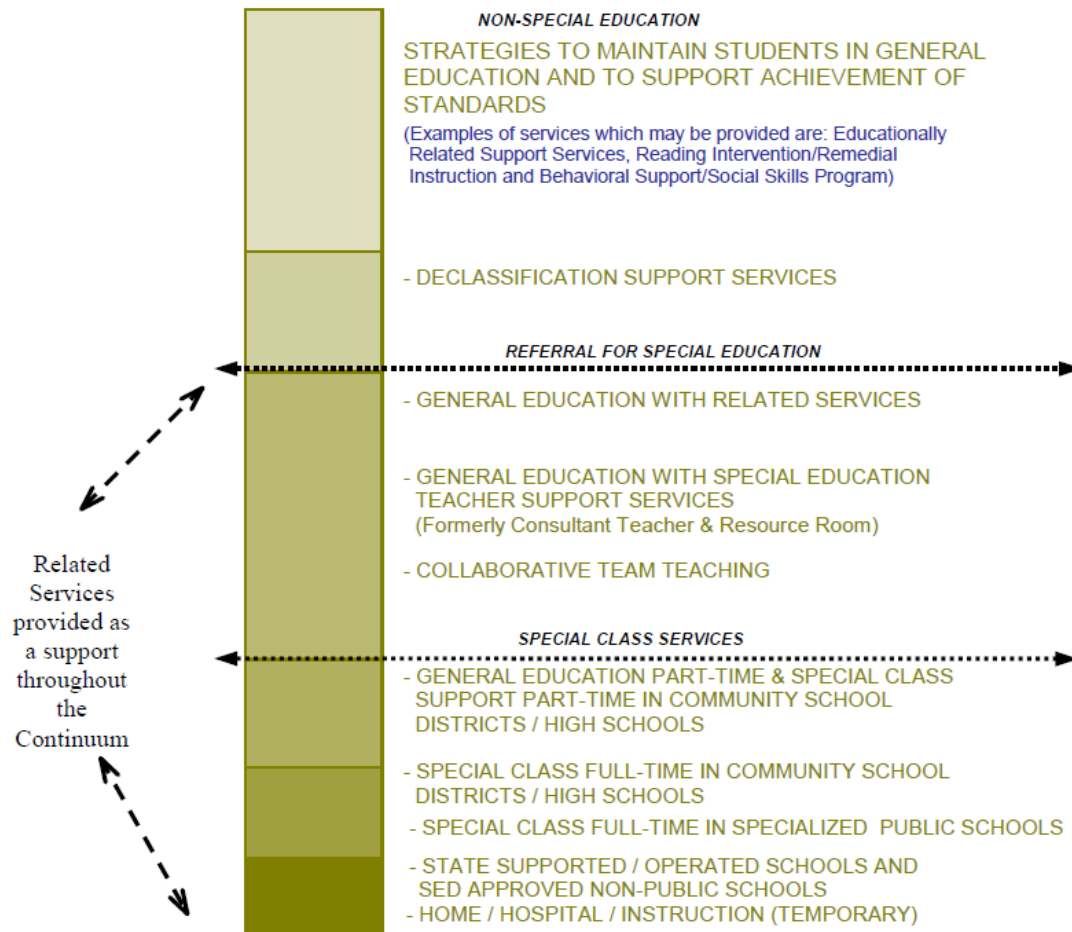
²⁰ Rodriguez, Laura. Internal DOE memorandum to schools.

²¹ Office of Special Education Initiatives – NYC Department of Education, *Special Education Services: As Part of a Unified Service Delivery System (The Continuum of Services for Students with Disabilities)*, Page 5, Figure 1.

Figure 1

UNIFIED SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM

This chart represents the types of special education services included in the new Continuum.



Rather than the wholesale export of students from neighborhood schools, DSwdELL focuses on three elements: reviewing current student IEPs to assess potential moves to less restrictive environments; developing a culture of responsibility for students in their home zone in schools that receive over-the-counter enrollees; and the transition grades of kindergarten, middle- and high-school entry with a focus on supporting incoming students with the least restrictive environments.

The new formula is considered to address changes in student classification, and changes in how instruction is provided with the intent to increase integration into general education curricula when possible.²²

July-August 2010

Additional network team training with DSwdELL staff and Teachers College Inclusive Classroom Project (TCICP)²³, focus on the IEP as an administrative and instructional tool.

²² Rodriguez, Laura. (June 2, 2010) Internal DOE memorandum to Phase One schools.

July 2010

Reorganization at central office eliminates Integrated Service Centers (operational support resources for networks and schools). All networks convert to CFN model to support schools on both instructional and operational levels and cluster teams are expanded to oversee/support small groups of networks. All schools become members of networks, which enroll, on average 20 to 30 schools. Networks report to cluster leaders, who have responsibility for ten to twelve networks. Committees on Special Education (CSEs) and Committees on Pre-school Education (CPSEs), which are responsible for evaluations of students with disabilities in pre-schools, non-public schools and charter schools, now report to DSwDELL.

July 2010

DSwDELL training extends to Parent Coordinators. The principals' union offers a leadership institute for school administrators focusing on reform.

July-August 2010

DSwDELL and Division of School Support and Instruction (DSSI) further assist networks to build their capacity to assist schools and focus on IEP development and service models and intervention and differentiation. DSwDELL and TCICP convene 250 network and school leaders and staff to customize planning for organizing support for Reform. DSwDELL invites two-to-five staff members from Phase One schools for two-day workshops focusing on IEP development and flexible programming.

September 2010

Deputy Chancellor Rodriguez notifies parents of students with disabilities in Phase One schools of DOE's Special Education Reform plan, highlighting the Reform's focus on achievement, success, and personalized support – and promising parents that “many students will be spending more of the school day...with non-disabled peers.”

THE EVOLUTION OF DSWDELL

Uniting the Office of Special Education (which includes District 75) and the Office of English Language Learners faced some skeptical criticism. Rodriguez acknowledged that they are two distinct student populations, with instructional needs that require distinct approaches. Consolidating both offices was an opportunity to expand the knowledge of teaching and learning for all students. “This was about accelerating and sustaining achievement, both for ELLs and for students with disabilities,” Rodriguez said. “That would be the commonality.” She was shocked to learn that the heads of both offices did not collaborate (or communicate) and set about encouraging integration across the offices, creating three teams – for operations, for instruction, and for accountability – comprised of special education and ELL staff.

The July 2010 departmental reorganization that phased out the Integrated Service Centers (ISCs) and altered schools' network support also affected DSwDELL. Before July 2010, the city had 20 CFN networks, which provided their own instructional and operational support, and 40 other networks that used ISCs as resources.¹ When the ISCs were eliminated, DOE expanded cluster teams to manage school networks. There are five cluster teams managing 59 networks of 20 to 30 schools each. In the same reorganization, responsibility for oversight of the Committees on Special Education was assigned to Deputy Chancellor Rodriguez. To accommodate these new structures, Rodriguez created three areas of focus: the Committees on Special Education, special education instruction and professional development, and English Language Learners. (The latter group is not part of the current reform effort. Their needs and outcomes are not within the scope of the current report.)

DSwDELL has 10 staff Phase One Special Education Specialists (as referenced in the timeline). An additional 62 technical assistance support center specialists work with schools and networks on special education instruction and compliance. DSwDELL also works cross-divisionally – with the Children First Intensive team and with the Office of School and Youth Development, for example – and with DOE's offices of Portfolio and School Support. DSwDELL builds working relationships with advocates (such as the ARISE Coalition), Teachers College and within the DOE to infuse and extend the use of technology for all students.

¹ The Children First Network (CFN) model was piloted in one network during SY 2007-08. In 2008-09, the pilot was expanded to four networks. In 2009-10, the model was expanded to 20 networks.

²³ The Teachers College Inclusive Classrooms Project supports research, teaching and service to create educational practices that support all students to grow and thrive in their classrooms. The project strives to support teachers' development of their own classroom practices to teach diverse learners.

September -October 2010

DOE conducts a total of six parent workshops to inform parents about Special Education Reform.

School Year 2010-11

DSwDELL in partnership with TCICP present three approaches in building school capacity and expertise for implementing the work in classroom practice: full-day workshops on topics including classroom management and co-teaching/co-planning; series of 10 sequential half-day inquiry-to-action sessions; and half-day workshops assisting staff in IEP goal writing.

School Year 2010-11

On-going training and dialogue among DSwDELL, network and school staffs to rethink compliance through the lens of reform. DSwDELL visits Community Education Council meetings to discuss reform agenda with parents and school communities and to take questions and respond to community concerns.

2010

DSwDELL provides background to the Committees on Special Education and the Committee for Preschool Education (CSE, CPSE) about the principles and implementation of Special Education Reform, with an emphasis on the Continuum of Services and learning to develop high-quality IEPs that focus on least-restrictive environments.

November 2010

Cathie Black named as Chancellor by Mayor Bloomberg.

January 2011

Chancellor Black postpones the system-wide rollout of Special Education Reform a full year, to the 2012-13 school year. Black cites the demands of SESIS implementation and the new New York State IEP as reasons for the delay: "Launching in the 2012-13 school year will allow the opportunity for all schools to go through an annual review cycle with both the new state IEP and SESIS. ... We will work with school staff and administrators on building the instructional and organizational capacity to implement the goals of the reform. Further, we will continue to develop best practices based on the experiences of Phase One schools."

January-March 2011

SEGIS data management system rollout by DOE central office to facilitate data access for students with disabilities. Trainings, two-day workshops for two staff per school, include extensive philosophical and practical education for all staff in all NYC schools, including networks/schools that are participating in Phase One.

January-June 2011

DSwDELL and TCICP design and implement a six-part series for network staff and NYC Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Center specialists to support school staff in providing access to the general education curricula for students with disabilities.

April 2011

Chancellor Black resigns. Deputy Mayor for Education Dennis Walcott is named Schools Chancellor.

Spring 2011

DOE's Turning Five program, for students with disabilities entering school, launches; DSdELL informs special education preschools about the Special Education Reform and the Turning Five initiative and trains pre-schools on the new New York State IEP.

State and city education departments continue to support the Special Education Reform. New York State instructional specialists funded through federal IDEA dollars are directed to devote 60 percent of their time to NYC's networks and

Theory into Practice: One Network's Experience

While the 10 Phase One networks differ widely in their demographics and in the needs of their schools and their students, all network leaders are expected to support school administrators and teachers, with different levels of focus on parents, parent coordinators, guidance counselors, paraprofessionals, and related service providers to support the planned Special Education Reform agenda. Network level professional development topics included flexible programming, IEP development/review, differentiating instruction, curriculum development, assessment, co-planning, and co-teaching.

One Phase One network leader, when asked about specific responsibilities, said, "to promote the work, to develop the capacity at all levels. So it was to understand what the needs were and what would be required to be successful. ..."

The network identified support for leadership as a network-wide need, and convened principals every month in sessions led by both the network leader and the deputy network leader. At the same time, network instructional coaches (and the network leader) met regularly with general- and special education 'teacher leaders' – who are outstanding classroom professionals identified by school principals. The teacher leaders were engaged in discussions about teaching practices, including co-teaching and co-planning, and were tasked with convening other teachers at their school to share knowledge and best practices learned at the network level. These sessions connected the theoretical discussions to concrete classroom practices.

The network also worked with each school's program schedulers on flexible programming, via meetings with the network programmer and information technology specialists, who helped to identify possible barriers and difficulties. Schools identified needs, year-end goals, and intermediate measures of progress in support of the Reform goals. In turn, the school-level program schedulers convened school IEP teams to explore flexible programming options and potential obstacles. Additionally, the network's student council program invited students to help create inclusive communities at their schools.

The results were stunning, according to the network's leader. Students dug in deep and examined what inclusion meant. Their original videos about being an inclusive community influenced the thinking of important adults in their school building, including teachers and principals. To support students and parents, the network met monthly with parent coordinators and guidance counselors, and the network leader identified leaders to head various training efforts. The network's special education lead, the achievement coach and the operations director allied to better support the training of these professionals, who often serve as a parent's point of contact at a school. Accordingly, trainings focused on building knowledge of special education services and planned reforms and building individual skills as facilitators and communicators. The network extended participant schools' activity in TCICP workshops beyond teachers, including assistant principals, school psychologists, and social workers, in an effort to change the schools' culture and practices as regard the integration of students with disabilities and general education students.

schools as Phase One specialists. NYC DOE-organized monthly workshops continue for IEP teams, special and general education teachers and service providers, including school psychologists, administrators and other school personnel. The Office of School Support (OSS) convenes assistant principals for workshops on implementing the operational aspects of the reform.

Additionally, District 75 staff members are tapped to share their expertise on supporting students with disabilities. As one DSwDELL staffer noted, “They [D75] have so many smart people and resources and knowledge base and skills.... In the Reform, a lot of the general education teachers are scared to death. Guess what? There are a lot of people over here who aren’t scared to death, [who] have training, who have assistance. Put them together and have them work together.”

Summer 2011

Federal Race-to-the-Top funding directed to support 59 new special education ‘coach’ positions, and to fund six senior instructional facilitators, to be placed at five clusters and at the central office. Additionally, DOE creates the Professional Development Institute (PDI) to support capacity-building at the cluster and network levels and across all city schools.

Summer 2011

New upper-level staff added/directed to DSwDELL; Special Education Reform Implementation Steering Committee created comprised of Chief Operations Officer, Chief Academic Officer and Deputy Chancellor of DSwDELL. Office of School Support adds Race-to-the-Top-funded staffers to all 59 networks.

Monthly workshops are sponsored by the NYC Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Center specialist, DSwDELL, and OSS provide supports for assistant principals, school based support teams, and Committees for Special Education.

Concluding Comment

Shael Polakow-Suransky, DOE’s Chief Academic Officer, recognizes that Reform efforts are far from complete. Nevertheless, he was eager to note the successes of Rodriguez and her team to date. “I think when Laura was appointed and that position was created... it meant that every other division had to think about how their work intersected with *this* work, [serving students with disabilities]. That’s a big shift, the fact that enrollment has to think about their practices and the folks that support schools and do P[rofessional] D[evelopment] have to think about their practices.” It has been a significant, systemic change. He adds: “This year, we started to make a shift and push on academic quality more strongly, and create sample resources around curriculum and assessment. We have from the start built in goals around universal design and adaptations for kids who have learning disabilities, which is different to how any previous curriculum reforms were rolled out.”

POLICY CHANGES TO SUPPORT REFORM

Budget In June 2010, Deputy Chancellor Rodriguez advised schools on how funding would support the Reform goals and initiatives. Although changing funding formulas was anticipated as part of the Reform, funding for Phase One schools remained consistent with funding for schools citywide, with specific adjustments for students with disabilities (funding to match levels for self-contained settings). Phase One schools had no change in mid-year funding despite programmatic changes related to reform and their accommodations for schools that experienced changes in their special education register from 2010 to 2011. Previously, schools received funds based on a classroom model – and not linked to actual student enrollment. A 12:1:1 class received the same amount of funds whether it was fully or partially enrolled. One of the changes of Special Education Reform, however, linked funding to the individual student and not to the class. The funding change would instead direct money to a school based on the actual number and need of students in attendance, rather than the classrooms that were provided. Phase One schools received funds to ease transition from classroom model to per capita funding formula.

In May 2012, DOE announced its funding support for Special Education Reform for all schools²⁴. The new formula extends and continues the practices begun with Phase One schools of funding schools on a per capita basis and providing transitional funding to all schools. Transitional funding for Phase One schools is based on their previous year's allocation. Transitional funding for non-Phase One schools is based on previous year's register of students with disabilities. Funding levels are to be reviewed mid-year and adjusted if necessary based on the school's register.

Further, the funding decision includes changes in the “weights” in the funding formula based on the percentage of time during their school day that students are assigned to ICT or self-contained classrooms. As the chart below outlines²⁵, incentives are provided for placing students, when appropriate, in part-time placements and disincentives for placing students in ICT or self-contained classrooms for more than 60 percent of their school day.

Special Education Category	FY12	FY13	Change
<= 20% (all grades)	0.56	0.56	0.00
21% - 59% (all grades)	0.68	1.25	0.57
>=60%, Self Contained (K-8)	1.23	1.18	(0.05)
>=60%, Self Contained (9-12)	0.58	0.58	0.00
>=60%, ICT (K)	2.28	2.09	(0.19)
>=60%, ICT (1-8)	1.90	1.74	(0.16)
>=60%, ICT (9-12)	2.10	1.74	(0.36)

Enrollment Serving zone students in zone schools and providing equity of access are core principles that requires culture change in the city's schools. Federal legislation mandates that students with disabilities are educated in their local schools, yet in NYC, in SY 2011-12, 59 percent of students with disabilities in kindergarten through grade 8 did not attend their zoned school. These students often traveled long distances by subsidized school bus to schools far from their home community, apart from siblings and general education peers. The enrollment policy changed with the 260 Phase One schools and will extend to the balance of city schools in school year 2012-13. No longer will a student entering school be placed outside their neighborhood school or school of choice, unless local schools demonstrate that they cannot support the child's

²⁴ New York City Department of Education, Department of Finance, (May 2012) Fair Student Funding and School Budget Resource Guide FY 2013 schools.nyc.gov/offices/d_chanc_oper/budget/dbor/allocationmemo/fy12_13/FY13_PDF/FSF_Guide.pdf

²⁵ Ibid, p. 24.

learning needs and that placement would create irreparable harm. This change will bring NYC policy and practices in line with federal IDEA directives.

Serving zone students in zone schools and achieving equity of access are not simple tasks. Schools must accept that their responsibility is to *all* students. To do so requires a profound shift in each school's culture – and the ability to deliver inclusive communities and effective teaching and learning strategies for every student.

Accountability The Division of Academics, Performance and Support is reviewing a range of data points regarding student movement to less restrictive environments, more inclusive program models, IEP referrals and compliance, and the academic performance of students with disability.

The 2011 School Progress Report – DOE's tool for grading schools based on student progress, performance, and school environment – now includes metrics that provide an incentive and extra rewards for progress made by students with disabilities. Additional incentives motivate moving students to less restrictive environments. No central directive asked Phase One schools to submit goals based on each school's Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) or the Principal Performance Review (PPR), although some schools elected to include Special Education Reform goals in one or both documents.

PART TWO: FINDINGS

In the following section, we report our findings from the interviews of central office, cluster, and network leaders and staff. We report 13 key findings grouped within five broad categories. The categories are linked to the Special Education Reform goals and principles. They are:

- Shared understanding of goals and principles;
- Staff capacity to achieve goals and principles;
- Policy and management obstacles;
- Parent and community engagement; and
- Early signs of encouragement and progress.

The findings describe the progress made resulting from substantial commitment of time and resources, and risk taking. The findings also describe areas of work to be done, particularly in expanding from 260 schools to system-wide implementation.

Developing Shared Understanding of Goals and Principles

Communicating expectations and confronting uncertainty, and the fears, that accompany changes in services and employment are among the initial steps to creating a climate conducive to change. For a change effort as comprehensive and expansive as Special Education Reform, leaders and those impacted directly need to have clarity about expectations for them, and to understand the rationale for the change.

We asked whether DOE system leaders have been clear about expectations for actions, and the rationale for the expectations. Our findings suggest that they have been intentional in creating awareness about Reform and communicating the Reform's goals, principles, rationale and purpose. We also found that many system leaders recognize that Special Education Reform requires a sea-change of beliefs, systems and practices.

-
- **Finding 1:** All interviewees –DOE system leaders, cluster and network leaders participating in Phase One – understand the importance of Special Education Reform's goals and principles.
-

When asked to describe the Reform goals, central office leaders' and staff's responses were consistent and aligned with the three goals and five principles of DOE's Special Education Reform articulated by Chancellor Klein and Deputy Chancellor Rodriguez. The ideas were expressed consistently across interviews while emphasis varied. For example, of the nine central office leaders interviewed, about half mentioned specifically each of the three goals of closing achievement gaps (including the graduation gap) to prepare all students for success in college and a career, building operational and instructional capacity at every level (school, network and central), and maximizing the flexibility allowed within the Continuum of Services provided to students. In addition, the goals were extended by many interviewees. Re-examination and writing of more meaningful IEPs were mentioned multiple times, as were the importance of access and opportunity to a course of study that leads to success in college and careers and Regents' diploma. Increasing the number of students placed into less restrictive environment, funding the "service to students not the classroom," and serving students in their zone school were mentioned also.

“I think the goals of the effort were very noble ones ... all of our principals agreed with the whole philosophy about the reform. Because everybody really was not satisfied with the way our special needs children were being educated.”

“... many of our schools were not meeting their targets with their special needs students. And they felt that part of that reason was that these were not neighborhood children. These were children that were sometimes on a bus for an hour, two hours. And they were not able to benefit by any of the after school programs that the school had to offer. Because the bus would pick them up and take them back home. They offered Saturday programs. The children didn't have the accessibility to be able to come back to the school. So they felt like that they really weren't giving the special needs children, the attention that they were giving to their neighborhood children.”

Interviewee 012, p. 3

Cluster leaders' responses were consistent and aligned as well. All of the four cluster leaders interviewed mentioned moving students to the least restrictive environment as a goal of Special Education Reform. Closing achievement gaps and changing beliefs about having students prepared for success in college and a career; building the instructional and organizational capacity; the importance of access and opportunity to general education curriculum; the change in belief and practice around schools “owning their own students”; and a decrease in special education referrals were each mentioned by cluster leaders.

Likewise, responses from the 10 network leaders were consistent about the goals and principles. The way that interviewees articulated the goals reflected an understanding of the complexity of Reform and its implications for change in day-to-day practices in schools. For example, the goals for Special Education Reform were described as preparing all students (across grades) for success in college and careers; reducing the number of students in full-day self-contained classrooms and move students to the least restrictive environment giving them access to rigorous curriculum; offering creative and flexible programming and schedules so students have opportunities to be successful; addressing the individual learning needs of, and support for, students; creating more effective teaching practices based on better insights into student learning; supporting students to increase achievement and outcomes; and engaging parents in more meaningful and trustful ways.

-
- **Finding 2:** Interviewees recognize achieving the goals and principles will require major changes in (1) beliefs and attitudes toward students with disabilities, (2) teaching practices for all students, and (3) ways support providers deliver services.
-

Central office and cluster leaders more often described the goals in measurable terms that are aligned with the three goals and five principles. It is most striking in the responses from network leaders that they did not limit their comments to objectively raising student performance and academic achievement only, but included re-imagining school practices. Half of the network leaders mentioned the goals were intended to create a greater community of parents, students and the neighborhood in which the school is located. Some described the intent to “develop a culture of embracing all of our

students at the school level. So that it's no longer that [a student] was the responsibility of the special education teacher and not the general education teacher's responsibility." Others sought to have special education become a service not a place where students are kept.

Network leaders were willing to share examples of changes occurring from implementation. For example, network leaders mentioned that the success of the Reform is dependent on challenging beliefs about students and changing attitudes of teachers. One network leader described challenges in this way: "And what was interesting was we sat down then as grades with the general education teachers and looked at student work -- in writing, in social studies. And the general education teachers [said], 'Oh, this kid is doing just as well as any kid in my class.' Some of them were even better. And we found that some of the special education teachers wanted to hold onto their kids. 'Oh, but I don't know if he's ready. I think he needs more time with me.' So then what we felt was that beside this connection to the kids, maybe it was the uncertainty that they felt that their job was threatened."

Many central office, cluster, and network leaders also recognize that Special Education Reform is more than only a focus on improving opportunities and instruction only among students with disabilities. Reform attempts, in particular, to break barriers that exist among the adults who serve general education students and students with disabilities and among students. As one interviewee indicates: "I think the goal was to focus on ways to actually improve general education, in New York City schools, ... this Reform looked or is looking at Phase One as inquiry, and let's try these things within Phase One, that will then be able to inform what we do across the entire school, which obviously means including the general education ... Laura [Rodriguez] and people in her shop, talked about it in the beginning, but to me, it was more around ... if you can do differentiation in a special education setting, then you can do differentiation in a general education setting. That is a direct benefit of doing this [Reform]."

Most of the interviewees identified attitudes toward reform as obstacles to be overcome. Several examples of concerns about attitude change are:

- Changing beliefs of adults and students that students can meet high expectations;
- Lack of trust in schools by parents that their children would be as well served in less restrictive environments as in self-contained classroom;
- Fear of the unknown, of having to change long-standing practices, or of job loss;
- Flexibility in adapting to, and anticipating the implications of implementing changes that have many moving parts; and
- Agreeing that special education is a service, not a place.

Similarly, interviewees echoed a concern expressed strongly in the Hehir Report of the potential for the provider community to operate in their self-interest in recommending services to students. Several interviewees representing all levels mentioned, in particular, the need to review IEPs developed by community-based organizations that provide early childhood care in which the organization provides the services.

Staff Capacity to Achieve the Goals and Principles

Often there are two choices when faced with an unfamiliar challenge: find someone who can help us do what is needed to be done, or to learn how to solve the challenge. Special Education Reform requires many people throughout the system – leaders, administrators, teachers, service providers, parents and students – to act in ways that are unfamiliar to them. In suggesting that capacity needs to be built to meet the challenges to be faced, we mean having: people in place with the knowledge and ability to implement Reform consistent with the goals, principles, rationale and purpose; and supports in place to help everyone involved learn to do something new efficiently and effectively. It should be apparent from the previous section of this report, that DOE has made a commitment to add staff and provide training and professional development to those in place. Nevertheless, the commitment is only a beginning.

-
- **Finding 3:** DOE created positions to support the Reform at the central, cluster and network levels. However, interviewees express concerns that there are too few staff at all levels, including classroom teachers, with adequate knowledge and expertise to lead and implement adequately the goals and principles of Special Education Reform.
-

Several interviewees reported challenges in identifying and building staff capacity – within and from the central office to the classroom – to achieve the goals. Interviewees reported taking great pains to hire staff with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to lead reform work and have provided learning opportunities for them to build upon their knowledge. In some cases, they described a willingness to delay hiring staff until the “right person” was found. Concerns were raised about the challenges of the next phase citing the uneven distribution of talent and expertise across networks. A few interviewees wonder whether the current staffing practices for networks were too “cookie cutter” and didn’t allow for the tailoring of expertise to support schools in their varying stages of readiness to implement the reform.

Interviewees recognized capacity building would take time, and that some of the capacity issues have improved. For example, cluster leaders reported that in the beginning Phase One networks did not have staff with expertise to help schools with the work. Reassignment of staff and the creation of the 10 Phase One instructional specialist positions and the now 59 Special Education Instructional Coaches have helped. Training and support for teachers and school teams from central and network levels have eased concerns and improved teacher knowledge. Nevertheless, some network leaders described difficulty in finding strong teachers with a strong special education background, particularly in hard to staff schools and the large number of general education teachers lacking the knowledge and skills to differentiate instruction. Half of the network leaders raised concerns about the difficulty small schools have in participating in professional development outside the school level.

-
- **Finding 4:** Several cluster, network, and central leaders express concerns that current agreements with psychologists and service providers present obstacles to access to services, flexibility in responding to student needs and equity, particularly in high-need and high-poverty neighborhoods.
-

Concerns expressed in the 2005 Hehir report about the psychologists’ role in the referral and evaluation process were repeated by some interviewees. In particular, access to psychologists and related service providers is impacted based on the school’s location. The current contractual arrangements for psychologists and related service providers are designed for the former district system and are bound by seniority rules. Further, there are 960 psychologists to serve 1,700 schools²⁶. The result is that the strategic deployment of expertise critical in serving high need students and schools is less than effective. A few interviewees feared that as schools assume responsibility for their own students, access to psychologists and service providers become more limited for some schools.

Likewise, several cluster and network leaders explained that the assignment of psychologists and related service providers are determined by the data on the number of referrals and students with disabilities in a school two years prior to the current year. Current structures limit flexibility for changes in student populations to be served in their home school, and may impact decisions for student placements.

Interviewees expressed equity concerns about access to quality external supports available especially for high-need, high poverty communities. Schools, they said, are reporting inconsistencies in services provided to their students and difficulty in securing first-rate providers. Concerns expressed deserve further investigation.

²⁶ Estimate of number of psychologists provided by NYC DOE DSWDELL.

-
- **Finding 5:** DOE invested considerable resources on professional development and capacity building during Phase One.
-

Central office, cluster, and network leaders described professional development as necessary to achieving Special Education Reform. They recognized that helping DOE staff understand the background and rationale of Special Education Reform is essential to changing practices as is training staff to meet new expectations for their job responsibilities. Interviewees reported the importance of developing knowledge, skills and understandings about the goals and principles among central office, cluster and network leaders and staff. To do so, interviewees reported having access to professional development that familiarized them with the purpose of the reform, as well as trainings that provide technical knowledge such as writing an IEP or utilizing SESIS. (See Appendix Four for description of the professional development offerings.) In turn, central office leaders provided professional development on the goals and principles to be achieved, and the practical means of accomplishing reform for their staffs, and network leaders for their schools.

Network leaders reported that professional development was provided to principals and teachers on elements and/or practical aspects of implementation. They described training and support for SESIS, IEP development, budgets, compliance with special education requirements and operations, ICT, flexible programming, differentiated instruction, co-teaching and co-planning, UDL, and Response to Intervention²⁷.

All network leaders indicated that the networks had responsibility for providing professional development, and they were building their capacity to do so effectively. Further, many network leaders said that responsibility for professional development was shared with principals who knew the needs of their schools.

Cluster and network leaders expressed appreciation for the professional development provided from the central office, including support from the partnership with Teachers College Inclusive Classrooms Project. In moving forward, they recognized that more options to support the differentiated needs of schools would be helpful. Further, several network leaders suggested that support for professional development that was designed by networks and schools and delivered in schools would be more beneficial than professional development offered across networks and schools.

When we asked interviewees for their recommendations about improving practices for full implementation, 25 percent of the recommendations were related to more professional development. The recommendations included continuing to promote clear city-wide expectations for reform including forums to share best practices consistent with expectations; collaboration and communicating progress across networks; more targeted support; and more intensive professional development for teachers to encourage a change in beliefs; and more staffing and funding for professional development. We return to these suggestions in our recommendations.

Policy and Management Obstacles to Special Education Reform

Special Education Reform requires changes in the ways that “business has been done” in DOE. Several large system-wide policy areas have been part of the Reform including: job responsibilities, enrollment/pupil personnel, scheduling, accountability and funding. The DOE’s implementation of SESIS, which was required of all schools system-wide and

²⁷ SESIS is an acronym for the Special Education Student Information System, a special education data management system. SESIS includes an electronic version of the NY State IEP. ICT is an acronym for Integrated CoTeaching, an instructional model that combines in one classroom a general education teacher, a special education teacher and a combination of students with and without IEP. UDL is an acronym for Universal Design for Learning. UDL is an instructional framework and strategies intended to help all students access core curriculum. (Source: NYC DOE DSWDELL)

therefore not considered as part of the Reform, is another area of change requiring time from those working with students with disabilities in Phase One schools and across the system.

Responsibilities for assuring success in implementing policies and directives differ at different levels of the system – central office, clusters, networks, and schools. Progress has been made in identifying challenges and responsibilities, and refining systems during Phase One. As the findings below indicate, interviewees recognize more needs to be done to resolve issues arising in these policy and implementation areas, to clarify responsibilities for assuring implementation and to create alignment within and across systems.

“Well, I think the goals are to give all children, regardless of what their needs are a solid education in New York City.”

Interviewee 016, p. 11

-
- **Finding 6:** Central office and cluster leaders rely on the network’s capacity to lead and support principals and schools in implementing Reform.
-

Interviewees articulated their areas of responsibilities. In addition to identifying responsibilities for a distinct aspect of the Reform, central office leaders have several responsibilities in common. Their common responsibilities are to align and support Special Education Reform, to monitor progress, to assure that Reform did not negatively impact compliance with state and federal mandates, and to provide professional development/training. Cluster leaders described their responsibilities as providing oversight and support through the cluster team to address operational challenges and compliance issues, providing professional development, and monitoring the review of IEPs. For the most part, they believe primary responsibilities for Phase One implementation fall to the networks and the schools in the initiative. One cluster leader described oversight as assuring that networks hire staff members that are “a right fit” for the initiative, and to facilitate network collaboration between Phase One and the remaining networks.

Network leaders described multiple responsibilities they had individually, and shared with network teams that include the instructional specialists and coaches, operational specialist, and youth development support. Their responsibilities fell into two general areas: communicating the goals and principles of Special Education Reform so that the message to schools emphasizes a different way of doing business; and developing capacity which included reviewing IEPs, creating flexible programs and placements, managing a network team to support schools, and providing professional development for principals, teachers and other staff. One network leader expressed the thoughts of others: “making sure that principals were apprised of the intent of the initiative. Listening to the principals’ concerns to make sure that we supported them as well as supporting the intent of the reform. Looking at the benefits of Reform in terms of creating more of a community school where they accept the children in their district and provide them with the special education supports.”

Other responsibilities mentioned are buffering/communicating/interpreting messages between central office and schools, securing resources, advocating for students, being a liaison with special education services, setting goals, working with parents and students, and working on impartial hearings. Maybe most importantly, network leaders try to minimize the negative, and keep the initiative moving forward.

-
- **Finding 7:** Changes in enrollment policies, when applied only to Phase One schools, created concerns about equity and service delivery to schools.
-

As described in the background section, the guiding principle of enrollment is that students’ needs would be best met in a school in their home zone or of their own choice. The principle was intended to change the practice of sending students to self-contained classrooms at schools that had open seats. There is wide-spread support among interviewees for having

students educated in their home school, and several interviewees expressed the desire to have schools be transformed into inclusive communities.

The experience of Phase One schools was that while they were expected to serve all students in their home zone, other schools in their zone who were not part of the Phase One did not have the same, explicit expectation, or were not “playing by the same rules.” Interviewees described challenges faced by of Phase One schools, including:

- Populations of students with disabilities increased, sometime substantially, in Phase One schools. Increases may have been the result of a school keeping students with disabilities from outside their zone in their schools as they registered students with disabilities from within their zone, and/or because there are larger populations of students with disabilities within their zone than is common in other zones;
- Schools in the same zone not part of Phase One were not required to accept students with disabilities if they did not have a vacant “seat” which would provide the services required by a student’s IEP. As a result, interviewees report that Phase One schools have higher percentage of students with disabilities than neighboring schools;
- Fear that in some cases, schools could have 75 to 80 percent of their students classified as low-performing because other schools would not accept their zoned students;
- Understanding about the impact of student placements from the Office of Student Enrollment was not as evident in the high impact areas. Further, interviewees questioned the Office’s awareness about the impact of flexible scheduling on enrollment;
- Opportunities have not occurred for joint problem-solving in which both enrollment and network staffs are in training together;
- Lack of clarity and protocols in writing about criteria for moving a student when the home school can not address the students’ needs; and
- Large numbers of students who enrolled in the school late (so-called over-the-counter registrations), which did not allow the school to plan adequate resources.
- There is wide-spread support among interviewees for having students educated in their home school, and several interviewees expressed the desire to have schools be transformed into inclusive communities.

Most interviewees recognized that the extension of the revised enrollment policy to all schools in full-implementation may resolve the challenges raised in Phase One, however, they cautioned that enrollment policies and practices need to be monitored to address equity and service delivery.

➤ **Finding 8:** Changes in funding formulas and “across the board” budget cuts reduced school level funding as Phase One implementation began.

Most cluster and network leaders agree that building capacity to address the needs of all students takes increased funding. Expressing the thoughts of several interviewees, one interviewee described, “in order to take a child to a least restrictive environment, you have to give that child more support and that support costs money.” Further, without increased funding it is difficult to debunk the myth that Special Education Reform is “really about saving money.”

Yet there was no additional funding to support Phase One at the school level. The funding formula for Phase One schools was changed from schools receiving funds based on the number of classrooms that served students with disabilities to a formula based on the enrollment of students with disabilities. In the past, a school received funds for a self-contained classroom whether or not the classroom was fully or partially enrolled. With per capita funding, interviewees report that the result for many schools was reduction in the amount of resources and therefore, the flexibility in providing services to

children. For Phase One schools, the reduction was eased by DOE's decision to provide Tax Levy Phase One Transition Support.

A few network leaders also raised concerns about the reductions in Academic Intervention Services funding and its effect on lowering special education referrals. Some Phase One schools perceived a shift in funding formula as a funding cut. One network leader provided an example: "We were working with RTI but they're cutting funding for the principals on that end to hire the staff for prevention intervention. So it's a double whammy."

Most interviewees agree it is a priority to develop a system-wide funding formula that allows schools to retain the resources needed to provide supports necessary for students to be successful in less restrictive environments. Most would also agree that additional resources to fully support the necessary capacity development are unlikely to appear in the near future, and their work is to help schools "do the best they can with what they have," which often requires redesigning service delivery and, for at least two networks, raising private dollars.

➤ **Finding 9:** Flexible service models of providing support to students in less restrictive environments now exist in each Phase One network.

It is an accomplishment that each network leader reported that there was evidence of flexible service models among network schools. Progress in the other networks, however, is reported as being mixed. Some networks report that, while some of their schools are much further along than others, several of their schools are at the stage of learning about scheduling options. Others report having examples of schools that are far along in scheduling students into less restrictive environments. The reasons given for the variations among schools within networks include the resources available to small schools, limited amount of teachers with dual certification, schools' capacity to serve students with disabilities in general education classes, space, IEPs that are not clear about the services students are to receive, and lack of creativity which may be associated with lack of knowledge about options.

➤ **Finding 10:** SESIS, which began concurrently with Special Education Reform, had an effect on Phase One.

Introducing SESIS at the same time of Phase One and with the assistance of a few Phase One networks caused confusion as to whether SESIS was part of Special Education Reform. As described in the background section, SESIS is an interactive student database system that contains all individual student data included in their IEPs. As a system-wide requirement, implementation of SESIS is not limited to Phase One schools. Glitches in implementing the SESIS system, and the time needed to learn and implement the system strained many of the same people responsible for leading Special Education Reform in Phase One schools. Also, network leaders reported continuing difficulties in compatibilities in the ATS, CAP and SEC systems.²⁸

It is important to note that cluster, and network leaders report that schools have made steady progress in reviewing IEPs and developing systems for more data-driven IEP writing and deeper understanding of students and their needs. They also indicate that progress is being made in shifting the approach to writing IEPs. The intended shift in approach is from placing students in a classroom in which services are provided to them, to an approach by which the specific needs of students are identified first and then supports are designed to meet their needs in the least restrictive environment.

²⁸ ATS is an acronym for Automate the Schools, a data system that contains student biographical information and school-related information such as grades, attendance, admission and discharge information. CAP is an acronym for Child Assistance Program, a data system for tracking Special Education information for students with disabilities. SEC is an acronym for Special Education Component, a data system that maintains information about placement and service delivery for students with disabilities. (Source: NYC DOE DSWDELL)

Although progress has been made, as reported in the next section, interviewees cautioned that challenges remain in deepening understanding about flexible scheduling options to meet the needs of students, building in the time to keep up with review and redesign of IEPs that reflect new understandings about how best to meet the needs of students, and addressing the increase in impartial hearings in some networks.

- **Finding 11:** DOE does not require schools to set improvement targets aligned with Special Education Reform. However, school progress reports now “reward” schools for moving students into least restrictive environments.
-

Central office, cluster and network leaders described how DSwdELL was intentional in applying existing system-wide accountability structures – progress reports, quality reviews – to Special Education Reform. Whether or not a school was part of Phase One, the methods for calculating school progress reports changed during 2009-10 to 2010-11 from general measures of student progress, graduation rate and student performance for students with disabilities, to measures of moving student with disabilities to the least restrictive environment. Cluster and network leaders were clear about the system-wide accountability changes and the potential positive impact on progress reports for schools that moved students to least restrictive environments. 2011-12 data from Phase One schools will provide the first opportunity to determine whether schools’ progress reports are impacted because of changes in least restrictive environment. While mention was made of the impact of progress reports, it is less clear how quality reviews have been changed to include supports for least restrictive environments.

Two other system-wide accountability systems, Comprehensive Educational Plans (CEP) and Principal Performance Reviews (PPR), were not aligned explicitly to Special Education Reform. The CEP serves as each school’s improvement plan annually developed by School Leadership Team. The PPR is the principal’s annual evaluation developed by principals and used by district superintendents, along with progress reports, to measure principal performance. Clusters and networks do not have authority to hold schools and principals accountable formally. Nevertheless, cluster and network leaders described various ways in which they assisted principals and schools to use data to measure student progress and set performance goals, and to develop CEP and PPR goals.

Central office leaders were clear that DSwdELL was intentional about letting Phase One networks and schools set goals for implementation. “There were certain givens, like we changed projections and we changed funding for those schools. That was straight across all 260. But when it came to the instructional aspects, that was nuanced, customized. In some [schools], it was more radical, in some, it was in the middle and some it was like one little baby step” said Laura Rodriguez. Several central office leaders and staff members commented that they thought it more important to focus schools’ attention on the reform rather than on writing goals.

Our interviews with cluster and network leaders confirmed that, with exceptions, most principal and school goals for Phase One implementation were informal, particularly in year one. Some network leaders reported that not having formal and publicized, specific goals allowed schools to set the foundation for Reform by talking about issues that were raised during early implementation. Most network leaders described having regular, often monthly, conversations with principals about implementation. One network leader shared the sentiment common to others: “Did we have goals that we used to drive our process? Yes. Did we all know where we were? Yes. Did we know we were making progress? Yes. Did we know where to provide additional support? Yes. But we did we have to submit goals? No?”

Some network leaders described increased effort to include Phase One-related goals into school CEPs in year two. One provided an example: “Every one of my schools created CEP goals and I would say that 90 percent of my schools had Phase One as one of the CEP goals. It was purposely written in because it was an initiative that we had begun.” While we did not review school CEPs as part of our study, interviewees indicated that informal goals were developed by schools.

Parent and Community Engagement for Special Education Reform

The long-term success of Special Education Reform may be dependent ultimately on wide-spread support outside DOE that can push for comprehensive and lasting change. Groups that have a stake in the Reform's success include parents, students, community members, and the policy community. To date, DOE-initiated communication efforts with external stakeholders have been with parents of students with disabilities.

-
- **Finding 12:** A system-wide strategy does not exist for engaging parents, or other external stakeholders, as partners in supporting the goals and principles of Special Education Reform.
-

Consistently, interviewees at all levels recognized that parent engagement is essential to the success of Special Education Reform. The majority of actions taken by DOE, clusters, and networks were to *inform* parents, particularly parents of students with disabilities, about Phase One and/or specific aspects of the reform, such as the IEP process. DOE sponsored borough-wide meetings; some networks reported sponsoring network-wide meetings, and schools were encouraged by some network leaders to have parent association meetings, parent nights, and other smaller gatherings of parents –such as parent-teacher conferences, and in one case network, meetings with high school students. At these meetings, parents received information about the reasons and purposes of reform and the steps to be taken.

Cluster and network leaders reported that while there have been outreach efforts across the clusters and networks, there have been more outreach activities by some networks and schools than others in their areas. One cluster leader attributed more attention to parent outreach as an area of emphasis added by Chancellor Walcott.

Network leaders indicated that school-based parent coordinators are often the first point of contact with parents who have concerns. Some networks provided support to parent coordinators to assure they were knowledgeable about Phase One and that in some cases they would work with groups of students and parents in understanding the IEP process. Network leaders also indicated that service providers – including psychologists and guidance counselors – have considerable influence on parents' views of changes in IEPs. Several shared that it was a challenge to engage the service providers in the Reform and remained a sizable obstacle in changing “mind sets” and “culture shifts.”

While there is general agreement across clusters and networks that there have been multiple efforts to *inform* parents and *explain* the rationale for Special Education Reform, there are few examples of engaging parents of general education students and of students with disabilities in *planning* or *dialoguing* about the conditions necessary to create schools in which students are in the least restrictive environment. To do so, parents need information and opportunities to discuss their concerns and contribute to developing solutions in the best interests of all students. Cluster and network leaders indicated that general education and special education parents had concerns about the levels of services provided to their children, worries that services would be lost as IEPs were revised, and fears for their children's safety as they were in classrooms with students with emotional disabilities.

A few interviewees discussed the challenge of “culture change” that requires schools to hear from parents, and work to overcome their fears. One powerful example of the call to culture change is: “I think schools need to engage specifically. ... They have to understand that students with a disability...they are not different than anybody else. And, I think that there's a big fear. I mean we hear so often 'We don't want those kids in our school because they are emotionally disturbed' ... These are kids. They are your kids, they are my kids ... we need to treat them with respect. We need to engage them.”

“The biggest challenge is for schools to figure out the parent is not the enemy, and [for parents] that the school is not the enemy. We have to work together.”

Deputy Chancellor Laura Rodriguez

Early Signs of Encouragement and Progress

It is too early to expect measurable progress in student achievement among Phase One schools. However, eight of the 10 network leaders were able to report on progress in implementing Special Education Reform that they believe will lead to improvement in student achievement. One network leader reports the elimination of all self-contained classes in network schools. Interviewees identified some specific examples of progress being made that can serve as foundation for more growth. Progress is contextual, and varies among Phase One schools.

-
- **Finding 13:** Central office, cluster, and network leaders indicate progress in implementing practices connected with the goals and principles of Special Education Reform.
-

Central office, cluster, and network leaders indicated progress in building capacity from their investments in professional development. They recognized that the real measures of progress would be found at the school level, and that, in the first 18 months, progress across networks and across schools within networks varied. Nevertheless, most interviewees reported some early signs of progress in establishing a foundation for continuous effort, and some exemplary practices and progress in schools that were ready to embrace implementation quickly.

“... what will be different is that, because we take a better look, and a more balanced look at supports that young people need, that we will actually see them being more successful academically, emotionally, socially, because we have the ability to not just do a one size fit all rubber stamp, but actually really look at the kid, and make changes based on the need of the young people. I expect to see college rates go up for students involved in this. I expect to see better teaching practices.”

Interviewee 010, p. 6

Central office leaders and staff reported “some positive trends” in the data from Phase One schools in reductions in the number of students referred “inappropriately,” and in more inclusion opportunities and moving students to less restrictive environments for students with disabilities. Also, progress was reported in building capacity, aligning accountability structures with the reform’s goals and principles, as well as in providing more specific data, such as placement, graduation rates, and attendance, of students with disabilities.

Cluster leaders indicated uniformly that progress was being made. Some cluster leaders were able to describe progress in terms of:

- Building understanding, acceptance, capacity, and foundation for learning;
- Pockets of large numbers of students moving from more to less restrictive environments;
- Improvements in the process of writing IEPs that better reflect the needs of students;
- More schools with flexible programming; and
- Strong capacity of networks to deliver professional development and support.

Network leaders reported progress in several areas. One area was in the network’s actions in delivering professional development for special education teachers, general education teachers, and principals in writing IEPs, about least restrictive environments and the changing roles of teachers and principals.

”[There are] a few things that we expect to be different. One, and a big one, is a shift of thinking in the way we think about educating our children, the way we think about educating students with special needs, the opportunities that we create for them, to improve the pedagogy, to improve the curriculum, to create inclusive communities where children, staff, embrace each other's needs and strengths and cultures and diversity.”

“Definitely want to see students moving to least restrictive environments. And we've seen that in a short period of time, actually, we began to see how it would look in a few of our schools.”

Interviewee 019, p. 7

Another area of progress indicated by network leaders is in establishing or strengthening exemplary and model programs in some of their network schools. Program expansion was reported as the result of schools believing they have “permission” to address the learning needs of students in ways different than in the past, and noticeable changes in principals’ beliefs about inclusion, and/or evidence of school-wide changes to a more inclusive culture.

Progress was also reported in increasing the number of students moving to a less restrictive environment and/or creating flexible programs, and increases in student achievement. Networks support schools in analyzing and rewriting IEPs and working with individual parents to deepen their understanding of proposed changes to a least restrictive environment. An encouraging indicator of progress was from the network leader who reported having “almost no full-time classes with the network of self-contained or ICT classes” and “a majority of our schools are on a part-time basis, based on individual student needs.”

While recognizing progress, almost all network leaders stressed that there was not uniformity in the implementation among principals and schools within their network. Specifically, several network leaders were careful to say that while there were exemplary practices in some of their schools, not all schools had embraced reform and made similar levels of progress.

PART THREE: RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to implement Special Education Reform system-wide, DOE has begun to establish direction, build organizational capacity, invest in professional development, and identify and address policy issues in response to the feedback received by way of our preliminary findings and recommendations and from others. We recognize that DOE is seeking ways to redirect and reallocate funding and positions to support Reform. There is much more work to do in order to address equity and access as DOE prepares for full implementation in September 2012. Our 10 recommendations draw upon all five areas of the findings, and are grouped in four areas:

- Communication: Communicate the message of Special Education Reform broadly;
- Funding: Provide Adequate Funding to Achieve Meaningful Reform;
- Capacity: Build system-wide capacity through improved placement and professional development/training of administrators, teachers and staff; and
- Policy and Practice: Analyze, evaluate and strengthen system-wide policies that further the goals and principles of Special Education Reform.

Communicate the Message of Special Education Reform Broadly

We found that DOE has had success in communicating the goals and principles among the central office, cluster, and network leaders involved in Phase One, and has fallen short in communicating to parents, the community, and policy makers. As full-implementation approaches, we recommend:

Recommendation 1: *Intensify efforts to communicate goals and principles internally across the system, especially with schools beginning implementation in 2012-13.* Although the goals and principles have been communicated, DOE should continue and intensify regular internal communications about the importance and progress of the Reform throughout the school year. In order to continue to demonstrate commitment to the Reform, the goals, principles and the expected changes in practice necessary for deep and meaningful implementation need to be clearly and explicitly stated with examples, such as the leadership necessary from principals, teachers, staff, parents and students. Continuing regular communications from central office and network leaders (i.e. chancellor's memorandum, network meetings) should reinforce that Reform is a priority for system.

Recommendation 2: *Engage parents of general education students as well as parents of students with disabilities in systematic dialogue about Special Education Reform.* DOE should intensify its efforts to communicate with parents and develop two-way communication with all parents about the benefits to all students in raising graduation rates, reducing dropouts, and creating schools in which all students are educated in the least restricted environment. Communication strategies should continue to include and broaden regular outreach to Community Education Councils and parent organizations, network and system-wide informational sessions, updates through newsletters and presentations at school-based events attended by parents. As one interviewee recommended, we need "to continually remind [parents] of the successes and failures, so that parents trust us."

Provide Adequate Funding to Achieve Meaningful Reform

We found that funding for Special Education Reform is critical to building capacity and incentivizing sustainable changes in ways that the system serves students. An investment of resources in the short-term will reinforce the message that Special Education Reform is a priority to improve student success and will enable schools to have flexibility in solving short-term problems that are inevitable in adopting system-wide change. To achieve full implementation, we recommend:

Recommendation 3: Provide additional funding for more on-site professional development by clusters and networks. Networks should know the strengths and challenges facing their schools, and be able to provide a combination of pressure and support to accelerate Reform implementation. Phase One network leaders strongly expressed that in-school supports were strategic in accelerating implementation. The same is likely to be true all schools. More funding should be available for increased capacity, maybe in the form of a second instructional specialist in networks that have higher concentrations of students with disabilities, and to support school-based professional development in which teams of teachers can work together.

Build System-wide Capacity through Improved Placement and Professional Development/Training of Administrators, Teachers and Staff

We found that attention has been placed on attracting and selecting central office, cluster and network staff to lead and support implementation. Further, DOE, at the central office and network levels, has invested in professional development to build the knowledge and skills of administrators, teachers and staff in Phase One schools. Full implementation will require the continued commitment to identifying staff in central office, cluster, and networks with knowledge and expertise to move schools to the vision, and with the experience to help schools with the systems and practices to achieve expectations. As full implementation approaches, we recommend:

Recommendation 4: Hire additional staff into central office and network positions who have the knowledge and skills necessary to help schools implement Special Education Reform. Strengthen the knowledge and skills of those holding positions with job-embedded professional development and training. It is particularly important, as plans for the new DSWDELL organizational structure are being finalized, that capacity development at the cluster, network and school levels remains a focus, especially by strategically utilizing school-level personnel, network-level coaches, cluster senior instructional facilitators, and central support staff.

Recommendation 5: Increase professional development for parent coordinators and service providers. Parent coordinators who have consistent contact with parents need to be extensively trained in the Reform principles and goals. Current efforts are a start, however, more is needed. Several networks indicated they initiated training with parent coordinators to ensure their support in understanding the implementation of the Reform as it affects parents. All networks should do so. Service providers also need training and guidance as to their roles in supporting parents in understanding the revised IEP process.

Recommendation 6: Expand the use the expertise from Phase One networks to assist other networks within their clusters. Phase One networks, which exist in four of the five district-wide clusters, have knowledge and experience with professional development that has had the greatest impact in move schools. Further, each cluster could benefit from intensifying efforts to systematically document the protocols and experiences of their Phase One networks, and share the protocols across the networks in their cluster. Financial incentives should be provided to Phase One networks to mentor other networks struggling with implementation.

Analyze and Strengthen System-wide Policies that Further the Goals and Principles of Special Education Reform

Special Education Reform's fifth principle is to align accountability measures, funding formulas and enrollment policies with the other principles. We found that DOE has altered accountability policies to provide incentives for moving students into less restrictive environments, and required Phase One schools to enroll student in their home school or school of choice. There is general agreement that schools and networks will move at different paces. Phase One schools were not directed

to establish annual goals related to the Reform goals and principles as part of their annual Comprehensive Education Plan. In preparing for full implementation, we also recommend:

Recommendation 7: *Define measures for evaluating progress and holding schools accountable for implementation.* DOE should establish reasonable expectations for schools in implementing Reform in addition to measurable student outcomes. Expectations should answer questions, such as: what is adequate school progress in implementing Special Education Reform? What are the consequences for schools that do not make progress increasing student achievement and graduation, and reduce dropouts? We recommend that further analysis and monitoring of progress of Phase One schools can provide part of the answers to these questions. Once determined, a school's expectations for progress should be part of their Comprehensive Education Plan to provide greater public accountability.

Recommendation 8: *Develop and communicate clear and transparent enrollment policies that balance the serving students in their zone/choice school with each school's capacity to serve students with disabilities.* Protocols need to be revised continually to address - at a minimum - placement exceptions, capping classes so schools have the ability to move students with disabilities into part time general education settings and over-the-counter enrollments of students in zone schools, particularly when it would be in the best interest of the student for the student not to be served in the home school. The Office of Student Enrollment must be diligent in balancing policy with inundating schools with the highest need students.

Recommendation 9: *Review, and, where appropriate, redesign the clustering process so schools are able to improve access to adequate and high quality psychologists and related services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, and contracted services.* The purpose for review should be to increase the quality of services, access among schools, assure equitable support across all areas of the city with particular attention to high need areas, and increase efficient use of limited resources. The review should provide guidance on assignment of psychologists and support services, monitoring and accountability measures, deployment of support services, and support provided for impartial hearings.

Recommendation 10: *Monitor and support schools in the development of IEPs that address the needs of students with disabilities.* DOE must continue to be proactive in schools and with IEP teams, with principals and teachers, and with psychologists to strengthen the use of data and analysis to determine student needs. Those reviewing and developing IEPs would benefit from learning about options and examples of alternatives to self-contained classrooms and approaches to providing supports. It remains a priority that students have high-quality IEPs that accurately assess student needs.

The previous 10 recommendations stem directly from the interviews, and in many instances incorporate suggestions we heard from interviewees. We offer four additional recommendations that suggest ways to deepen support for the Reform based on promising practices and change management research²⁹. The recommendations suggest continued attention by the Public Advocate and the DOE in order to broaden public understanding and dialogue and continue to provide objective, independent information and analysis about the progress of Special Education Reform. Broad engagement across NYC will be required to realize the goals of Special Education Reform.

We offer the following recommendations:

Recommendation 11: *Hold a city-wide Special Education Reform Summit to explore the implications of the Reform on equity and access for all students as the 2012-13 school year unfolds.* The Public Advocate and DOE should collaborate on designing and conducting a public forum or summit in which key stakeholders are provided opportunities to

²⁹ See for example, Kotter, J. (1996) *Leading Change*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press; Katzenbach, J.R. and Smith, D.K. (1993). *The Wisdom of Teams*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press; Childress, S.M., Doyle, D. and Thomas, D.A. (2009) *Leading for Equity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press; Fullan, M. (November 2006) *Change Theory: A force for school improvement*. Centre for Strategic Education, Seminar Series Paper No. 157, East Melbourne, Victoria

examine and explore actions planned to improve and sustain Special Education Reform, target equity and access, and increase the number of students who graduate high school and are prepared for success in college and careers.

Recommendation 12: *Survey parents, teachers and students to evaluate implementation of the Reform.* The Public Advocate and DOE should develop a survey instrument at the end of the 2012-2013 school year that seeks to understand parents, teachers and student's experiences with Special Education Reform. Feedback is likely to most helpful at the school level, and the process for soliciting feedback should be school-based.

Recommendation 13: *Develop and communicate about the implications for adults whose positions are impacted by the Reform.* In an effort to overcome resistance to reform due to fear of change and of losing positions, DOE should develop and communicate a vision for the future positions for adults who provide support to students with disabilities. The vision should parallel the vision for moving students to a less restrictive environment, that is to say, there should be a plan for retraining adults for positions that support students in a less restricted environment. Simply, the vision may address the questions: what will adults be called on to do less?, and what will they be called upon to do more?

Recommendation 14: *Validate and disseminate effective practices.* The Public Advocate and DOE should continue to objectively validate effective and promising practices within the central office, clusters, networks and schools. A first step is to create objective, research-based, descriptive (qualitative) criteria that complement the quantitative data collected by DOE. The Public Advocate should continue its efforts to gather qualitative information and to report on the successes and challenges faced by networks and schools in rethinking service delivery systems, such as the use of network teams, and clinics with teams from multiple schools and strategies used to change beliefs and create inclusive communities. Information gathering should include school-level interviews questions that will solicit the ways schools used goals, informally and formally, to communicate, inform, and build consensus on reform among teachers, parents, and students.

Data Compelling Special Education Reform in New York City Public Schools

This section reviews four sets of data evaluating the delivery of special education services and the performance of students with disabilities in 2009-10, the year before Phase One was initiated. The first set describes New York City’s performance on selected indicators from the New York State Performance Plan (SPP), developed in accordance with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). The second set comprises performance data on State assessments in English language arts and mathematics; the third, graduation-rate data; the fourth, NCLB accountability results.

The State Performance Plan

IDEA requires each state to develop indicators and targets to evaluate the state’s performance in meeting its requirements. States must report annually to the public on each school district’s performance on the State indicators. We review 2009-10 New York City data on five of New York State’s 20 indicators. These indicators were selected as most relevant to the goals of the reform. While the City did not meet the State target on these five indicators; it did meet the target on a number of the remaining indicators.

State Indicator 1 is the graduation rate of students with disabilities. The metric for this indicator was the percentage of students with disabilities in the cohort of students who first entered grade 9 anywhere (or if ungraded, became 17 years old) in 2005-06 who had earned a local or Regents diploma as of August 2009. New York City’s 2005 Cohort included 10,510 students with disabilities; their graduation rate was 27.1 percent. The State target was 44 percent or higher.

State Indicator 2 is the dropout rate of students with disabilities. The metric is based on the same cohort as the graduation rate. The dropout rate for students with disabilities in the 2005 Cohort as of August 2009 was 20.4 percent. This rate was higher than the State target of 18 percent or lower.

State Indicator 5 is the percentage of students with disabilities served in the least restrictive environment. As shown in the table below, in 2009-10, New York City Public Schools failed to meet any of the targets in this area and served fewer students in least restrictive environments, on average, than other public schools.

New York City Performance on Least Restrict Environment Indicator³⁰

Percent of students with disabilities in general education program for	New York City	State Target	Meets State target?	Rest of State
80% or more of the day	53.1%	More than 53.3%	No	56.7%
Less than 40% of the day	29.6%	Less than 24.4%	No	18.4%
In separate schools / facilities	8.3%	Less than 6.6%	No	5.1%

State Indicator 8 requires school districts to survey parents to determine if parents believe that “schools facilitated parent involvement to improve services and results for students with disabilities.” New York City received 115 parent surveys on which 84.3 percent of parents reported that their child’s school complied with this requirement. This percentage did not meet the State target of 89% or higher.

³⁰ <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/spp/apr2011/ind5.htm>

State Indicator 13 covers transition planning for students approaching the completion of secondary school. The IEPs of all students with disabilities aged 15 and above should include “postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based upon an age-appropriate transition assessment; transition services, including courses of study, that will reasonably enable the student to meet those post-secondary goals; and annual IEP goals related to the student’s transition services needs; with evidence that the student was invited to the CSE meeting where transition services were discussed and, if appropriate, a representative of any participating agency was invited to the CSE meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who had reached the age of majority.” To evaluate this indicator, the State reviewed 100 IEPs and found that only 25 percent complied with this requirement. The State target for 2009-10 was 100 percent.

Performance on State Assessments in English Language Arts and Mathematics

The following table compares the performance of students with disabilities in New York City with those outside of New York City and with those in all State public schools (including New York City) on the grades 3 through 8 State assessments in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. In grades 3 through 5, the performance of New York City students was comparable to—and sometimes better than—that of students in other districts. However, beginning in grade 6, the performance of New York City students with disabilities fell substantially below that of such students in other districts.

The Percentage of Students with Disabilities who Scored at the Proficient Level or Above in 2010³¹

	New York City	State
ELA 3	19.0%	19.5%
ELA 4	16.7%	18.8%
ELA 5	17.2%	16.6%
ELA 6	9.9%	13.6%
ELA 7	9.3%	12.1%
ELA 8	8.0%	11.4%
Math 3	29.0%	27.8%
Math 4	30.6%	29.4%
Math 5	31.0%	29.3%
Math 6	19.7%	21.9%
Math 7	19.8%	23.1%
Math 8	13.9%	16.8%

The following table shows the performance of students with disabilities in the 2006 cohort (after four years of high school) on the Regents English Examination. As with students in grades 6 through 8, students with disabilities in City schools, on average, were substantially less likely than students in other districts to score 65 or higher on the Regents English examination. They were substantially more likely to have never taken the Regents exam.

³¹ <https://reportcards.nysed.gov/counties.php?year=2011>

Regents English Examination

The Percentage of Students with Disabilities in the 2006 Cohort Who Scored at the Proficient Level or Above³²

	Cohort Count	Percent Proficient	Percent Not Tested
2006 Cohort			
New York City	11,094	28.3%	44.8%
Rest of State	21,592	44.7%	32.1%
All Public Schools	32,686	39.1%	36.4%

Examination of the performance of the 2006 cohorts on the Regents mathematics examination shows the same pattern. New York City students with disabilities, on average, were less likely to score 65 or higher and more likely to have not taken the examination than such students in other districts.

Regents Mathematics Examination

The Percentage of Students with Disabilities in the 2006 Cohort Who Scored at the Proficient Level or Above³³

	Cohort Count	Percent Proficient	Percent Not Tested
2006 Cohort			
New York City	11,094	25.5%	39.2%
Rest of State	21,592	45.7%	28.9%
All Public Schools	32,686	38.8%	32.4%

Graduation Rates for Students with Disabilities

The following table examines the percentages of students with disabilities in the 2006 Cohort who earned Regents diplomas and local diplomas as of June 2009. Graduation rates and Regents diploma rates in New York City, on average, fell well below those in other districts.

Graduation Rates and Regents-Diploma Rates for Students with Disabilities in the 2006 Cohort after Four Years³⁴

	Cohort Count	Percent Proficient	Percent Not Tested
New York City	11,367	27.9%	11.1%
Rest of State	21,329	52.8%	29.8%
All Public Schools	32,696	44.1%	23.3%

³² <https://reportcards.nysed.gov/counties.php?year=2011>

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/pressRelease/20110614/home.html>

Accountability under NCLB

We examined the number of New York City's Community School Districts (CSDs) who failed to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for students with disabilities in 2009-10. With the notable exception of grades 3-8 mathematics, at least 30 of the 32 CSDs failed to make AYP. Accountability for CSDs is determined by aggregating results for all students attending schools within the CSD plus students with disabilities who are the responsibility of the CSD but are placed in schools outside the CSD.

The number of CSDs Who Failed to Make AYP in 2009-10 for Students with Disabilities by Accountability Measure

Measure	Count of CSDs
Grades 3-8 ELA	31
Grades 3-8 Math	4
High School English	31
High School Math	31
Graduation Rate	30

Performance Summary

The City data on State assessments in 2009-10 shows that the performance of students with disabilities in the elementary grades is comparable to that of such students in other districts. Beginning in grade 6, the performance of City students with disabilities declines in absolute terms and relative to that in other districts. Forty-seven (47) percent of students with disabilities in the 2005 Cohort had not taken the Regents English Examination after five years of high school. Almost 43 percent had not taken the Regents mathematics examination. Taking these exams is a requirement for earning a local diploma, even though students with disabilities may pass a Regents competency test in lieu of passing a Regents examination. The percentages of students in these cohorts earning a local or Regents diploma is much lower than the percentages of such students in other districts. These findings suggest that many City students with disabilities do not have access to the curriculum required to earn a Regents diploma. The cited performance data clearly compelled New York City to make major changes in their program for educating students with disabilities.

1. Interviewees

From September 2011 through January 2012, Perry and Associates, Inc. conducted more than 40 confidential interviews of deputy chancellors, New York City Department of Education central office staff, cluster and network leaders in Phase One, and others external to the DOE who have knowledge of Special Education Reform. Interviewees were:

New York City Department of Education

Central Office

- **Shael Polakow-Suransky** – Chief Academic Officer & Senior Deputy Chancellor, Division of Academics, Performance and Support
- **Veronica Conforme** – Chief Financial Officer

Central Office, Division for Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners

- **Laura Rodriguez** – Deputy Chancellor
- **Johanna Chase** – Executive Director, Special Populations, Office of School Support and Senior Advisor for Special Education Reform
- **Lauren Katzman** – Executive Director, Special Education
- **Andrew Hollander** – Deputy Director, for Operations and Implementation
- **Jan McDonald** – Executive Director, Committees on Special Education, Compliance and Analytics
- **Nigel Pugh** – Director, Professional Leadership

Clusters

- **Corinne Rello Anselmi** – Cluster Leader, DSSI Cluster 1
- **Christopher Groll** – Cluster Leader, DSSI Cluster 4
- **Debra Maldonado** – Cluster Leader, DSSI Cluster 5
- **Jose Ruiz** – Cluster Leader, DSSI Cluster 6
- **Elizabeth Sexton** – Director of Special Education, DSSI Cluster 5

Networks

- **Marisol Bradbury** – former Network Leader, Children First Network 403
- **David Cohen** – Director of Student Services, Children First Network 409
- **Lorraine Estrada** – Administrator, Special Education, Children First Network 407
- **Jonathan Green** – Network Leader, Children First Network 105
- **Varleton McDonald** – Network Leader, Children First Network 407
- **Elmer Meyers** – Network Leader, Children First Network 607
- **Neal Opromalla** – Network Leader, Children First Network 409
- **Maria Quail** – Network Leader, Children First Network 109
- **Nancy Scala** – Network Leader, Children First Network 107
- **Derek Smith** – Network Leader, Children First Network 561

- **Gillian Smith** – Network Leader, Children First Network 403
- **Ben Waxman** – Network Leader, Children First Network 534

District 75

- **Gary Hecht** – Superintendent, District 75

Interviewees External to New York City Department of Education

- **Rebecca Cort** - Associate Commissioner, New York State Education Department
- P-12 Office of Special Education
- **Celia Oyler** – Leader, Teachers College Inclusive Classrooms Project (TCICP)
- **Alfred Youngwood** – Former Staff to Garth Harries, then Senior Counselor for Special Education, New York City Department of Education

2. Interview Questions

The following are the questions asked in interviews. Interviewees were asked the general questions. Follow-up questions were asked as appropriate. Specific questions for each participant were emailed to the participant two business days before the interview.

General Questions for DOE Staff

1. DOE began implementing a systemic reform effort in 2010-11 to improve how it supports and educates students with disabilities. What are the goals of this effort? What would you expect to be different as a result of this effort?
2. In your position as _____, what are your specific responsibilities for implementing this reform?
3. With respect to the Phase One schools, what progress have you made in executing these responsibilities? What obstacles have you encountered? How are you overcoming these obstacles?
4. Appropriate follow-up questions based on responses to question 3 and interviewee's position. (See below)
5. What changes in roles or addition of staff has taken place to support this initiative?
6. Have schools set goals for this initiative?
7. How will schools be held accountable for implementing the required process changes? For improving the outcomes of students with disabilities?
8. How have parents been involved in planning and implementing this initiative?
9. In your view, has this initiative succeeded in better aligning special education policies with broader DOE reforms?
10. What previous experience do you have with special education issues?
11. Where would you place this initiative in relation to DOE's other priorities? In relation to the other priorities of your office?
12. What will be the indicators that the DOE will use to determine whether this initiative will be ready to implement system-wide in 2012-13?
13. What changes do you recommend to ensure a better implementation of this initiative?
14. Do you anticipate other initiatives designed to improvement the referral and identification processes for students with possible disabilities?

Follow-up Questions

1. When the IEP team has assessed students with disabilities according to the functional categories—academic, social, physical and management needs—and a corresponding program of services has been specified, whose responsibility is it to ensure that the school has the resources to provide the identified services? Or does the IEP team need to work within a set of existing services if the student is to be educated in that community school?
2. Is number of students with disabilities being served in District 75 being reduced because of this initiative? What about the number served in other settings outside the zoned community school?
3. What portion of Phase One schools have implemented more flexible service models?
4. How are special education teachers and other special education support personnel assigned to schools? Are you able to recruit sufficient certified special education teachers?
5. Who is responsible for ensuring that school personnel have the necessary professional development to successfully implement this initiative? What professional development related to this initiative has been provided to Phase One schools?
6. Who is responsible for monitoring the CSEs and IEP teams to ensure that functional category assessments and IEPs are consistent with regulations and DOE guidelines? How have Phase One schools been monitored?
7. Who is responsible for ensuring that students receive the services specified in their IEPs? How is this being monitored?
8. Have you increased the number of staff working on Special Education?
9. How will the progress of individual students be tracked to determine if they are meeting the goals established in the IEP?

Profile of Schools Participating in Phase One of New York City's Special Education Reform Initiative

New York City Department of Education initiated a reform of its special education program in 2010-11. The goal of the reform is to advance learning and achievement for students with disabilities (SwD). Specifically, the plan calls for educating the vast majority of students with disabilities in their home school with more flexible instruction, curricula, and scheduling and to ensure that schools are held accountable for all students meeting standards-based goals.

Individual schools were not identified to participate in Phase One of the Reform. Rather, 12 Children First Networks applied in March 2010 to participate in Phase One and nine are chosen. The selection is based on the network's interest, the network's ability to win the support of the network's schools, and the network's capacity to support its schools in implementing the Reform. A tenth non-CFN is added based on its proven strengths in instruction and special education. Two-hundred-sixty schools were members of the 10 participating networks. Five of these schools were closed at the end of that year, leaving 255 participating schools in 2011-12. Because seven Phase One schools did not open until 2010-11, analyses in this report using data for the 2009-10 school year include only the 248 schools open in 2009-10.

The tables on the following pages are designed to answer the following questions about Phase One schools:

- Where are Phase One schools located in terms of borough, community school district, cluster, network and Committees on Special Education and do they represent the variety of grade structures found in New York City schools?
- In 2009-10, when Phase One schools were selected, were they representative of City schools in terms of enrollment, eligibility for free-and-reduced-price lunches, percentage of English language learners enrolled, and racial/ethnic composition?
- In 2009-10, were Phase One schools representative of City schools in the percentages of schools belonging to each education need quartile?
- In 2009-10, were Phase One schools representative of City schools in terms of the percentage of students with disabilities enrolled and the placement of these students in Collaborative Team Teaching (CTT) and self-contained classes?
- In 2010-11, the first year of reform implementation, were there larger changes in the enrollment and class placement of students with disabilities in Phase One schools compared with non-participating schools?
- When the three major grade structures, elementary, middle, and high school, are examined separately, are different patterns found in Phase One schools on any of the characteristics examined above?

Major Findings

The analyses presented in the following tables revealed the following major findings:

- The Phase One schools represented all New York City boroughs and 30 of the 32 community school districts (CSDs). (Districts 16 and 32 in Brooklyn did not have Phase One schools.) Almost half of these schools were located in the Bronx. In 2011-12, with two exceptions, they represented five clusters, and, with 15 exceptions, they belonged to 10 networks.
- The Phase One schools had a range of grade structures, with about 46 percent serving students in elementary grades, including K-8 and K-12 schools, and 33 percent serving only students in grades 9-12.

- On average, Phase One schools enrolled fewer students in 2009-10 than other schools. This difference resulted solely from the smaller enrollments in Phase One schools at the middle and high school levels. The average enrollment was smaller by 232 students at the middle level and 322 students at the high school level.
- Differences in other demographic factors also varied by grade structure. At the elementary level, Phase One schools enrolled larger percentages of students eligible for free-and-reduced-price lunches, English language learners, and Hispanic students. They enrolled smaller percentages of Asian and Black students. At the middle level, there were no differences between Phase One and other schools on any demographic characteristic. At the high school level, Phase One schools enrolled larger percentages of Hispanic students and smaller percentages of Asian students.
- Quartiles based on the educational needs of a school's students were developed to distribute New York City's Contract for Excellence funding. Educational need is defined as coming from families in poverty, being disabled, being English language learners, performing below the state standard and/or not graduating in four years. When considering these need quartiles, Phase One schools were more likely than other schools to be in the highest-need category and less likely to be in the lowest-need category. This pattern was seen in the elementary schools, but not in the middle and high schools. In those schools, Phase One schools were less likely to be in the lowest-need category but no more likely to be in the highest-need category.
- In 2009-10, Phase One schools enrolled a slightly larger percentage of students with disabilities, 16.9 compared with 15.4 percent, and assigned a slightly larger percentage of these students to CTT classes. They did not differ significantly from other schools in the percentage of students assigned to self-contained classes.
- Between 2009-10 and 2010-11, across all grade levels, the number and percentage of students with disabilities increased slightly more in Phase One than in other schools. Examining schools with each grade structure separately, the differences between Phase One and other schools was not large enough to be significant.
- Between 2009-10 and 2010-11, the percentage of students with disabilities placed in CTT classes in both groups increased slightly, from 28.5 to 31.5 percent. In 2010-11, Phase One schools were no more likely than other schools to increase this percentage. Phase One schools were statistically no more likely than other schools, on average, to reduce the percentage of students in self-contained classes. Across all schools, the average percentage placed in such classes did not change, remaining at slightly over 30 percent.
- Changes in enrollment and placement of students with disabilities varied by grade level. Phase One schools at the elementary level reduced the percentage of students assigned to self-contained classes by 1.7 percentage points. Other elementary schools increased the percentage assigned to such classes by 0.3 percentage points. The groups did not differ in the change in the percentage assigned to CTT classes. At the middle and high school levels, there was no significant difference between Phase One and other schools on these measures.
- In large part, the 2009-10 differences between participating and non-participating schools varied by grade structure. Phase One elementary schools did not differ in size from other elementary schools; however, they had higher percentages of students who were eligible for free-and-reduced-price lunches and who were English language learners. They were also more likely to be in the highest-educational-need quartile. While they enrolled a slightly larger percentage of students with disabilities, they placed them in CTT and self-contained classes at rates similar to non-participating schools. Phase One schools with middle grades were smaller but did not differ demographically from other such schools. They did not differ significantly from other schools in the percentage of enrollment who were disabled or in the class placement of those students. Phase One high schools were smaller, less likely to have high educational need, enrolled larger percentages of students with disabilities, and placed a larger percentage of them in CTT classes than non-participating schools.
- In conclusion, it appears that Phase One schools, relative to other schools, made few changes in the class placement of students with disabilities in the first year of implementation. It may be expected that greater changes will be realized in 2011-12 when Individualized Education Plans written in 2010-11 are implemented.

Where are Phase One schools located in terms of borough, community school district, cluster, network and Committee on Special Education and do they represent the variety of grade structures found in New York City schools?

Count of Phase One Schools in 2011-12 by Cluster and CSD

Phase One schools represented all community school districts (CSD) except Brooklyn districts 16 and 32. All but two schools belonged to five clusters. Ten networks were represented by 240 schools, with 19 to 31 schools belonging to each network. The remaining 15 schools represented eight other networks, with between one and four schools belonging to each.

CSD	Cluster							Total
	CL01	CL02	CL04	CL06	CL53	CL55	CL56	
01	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
02	13	0	2	0	0	0	4	19
03	3	0	2	1	0	0	2	8
04	0	0	1	4	1	0	1	7
05	2	0	2	1	0	1	2	8
06	4	0	2	1	0	0	3	10
07	3	0	3	1	1	0	0	8
08	3	0	6	17	3	0	0	29
09	5	0	2	2	11	0	0	20
10	22	0	2	3	3	0	0	30
11	2	0	1	13	7	0	0	23
12	2	0	3	5	1	0	0	11
13	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	5
14	1	0	3	0	0	0	2	6
15	1	0	9	0	0	0	0	10
17	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
18	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	3
19	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	3
20	1	0	9	0	0	0	0	10
21	1	0	7	1	0	0	0	9
22	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
23	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
24	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	4
25	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
26	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
27	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	4
28	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	5
29	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	3
30	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
31	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	7
Total	70	1	75	53	30	1	25	255

Count of Phase One Schools in 2010-11 by Borough

Almost one half of Phase One schools were located in the Bronx.

Borough	Count	Percent
Manhattan	54	21.2%
Bronx	126	49.4%
Brooklyn	47	18.4%
Queens	21	8.2%
Staten Island	7	2.7%

Count of Phase One Schools by Network within Boroughs

Network	Manhattan	Bronx	Brooklyn	Queens	Staten Island	Total
N102	0	1	0	0	0	1
N103	2	0	0	0	0	2
N105	8	10	1	0	0	19
N107	13	2	4	1	0	20
N109	0	28	0	0	0	28
N204	0	0	0	1	0	1
N403	7	4	6	4	1	22
N407	2	14	5	1	0	22
N409	0	0	25	0	6	31
N532	0	4	0	0	0	4
N534	1	22	0	2	0	25
N535	0	0	1	0	0	1
N551	1	0	0	0	0	1
N561	13	0	3	9	0	25
N602	0	0	1	0	0	1
N603	2	19	1	2	0	24
N607	4	19	0	1	0	24
N610	1	3	0	0	0	4

<i>Grade Structure</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Elementary</i>	96	37.6
<i>Middle Grades</i>	36	14.1
<i>High School</i>	83	32.5
<i>K-8</i>	19	7.5
<i>Secondary School</i>	19	7.5
<i>K-12</i>	1	.4
<i>Early Childhood</i>	1	.4
<i>Total</i>	255	100.0

In 2009-10, when Phase One schools were selected, were they representative of City schools in terms of enrollment, eligibility for free-and-reduced-price lunches, percentage of English language learners enrolled, and racial/ethnic composition?

On average, the 248 Phase One schools open in 2009-10 enrolled 138 fewer students in 2009-10 than non-participating schools. Phase One schools had a significantly larger percentage of students who were eligible for free-and-reduced-price lunches, 79.0 compared with 75.8 percent. There was no significant difference between groups in the percentage of English language learners enrolled.

Comparison of Enrollment, Eligibility for Free-and-Reduced-Price Lunch, and English Language Learners

Characteristic	Phase One ³⁵	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistically Different? ³⁶
Total Enrollment	1	248	547.4	411.5	yes
	0	1,212	685.7	573.2	
% Free and Reduced Price Lunch	1	248	79.0	16.8	yes
	0	1,212	75.8	20.2	
% English Language Learners	1	246	15.5	15.2	no
	0	1,199	14.2	14.9	

Comparison by 2009-10 Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

Phase One schools enrolled a significantly larger percentage of Hispanic students and significantly smaller percentages of Asian and White students in 2009-10 than other schools. The largest discrepancy between the two groups was in the percentage of Hispanic students enrolled, 50.3 compared with 39.1 percent.

Race/Ethnicity	Phase One	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistically Different?
% Asian	1	248	7.1	12.8	yes
	0	1,212	11.9	17.4	
% Black	1	248	31.7	23.3	no
	0	1,212	34.8	29.3	
% Hispanic	1	248	50.3	24.1	yes
	0	1,212	39.1	25.7	
% White	1	248	9.3	16.2	yes
	0	1,212	12.7	19.8	

³⁵ 1 identifies Phase One schools; 0, non-participants.

³⁶ Differences are considered statistically significant when the magnitude of difference shown would occur by chance less than five percent of the time.

In 2009-10, were Phase One schools representative of City schools in the percentages of schools belonging to each education need quartile?

Comparisons of 2009-10 Educational Need Categories

Quartiles based on the educational needs of a school's students were developed to distribute New York City's Contract for Excellence funding. Educational need is defined as coming from families in poverty, being disabled, being English language learners, performing below the state standard and/or not graduating in four years. Considering schools of all grade configurations, Phase One schools were less likely to be in the lowest-need category and more likely to be in the highest-need category than non-participating schools. The over-representation of Phase One schools in the highest-need quartile may reflect the fact that almost 50 percent of such schools are located in the Bronx. Among the boroughs, the Bronx has the highest percentage of schools in the highest-need quartile.

Need Quartile	Phase One				Total	
	0		1			
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Lowest Need	236	20.0%	30	12.3%	266	18.7%
2	342	29.0%	75	30.9%	417	29.3%
3	310	26.2%	65	26.7%	375	26.3%
Highest Need	293	24.8%	73	30.0%	366	25.7%

In 2009-10, were Phase One schools representative of City schools in terms of the percentage of students with disabilities enrolled and the placement of these students in collaborative team teaching (CTT) classes and self-contained classes?

Comparison of Numbers and Percentages of Students with Disabilities and Their Placements in 2009-10

In the school year before the implementation of special education reform (2009-10), Phase One schools enrolled a smaller number but a larger percentage of students with disabilities than other schools, 16.9 compared with 15.4 percent. These schools also served a larger percentage of enrolled students with disabilities in CTT classes, 31.4 compared with 27.9 percent. The groups did not differ significantly in the percentages of enrolled students with disabilities educated in self-contained classes in 2009-10

	Phase One	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistically Different?
# SwD	1	248	87.4	65.6	yes
	0	1,212	96.9	70.3	
% SwD	1	248	16.9	7.3	yes
	0	1,212	15.4	6.5	
% of SwD in CTT Classes	1	248	31.4	24.8	yes
	0	1,212	27.9	22.0	
% of SwD in Self-Contained classes	1	248	28.1	22.4	no
	0	1,212	30.6	19.8	

***In 2010-11, the first year of reform implementation, were there larger changes in the enrollment and class placement of students with disabilities in Phase One schools compared with non-participating schools?
Comparison of Percentages of Students with Disabilities and Their Placements in 2010-11***

In the first year of implementation, the Phase One schools continued, on average, to enroll a significantly larger percentage of students with disabilities, 17.0 compared with 15.1 percent. They placed a significantly larger percentage of students with disabilities in CTT classes (34.4 compared with 30.8 percent) and a smaller percentage in self-contained classes (27.4 compared with 30.8 percent). While statistically significant, the differences between groups were not large.

Enrollment	Phase One	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistically Different
# SwD	1	255	87.9	65.8	no
	0	1,238	94.4	73.3	
% SwD	1	255	17.0	7.1	yes
	0	1,238	15.1	6.6	
% of SwD in CTT Classes	1	255	34.4	24.1	yes
	0	1,238	30.8	22.8	
% of SwD in Self-Contained classes	1	255	27.4	21.4	yes
	0	1,238	30.8	20.6	

Comparison of Change between 2009-10 and 2010-11 in Numbers and Percentages of Students with Disabilities and Their Placements

On average, all schools increased the percentage of students with disabilities placed in CTT classes between 2009-10 and 2010-11. The percentages placed in self-contained classes differed only slightly from the previous school year. Phase One schools increased the percentage of enrollment who were disabled by a fraction of a percent.

Change in	Phase One	N	Mean Change	Std. Deviation	Statistically Different?
# SwD	1	248	2.3	13.3	yes
	0	1,212	-0.8	14.9	
% SwD	1	248	0.2	2.4	yes
	0	1,212	-0.2	2.4	
% of SwD in CTT Classes	1	248	2.6	10.3	no
	0	1,212	2.8	8.8	
% of SwD in Self-Contained classes	1	248	-0.3	7.9	no
	0	1,212	0.3	7.6	

Cumulative Change in Numbers and Percentages of Students with Disabilities (SwD) and Their Placements between 2009-10 and 2010-11

The following table presents the change between 2009-10 and 2010-11 across all schools participating or not participating in Phase One. It includes 248 participating schools and 2,012 non-participating schools that were open in 2009-10 and 2010-11. The number of students with disabilities enrolled in participating schools increased by 0.1 percent, while the number in non-participating school decreased by the same percentage. In both groups the number and percentage of students with disabilities in CTT classes increased by over three percent. In total, the number of students with disabilities served in CTT classes increased by 4,343 students in 2010-11. The number of students with disabilities served in self-contained classes did not change substantially in either group.

Enrollment	Phase One					
	0			1		
	2009-10	Change in 2010-11	Percent Change	2009-10	Change in 2010-11	Percent Change
SwD	117,400	-957	-0.1%	21,677	571	0.1%
CTT Classes	33,098	3,355	3.1%	6,348	988	3.7%
Self-Contained Classes	40,471	-221	0.1%	7,357	-125	-1.4%
Total Enrollment	831,063	-646		135,751	2,680	

When the three major grade structures, elementary, middle, and high school, are examined separately, are different patterns found in Phase One schools on any of the characteristics examined above?

Count of Schools by Grade Structure within CSDs

While all but two CSDs had Phase One schools, within CSDs schools with different grade structures were not equitably represented. For example, 16 high schools but no elementary schools were located in District 2.

CSD	Grade Structure						Total
	Elementary	Middle Grades	High School	K-8	Secondary School	K-12	
01	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
02	0	2	16	1	0	0	19
03	1	0	5	0	1	0	7
04	3	0	1	1	2	0	7
05	2	1	2	1	2	0	8
06	1	1	5	2	1	0	10
07	4	1	2	0	1	0	8
08	15	5	5	0	3	0	28
09	10	5	2	0	3	0	20
10	18	3	4	4	0	0	29
11	13	1	6	2	1	0	23
12	4	3	4	0	0	0	11
13	0	1	3	0	1	0	5
14	0	2	3	0	1	0	6
15	7	2	1	0	0	0	10
17	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
18	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
19	1	0	2	0	0	0	3
20	7	1	0	2	0	0	10
21	4	1	0	4	0	0	9
22	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
23	0	1	1	1	0	0	3
24	1	0	3	0	0	0	4
25	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
26	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
27	0	2	2	0	0	0	4
28	0	0	2	0	1	0	3
29	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
30	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
31	4	1	1	0	0	1	7
Total	96	35	78	19	19	1	248

Elementary Schools (including K-8, K-12 and Early Childhood)

Comparison of Enrollment and Demographics in 2009-10

There was no difference in the average enrollment of Phase One and other elementary schools (639.6 compared with 637.8). Compared with other schools, Phase One elementary schools enrolled significantly larger percentages of students eligible for free- and-reduced-price lunches (83.4 compared with 77.1 percent), English language learners (18.7 compared with 15.1 percent), and Hispanic students (51.9 compared with 36.7 percent). They enrolled significantly smaller percentages of Asian and Black students.

Characteristic	Phase One	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistically Significant?
Total Enrollment	1	116	642.7	299.9	No
	0	640	637.8	304.4	
% Free and Reduced Price Lunch	1	116	83.4	16.6	Yes
	0	640	77.1	22.1	
% English Language Learners	1	115	18.7	11.6	Yes
	0	639	15.1	12.5	
% Asian	1	116	8.6	14.0	Yes
	0	640	13.7	19.2	
% Black	1	116	24.7	21.2	Yes
	0	640	31.5	30.4	
% Hispanic	1	116	51.9	24.3	Yes
	0	640	36.7	26.1	
% White	1	116	12.9	19.5	No
	0	640	16.1	22.7	

Comparisons of 2009-10 Educational Need Categories

Phase One elementary schools were more likely than non-participating schools to be in the highest-need category and less likely to be in the lowest-need category.

Need Quartile	Phase One				Total	
	0		1			
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Lowest Need	132	21.4%	14	12.1%	146	19.9%
2	173	28.0%	22	19.0%	195	26.6%
3	159	25.7%	36	31.0%	195	26.6%
Highest Need	154	24.9%	44	37.9%	198	27.0%

Comparison of Numbers and Percentages of Students with Disabilities (SwD) and Their Placements in 2009-10

In 2009-10, 116 schools with elementary grades still operating in 2011-12, were selected to participate in Phase One; 630 still-operating schools did not participate. Participating schools enrolled a significantly larger number and percentage of students with disabilities (17.7 versus 16.0 percent), compared with non-participating schools. The two groups did not differ significantly in the percentage of enrolled students with disabilities assigned to CTT or self-contained classes.

	Phase One	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistically Different
# SwD	1	116	108.0	50.4	yes
	0	630	97.4	45.0	
% SwD	1	116	17.7	6.5	yes
	0	630	16.0	5.6	
% of SwD in CTT Classes	1	116	24.4	18.5	no
	0	630	25.9	18.6	
% of SwD in Self-Contained classes	1	116	36.4	20.2	no
	0	630	33.6	18.0	

Comparison of Change between 2009-10 and 2010-11 in Numbers and Percentages of Students with Disabilities and Their Placements

There were no significant differences between Phase One and other elementary schools in the changes between 2009-10 and 2010-11 in the number or percentage of students with disabilities enrolled, or in the percentage placed in CTT classes. Phase One elementary schools reduced the average percentage of students with disabilities assigned to self-contained classes, while non-participating schools increased that percentage slightly. The difference was small.

Change in	Phase One	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistically Different?
# SwD	1	116	-3.1	12.6	no
	0	630	-4.8	11.6	
% SwD	1	116	-0.6	2.2	No
	0	630	-0.9	1.9	
% of SwD in CTT Classes	1	116	3.6	7.8	No
	0	630	3.1	7.2	
% of SwD in Self-Contained Classes	1	116	-1.7	6.8	Yes
	0	630	0.3	6.9	

Cumulative Change in Numbers and Percentages of Students with Disabilities (SwD) and Their Placements between 2009-10 and 2010-11

The following table presents the change between 2009-10 and 2010-11 across all elementary schools participating or not participating in Phase One. It includes 116 participating and 614 non-participating schools that were open in 2009-10 and 2010-11. In both groups, the number of students with disabilities enrolled decreased slightly and the number and percentage of students with disabilities in CTT classes increased by 3.6 percent. In total, the number of students with disabilities served in CTT classes increased by 1,620 students in 2010-11. The percentage of students with disabilities served in self-contained classes did not change substantially in non-participating schools, but decreased by almost two percent in participating schools.

Enrollment	Phase One Elementary Schools					
	0			1		
	2009-10	Change in 2010-11	Percent Change	2009-10	Change in 2010-11	Percent Change
SwD	61,723	-3,005	-0.9%	12,525	-361	-0.6%
CTT Classes	17,036	1,268	3.6%	3,129	352	3.6%
Self-Contained Classes	20,910	-872	0.2%	4,770	-357	-1.8%
Total Enrollment	408,222	5,333		74,557	491	

Schools with Middle Grades

Comparison of Enrollment and Demographics in 2009-10

Phase One schools serving only the middle grades had substantially smaller enrollments in 2009-10 than other such schools (398.5 compared with 630.8). They did not differ significantly from other schools in the percentage of enrollment who were eligible for free-and-reduced-price lunches, who were English language learners, or who were members of any particular ethnic group.

Characteristic	Phase One	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistically Different?
Total Enrollment	1	35	398.5	317.9	yes
	0	234	630.8	446.8	
% Free and Reduced Price Lunch	1	35	77.3	16.5	no
	0	234	77.8	17.8	
% English Language Learners	1	35	15.2	16.9	no
	0	233	13.5	12.3	
% Asian	1	35	6.9	14.8	no
	0	234	11.0	16.1	
% Black	1	35	37.2	24.7	no
	0	234	35.4	29.1	
% Hispanic	1	35	47.4	25.7	no
	0	234	42.6	26.7	
% White	1	35	7.5	13.4	no
	0	234	10.4	17.4	

Comparisons of 2009-10 Educational Need Categories

Phase One schools serving the middle grades were less likely to be in the lowest-need category but no more likely than non-participating schools to be in the highest-need category. The most salient difference between groups is shown by comparing the top two quartiles with the bottom two quartiles. Phase One schools are less likely to be in the lowest-need quartiles and more likely to be in the highest-need quartiles than other schools; 23 percent of Phase One schools are in the lowest-need quartiles and 77 percent in the highest-need quartiles. For other schools, the comparable percentages are 32 and 68 percent.

Need Quartile	Phase One				Total	
	0		1		Number	Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Lowest Need	37	15.9%	3	8.6%	40	15.0%
2	37	15.9%	5	14.3%	42	15.7%
3	74	31.9%	14	40.0%	88	33.0%
Highest Need	84	36.2%	13	37.1%	97	36.3%

Comparison of Numbers and Percentages of Students with Disabilities (SwD) and Their Placements in 2009-10

In 2009-10, Phase One schools with middle grades enrolled fewer students with disabilities (and fewer students overall), but the percentage of enrolled students with disabilities was not significantly different than the percentage in non-participating schools. In addition, there was no significant difference between groups in the percentage of enrolled students with disabilities assigned to CTT or self-contained classes.

Enrollment	Phase One	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistically Different
# SwD	1	35	77.1	52.9	Yes
	0	234	104.8	67.5	
% SwD	1	35	21.0	7.0	No
	0	234	18.6	7.1	
% of SwD in CTT Classes	1	35	28.7	23.0	No
	0	234	25.5	18.8	
% of SwD in Self-Contained classes	1	35	37.9	23.8	No
	0	234	38.6	18.3	

Comparison of Change between 2009-10 and 2010-11 in Numbers and Percentages of Students with Disabilities and Their Placements

The changes in enrollment and placements of students with disabilities in Phase One schools serving the middle grades did not differ significantly from other such schools.

Change in	Phase One	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistically Different?
# SwD	1	35	1.8	13.9	no
	0	234	-1.6	14.2	
% SwD	1	35	-0.4	2.8	no
	0	234	-0.1	2.7	
% of SwD in CTT Classes	1	35	2.3	12.9	no
	0	234	1.4	8.3	
% of SwD in Self-Contained classes	1	35	-1.1	11.5	no
	0	234	-0.3	8.3	

Cumulative Change in Numbers and Percentages of Students with Disabilities (SwD) and Their Placements between 2009-10 and 2010-11

The following table presents the change between 2009-10 and 2010-11 across all schools with middle grades participating or not participating in Phase One. It includes 35 participating and 234 non-participating schools that were open in 2009-10 and 2010-11. In both groups, the percentage of enrolled students who were disabled decreased very slightly, and the number and percentage of students with disabilities in CTT classes increased; the increase was twice as great in participating schools. In total, the number of students with disabilities served in CTT classes increased by 433 students in 2010-11. The number of students with disabilities served in self-contained classes decreased in both groups of schools.

Enrollment	Phase One Middle Grades					
	0			1		
	2009-10	Change in 2010-11	Percent Change	2009-10	Change in 2010-11	Percent Change
SwD	24,530	-383	-0.1%	2,700	62	-0.1%
CTT Classes	6,294	321	1.7%	663	112	3.5%
Self-Contained Classes	9,640	-260	-0.5%	1,090	-17	-1.5%
Total Enrollment	147,605	-1,420		13,947	406	

High Schools and Secondary Schools

Comparison of Enrollment and Demographics in 2009-10

Phase One high schools, on average, were substantially smaller than other high schools (487 compared with 814 students) in 2009-10. They also enrolled significantly larger percentages of Hispanic students and significantly smaller percentages of Asians and English language learners. The two groups did not differ significantly on other characteristics.

Characteristic	Phase One	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistically Different
Total Enrollment	1	97	487.1	519.1	yes
	0	338	814.3	918.6	
% Free and Reduced Price Lunch	1	97	74.5	15.8	no
	0	338	71.9	17.6	
% English Language Learners	1	96	11.7	17.4	no
	0	327	13.0	20.0	
% Asian	1	97	5.3	10.1	yes
	0	338	9.2	14.0	
% Black	1	97	38.2	23.1	no
	0	338	40.4	26.4	
% Hispanic	1	97	49.4	23.2	yes
	0	338	41.1	23.7	
% White	1	97	5.5	11.0	no
	0	338	7.9	13.2	

Comparisons of 2009-10 Educational Need Categories

Phase One schools with secondary grades were less likely to be in the lowest-need quartile and no more likely than non-participating schools to be in the highest-need category. The most salient difference between groups is shown by comparing the top two quartiles with the bottom two quartiles. Phase One schools are more likely to be in the lowest-need quartiles and less likely to be in the highest-need quartiles than other schools; 66 percent of Phase One schools are in the lowest-need quartiles and 34 percent in the highest-need quartiles. For other schools, the comparable percentages are 60 and 40 percent.

Need Quartile	Phase One				Total	
	0		1		Number	Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Lowest Need	67	20.9%	13	14.1%	80	19.4%
2	126	39.3%	48	52.2%	174	42.1%
3	74	23.1%	15	16.3%	89	21.5%
Highest Need	54	16.8%	16	17.4%	70	16.9%

Comparison of Numbers and Percentages of Students with Disabilities (SwD) and Their Placements in 2009-10

Phase One high schools had substantially fewer students with disabilities (reflecting their smaller enrollments), but a significantly larger percentage of such students, 14.5 compared with 12.1 percent. Phase One high schools also had a significantly larger percentage of students with disabilities enrolled in CTT classes (40.7 compared with 12.1 percent) and a significantly smaller percentage enrolled in self-contained classes (14.8 compared with 20.1 percent).

Enrollment	Phase One	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistically Different
# SwD	1	97	66.5	77.9	yes
	0	338	92.2	102.9	
% SwD	1	97	14.5	7.6	yes
	0	338	12.1	6.2	
% of SwD in CTT Classes	1	97	40.7	28.9	yes
	0	338	33.2	28.1	
% of SwD in Self-Contained classes	1	97	14.8	17.3	yes
	0	338	20.1	19.6	

Comparison of Change between 2009-10 and 2010-11 in Numbers and Percentages of Students with Disabilities and Their Placements

On average, Phase One high schools did not make changes in the enrollment or class placement of students with disabilities that were significantly different than other high schools.

Change In	Phase One	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Statistically Different?
# SwD	1	97	9.0	10.7	No
	0	338	7.2	17.5	
% SwD	1	97	1.4	1.9	No
	0	338	1.3	2.3	
% of SwD in CTT Classes	1	97	1.6	11.8	No
	0	338	3.0	11.2	
% of SwD in Self-Contained classes	1	97	1.8	7.2	No
	0	338	0.6	8.1	

Cumulative Change in Numbers and Percentages of Students with Disabilities (SwD) and Their Placements between 2009-10 and 2010-11

The following table presents the change between 2009-10 and 2010-11 across all high schools participating or not participating in Phase One. It includes 97 participating schools and 338 non-participating schools that were open in 2009-10 and 2010-11. In both groups, the percentage of students with disabilities enrolled increased by just over one percent and the number and percentage of students with disabilities in CTT classes increased. The increase was slightly greater in non-participating schools. In total, the number of students with disabilities served in CTT classes increased by 2,290 students in 2010-11. The number of students with disabilities served in self-contained classes also increased slightly in both groups of schools.

Enrollment	Phase One High Schools					
	0			1		
	2009-10	Change in 2010-11	Percent Change	2009-10	Change in 2010-11	Percent Change
SwD	31,147	2,431	1.1%	6,452	870	1.3%
CTT Classes	9,768	1,766	3.0%	2,556	524	2.4%
Self-Contained Classes	9,921	911	0.4%	1,497	249	0.6%
Total Enrollment	275,236	-4,559		47,247	1,783	

APPENDIX FOUR: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TABLES

Capacity Building School Year 2010-11

PD Provider	Attendees	# of Attendees	Purpose	Subjects Covered	Date	Duration
CLUSTER STAFF						
DSwDELL	Phase One Cluster and Network Leaders and Staff	35 attendees at each of six sessions. Total 210 staff	Assist clusters in further developing all networks to implement reform	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overview of the Special Education Reform Initiative 2. Universal Design for Learning 3. Accountability Recommendations 4. Operational Supports and Network Next Steps 	January-March 2011	Half day
NETWORK/SCHOOL STAFF						
DSwDELL	Phase One Networks	10 Phase One Networks	Discuss instructional programming consistent with continuum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Flexibility and variety in existing continuum of services 2. Development of IEPs 3. Practical implications of more flexible, individualized programming 	March-September 2010	Monthly

Phase One Specialists	Phase One Networks and Schools	10 Phase One Networks/260 Phase One Schools	Assist networks and schools in achieving goals of Special Education Reform	Developing flexible programming for more restrictive IEPs. Broadly assisted schools in meeting their needs	Began June 2010 and on-going	As needed
DSwDELL and CSA Executive Leadership Institute	Phase One Administrators	Approximately 50	Reinforce the concepts of the Reform and provide support for implementation	Included discussion of best practices and implementation plans with peers	July 2010	Two day training
DSwDELL and DSSI	Phase One Network Team Members	Ten Phase One Networks	Further develop network capacity to assist schools in achieving goals of Special Education Reform	1. IEP Development and Service Models 2. Intervention and Differentiation 3. Graduation, Transitions and Community Building	Summer 2010	Two day training
DSwDELL and Division of Portfolio Planning	Phase One Schools and Networks	Open to All	Webcast to support School Opening for SY 2010-11	1. Description of Special Education Reform 2. Over-the Counter Enrollment 3. Managing the IEP Process for School Opening 4. ATS & CAP Coding 5. Capping 6. Documents and Resources	August 2010	On-going availability
DSwDELL and Teachers College Inclusive Classrooms Project	Phase One Network Leadership, School Assistant Principals and Teachers	10 Networks 250 Staff	Customize planning to organize support for Special Education Reform	Least restrictive environments Service delivery models	July-August 2010	One day workshops

DSwDELL and Teachers College Inclusive Classrooms Project	Phase One Network Team Members and School Staff	Over 500 educators from 200 schools	Build capacity to implement Special Education Reform	Seven topics including classroom management, co-teaching and co-planning, UDL and Assistive Technology	September 2010 - December 2011	Could attend any number of one day workshops on seven topics
NETWORK/SCHOOL STAFF (Continued)						
DSwDELL and Teacher College Inclusive Classrooms Project	Phase One Network Team Members and School Staff	320 teachers from 10 networks	Short term – Create bank of resources for teachers Long term – Document best practices and build staff to serve as professional developers in networks and schools	1. Positive Student Behavior 2. Assistive Technology 3. Multimodal Projects 4. Multilevel Dynamic Assessments 5. Supporting Classroom Learning through Family Connections 6. UDL – Accommodations, Modifications, and Peer Supports 7. Consultant Teacher Indirect Services (Co-Planning) 8. Restrictive Environment Transitions	September 2010 - December 2011	10 sessions throughout school year
DSwDELL and Teachers College Inclusive Classrooms Project	Phase One Network Team Members and School Staff	729 Educators including teachers, Pupil Personnel Team (PPT) and IEP team members	Assist school staff in developing “Smart Goals” aligned with NYS new IEP system	IEP Goal Writing	September 2010 - December 2011	Full day trainings

DSwDELL	Phase One Networks and Schools	10 Meetings 50 Staff per meeting	Rethink compliance through the lens of Special Education Reform	1. Purpose, Goals and Principles of Special Education Reform 2. Reviewing compliance in relationship to services needed to support students in least restrictive environments to access Common Core curriculum	Throughout SY 2010-11	Regular, as needed
DSwDELL	All Network and Schools; First Group was Phase One Schools	Thousands; Two staff per school	Train network and school staff on the use of Special Education Student Information System (SEIS)	1. Purpose, Goals and Principles of the Reform 2. Writing Quality IEP 3. Practical day-to-day usage of SEIS	January - March 2011	Two day training
NETWORK/SCHOOL STAFF (Continued)						
DSwDELL	Phase One Schools Parent Coordinators	Approximately 250	Educate parent coordinators about Special Education Reform	1. Building Inclusive Environments in Schools 2. Screening <i>Including Samuel</i>	Fall 2010	One day trainings in all five boroughs
PARENTS						
DSwDELL	Parents from All Schools	Approximately 25-50 each for a total of 150	Expand parents understanding of the Reform emphasizing the acceleration of learning and achievement for all students	1. Laura Rodriguez presentation on purpose, goal and principles of Special Education Reform 2. Screening of <i>Including Samuel</i>	September - October 2010	Six parent workshops in the five boroughs

DSwDELL	Parents of Pre-Schoolers with Disabilities Turning 5	Range of 15-75 parents per session for 35 sessions	Educate parents whose children with disabilities would be attending kindergarten about Special Education Reform	1. Purpose, Goals and Principles of Reform 2. Background on Special Education Process in NYC Public Schools	Fall and Spring 2011	10 Committees on Special Education coordinated 2.5 hour sessions in evenings
DSwDELL	Parents of Students with Disabilities from all Schools	Between 15-50 per session	Educate parents of students with disabilities about the changes required by the new New York State IEP	Changes, Additions and Requirements of new NYS IEP	June 2011	Seven sessions in all five boroughs

COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCILS (CECs)

DSwDELL	Community Education Councils (CECs)	Members and Community of 34 CECs	Educate CEC members and their communities about Special Education Reform	Purpose, Goals and Principles of Special Education Reform	SY 2010-11	Attended regularly scheduled CEC meetings
---------	-------------------------------------	----------------------------------	--	---	------------	---

CSEs and CPSEs

DSwDELL	Committees on Special Education (CSEs) and Committees for Preschool Education (CPSEs) Staff	Approximately 100	Define staff role in supporting Special Education Reform	Purpose, Goals and Principles of Reform with emphasis on staff role in reviewing the continuum of services and developing high-quality IEPs that provide the broadest access to LRE and rigorous curriculum	Fall 2010 and Spring 2011	One - three hour sessions
---------	---	-------------------	--	---	---------------------------	---------------------------

NON-PUBLIC PRE-SCHOOLS

DSwDELL	4410 Non-Public Preschools	Estimate hundreds of attendees	Train staff on new New York State IEP	1. Purpose, Goals and Principles of Reform 2. Rethinking development of preschooler's IEPs to conform with new IEP	Spring 2010	Full day sessions in every borough
---------	----------------------------	--------------------------------	---------------------------------------	---	-------------	------------------------------------

ADDITIONAL CENTRAL AND NETWORK STAFF

DSwDELL	Quality Reviewers	Approximately 80	Expand accountability on serving students with disabilities and English language learners; Introduce qualitative measures in evaluating changes in least restrictive environments and outcomes	Training staff to change rubrics to include students with disabilities and English language learners purposefully	Spring 2010	Two hour session
---------	-------------------	------------------	--	---	-------------	------------------

<p>DSwDELL in collaboration with Teachers College Inclusive Classrooms Project</p>	<p>Phase One Network Coordinators of Early Intervention Services (CEISs), Administrators for Special Education (ASEs), Instructional Support Specialists, and NYC Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Center specialists (RSE-TASC)</p>	<p>Approximately 100</p>	<p>Support staff to provide access to the general education curricula for students with disabilities</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to support instruction and flexible service delivery in LRE 2. Leading adult learning to support adult development in schools 3. Using Assistive Technology to teach diverse learners 4. Accelerating the achievement of ELLs 5. Embedding transition services into IEP planning 	<p>January-June 2011</p>	<p>Six part series</p>
--	---	--------------------------	--	---	--------------------------	------------------------

Capacity Building School Year 2011-12

PD Provider	Attendees	# of Attendees	Purpose	Subjects Covered	Date	Duration
Central (SE Reform Team and DSwdELL)	Cluster and Network staff (Network Leaders, coaches, ASE, Youth Development, etc)	400	Launch the professional development for clusters and networks by bringing everyone together to hear from DC Rodriguez, prepare to go citywide with the reform and have breakout sessions on topics which schools need support on.	Reform overview; breakout sessions on flexible programming and funding	3/2/2012	One day
Central (SE Reform Team and DSwdELL)	School based staff, Networks, Clusters	Approximately 700 viewed live plus those who watched archived through toolkit	Webinars to build capacity around key topics related to the reform	The Turning 5 Process and the Reform; reform overview; Positive Behavioral Supports; Quality IEPs which provide access to the LRE; Flexible Programming	January 2012-May 2012	Five sessions
Central (SE Reform Team and DSwdELL)	Cluster and Network staff	632	Build the capacity of networks on topics related to the reform so they are equipped to provide up-to-date support to their schools	Programming along with funding; Positive Behavioral Supports; Supporting Teachers Instructionally; Working with Families; Flexible Programming	April 2012-June 2012	13 sessions
Central (SE Reform Team and DSwdELL)	Network Leaders	59+	Provide network leaders with updates related to the instructional and operational components of the reform		February 2012; May 2012	Two sessions
Central (SE Reform Team and DSwdELL)	Principals	1,500+	Provide principals an opportunity to hear from Laura Rodriguez about the rationale for Special Education Reform and provide feedback	Why reform is needed; instructional and operational changes	February 2012- April 2012	59 sessions

Networks	School based staff	3,000+	Topic training on key issues related to the work of the reform	PD Plans for each CFN were collected centrally	April 2012- August 2012	59 sessions
Networks	School based staff	3,000+	Clinic to support implementation of the reform, specifically supporting the work of reviewing IEPs to determine alignment of present level of performance and the recommended programs and services to ensure access to least restricted environment	PD Plans for each CFN were collected centrally	April 2012- August 2012	59 sessions
Central (SE Reform Team and DSwdELL)	Principals (Chancellor's Principal Conference)	270	To provide principals with scenarios of their colleagues and how they are implementing the reform, including overcoming obstacles a school may have historically not confronted		6/9/2012	Half day
Central (SE Reform Team and DSwdELL)	Parent Coordinators	100			February 2012- April 2012	Four sessions
Central (SE Reform Team and DSwdELL)	School psychologists	486	Build capacity of elementary school psychologists before the Turning 5 process	Least Restricted Environment, high quality IEPs, and the goals of the reform	February 2012- April 2012	Four sessions
Central (SE Reform Team and DSwdELL)	UFT General Assembly; UFT Leadership	300+; 35			5/29/2012; 6/4/2012	Two sessions
Central (SE Reform Team and DSwdELL)	Supervisors of psychology and related services	75			April 2012- June 2012	Four sessions
Central (SE Reform Team and DSwdELL)	School based Special Education Liaisons	85			March 2012- April 2012	Two sessions

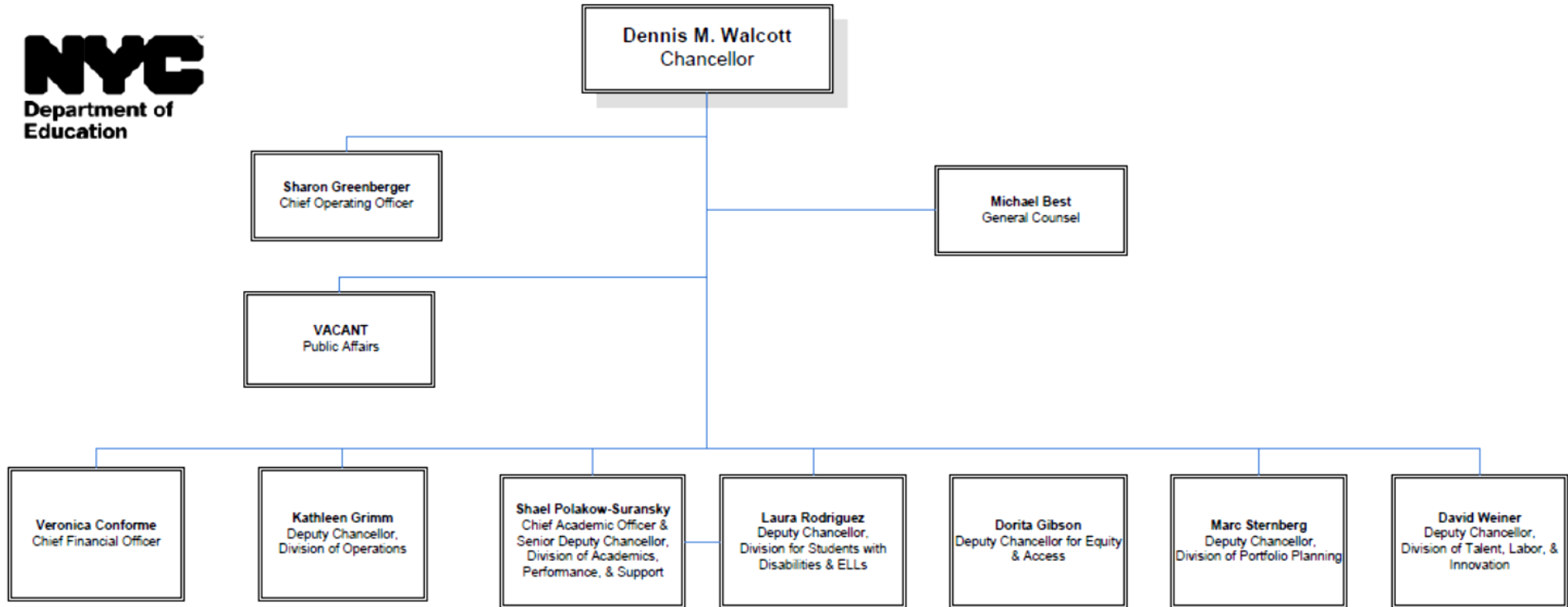
Central (SE Reform Team and DSwDELL)	Nurses	1,500		Overview of the reform	6/7/2012	One hour
SE Reform team	Teachers of Speech	225		Special Education reform; instructional implications; response to intervention	6/7/2012	Half day
Central (SE Reform Team, OSS and DSwDELL)	Administrators of Special Education (ASEs)	59			Jan 2012-May 2012	Monthly meetings
Central (SE Reform Team, OSS and DSwDELL)	Pre-K Social Workers	48			5/14/2012	Half day
Central (SE Reform Team, OSS and DSwDELL)	Special Education Attorneys	65			4/11/2012	Half day
DSWDELL, Professional Development Institute (PDI), TCICP	Special Education Instructional Coaches District 75 (D75) Inclusion Coaches Cluster Based Senior Instructional Facilitators (SIFs)	59 Special Education Instructional Coaches; Four D75 Inclusion Coaches; 5 SIFs	Provide coaching and instructional/operational support to understand the scope of the reform and to develop coaching practices to effectively support the changes in practices at the school level	Includes range of instructional practices and curricular change to challenge and support all learners, understanding all aspects of the IEP and Flexible Scheduling and a deeper understanding of UDL and how to retrofit existing curriculum	September 2011 - June 2012	SEISs and D75 Inclusion Coaches -- two full days of professional development each month. SIFs -- Bi-monthly co-planning sessions
DSWDELL and PDI	Special Education Instructional Coaches D75 Inclusion Coaches Cluster Based Senior Instructional Facilitators (SIFs)	59 Special Education Instructional Coaches; Four D75 Inclusion Coaches; 5 SIFs	School-embedded professional development to support changes in practice at school level	Includes range of instructional practices and curricular change to challenge and support all learners, understanding the IEP, flexible scheduling, understanding UDL and retrofitting existing curriculum.	September 2011 - June 2012	As needed

NETWORK/SCHOOL STAFF						
DSWDELL, PDI, TCICP	58 Networks 1700 Schools	1370	Build capacity to implement Special Education Reform	Seven topics including classroom management, co-teaching and co-planning, UDL and Assistive Technology	September 2011 - June 2012	59 full-day workshops
DSWDELL, PDI, TCICP	58 Networks 1700 Schools	102	Short term -- Create bank of resources for teachers Long term -- Document best practices and build staff to serve as professional developers in networks and schools	1. Positive Student Behavior 2. Assistive Technology 3. Multimodal Projects 4. Multilevel Dynamic Assessments 5. Supporting Classroom Learning through Family Connections 6. UDL -- Accommodations, Modifications, and Peer Supports 7. Consultant Teacher Indirect Services (Co-Planning) 8. Restrictive Environment Transitions	September 2011 - June 2012	Series of 10 sequential half-day inquiry-to-action sessions culminating in a practitioner-designed full-day conference
DSWDELL, PDI, TCICP	58 Networks 1700 Schools	750	Assist school staff in developing "Smart Goals" aligned with NYS's new IEP system	IEP Goal Writing	SY 2011-12	26 half-day workshops

NYC Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Center (RSE-TASC)	All Network and Schools IEP Teams, Special/General Education Teachers, Special Education Service Providers, School Psychologists, Administrators or other interested school personnel	39 trainings with an average of 20 participants each	Assist school staff in reviewing and developing IEPs	IEP Development	Throughout SY 2011-12	Monthly workshops in all five boroughs
Special Education Instructional Coaches	All Schools	Varies from School-to-School	Assist school staff in reviewing and developing IEPs	IEP Development	September 2011 - June 2012	As needed
DSWDELL	Transition Coordinators or Principal's Designees	Average 20 in each of monthly borough based mtgs total 50 meetings - total 100	Provide critical information about planning transition services for students with disabilities at middle and high schools	Examples of topics include Transition Services, Community Resources and Vocational Assessments	September 2011 - June 2012	Monthly workshops in all five boroughs
OSS	Personnel from the School Based Support Teams (SBST) and Committees on Special Education (CSEs)	N/A	Assist staff critical in the development of IEPs on the vision of the reform and to create buy-in and clarity about the initiative	IEP Development in the context of the special education reform	September 2011 - June 2012	As needed
District 75	General Education Teachers	Schools that support both community schools and District 75 programs	Share expertise of D75 practitioners with general education teachers	Special Education practices and techniques.	Began SY 2010-11 and continues	On-going

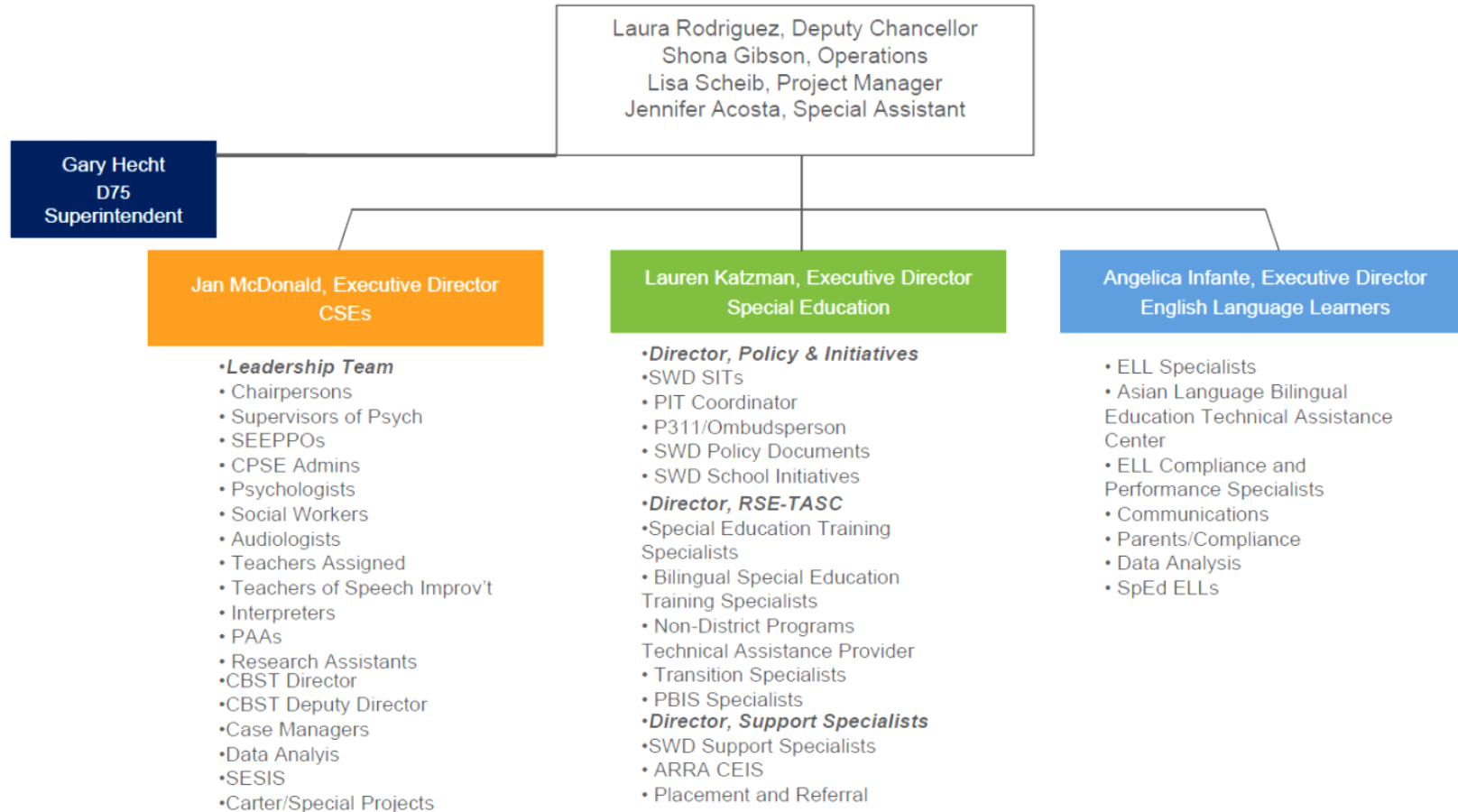
DSWDELL	All Parents	433	Educate parents about the Special Education Reform Initiative	1. Goals and Principles of Special Education Reform 2. IEP and IEP process	March-April 2012	Total of 20 two hour sessions in all five boroughs
DSWDELL	Parents of Pre-Schoolers with Disabilities Turning Five	range of 20-100 parents per session for 45 sessions	Educate parents whose children with disabilities would be attending kindergarten about Special Education Reform	1. Purpose, Goals and Principles of Reform 2. Background on Special Education Process in NYC Public Schools	Fall 2011 and Spring 2012	10 CSEs coordinated 2.5 hour sessions in evenings
DSWDELL (RSE TASC)	School and Network Staff	5 trainings, 15 participants in each	Provide information and resources regarding AIM	Accessible Instructional Materials	2011 - 2012	Five sessions

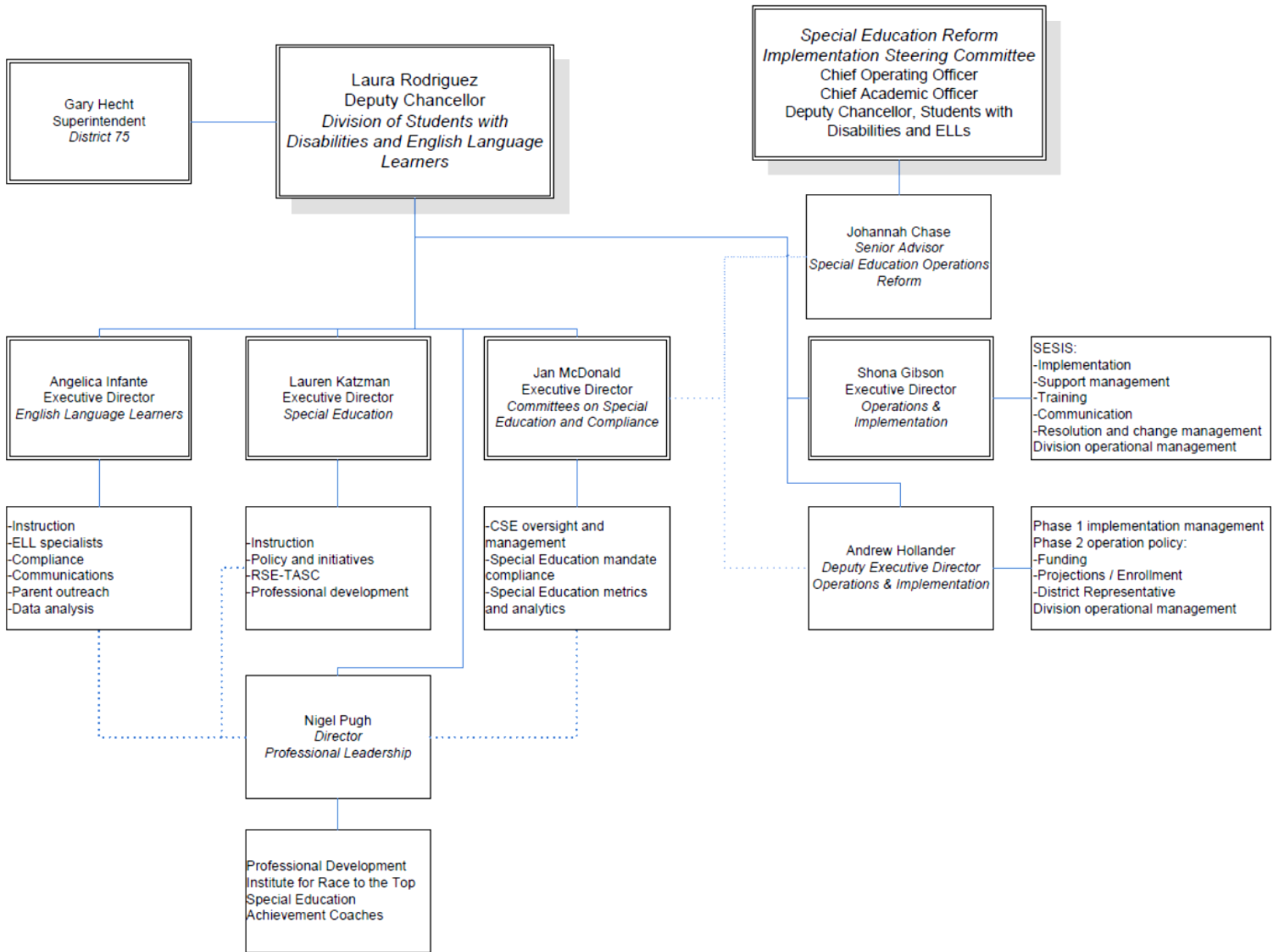
APPENDIX FIVE: DOE ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS



Current as of
5.26.11

Division of Students with Disabilities & English Language Learners





DRAFT - DO NOT CIRCULATE

