



**Rhode Island Department of Education  
Office of Student, Community and Academic Supports**

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**School Support System Report and Support Plan**

**The Spurwink School  
March 2018**

## SCHOOL SUPPORT SYSTEM A Collaborative System of Focused Monitoring

### Introduction

The purpose of the School Support System (SSS) is to provide a means of accountability for delivery of programs and services for students with exceptionalities. The School Support System model is designed to promote the involvement of the whole school district, general educators as well as special educators and parents. It is designed to learn if the district meets the regulations and what effects programs and services have on student outcomes. Finally, the SSS develops a school support plan for training and technical assistance.

To accomplish this the SSS includes these components:

- **The Orientation Meeting:** The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) staff meets the Local Education Agency (LEA) to plan the site review and identify issues or initiatives that may influence programs or service delivery.
- **Data Analysis Meeting:** The RIDE staff meets to review LEA demographic information on selected reports including: the LEA annual plan, census information, and information collected through record review, staff questionnaires and parent interviews. To ensure that the child is at the center of the study, all analyses begin with the child. Thus, a sample of approximately 20 students with exceptionalities is selected; the records of these students are reviewed; their parents, teachers and related service providers are interviewed, and their classrooms are observed. The result is an in-depth, unified examination of the actual provision of programs and services for students with exceptionalities. The RIDE staff compiles a preliminary summary of their analyses of this data.
- **Presentation by the LEA and School Site Review:** The on-site review begins with a presentation of programs by teachers and staff. The presentation provides the review team with general and specific information on delivery of programs and services to students. Following this presentation, on-site reviews to all schools are made. The team members interview school administrators and teaching staff. Parents and central office staff are also interviewed. The team gathers sufficient information and works with the LEA personnel to generate a report, covering the following:
  - The district's compliance with the state and federal regulations, relative to the education of students with exceptionalities.
  - The quality and effectiveness of programs and services provided by the district.
  - The need for professional development and technical assistance that will enable the LEA to improve programs and services.
- **The Support Plan:** The Ride team, LEA central office and building administrators meet to review the data and complete a report of results. The group designs a professional development/technical assistance support plan with timelines for implementation. This plan enables the school and district to correct areas of non-compliance and to strengthen promising programs and correct areas of weakness in order to improve services and programs for all students.
- **The SSS Report:** The report summarizes the findings from the various data sources. The format of the report uses four divisions: Indicators, Findings, Documentation, and Support Plan. Indicators describe either performance or compliance. Findings can include a variety of some six categories, from School Improvement to Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment. The documentation section of the report distinguishes the source of the finding. The support plan reflects the response to the described findings. The support plan describes the corrective action by the district as well as resources and time lines to improve programs and services.

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**Team Member**

**Team A – Susan Wood and Sandra Cambio Gregoire**

The RIDE, Office of Student, Community & Academic Supports School Support System process was facilitated to provide a means of accountability for delivery of programs and services to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. The following pages reflect the findings of that process.

**1. FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (FAPE/LRE)**

Indicator		Findings	Support Plan
Result	1	<p>The RIDE, Office of Students, Community &amp; Academic Supports School Support System process was facilitated to provide a means of accountability for delivery of programs and services to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. The following pages reflect the findings of that process.</p>	
Result	2	<p><b>Program Overview</b></p> <p>The Spurwink School is a licensed and accredited private special education school for students in grades K-12 whose emotional and behavioral needs significantly interfere with their ability to make progress in a less restrictive and specialized setting. The school has provided individualized education and clinical supports to Rhode Island children in a community-based setting since 1982. Therapeutic principles and techniques are integrated throughout the program by a collaborative team of professionals including special educators, mental health clinicians, behavioral specialists, a child psychiatrist, a clinical psychologist, a speech pathologist, an occupational therapist and a full-time nurse. In addition, the school has a unique Expressive Arts Program with artists in residence in Music, Drawing/Painting and Dance/Movement.</p> <p>The goal of the program is to assist LEAs (currently 10) by providing interventional strategies, techniques, modifications, accommodations and tools to enable students to return to a less restrictive educational setting, to transition from school to the workplace or to improve upon a student’s overall ability to function independently and functionally.</p> <p>In accordance with RI State Regulations, The Spurwink School curriculum follows the Common Core State Standards with individualized accommodations and modifications, as needed. There is an emphasis on the integration of project-based, experiential learning as well as technology (blended learning) across grade levels. Students fully participate in the State Assessment Program.</p> <p>In addition to the academic curriculum, the program addresses the area of Social/Emotional Learning in a variety of ways. Individual students are</p>	

	<p>assessed (quarterly) to identify and quantify specific skills to include in IEP goals. These skills are addressed by clinicians during individual sessions and during weekly group sessions. Topics such as “Growth Mindsets”, “Team Building” and “Coping Strategies” are explored over several weeks to immerse students in these concepts.</p> <p>The speech/language pathologist works on SEL skills through a programmatic language program called “Social Thinking” which categorizes behaviors as “expected” or “unexpected” in relation to communication in the school community. The occupational therapist utilized a program called “Zones of Regulation” which provides a tool for students to identify their level of arousal/internal stimulation at any given time.</p> <p>The Spurwink School’s curriculum also emphasizes functional/daily living skills and school to career transition skills from grades 7-12. Students in grades 7-8 are able to apply for jobs within the school community (like collecting attendance, serving lunch, managing the recycling program) which can increase in complexity according to successful performance. Students in grades 9-10 take a Career Exploration class where they create accounts on “Way To Go RI” and explore areas of interest, complete formal Interest Inventories, tour local businesses and develop resumes. By grade 11, students job shadow and participate in internships with the school’s local business partners. During the summer, students work/volunteer at a local farm, where food is grown and distributed to the RI Community Food Bank and other similar sites.</p> <p>A unique program for Arts Education is provided through the collaboration of an Artist in Residence model that includes well-known local working artists who rotate (on a quarterly basis) through all of the age groups. Students create and perform in Music, Cartooning, Fine Arts and Dance/Movement.</p> <p>Students are referred to The Spurwink School by their local school districts after evaluations for special education eligibility and documentation about the need for a therapeutic environment has been collected. Students who are admitted participate in an Initial Assessment period (approximately 8 weeks in length) when data is collected by teachers and clinicians in a highly specialized environment. At the end of the assessment period, a meeting is held with parents, the LEA and other providers to discuss the data and to develop IEP goals that are based on the Initial Assessment in the new setting.</p> <p>On some occasions, LEA may request that the eligibility assessments be completed at The Spurwink School. This can occur when a child may be</p>	
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		referred for admission after a hospitalization or an unplanned DCYF intervention.	
Result	3	<p><b>Student Support and Intervention</b></p> <p>The structure of the program emphasizes collaboration and integration of multiple disciplines that are necessary for the school to operate at its best and to individualize services to the students.</p> <p>Communication is a key element for the success and is prioritized daily in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily Briefings – Administrators, clinicians, behavior specialists, classroom staff attend a meeting at the start of each day to share information about the status of each child and the status of the school as a whole. At these meeting, planning is done for the need for extra staff support, safety measures, business of the day, etc.</li> <li>• Educational Staff Meeting – Tuesday’s at 1:00 - Educators and the Special Education Administrator/Director discuss various topics such as curriculum materials, state testing, professional development, DOE news, great ideas, etc.</li> <li>• Clinical Staff Meeting – Wednesday’s at 1:00 – Clinician’s and the Special Education Administrator/Director meet to go over student cases, review referrals, plan for transition needs, design interventions to remediate specific classroom or student issues.</li> <li>• Full Staff Meeting – Tuesday’s 3:00-4:00 – A variety of purposes are targeted, such as agency business, upcoming events, professional development, team problem solving, etc.</li> <li>• Community Meeting – Thursday’s at 2:00 – On Thursday afternoons, the whole school gathers in the central common area and the principal leads a meeting where students are recognized for weekly accomplishments (student of the week awards), new students are welcomed and announcements are made by the principal, the staff and the students. Classrooms put on demonstrations or exhibit projects for the school community. This is a tradition and ritual that enhances the sense of community and continuity for the students.</li> </ul> <p>A major aspect of student support and intervention is one school-wide level system for student behavior. There are 5 prosocial skills identified as school rules: Follow Directions, Showing Respect, Being Responsible, Staying on Task and Making Safe Choices. Students can earn up to 10 points in these 5</p>	

areas across 10 time periods in the school day, and can earn from 0-100 each day. Once points are earned, they cannot be taken away. Points are tallied 3 times per day and totals correspond to a menu of free-time activities. If a student earns 80 points or above, he/she is eligible for "free time". For students who earn lower than 80 points, they may need to make up missed assignments or they can read, color or draw at their desks.

### **Clinical Supports and Services**

Therapeutic supports and services are reviewed by a multi-disciplinary team review process which occurs two times a year at the midpoint of the IEP year and prior to IEP expiration in preparation for a new IEP. This process can also be utilized when/if a student's progress requires immediate review and intervention.

School clinicians are Licensed Mental Health Counselors (LMHCs) and they conduct weekly social skills groups in the classrooms to address peer interactions, problem solving, goal setting, etc. They provide professional development on clinical topics to school staff, as needed. These clinicians are supported and supervised by a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist and a School Social Worker who provide consultation and guidance regarding pharmacological and general treatment expertise. Consultation to parents, home visits, case management issues are supervised by the school Director.

The clinicians have recently been enrolled in a professional development program which has enabled them to become Certified Trauma Practitioners in addition to their advanced degrees. They have developed a curriculum to provide training and leadership to all school staff on this topic.

Since September of 2017, The Spurwink School has established a partnership with Rhode Island College to provide clinical internships/field work placements for students enrolled in a Master's Program in Counseling. A similar relationship has been established with Providence College for Graduate students to complete internships during the summer.

### **Social Emotional Learning**

This is, and has always been, central to the purpose and identity of The Spurwink School. The students who are referred to us have major struggles in this area which significantly impact their ability to make academic progress in a

		<p>public school setting. During the Initial Assessment period, each student's team (Teacher, Behavioral Therapist, and Clinician) completes a rating scale which identifies strengths and needs in the SEL domain, measurable goals are developed and become part of the student's IEP. The rating scale is completed quarterly to indicate progress or the need for increased support. These competencies are worked on during individual therapy sessions and during the Social Skills groups that are held weekly in the classroom.</p> <p><b>School Removals/Disciplinary Policies</b></p> <p>The Spurwink School does not utilize suspension or expulsion as a behavioral intervention unless there is a safety incident that involves the police or rescue. After a significant safety incident or hospitalization, a parent needs to accompany the student when he/she returns to school. The purpose of this is not punitive, but necessary to establish the appropriate level of support for the student upon return.</p> <p>Disciplinary policies and practices are clearly defined through the student/parent handbook.</p>	
Result	4	<p><b>Program Continuum</b></p> <p>The Spurwink School has the capacity to service up to 40 students attending grades K-12. Classroom placement is determined by age, academic development and social/emotional needs. Currently, there are 4 self-contained classrooms (1 Early Elementary, 1 Upper Elementary, 1 Middle, 1 Secondary) and 1 Resource room that is used to support the need for small group instruction for all of the classrooms. Each class has 1 Certified Special Educator and 1 to 2 Certified Assistants.</p> <p>In the Early Elementary classroom, the emphasis is on "readiness" for learning. Often, students in this class have developmental needs and require individualized and group Speech/Language and Occupational Therapy. Due to high levels of anxiety, rigidity and lack of self-control, these students have difficulty functioning as a member of a group. They are sometimes academically lagging due to time away from their classrooms for behavioral dyscontrol. A great deal of creative playtime is built into the break schedule in this classroom. Students learn to use words (or symbols) to ask for what they need.</p>	

		<p>In the Upper Elementary classroom, the emphasis is on “increased expectations” as students from grades 4-6 face more rigorous academic demands and learn to work as partners in learning. Students learn to rely on themselves to make effort before they seek assistance from staff.</p> <p>In the Middle School classroom, there is an emphasis on “increased independence” and the application of strategies to solve both academic and social problems for grades 7 and 8. Many of the Middle School students/parents have goals to transition to a less restrictive environment for High School, so the need for independence is critical.</p> <p>The Secondary classroom (grades 9-12) has an emphasis on “transition” from Middle School to High School and from High School to College or careers. Curriculum is aligned to specific district graduation requirements and the student’s complete portfolios and Senior Projects which are reviewed and attended by LEAs.</p>	
Result	5	<p><b>Adaptive Physical Education (APE)</b></p> <p>NA at this time.</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u> Data Analysis</p>	
Result	6	<p><b>Extended School Year (ESY)</b></p> <p>The Spurwink School runs an 8 week summer program that includes academic instruction (according to IEP goals) related to a theme for each summer, such as “Maps and Pathways”, “Art and Artists”, and “Native American Heritage”.</p> <p>Weekly field trips are scheduled for each classroom and increased opportunities for experiential learning and community engagement are emphasized. The extent to which each student participates in the summer program is an IEP decision.</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u> Data Analysis; Interviews</p>	
Result	7	<p><b>Parent Engagement</b></p>	

	<p>Each school year The Spurwink School makes effort to increase opportunities for parent engagement. An Annual Parent's Night (Open House) is scheduled in October for parents to visit classrooms, speak with teachers and clinicians and view a variety of exhibits of student work.</p> <p>Daily communication between school and home occurs in the form of emails or written notebooks. Teachers report events of the day and share general information and parents are encouraged to respond.</p> <p>A questionnaire has been developed to elicit participation in the IEP process. It is sent home with the IEP invitation so that parents can fill it out and bring it with them to the meeting. This has been very successful, since many parents have difficulty being required to answer the same types of question on the spot; parents seem to appreciate the opportunity to think about their hopes and goals for their children and to be prepared ahead of time.</p> <p>This year, The Spurwink Schools has 6 graduating seniors, so an informational meeting is scheduled with (ORS, BHDDH and the Parent Support Network) to assist parents with navigating a new set of services for new circumstances. Lunch had been provided and it created a casual enough atmosphere that parents felt comfortable enough to chat and ask questions.</p>	
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**2. EVALUATION / INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)**

Indicator	Findings	Support Plan
Result	<p>1</p> <p><b>Student Accommodations and Modifications</b></p> <p>The students at The Spurwink School have extensive lists of accommodations and modifications included in their IEPs. All teaching and clinical staff has access to these documents. In addition, one member of the classroom team</p>	

	<p>accompanies students to Physical Education, Health, Music, Art &amp; Movement. This ensures consistency of interventions and supports throughout the school for all of the children.</p> <p>Each student has a personal laptop computer to assist them with writing tasks, which is the most common requirement. A variety of sensory options are utilized for increasing or decreasing levels of arousal, for recognizing the need for movement (standup desk options, wiggle seats, Therabands, etc.). Incorporated into behavioral plans for many students are taking walks, having water available and noise cancelling headphones.</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u> Data Analysis; Interviews; Document Reviews</p>	
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**3. IDEA TRANSITION**

Indicator	Findings	Support Plan
Result	<p>1 <b>IDEA Transition Planning</b></p> <p>The Spurwink School incorporates the ideas of School to Career preparation to students K-12. The Way To Go RI website offers ideas that are applicable for elementary and middle school children to think about their goals and dreams for the future. From grades 7-12, the students create their own accounts on the site which can follow them and keep a long running record of exploration. The Spurwink School's own program begins with pre-vocational opportunities to learn about and perform jobs that need to be done in the school community (collecting attendance, emptying trash and recycling, etc.).</p> <p>For student in grade 9-12, students participate in a Careers class where they explore interests and aptitudes using formal and informal tools. They explore what training or education could be required, salary scales, etc. These students tour local businesses and attend statewide events designed to help them expand their knowledge base.</p> <p>The Spurwink School works with sending districts to refer students in grade 10 and 11 to the Office of Rehabilitative Services (ORS) and The Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH).</p>	

		<p>Community-based work opportunities and paid internships are made available to secondary students through ORS or through the school's network of businesses who work with the students.</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u> Data Analysis; Interviews; Record Reviews</p>	
Result	2	<p>The nonpublic special education school works with the sending districts in assisting with referrals to the Office of Rehabilitative Services (ORS) and to the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities &amp; Hospitals (BHDDH).</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u> Interviews; Document Review</p>	
Result	3	<p><b>Summary of Performance (SOP) is facilitated by the case managers as appropriate.</b></p> <p>A Summary of Performance is completed by members of the student's educational and clinical teams by the end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade.</p> <p><u>Documentation:</u> Interviews; Document Review</p>	