

A SUMMARY OF THE EDUCATION SERVICES ANALYSIS

A PRESENTATION TO BETHLEHEM CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Your Presenters

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Presentation Overview

The primary purposes of this presentation are to:

- 1. Review the methodology of the study**
- 2. Present pertinent information for contextual purposes**
- 3. Provide key Findings**
- 4. Provide corresponding Areas of Opportunity**
- 5. Provide a forum for discussion**

Specific Areas of the Program Review

1. Continuum of Services
2. Related Services
3. Utilization of Para-Professional Supports
4. Out of District Placements
5. Organizational Structure and District Coordination of Programs and Services
6. An analysis of Medicaid and Special Education Transportation

Organization of the Presentation

The program report, and this corresponding presentation, are organized with respect to two main areas:

Organizational Considerations

Continuum of Supports

Each will be considered when we discuss *Findings and Areas of Opportunity*.

Methodology

- Eighty (80) confidential interviews with central office leadership, school-based administration, certified teachers, para-professionals, related service providers, parents (with additional 97 surveys). Questions were catered to the interviewees' particular areas of expertise and relevance to the areas under review.
- Non-evaluative site visits to all of the District's schools
- Comparative analyses to other analogous districts within the region (CRASDs) and New York State regarding student outcome and financial data.
- Document Reviews (e.g., stratified, random IEPs, workload analyses)

Organizational Considerations

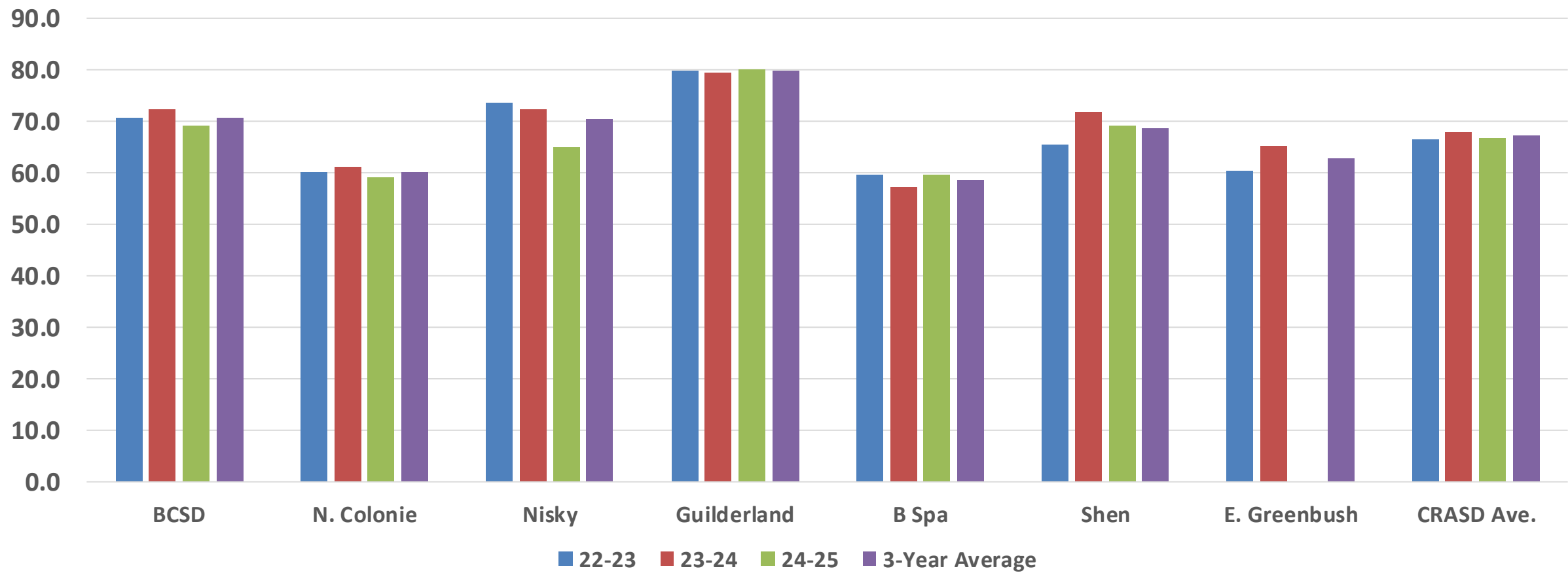
Culture and Climate

Findings

- ✓ The review found that shared ownership of special education was inconsistent across the district. General education administrators and teachers who had collaborated with special education colleagues were more likely to feel responsible for the success of students with disabilities than those who had not.
- ✓ Encouragingly, as indicated in the next slide, the percentage of District SWDs spending at least 80% of their school day in general education is just under 71%, and has remained stable during the past 3 years; this compares favorably to the CRASDs.

Organizational Considerations

Culture and Climate



Organizational Considerations

Culture and Climate

Areas of Opportunity

- ✓ **Develop Professional Learning Communities at all schools that involve the integration of special education and regular education personnel including trainings for principals.**
- ✓ **Create a mission statement explicitly containing elements of general and special education and make this visible to personnel at all schools.**
- ✓ **As new teachers are hired in the District, provide all principals with an operational hiring guide.**

Organizational Considerations

CSE Processes

Findings

- ✓ The processes and procedures of the CSE were viewed by respondents as generally uniform, consistent and understood by participant stakeholders; albeit with some variability across different CSE chairpersons.
- ✓ In general interviewees reported that Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) was discussed in CSE meetings, but are not necessarily emphasized at all meetings. With respect to Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), it was reported that those CSE meetings ranged from celebratory to anxious and resistant in climate, on a case-by-case basis.
- ✓ Although there was acknowledgement of the work of the Special Education Cabinet in developing program descriptions and learner characteristics, there was not wide-spread awareness on the part of those interviewed regarding the existence of associated documents.

Organizational Considerations

CSE Processes

Areas of Opportunity

- ✓ Refining and publicizing the in-District continuum of programs, which can draw upon the present Special Education Plan document, in a reader-user format.
- ✓ To enhance education for, and engagement with, parents and guardians of SWDs, it is recommended that principals take the lead in hosting (rotating) building-based SEPTA meetings that will provide information on special education topics to parents, guardians, and other stakeholders.

Organizational Considerations

Staff Support

Findings

- ✓ Certified teachers were very positive about the District's commitment to Professional Development (PD).
- ✓ It was the consensus of respondents that the District does provide sufficient instructional materials, and technologies to support and enable the teaching and learning process.
- ✓ From a quantitative perspective, the projected administrator to SWD ratio for the next academic school year (2026-27) of 128:1 is generously staffed (but less so compared to the 2025-26 school year).

Organizational Consideration Staffing

Findings

- ✓ As indicated below, the District's personnel (as of the end of ASY 2025-26) ranges from leanly staffed (in special education teachers) to generously staffed (e.g., in OT).

Discipline	FTE	ARI	Expected Ratio	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Special Ed. Teachers*	38	11.9:1	10:1	+/- 1.5	Leanly Staffed
Para-educators (serving SWDs)*	73	6.2:1	8.9:1	+/- 3.1	Within Expectations
S-LP Staff**	10	47.4:1	70:1	+/- 19	Generously Staffed
Occupational Therapists**	5	94.8:1	164:1	+/-58	Generously Staffed
Physical Therapists**	2	237:1	298:1	+/-95	Within Expectations
Behavioral Health Providers**	20	23.7	27.7:1	+/- 6.6	Within Expectations

Organizational Considerations

Staff Support

Areas of Opportunity

- ✓ Continue to provide PD with thematic relevance.
- ✓ Explore increasing school-based administrative capacity to allow the special education director to focus on more global programmatic enhancements, consider creating a scope and sequence of a “Special Education 101.”
- ✓ The District is encouraged to re-visit systematic, District-wide entry and exit guidelines for related services.
- ✓ The District leadership is commended for its plan to add quantitative parameters for eligibility for para-professional supports.

Continuum of Supports

RtI/MTSS and 504 Plans

Findings

MTSS

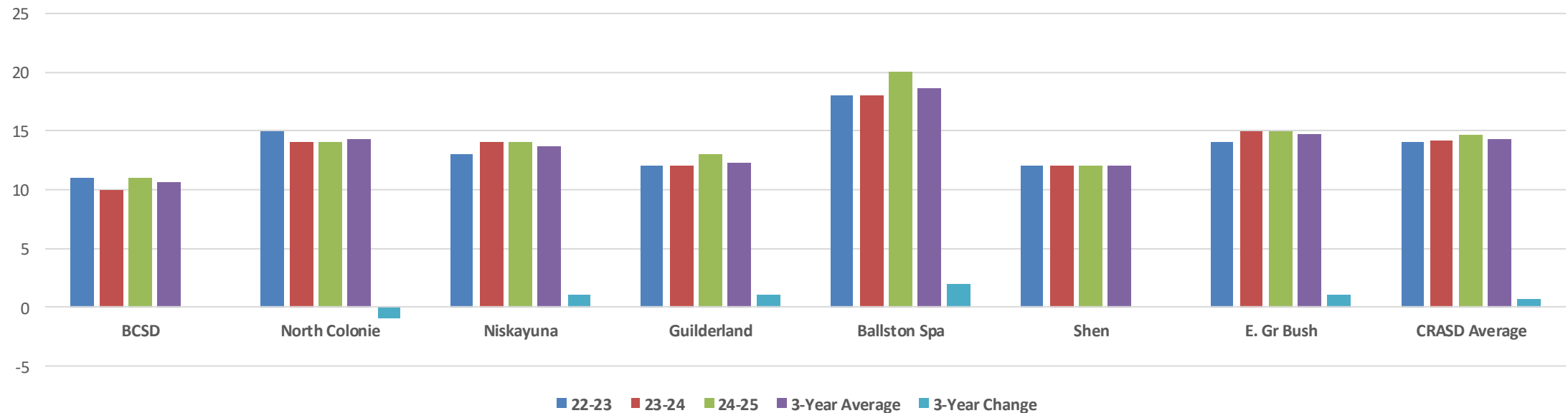
- ✓ Although there may be “pockets” of isolated practices that support the MTSS process (especially in ELA and numeracy at the elementary-level) throughout the District, there was near unanimity among interviews that MTSS is very much a “work in progress.”
- ✓ Some perceived challenges District-wide included:
 1. A need for more consistent knowledge and implementation of the District’s MTSS plan.
 2. A desire for the MTSS coalition to be more effective.
 3. A need to bridge “theory” and “practice” at the instructional level.

Continuum of Supports

RTI/MTSS

MTSS Findings (cont.)

The District's 3-Year average SWD population of 11% is 3% less than the CRASD cohort. It is also notable that the District has experienced a 0% change in the last 3-years compared to a .67% increase for the CRASDs.

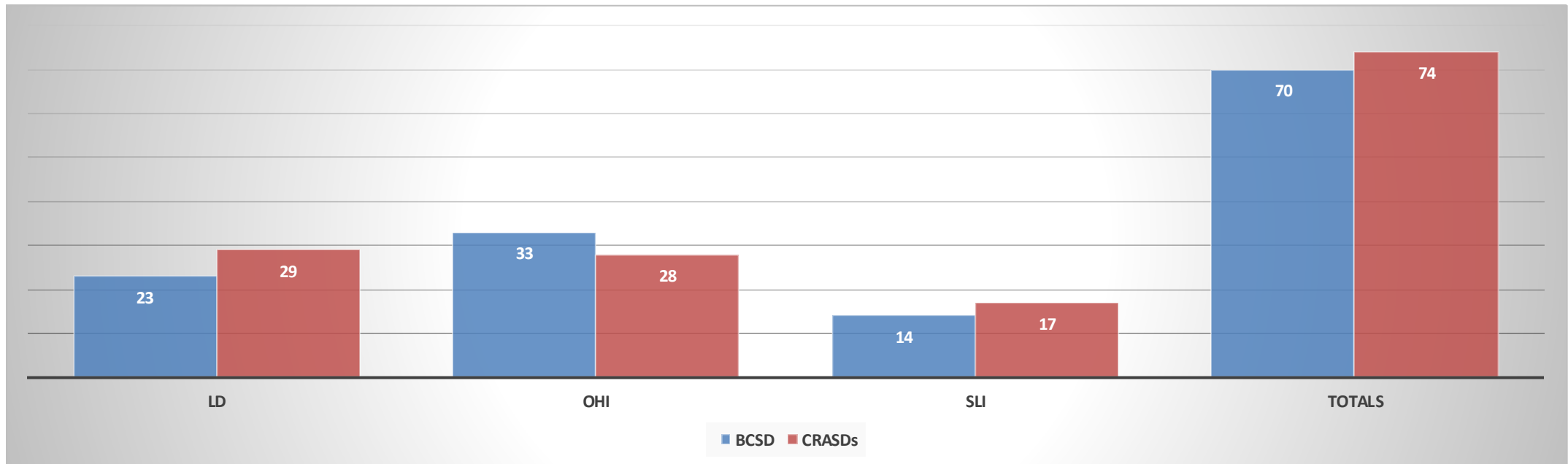


Continuum of Supports

RtI/MTSS

MTSS Findings (cont.)

The constellation of high-incidence/low need disability classifications (comprising Other Health Impairment, Learning Disability, and Speech-Language Impairment) constitute 70% of the SWD K-12 population, compared to 77% for the State and the 74% CRASD average.



Continuum of Supports

RtI/MTSS

MTSS Findings (cont.)

- ✓ It is important to note that the District has undertaken, and begun the execution of, a multi-year strategy to improve the MTSS process. The current status is:

Year 1 (Past Year): The District administrative team partnered with Solution Tree to explore the RtI at Work framework and map out the necessary organizational structures.

Year 2 (2026–2027): All faculty and staff will launch a year-long professional learning experience (including a book study and collaborative learning sequence). The focus will be on building building-level Guiding Coalitions, strengthening collaborative teacher teams, and clarifying intervention processes.

Year 3 (2027–2028): Full operational rollout of the MTSS framework aligned to RtI at Work.

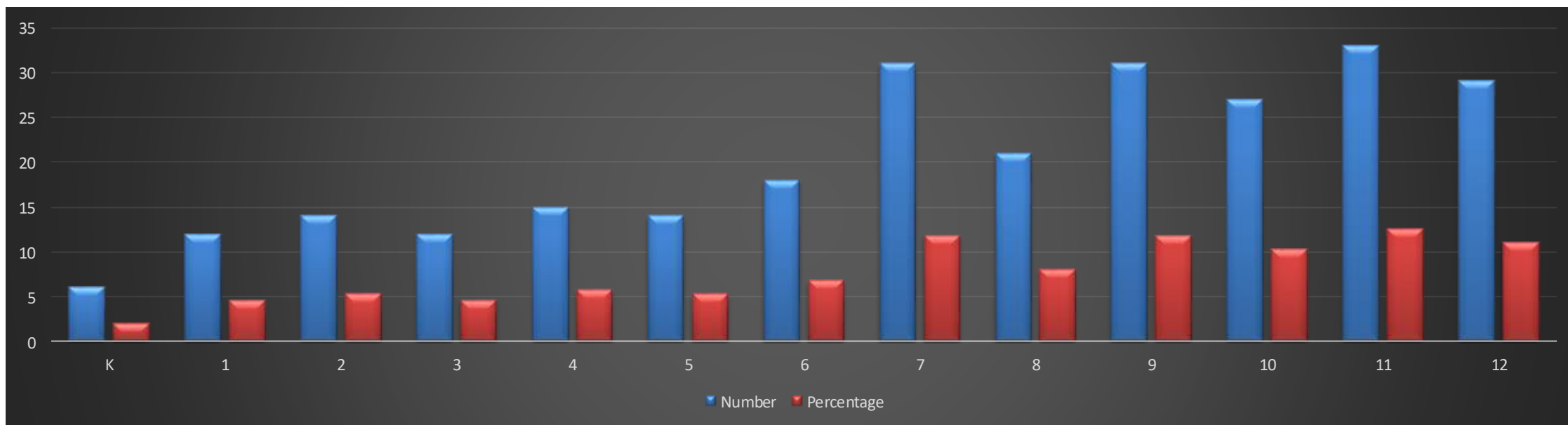
Continuum of Supports

RtI/MTSS and 504 Plans

Findings

504 Plans

With respect to 504 plans, the District currently has 263 students with active plans; this constitutes 6.5% of the K-12 school population and compares to the state average of 2.63%



Continuum of Supports RtI/MTSS (cont.)

MTSS Areas of Opportunity (in alignment with District Plan)

- ✓ As part of the hiring process ensure that all teachers understand the ownership standard of their jobs.
- ✓ Consider a “reverse” MTSS process.
- ✓ There may be greater opportunities for the RSPs to support Tier 1 instruction more systematically in the younger classrooms to support communication, fine motor, gross motor, and SEL in the elementary schools.

Continuum of Supports RtI/MTSS (cont.)

504 Area of Opportunity

- ✓ Review the Section 504 program with respect to eligibility and exit guidelines to ensure those who qualify are truly in need of these services.

Continuum of Services

In-District Special Education Programs

Findings

- ✓ Although the District operates a number of services and programs (e.g., ICT) within its continuum, there was a strong sense from interviewees that the continuum would benefit from further enhancements such as:
 1. Increased special education teacher time in ICT classrooms.
 2. Programming or classes that meet the social/emotional and behavioral needs of students.
 3. Improving transition between the sending and receiving environments
- ✓ As indicated on the next pages, there are celebrations regarding SWD achievement in ELA and Regents; and opportunities to improve performance in math and graduation rates for SWDs.

Continuum of Services

In-District Special Education Programs

District	ELA 2024-25	ELA 2024-25	2024-25	ELA 2021-22	ELA 2021-22	2021-22	GAP Change
	Gen Ed Prof.	SWD Prof.	ELA GAP	Gen Ed Prof.	SWD Prof.	ELA GAP	
BCSD	77	25	52	74	19	55	-3
North Colonie	72	23	49	64	21	43	6
Nisky	78	15	63	70	16	54	9
Guilderland	69	21	48	63	17	46	2
Ballston Spa	65	18	47	50	6	44	3
Shen	79	22	57	73	22	51	6
E. Greenbush	74	30	44	69	19	50	-6
CRASD Aver.	73	22	51	65	17	48	3

Continuum of Services

In-District Special Education Programs

BCSD	Gen Ed	SWD	Gap
ELA	98	73	25
ALG	97	72	25
GEOM	89	57	32
BIOL	94	50	44
GLOB HIST	97	81	16
US HIST	97	76	21
<i>Average</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>27</i>
CRASD	Gen Ed	SWD	Gap
ELA	94	64	30
ALG	85	42	43
GEOM	88	62	26
BIOL	88	51	37
GLOB HIST	93	59	34
US HIST	92	56	36
<i>Average</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>34</i>

Continuum of Services

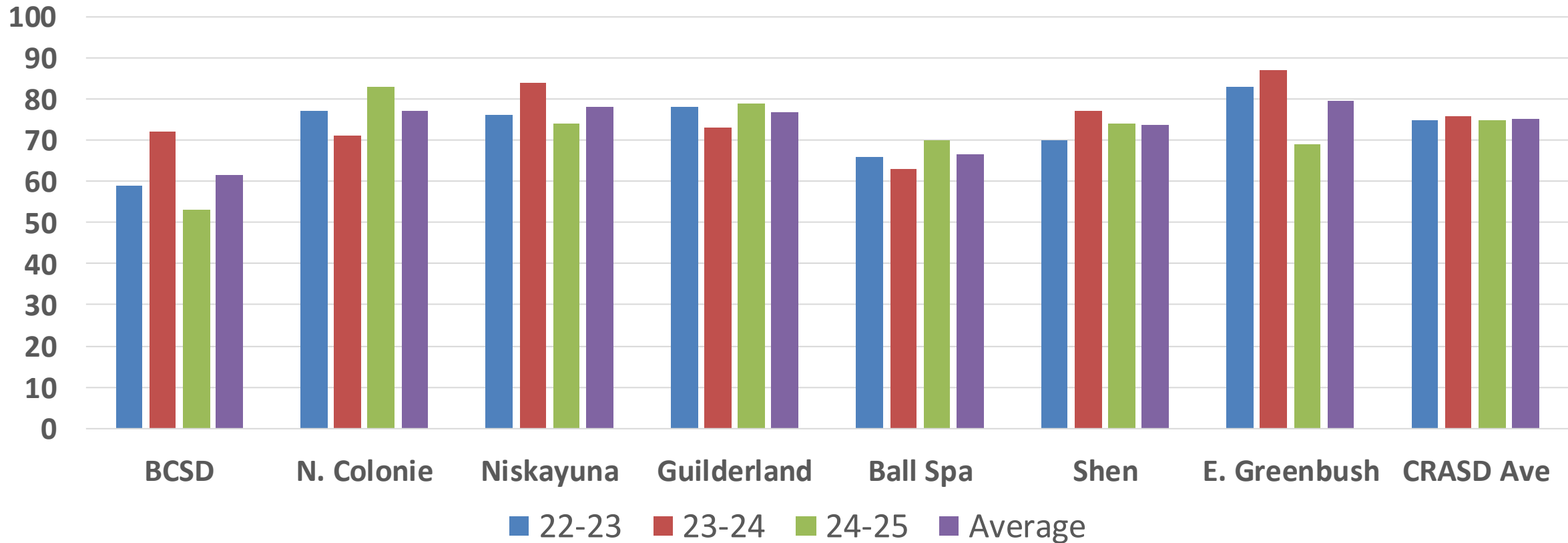
In-District Special Education Programs

District	Math 2024-25 Gen Ed Prof.	Math 2024-25 SWD Prof.	2024-25 Math GAP	Math 2021-22 Gen Ed Prof.	Math 2021-22 SWD Prof.	2021-22 MATH GAP	GAP Change
BCSD	79	26	53	69	19	50	3
North Colonie	77	32	45	58	21	37	8
Nisky	82	26	56	64	16	48	8
Guilderland	75	33	42	56	15	41	1
Ballson Spa	78	28	50	52	10	42	8
Shen	86	35	51	69	20	49	2
E. Greenbush	82	36	46	67	19	48	-2
CRASD Aver.	80	32	48	61	17	44	4

Continuum of Services

In-District Special Education Programs

Graduation Rates



Continuum of Services

In-District Special Education Programs

Areas of Opportunity

- ✓ With the expansion of ICT across all schools, ensure adequate co-planning, general/special education dyads, and master scheduling to optimize success. Expand RSP roles in co-teaching.
- ✓ Implement vertical articulation teams.
- ✓ There are several suggestions in the report to address graduation rates for all SWDs including process and personnel considerations.
- ✓ Continue to collaborate with staff on writing IEPs that are internally consistent, measurable, and aligned to grade-level essential standards.

Continuum of Services

Out of District Placements

Primary Finding

- ✓ As of May 2026, there are 32 SWDs served in out of District placements (non-parentally placed). This constitutes 6.6% of the SWD population, which is considered to be a low percentage for a District of BCSD's size.

Area of Opportunity

- ✓ Continue the focus on requisite capacities to serve SWDs in the District and continue the commendable practice of creating in-District programs.

Summary and Final Commentary

This analysis revealed many celebrations and areas of commendation (e.g., LRE). The authors postulate that the following areas may be of most immediate value in that they have both programmatic and fiscal implications and are offered for consideration as part of the District's strategic planning and, although the two areas are intertwined, we have presented them with respect to organizational and programmatic considerations.

Summary and Final Commentary (cont.)

Organizational Considerations

- 1. Continue efforts to promote a pervasive culture of ownership for SWDs.**
- 2. Increase leadership visibility and communication to strengthen relationships and reinforce transparency.**
- 3. Implement, as a priority initiative, a plan to improve the relationship between general education and special education District wide.**
- 4. Continue efforts to promote a positive and collaborative relationship with parents and with SEPTA.**
- 5. Review and revitalize opportunities for professional development and training for professional and paraprofessional staff.**

Summary and Final Commentary (cont.)

Programmatic Considerations

- 1. Continue the implementation and refinement of the District's phased RTI at Work -aligned MTSS framework.**
- 2. Revisit the in-district continuum of services to maximize the efficacy of ICT services.**
- 3. Institute Vertical Articulation Teams of sending and receiving school representatives at all levels.**
- 4. Review the Section 504 program with respect to eligibility and exit guidelines.**

QUESTIONS-DISCUSSION