SPECIAL CLASS INTEGRATED SETTING PROGRAMS IN NEW YORK STATE

Survey of School District, BOCES and CPSE Chairs and/or Committee Members
242 Survey Responses
231 School Districts, 3 BOCES, 8 County Representatives

Of the 231 school districts, three Large City School Districts Responded: Syracuse, Yonkers and New York City
Responses identifying the programs in the district that serve preschool students with disabilities in early childhood settings with typically developing peers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of inclusive programs:</th>
<th>Special Class Integrated Setting</th>
<th>Special Education Itinerant Services</th>
<th>Related Services</th>
<th>State Admin. Pre-k</th>
<th>Early Head Start/Head Start</th>
<th>Daycare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Available in the district</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not available in the district</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Districts Reporting</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rankings of the difficulty finding SCIS placements (half/full day, September, January, July)

Survey of School Districts, BOCES and CPSEs - September 2017
Are there equal SCIS opportunities for students placed at 3 years of age vs 4 years of age?

Total YES - Equal Opportunities for 3 year olds 182
Total NO – Not Equal Opportunities of 3 year olds 52
Total Districts Reporting 234

Is there a need for more SCIS programs in the region?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Districts</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need for full-day SCIS</td>
<td>Need for half-day SCIS</td>
<td>No Additional SCIS Need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>188</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey of School Districts, BOCES and CPSEs - September 2017
Only 21 school districts operate approved SCIS programs. Districts who do not were asked why:

- Funding does not support the costs of operating a program
- District does not offer any programs for typically developing preschool-age students
- Small district/not enough student enrollment to support a program
- Lack of physical space
- Other approved programs fulfill the SCIS need in the region
- Shortage of appropriately qualified special education and related service staff – including bilingual professionals
- Cumbersome application process, complex and restrictive program requirements
Applicable challenges to operating a SCIS program from survey list provided:

- Student Ratio (6, 8, 12 Requirement) - 48
- Two Teacher Requirement - 101
- 16 Child Minimum - 91
- Staff Shortages - 132
- Parent Reservations - 50
- Complicated Blended Funding - 134
- Reimbursement Rate - 187

Survey of School Districts, BOCES and CPSEs - September 2017
What improvements or changes are needed to increase the number of preschool students with disabilities receiving services within a State Administered Pre-K?

• Access to sustainable funding for State Administered Pre-K
• Increased funding to cover preschool special education expenses
• Less complicated reimbursement methodology – funding must be timely and cover the cost of the program
• Programmatic flexibility in staffing standards and class size/student ratios
• Ability to count a student receiving related services only as a typically developing student in a SCIS classroom
• Less burdensome application process
• More education, training and professional development for staff
• Funding for creating new facility space and transportation costs
• Increased guidance on the benefits of inclusion – requirements/set-asides for State Administered Pre-K programs to operate SCIS
The Districts that operate a State Administered Pre-K programs identified how preschool students with disabilities are served in the program:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of surveyed Districts Operating State Admin. Pre-K</th>
<th>Preschool students with disabilities served by:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Special Education Itinerant Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>161</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the previously named challenges associated with operating a SCIS program, Districts identified the following challenges with increasing opportunities for inclusion within State Administered Pre-K:

- Lack of SEIS providers
- Long waitlist for evaluations
What school-age models or methods of integration could be applied to the State Administered Pre-K program for preschool students with disabilities?

- Integrated co-teaching or consultant teaching models
- The push-in model, which offers more classroom-based services that benefit all students
- Onsite special education and related service providers for consistency and greater access to services, and to support all staff and students as a whole class resource
- Small groups, guided reading groups, and resource rooms
- Students placed in self-contained classes should be mainstreamed with typical students as appropriate; lunch, recess, specials and/or some academic areas
- Provide additional training and professional development in child-development strategies, behavioral/sensory/adaptive materials
- Create more regional programs between districts or BOCES to share staff and space
The most challenging fiscal issue(s) facing area preschool integrated early childhood programs:

• Reimbursement rates for SCIS do not cover total expenses
• Lack of funding for State Administered Pre-K
• Funding (both SCIS and State Administered Pre-K) is not predictable year to year
• Salary differential between preschool and district
• SCIS student numbers fluctuate making enrollment-based funding difficult
• Reimbursement rates are not structured to support lower enrollment of students with disabilities (per pupil dollar amount)
• Limited options to combine resources to support rural districts
• Funding process is too complicated
• Burden to taxpayers (property tax cap) prevents districts from generating local funds to support preschool programs
• Funding is needed for start-up costs, facility space and transportation
The most challenging regulatory issue(s) facing preschool integrated early childhood programs:

• Requirement for two full-time certified teachers in the classroom
• Special education teachers certified in grades 1-6 are not qualified to provide preschool special education services
• Rigid classroom ratios; class sizes of 6, 8 or 12 do not align with general education preschool programs
• Students receiving related services only count as preschool students with a disability in SCIS classrooms
• Regulatory requirement for a minimum of 16 students when applying to operate a preschool special education program
• Cumbersome approval process; paperwork requirements are overwhelming
• Lack of qualified evaluators, lack of appropriately qualified related service providers and special education instructional staff
What should SED know when developing its recommendation to improve preschool opportunities for inclusion?

• Funding must be adequate, predictable, and straightforward to support and sustain programs
• The specific needs of each district should to be factored into funding (not a one size solution)
• Districts need options for sharing resources
• There is a need for wraparound services for both students with and without disabilities in order for children to participate in preschool programs
• There is a need for more professional development and training around developmentally appropriate programming, behavioral support, and mental health needs
• SED should develop recommendations and funding that would encourage public school districts to run SCIS programs
• Preschool requirements should be closer aligned to school-age requirements to get more district participation
• Reduce administrative burdens (paperwork) and provide start-up funding