

## **SNAC 2015-2016 End-Of-Year Report Executive Summary**

The Special Needs Advisory Committee continues to be a collaboration between parents, staff and the community to improve education for students with special needs. So far this year, we have had presentations on how to serve our schools as SNAC Representatives, improve the Open House experience for Parents of Students with special needs, and become better self advocates. District staff and community organizations have presented on ADHD, dyslexia, hearing loss, mental health, Systems Level classrooms, and multiple presentations on transitions.

This year the Special Needs Advisory Council has continued its focus on four areas for the 2015-2016 school year and added a fifth:

### **1. Co-teaching/Mainstream Inclusion Workgroup**

This group has been exploring a survey sent to staff in 2015 on ways to improve co-teaching/mainstream inclusion and discussing ways to continue to share with teachers best practices from the survey.

### **2. Peer Buddy Program (Middle and High Schools)**

The purpose of this program is to promote inclusion of EC students as well as to provide support for students in mainstream education. The Peer Buddy program facilitates friendships, builds leadership skills and promotes acceptance, understanding and awareness of differences among students.

### **3. 2E – Twice Exceptional Committee**

The 2E committee aims to build upon the previous findings by a district task force in 2009 to determine best practice for identifying and serving 2E students.

### **4. EC HS Vocational Education Working Group/PATHSS**

This group has been successful in working with the district and UNC to create a model vocational training program, PATHSS, for EC high school students. The PATHSS program provides training that is meaningful, sustainable and offers real work experience with a key local employer.

### **5. Systems Level Classrooms**

This group's goal is to improve the consistency, sense of community within the class and schools, and rigor of the systems level classrooms. Dr. Karen Erickson is introducing a reading curriculum for Systems Level Classrooms, training SL teachers on its use, and will plan means to measure outcomes related to its implementation.

### **Progress**

- The Co-teaching /Mainstream Inclusion group created a survey that was administered to both EC and mainstream staff. The purpose of the survey is to help identify best programs and teaching practices.
- The Peer Buddy Group began implementing the program at district high schools and middle schools in Nov. 2015.

- The 2E group developed a definition, are exploring how executive functioning and 2E intersect, and are working on aligning professional development modules with Project Advance.
- The EC HS Vocational Education Working Group and PATHSS Group continues to make exciting progress this year. As the PATHSS program moves from pilot to program stage in June of 2016, it has continued to raise positive awareness for both the CHCCS school district and UNC. Together they continue to help our exceptional students prepare for transition to young adulthood.

## Co-Teaching/Mainstream Inclusion Workgroup

**Chairs:** Kathy Peticolas, Sherron Leplin

**Vice Chairs:** Mary Berridge, Laura Henderson, Spencer Register

### **Action Area Objective:**

After studying co-teaching and inclusion models the previous school year, the group is now gathering information on co-teaching and inclusion best practices currently being implemented in the school district.

### **Rationale:**

The EC program works to educate staff on inclusion best practices and principles so that EC students can fully access the curriculum and participate in their classrooms and schools alongside their non-EC peers. These practices are designed to meet the needs of students with a variety of learning styles and needs, providing benefits to both EC and non-EC students. Co-Teaching can provide teachers the opportunity to learn new teaching tools. This type of sharing of best practices can help address the achievement gap and ensure district compliance with the LRE directive under IDEA Federal law.

In addition, there are successful school-wide inclusion programs, such as peer buddies or social skills groups, that are not implemented in all schools, or if present, may not be well known. By gathering data on the inclusion best practices and programs currently in use, those successful practices and programs can be shared increasing the quality of instruction and consistency throughout the district.

### **Progress:**

The Inclusion/Co-Teaching Workgroup has continued reviewing the results of the survey from the spring of 2015. We met with Sherron Leplin and Spencer Register in November to discuss the results and how best to disseminate the ideas and best practices from the survey to teachers and staff. We also considered including “success stories” that highlight the benefit of these best practices. In terms of distribution, we would most likely use already established district communications.

Some members of the work group have also been exploring creating a new course for EC secondary school students (who are otherwise mostly or all mainstreamed). The course would offer instruction in several skill areas that would help these students participate successfully in mainstream classes and activities. It would focus on social skills, study skills, living skills, executive function, and emotional regulation. The group met with the director of curriculum for the district who asked that we research similar courses in the state. We found a similar and very promising course in New Hanover County, which we are considering using as a model. We plan to look more closely at this course to see if it, or something similar, would benefit our students.

## Peer Buddy Program

**Chairs:** Cathy Feole & Laurie Josey, District Peer Buddy Facilitator

### **Action Area Objective:**

This group is working on creating ongoing Peer Buddy programs to serve EC students and mainstream students in all CHCCS middle and high schools. The group has secured funding from The Oak Foundation to pay for support staff and social activities for students involved in the program.

### **Rationale:**

The purpose of this group is to promote inclusion of EC students as well as to provide social support for students in mainstream education who need social support from peers in order to participate and become more involved in the climate and culture of their school. There is a great deal of research available showing that Peer Buddy programs are highly beneficial to all students, both mentors and mentees. "High School Peer Buddies: A Win-Win Situation" 2002 by Copeland is just one example of many articles on the topic. Peer Buddy programs facilitate friendships, build leadership skills and promote acceptance, awareness and understanding of differences while helping to reduce incidences of bullying.

In addition, the Peer Buddy program provides a much needed opportunity for CHCCS high school students to earn service hours on campus during school hours.

### **Progress:**

The Peer Buddy program is now active in all middle and high schools.

District Peer Buddy Facilitator, Laurie Josey, was hired with funding from Oak Foundation in October 2015 and all School-Based Facilitators were trained by her in Nov. 2015.

The District Peer Buddy Facilitator has monitored the implementation of the program at all schools. Her primary responsibility is to work with the School Based Facilitators to ensure that the program is growing and developing and being implemented with integrity at all schools. Students pairs (mentors and mentees) meet a minimum of one time per week during their lunch period or another time during the school day where both students are available. The program includes students in mainstream education, special education settings (EC resource, OCS, system level) and ESL settings.

We have had a successful start to this program by matching nearly 200 students in the district since the inception of the program in November. We are very excited to start at the beginning of the 2016-17 school year and have a full year of implementation. We have learned from this pilot year and will implement new ideas and increase supports for the Fall, specifically, by broadening the lines of communication among administration, faculty, parents and students. Most of the current school based facilitators will be returning next year and we are currently working on interviewing replacements for those that are not returning. The District Facilitator has been present in all the schools for training and support of the school based facilitators. We have had positive comments from teachers as well as parents who have mentioned how much their student enjoys their "buddy".

## **Twice-Exceptional Student Committee End-Of-Year Update 2015-2016**

**Co-Chairs:** Dr. Sherron Leplin, Executive Director, Exceptional Children and Camille House, Coordinator of Gifted Education

**Committee Members:** Andrew Davidson, Board of Education; Kathryn Kennedy, Lead Gifted Education Specialist; Margaret Maternowski, EC Program Facilitator Carrboro HS; Bridget Mora, SNAC Vice-Chair; Spencer Register, Assistant EC Director, Exceptional Children; Alisha Schiltz, MTSS/504 Coordinator; Coretta Sharpless, Principal Northside Elementary; Alfred Soulier, Lead School Psychologist; Steven Weber, Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction

### **Action Area Objectives:**

- Create consistency around the district in regards to 2E and Compliance
- Determine how 2E students are identified 2E, especially when difficulties are masked (specific focus on processing speed and working memory)
- Ensure we look at each individual child's needs to identify 2E students
- Determine the 2E definition that will inform our work

**Rationale:** CHCCS is believed to have a higher than average number of Twice-Exceptional (2E) students, generally defined as a student with both a disability and giftedness. 2E students are often under-identified, as their strengths can mask their challenges, their challenges can obscure their giftedness, or the combination of disability and giftedness can mask the student's need for both supports and higher level academics. The 2E committee aims to build upon the previous findings by a district task force in 2009 to determine best practice for identifying and serving 2E students. Areas of investigation may also include: professional development, parent education, collaboration between EC and AIG, legal compliance, and improved communication among stakeholders.

**Actions:** The committee focus this year has been to identify the 2E definition that CHCCS will use, discuss how the MTSS model will support the identification of 2E students, examine how executive functioning and 2E intersect, and consider how we will develop modules that align with professional development in Project Advance. By the end of this school year, the committee would like to develop an action plan to accomplish the proposed ideas.

**Definition:** Twice exceptional (2e) individuals evidence exceptional ability and disability, which results in a unique set of circumstances. Their exceptional ability may dominate, hiding their disability; their disability may dominate, hiding their exceptional ability; each may mask the other so that neither is recognized or addressed.

## EC HS Vocational Education Working Group

**Chair:** Adela Van Name

**Working Group is now supported by the Operations Committee members which is comprised of both CHCCS staff and UNC staff. This membership is outlined under the UNC Administration Support section on page 9.**

**Action Area Objective:**

Ensure that the community-based instruction and school-based vocational training of EC high school students prepare the students for a successful transition to work post high school.

### PATHSS

#### **Project Achieve For Transitioning High School Students 2015-16 End of Year Report Externship Pilot**

**Mission Statement:** The mission of PATHSS/Project Achieve is to promote positive adult life outcomes for high school students with **disabilities** by facilitating the development of self-determination, work readiness, and everyday life management skills **and by helping the student achieve meaningful employment upon graduation.**

**Overview:** With the close of the 2015-16 school year in June 2016, the PATHSS program will officially transition from pilot to program phase of development. We have secured funding for the continuation of the program from the Oak Foundation. We also look forward to cementing our partnership with UNC as we discussed and to finalize our MOU before the end of this school year. We are extremely grateful to both UNC and the Oak Foundation for their continued support of our program and our students with exceptional needs and intellectual disabilities. Special thanks to the leadership of CHCCS for their unwavering support.

We are pleased to announce our first two graduates from the PATHSS pilot. We will present them at the upcoming commencement ceremony on June 1, 2016 on the Carolina campus. Two of the four original PATHSS pilot students will remain for an additional year at PATHSS. The PATHSS program has accepted four new students for the 2016-17 school year bringing next year's PATHSS total participants to six students.

With the additional support of the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN), we have worked diligently this year to operationalize our program and to add more structure. This will allow us to drive sustainability and replicate PATHSS on a broader level.

In 2015-16, PATHSS experienced tremendous developmental growth. Additional job sites were created allowing for more externship rotations and extended work periods.

Students engaged in a variety of work activities that furthered their vocational competencies and person-specific elements of self-determination. All worksites have afforded PATHSS students meaningful and authentic opportunities to develop work specific technical skills, interpersonal skills, awareness of workplace practices and norms, decision-making and problem-solving skills, time management and organizational strategies, and overall self-advocacy.

**Program Updates:**

**Externship worksites and tasks included:**

Lenoir Dining Hall and Beach Cafe: bussing, cleaning and resetting tables, refilling salt/pepper shakers, napkin holders, and disposable silverware dispensers, sorting silverware, sorting silverware, sweeping, and continuous monitoring and cleaning of cafeteria food stations.

UNC Athletics: assist with various components of event set up and breakdown at multiple athletic facilities/arenas, check inventory and create list of supply needs to be ordered.

UNC Geology Department: interoffice mail sorting/delivery, shredding and recycling projects, light cleaning tasks, and room organization/set up for special events.

Undergraduate Studies Department: interoffice and cross-campus mail sorting/delivery, shredding, recycling projects, light cleaning, light stocking tasks, organizing supply cabinets, resupplying/replenishing supplies and materials including maintaining paper supply for copiers and printers.

Davis Library: Rough and fine sorting of books by LC call numbers, clearing and scanning discarded books to determine count use, and maintaining paper supply for copiers and printers.

UNC Paws for People/UNC Psychiatry Department: Supervising puppies on community outings, photographing puppies and people during outings, tracking, recording, and reporting environmental characteristics (types of surfaces, spaces, noises, people, equipment, etc.) the puppies are exposed to while on outings. Onsite at Penny Lane Farm: laundering soiled towels, sweeping puppy living space, cleaning puppy ears, cleaning puppy messes in living space and in fenced area, exercising puppies – taking puppies on trail walks.

UNC Student Store Warehouse: Work tasks included merchandise intake tasks such as counting, sorting, and pricing merchandise, and repackaging.

UNC Facilities HR: Job tasks included filing, shredding and recycling projects, data entry, document management, recycling, pricing, manual work

Undergraduate Research Symposium (1x a year event): Setting up tri-pods and poster boards for 150+ presenters, distributing programs and greeting event attendees.

### **Classroom/Campus/Community Instruction:**

#### **Employment:**

- Career exploration – students interviewed individual in career field of interest (videos on class blog: <http://unc-pathss.blogspot.com/>)
- Job seeking skills: Resume development and updates, job application requests in community, application practice, mock and externship interviews
- Work portfolio development
- Participation in UNC Employee orientation (modified for students) hosted by UNC's Human Resource Department prior to every externship covering UNC workplace policies relating to employee rights and responsibilities, the prohibition of firearms and drug use on campus, harassment and discrimination, safety and Carolina Alert system, etc.
- Participation in UNC's Employee Appreciation Day – Student participation.
- Externship specific skill-set development in class (practice refilling salt/pepper shakers, putting on work gloves and hair net, sorting books by call number, etc.)

#### **Daily Life Skills:**

- Money Management and Handling: Students were given a spending budget of \$25 a week (as a class) and were responsible for developing shopping lists, estimating costs, comparing prices of individual items, making purchases at checkout lanes and self-check lanes, tracking and reporting spending using both a paper/pencil ledger and iSpending app.
- Banking skills – in class and community practice with ATM use, banking forms, bank tellers, banking apps for making deposits and withdrawing money, debit card vs. credit card coverage
- Food preparation, safety and safe food handling and storage - Students were responsible for planning, shopping for, and preparing lunch for their classmates once a semester.
- Home care: including cleaning tasks, laundry skills, and basic clothing care
- Participation in Friday Center cooking demonstration and lunch with Chef Michael, Friday Center Executive Chef
- Party planning and food preparation, hosting: SILS Take a Break with Cake Party, Open House – Bring your Parent to PATHSS Day, and Valentine's Day/Halloween/Winter Holiday Parties (w/ UNC and CHCCS friends)

#### **Personal Development and Self-Determination:**

- Learning Garden at Chapel Hill Community Park: Students learn horticulture skills and help to maintain the community garden

- Technology instruction: iPad and laptop care and use, online safety, word processing, PowerPoint, email, calendar systems, class blog social media, online banking systems, photo storage and tagging apps, music and video streaming sites (saving and creating playlists), “next bus” apps, and additional web applications including Google Transit, AllRecipes, iSpending, Weather.com, Harris Teeter app, Dictionary app, etc.
- Preparation and participation in Student Showcase– live presentation with PowerPoint
- PATHSS student partnerships with graduate students from UNC Public Health and UNC OT in participatory research project using photo-voice methodology
- Volunteer exploration: Orange County Animal Shelter tour and volunteer information session
- Adult Life exploration and options: Presentation by two adult mentors with I/DD on their own transition to adulthood including work, housing, social life, and relationships (family/friends),
- Presentation by RSI Social Worker, Eileen Slade, to learn about group homes and supported apartment living, group home tour
- Participation in UNC’s University Day
- Personal safety sessions (monthly) with Sgt. James David from UNC’s Public Safety Department: Topics have included: first aid, self-defense, staying safe in chaotic and unexpected situations (lock downs, power outages, becoming lost in the community, severe weather, fires, etc.), pedestrian safety, panhandling
- Big Buddy/Little Buddy Mentoring: PATHSS students have been paired with a younger student from a special education class at Rashkis Elementary. Activities have included letter writing, Flat Stanley photos and bookmaking, holiday lunch and group reading presentations.
- Maintaining Communication with CHCCS – HS Peers and UNC Support Staff – lunch and party gatherings
- Healthy Relationship sessions - Orange County Rape Crisis Center
- Exploration and application process for post-secondary programs
- Self-advocacy sessions with CIDD’s Project STIR team
- Best Buddy partnership – Students enrolled in program using online application process. Once partnered, students initiated and planned lunch dates with Best Buddies using online calendar, email, texting, city transit website (bus routes/schedules)
- Healthy living and positive coping strategies – visits to UNC meditation room for guided meditation sessions, yoga, campus recreation center tour, weight room orientation, and use
- Participated in process for acquiring NC state ID from NC DMV
- Monitored presidential primaries – registered and voted in primaries
- Campus Fall Fest participation

**Community Access:**

- Explored community transportation options and access (EZ Rider, city bus system, taxi services, Uber)
- Practiced skills using city bus, EZ Rider, and Uber
- Registering for and arranging EZ Rider transportation
- Transportation planning using Google Transit/Chapel Hill Transit schedules/"next bus" apps
- Holiday/Movie shopping trip to Southpoint Mall using regional bus system. Preparations included determining bus routes and fare, exploring theater website to determine movie times and ticket costs)
- NC State Fair using regional bus system (preparations included determining bus routes and fare, exploring NC State Fair website to estimate costs, prioritize fair activities, and manage time)
- Additional community outings - Ackland Art Museum, Planetarium, Franklin Street vendors, UNC Farmers Market (scavenger hunt), UNC Science Expo
- Geo-Caching on campus and community
- Community Mural Scavenger Hunt - navigation using Google Maps audio walking directions
- Transportation - Exploring and trying out a variety of transportation options in community

**Programming Partnerships:**

**UNC Administration Support:**

UNC administration invited CHCCS to work together to create an effective communications and operations structure at the beginning of the 2015-16 school year. With the addition of our consultants from NIRN we have continued development in the following areas:

- Development of governance structure:
  - Executive Leadership Committee: S. Leplin, S. Register, N. Montgomery, M. Weiss
  - Operations Committee: S. Register, M. Weiss, A. VanName, D. Hanson-Baldauf, N. Long, B. Stockard.
  - Action Teams: Job Site Development/Training: L. Marro, S. Lombardo, N. Jimmerson, D. Hanson-Baldauf, AVannname, S.Register
  - Curriculum Planning and Assessment: D. Hanson-Baldauf, M. Barry, AVannname, S. Register
- Development of "Basecamp" a shared access internet site for communication.
- Identification of training needs for staff and supervisors.

UNC has been an outstanding partner by helping us through many daily hurdles from arranging parking for our staff, classroom space, One Card access, recreation facilities

access, training apartment use, and technology support for our students and administration and staff support for our program. They are also helping us to secure more and better job sites as we grow the program. Thank you UNC for all you continue to do!

### **National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Service (NTACT):**

#### **December - June 2017**

We are looking forward to the next phase of development with NTACT during the second semester of the 2016-17 school year. We have been incorporating the recommendations that are listed below as we build our curriculum and program structure.

#### **August – December 2015**

We have continued to develop our relationship with NTACT\* and are currently working with two new consultants from this organization. They are compiling their report from their site visit in November of 2015. These are goals/next steps that we discussed:

- Share immediate resources with CHCCS
- Review program curriculum and provide feedback: in context of predictor implementation and possible requirements
- Provide feedback on implementation of predictors and rationale for the emphasis on specific predictors at this juncture of programs development (the work listed from June 2015 – below- were two of the seventeen predictors)
- Provide guidance/resources specific to (a) student level progress monitoring, and (b) formative assessments of the program (as needed)

\*NTACT developed the “Predictor Implementation School/District Self-Assessment” which is “a checklist intended to provide schools, districts, or other stakeholders in secondary transition with a framework for determining the degree to which their program is implementing practices that are likely to lead to more positive post-school outcomes for students with disabilities.” There are seventeen predictors.

#### **On-Campus Supports**

The PATHSS’ teacher, staff and students also nurtured their close relationships with UNC staff. This development and maintenance of relationships is truly the cornerstone on which the program is being built. PATHSS is becoming better known on campus and many different UNC programs are exploring how to partner with the program. A few of the departments already supporting PATHSS are:

- UNC Human Resources - extern orientation
- UNC Equal Opportunity Compliance Office: employer orientation/training

- UNC TEACCH: Job Development Consultation
- UNC Division of Occupational Science: OT Rehabilitation Apt for Life Skills (weekly)- Bondurant Hall/4 field experience students 1 afternoon/week for 2 five week sessions/ Community Service Project
- UNC School of Information and Library Science: Library and Classroom support (daily) and student information needs support through graduate collection development course and course project.
- UNC Instructional Technology Services: tech support
- UNC Carolina Dining Services: tour/orientation
- UNC Visitor Center: campus orientation/explorations (5)
- UNC Transportation and Public Services: Travel training
- UNC Public Safety – lessons on campus: i.e. personal safety, self defense, and first aid sessions, K-9 unit, 911 call center
- UNC Public Health – student partnerships on community-participatory research projects

#### **Next Steps:**

- Increase teacher’s planning time to support instructional outcomes and data collection **Continue progress**
- Add additional job coach supports for development of more job sites and improve student’s ability to engage in campus activities - **Completed**
- Trial adding OCS/SL students for a ½ day program- **2016-17 school year confirmed**
- Expand MOU with UNC for post pilot “program” agreement- **In progress**
- Submit grant proposal for Oak Foundation support - **Completed and approved**
- Morgan Creek Foundation will nominate PATHSS for a grant application - **Fall 2016**
- Training Proposals: ASNC and TEACCH - **Fall 2016** - in committee now

#### **Additional Accomplishments:**

- Reduced transportation needs by utilizing city/campus bus system
- Developed PATHSS curriculum – approved
- Developed the Student Selection Criteria and Admissions Process
- Continued alignment with CHCCS district policies
- Integrating all three CHCCS transition facilitators to PATHSS
- Developed Graduation Process for PATHSS students
- Securing and individualizing more job sites and creating a “job bank”
- Offering half-day option to selected System Level students who could benefit

#### **Challenges:**

- Continue development of policies and procedures to align with CHCCS:
  - Teacher evaluations/program evaluations
  - Principal Tully at ECCHS will serve as site administrator

- Data Collection and establish systems to measure goals/performance
- Marketing for Student Recruitment
- Continue and expand fundraising efforts

**Key Learnings:**

- Utilize more EC staff for program support from each HS as well as from the EC administration at Lincoln Center to help defray the financial burden.
- Oak Grant Application fostered the development of a business plan for the next 4 years:
  - Plan incorporates consultants to help with system/operational structures/sustainability and replicability
  - Monthly budget forecast meetings
- Continued and increased collaboration and communication between CHCCS leaders and UNC leaders is critical to success.
- Expansion of program to OCS and other non-PATHSS students will increase ROI.
- Continue to refine roles and responsibilities of staff and goals of the program.