Beginning the Conversation

• ACHIEVEMENT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COHORTS OF STUDENTS: Special Education, English as a Second Language, Title One, General Education
What is Our Purpose This Evening

• To begin the conversation and examination of the performance of the various subgroups of students.

• To examine the current status, review current practices and ultimately to reflect on what else can we or should we do differently to enhance individual and ultimately group student performance.
Framing the Question

• Why is this best viewed as a performance question versus an achievement gap question?
Defining Achievement Gap

• Although on the surface, a singular definition of achievement gap may seem small, in the world of policy making, leadership, and decision making, definitions are powerful. As Schon (1994) and Edelman (1988) asserted, how issues are defined largely determines the public’s understanding of them, the policies crafted to influence them, and how success is measured.
Defining Achievement Gap

• Achievement gap: The U.S. Department of Education describes the achievement gap as “the difference in academic performance between different ethnic groups.”

• The “achievement gap” in education refers to the disparity in academic performance between groups of students. The achievement gap shows up in grades, standardized-test scores, course selection, dropout rates, and college-completion rates, among other success measures. It is most often used to describe the troubling performance gaps between African-American and Hispanic students, at the lower end of the performance scale, and their non-Hispanic white peers, and the similar academic disparity between students from low-income families and those who are better off.

In the past decade, though, scholars and policymakers have begun to focus increasing attention on other achievement gaps, such as those based on sex, English-language proficiency and learning disabilities.

Education Week, July 7, 2011
Staggered Start
ELL Eligibility

• Any score less than a 4.6 on each of the domains tested on the W-APT: Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing qualifies a student for ESL services and placement.

• Additional multiple criteria from PDE:
  • Scores on district-wide assessments that are comparable to the BASIC performance level on the PSSA.
  • Final grades of C or better in core subject areas (Mathematics, Language Arts, Science and Social Studies).
Title One Eligibility Criteria

• To qualify for Title I service for the current 2011-2012 school year in Kindergarten:

  • Test averages fall at or below 76%
  • Stanine average scores of 1-3 on the Kindergarten GRADE,
  • Teacher recommendation & Parent communication

• To qualify for Title I services for the 2011-2012 school year in 1st Grade and in 2nd Grade:

  • Classroom assessment average falls at or below 76%
  • Stanine average scores of 1-3 on the GRADE Assessment
  • Guided Reading Levels indicating two instructional levels below the academic standard
  • Teacher recommendation & Parental concerns
  • A score of 1 out of 3 on the Constructive Response Writing Assessment (where applicable) 2nd Grade only
Definition of STANINE

Any of the nine classes into which a set of normalized standard scores arranged according to rank in educational testing are divided, which include the bottom 4 percent and the top 4 percent of the scores in the first and ninth classes and the middle 20 percent in the fifth, and which have a standard deviation of 2 and a mean of 5.
Grade 2 Group Reading Assessment & Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) Stanine Comparison

General Education Students N = 123  Total Test Stanine Avg. = 6.7
Title One Eligible Students N = 19       Total Test Stanine Avg. = 4.2
Special Education Eligible N = 6       Total Test Stanine Avg. = 3.5
Special Education Eligibility

• **Who is Eligible for Special Education Services?**

• To be eligible for special education, a child must have a disability and must need special education services and related services. If a child has a disability but does not need specially designed instruction, the child is not eligible for special education under IDEA.....

  • Wrightslaw
PSSA Data

- Analysis of group mean scores of two different cohorts in the same grade and one cohort over time in two subject areas, Reading and Mathematics reveals that there is minimal movement between the general education cohort and the special education cohort when comparing mean scaled scores. Further analysis of additional data will be necessary to examine this longitudinally and across subject areas and for statistical significance.
### Reading Mean Scale Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Grade</th>
<th>GE</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>+/- Difference</th>
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<th>+/- Difference</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>Grade 7</td>
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### Reading Mean Scale Score

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#### Grade 5

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### Students in Special Education by category
#### 12/1/2011

<table>
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<th>Exceptionality</th>
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<td>Autism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional Disturbance</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing Impairment including Deafness</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Disability</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple Disabilities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Health Impairment</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Learning Disability</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech and Language Impairment</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traumatic Brain Injury</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Impairment including Blindness</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>244</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>
What are we currently doing in New Hope Solebury School District to address this issue?

- Training for Special Education Teaching staff on: Reading and Writing across the curriculum, Universal Design for Learning, Differentiated Instruction, Including Students with Asperger’s (Team of one parent, one general education teacher and one parent to turn key @ the HS), Positive Behavior Supports, Inclusive practices, Applied Behavior Analysis, Prevent-Teach-Reinforce FBA, Using peer supports strategies @ MS/HS, Differentiation of the Writing Curricula, Progress Monitoring for instruction, Standards aligned IEPs

- Training for Special Education Instructional Assistants: Reading Instruction Five Big Ideas: Phonemic Awareness, Alphabetic Principle, Fluency, Vocabulary, Comprehension; Principles of Applied Behavior analysis

- Reading Specialist providing explicit instruction K-12, one per building

- Reducing the degrees of tracking @ the secondary level
What are we currently doing in New Hope Solebury School District to address this issue?

- Using technology to access the general education curricula
- Advisory model inclusive of all students grades 6-8
- Moving to Co-Teaching opportunities grades 6-12, 2012/2013 school year
- Creating parallel support programs: additional class and/or support opportunities @ Grades 6-12
- Grade 6 increasing flex blocks for more instructional time & teacher-student contact time
- K-2 Multi-Sensory Reading Instruction in Learning Support
- Creating school based “Inclusion Teams” with Pattan
- Piloting the SaS toolkit with at least one student per building
- Provision of Supplementary Aids and Services
What are we currently doing in New Hope Solebury School District to address this issue?

• PSSA Seminar Classes @ grades 9-12
• Math Lab support classes @ grades 9-12
• Differentiated blocks for RELA & Math @ grades 3-5
• Flexible grouping for RELA & Math @ Elementary level
• Additional instruction time allocated for writing @ grades 3-5
• Curriculum based assessments @ grades K-5 to inform instruction
Setting the Standards

• According to Thurlow (2000), “Most students with disabilities should be meeting the same high standards as other students . . . . Inclusion of students with disabilities in the teaching/learning process holds the potential to reduce perceived differences by educators between IDEA-served and unserved students. As Thurlow (2000) points out, the bottom line is instruction. Inclusion enhances this process by focusing both teaching/learning processes and accountability processes on students’ learning outcomes (abilities) rather than on differences among subsets of students (disabilities).

• Recommendation: There is at present, an “accountability gap” between IDEA served and un-served students across the states. Research is needed that will close this gap and enable students with disabilities to benefit from standards-based reform. Direct a program of research toward identifying accommodations that work, not only to increase participation roles in assessment but linked directly to school wide teaching/learning accommodations.

President’s Commission on Excellence in Special Education Research Agenda Task Force Testimony submitted by Wayne Sailor, Ph.D. Professor, Department of Special Education April 18, 2002 Nashville, Tennessee
Next Steps Closer to Home

• Continuous examination of our instructional practices with all groups and sub-groups of students, reflecting on what works, what does not, to make data driven, research based decisions reflecting the best practices of our profession

• Analysis of staff development system to insure consistency and acquisition of necessary training for existing and new faculty members

• Continue current training initiatives to increase opportunities for students with IEPs to access their education in the least restrictive environment
References & Citations:

- [http://nichcy.org/disability/categories](http://nichcy.org/disability/categories)
- [https://www.centralreach.com/articles/inclusive-education-is-it-for-](https://www.centralreach.com/articles/inclusive-education-is-it-for-)
- [http://www.beachcenter.org/Books/FullPublications/PDF/PresidentReport.pdf](http://www.beachcenter.org/Books/FullPublications/PDF/PresidentReport.pdf)
- [http://www.spedlawyers.com/outcomes_research.htm](http://www.spedlawyers.com/outcomes_research.htm)
- [http://rse.sagepub.com/content/15/5/281.short](http://rse.sagepub.com/content/15/5/281.short)
- [http://static.pdesas.org/content/documents/SaS-Toolkit.pdf](http://static.pdesas.org/content/documents/SaS-Toolkit.pdf)
Appendix 1: Supplementary Aids and Services SaS

- Supplementary Aids and Services (SaS) create a system of support that enables many students with disabilities to learn and participate alongside typical peers, regardless of their unique instructional needs and differences. Consistent with the least restrictive environment (LRE) principle of IDEA, IEP teams must thoughtfully consider a full array of Supplementary Aids and Services that make it possible for students with disabilities to be included in general education classrooms, non-academic, and extracurricular activities. The SaS Consideration Toolkit, developed for use within schools throughout Pennsylvania, provides a systematic approach to structure this process.
Appendix 2: Supplementary Aids and Services

- **Supplementary aids and services** means aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes, other education-related settings, and in extracurricular and nonacademic settings, to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate ...

- According to the SEELS School Program Survey[1] and as reported in the *26th Annual Report to Congress* on the implementation of IDEA (U.S. Department of Education, 2006), about 85% of elementary or middle-school children with disabilities in regular education language arts classes have some type of support indicated on their IEP or 504 plan. Looking at the specific accommodations and supports they receive, we find that:
  - 61.9% are provided extra time to take tests or complete assignments.
  - 36.8% are given shorter or different assignments.
  - 35.3% have tests read to them.
  - 33.4% take modified tests.
  - 33.3% receive feedback more frequently than other children.
  - 30.4% receive slower-paced instruction.
  - .7% are provided physical adaptations.
Appendix 3: Federal Categories

1. **Autism**...means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engaging in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. The term autism does not apply if the child’s educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance, as defined in #5 below.

A child who shows the characteristics of autism after age 3 could be diagnosed as having autism if the criteria above are satisfied.

2. **Deaf-Blindness**...means concomitant [simultaneous] hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.

3. **Deafness**...means a hearing impairment so severe that a child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance.

4. **Developmental Delay**...for children from birth to age three (under IDEA Part C) and children from ages three through nine (under IDEA Part B), the term developmental delay, as defined by each State, means a delay in one or more of the following areas: physical development; cognitive development; communication; social or emotional development; or adaptive [behavioral] development.
Appendix 3: Federal Categories

5. **Emotional Disturbance**...means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child’s educational performance:

   (a) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
   (b) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
   (c) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
   (d) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
   (e) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

   The term includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance.

6. **Hearing Impairment**...means an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance but is not included under the definition of “deafness.

7. **Intellectual Disability**...means significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently [at the same time] with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance.

   *(Editor’s Note, February 2011: “Intellectual Disability” is a new term in IDEA. Until October 2010, the law used the term “mental retardation.” In October 2010, Rosa’s Law was signed into law by President Obama. Rosa’s Law changed the term to be used in future to “intellectual disability.” The definition of the term itself did not change and is what has just been shown above.*

8. **Multiple Disabilities**...means concomitant [simultaneous] impairments (such as intellectual disability-blindness, intellectual disability-orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in a special education program solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf-blindness.
Appendix 3: Federal Categories

9. **Orthopedic Impairment**... means a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by a congenital anomaly, impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures).

10. **Other Health Impairment**... means having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that—

(a) is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette syndrome; and

(b) adversely affects a child’s educational performance.

11. **Specific Learning Disability**... means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; of mental retardation; of emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

12. **Speech or Language Impairment**... means a communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child’s educational performance.

13. **Traumatic Brain Injury**... means an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech.

The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

14. **Visual Impairment Including Blindness**... means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child’s educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.
Appendix 4: Scaled Scores

A scaled score is a conversion of a student's raw score on a test to a common scale that allows for a numerical comparison between students.

Scaled scores tell you how much students' scores deviate from the mean or average score. That is, by looking at a scaled score, you can tell immediately how far above or below the mean a person's score is.

The range of the scaled score varies depending on the test maker. Some tests such as the CAT, SAT or GRE, use the same 200-800 scale. The ACT uses a scale from 1-36 with a mean of 18. Wechsler IQ scores use a scale of 55-145 with a mean of 100. These scores can be used to compute the average performance for groups of students.