

Inclusion in PreK

Why It Matters and Best Practices From the Field



May 14, 2025

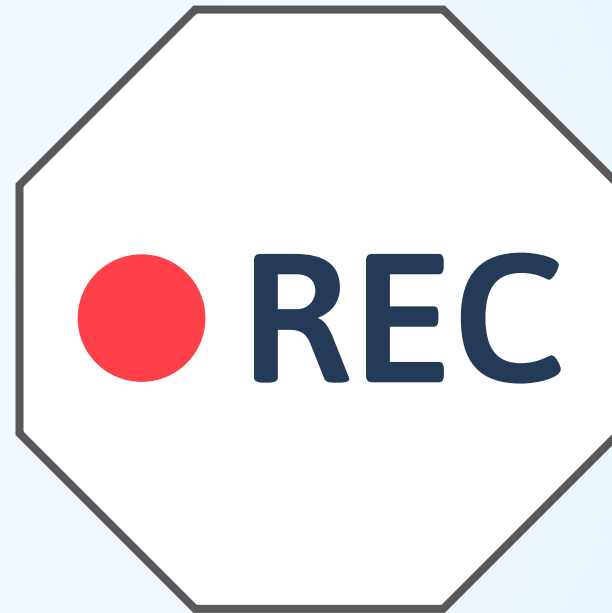
Housekeeping



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MUTED**



**CAMERAS
OFF**



**RECORDING IN
PROGRESS**



Q & A



CHAT FEATURE

Presenters



Noelle Lake

**Office of Early
Learning**



Lauren Cosamano

**Office of Early
Learning**

Panelists



Brushton-Moira CSD



Rochester City School District



TIEGERMAN
TEACHING THE EXTRAORDINARY

Participants will.....

- Focus on the importance of ensuring that every child, regardless of ability, background, or needs have equal opportunity to learn and grow.
- Hear examples of practical applications for supporting students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms across New York State.
- Identify next steps that can be applied in your own programs and classrooms.



The Office of Special Education

Preschool Policy Unit



Christopher Suriano
Associate Commissioner



Suzanne Bolling
Preschool Policy Manager

Special Education
Preschool Policy Unit
works to promote
educational equity and
excellence to ensure
preschool students with
disabilities receive timely
and appropriate services
in the least restrictive
environment.



Least restrictive environment means that placement of students with disabilities in special classes, separate schools or other removal from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that even with the use of supplementary aids and services, education cannot be satisfactorily achieved.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

POLICY STATEMENT ON
INCLUSION OF CHILDREN
WITH DISABILITIES IN
EARLY CHILDHOOD
PROGRAMS



Benefits of Preschool Inclusion

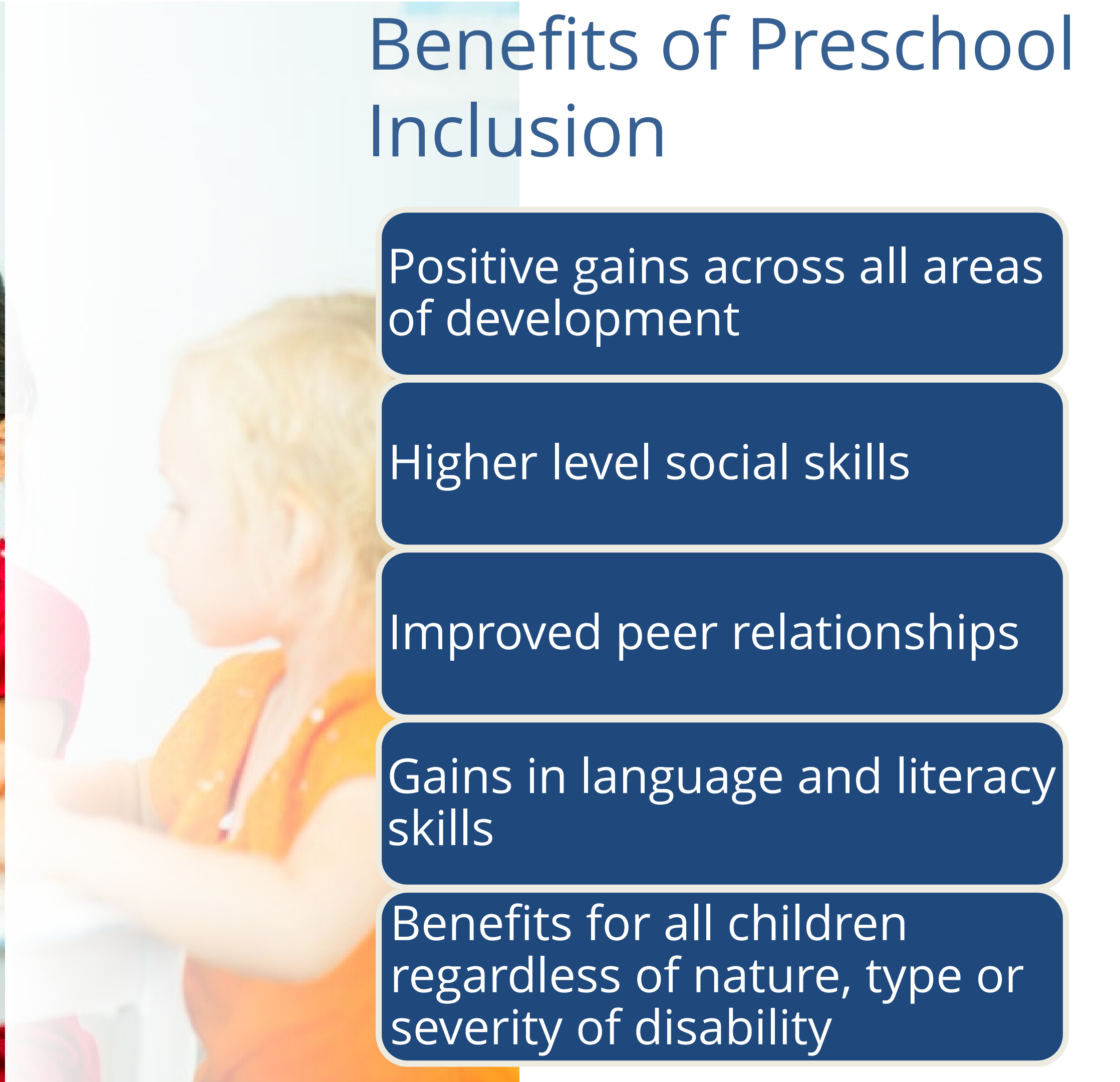
Positive gains across all areas of development

Higher level social skills

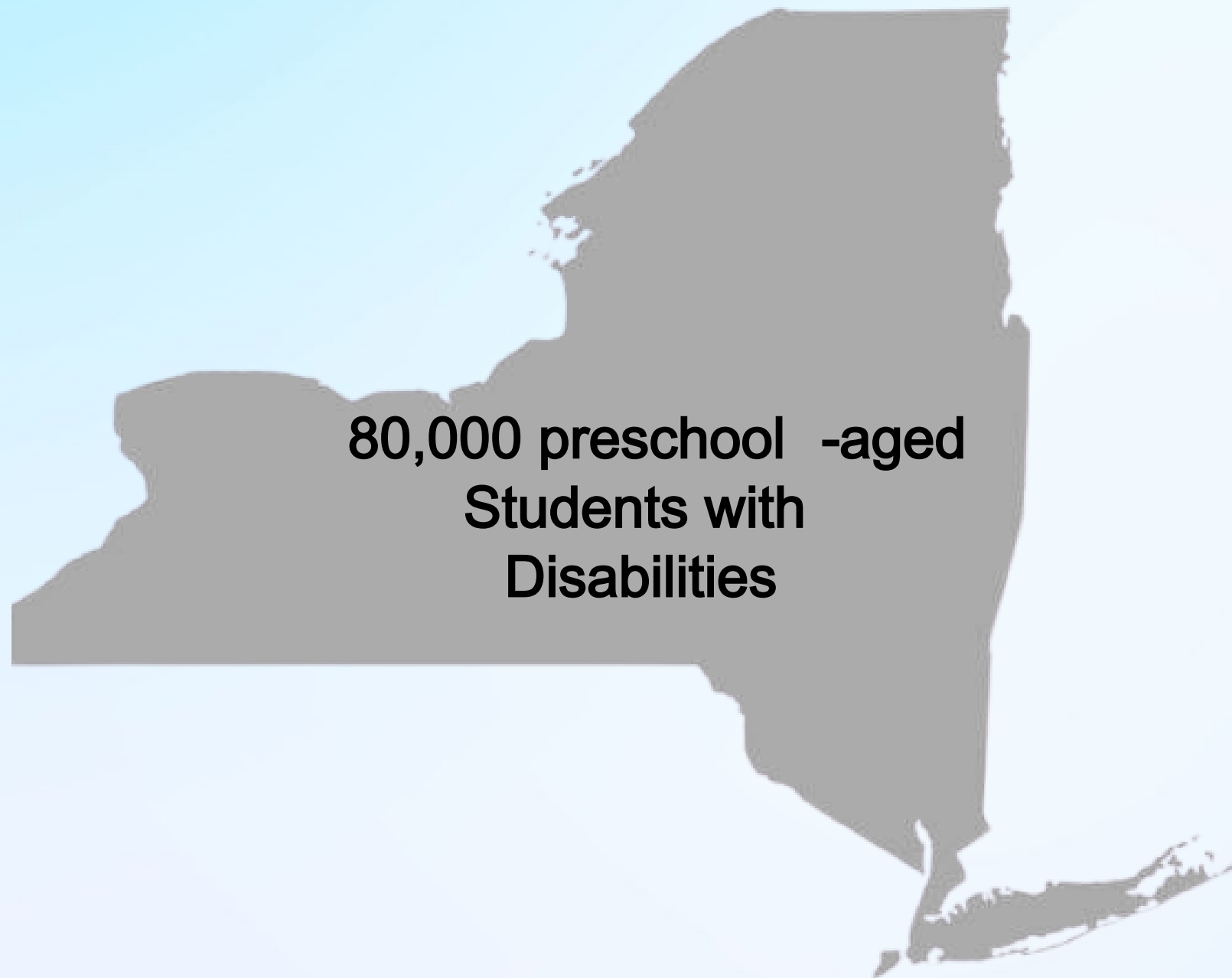
Improved peer relationships

Gains in language and literacy skills

Benefits for all children regardless of nature, type or severity of disability



New York State's Inclusion Landscape



INCLUSION RATE



2023-2024: 47.2%



2025-2026: 50% Target

SEPARATE SETTING RATE

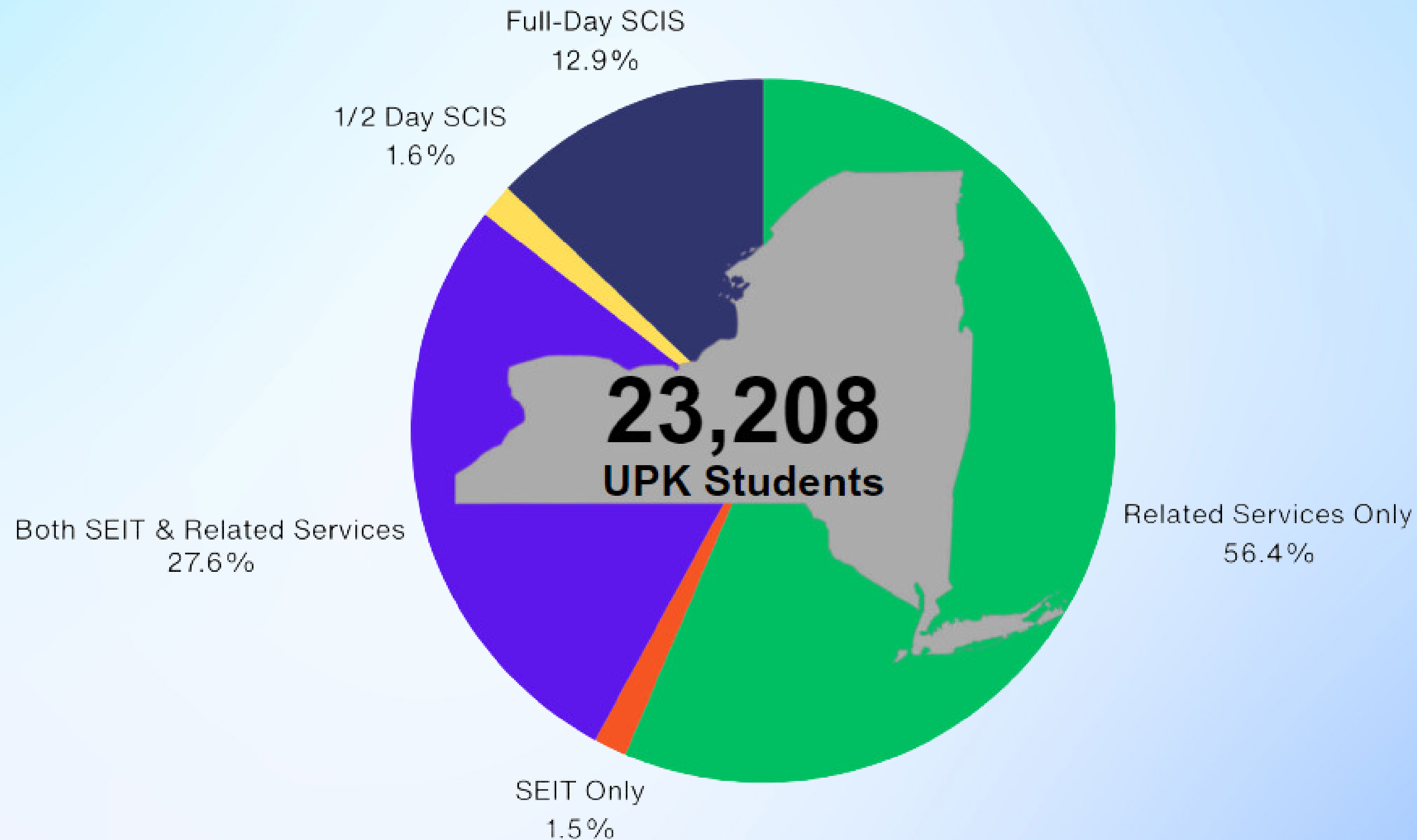


2023-2024: 27.5%



2025-2026: 20% Target

The State of UPK Inclusion in NYS



Foundation for
acceptance and
understanding

All children have the
ability to learn

Why Inclusion?

High learning
expectations
for all



Social -emotional
development

Communication skills,
cooperation,
empathy

Same educational
opportunities to
all students

Brushton-Moira CSD Panel Members



Todd LaPage

Superintendent



Rachel Southworth

**Integrated Pre-K
Teacher**

Brushton-Moira CSD



- 48 total students
- 2 universal Pre-K (UPK):
 - 18 Students per Class
- 1 Integrated Pre-K (IPK/SCIS):
 - 12 Students
 - 6 students with IEPs
 - 6 general education students
- IPK Program Serves Multiple Districts



Classroom Transformation



August 2015

Classroom Transformation



Present

Access, Participation and Support

- Individualized Planning
- Regular Monitoring and Feedback
- Adapted Curriculum and Activities
- Peer Support and Social Interaction



Equitable Access and Opportunities

- Differentiated Instruction
 - Flexible Grouping
- Universal Design for Learning
 - Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic
- Accessible Learning Environments
 - Classrooms Materials
 - Assistive Technology
- High Expectations for All



Sense of belonging for all

- Welcoming Environment
- Social-Emotional Learning
 - Pocket of Pre-School: Red & Green choices
 - Second Step
- Peer Support Systems
- Accessible and Flexible Spaces
- Modeling Inclusivity



Successes

Impact



Enhanced
Collaboration

- Strong partnerships between general and special education teachers

Positive Student
Relationships

- Increased acceptance and understanding
- Developed friendships across different abilities

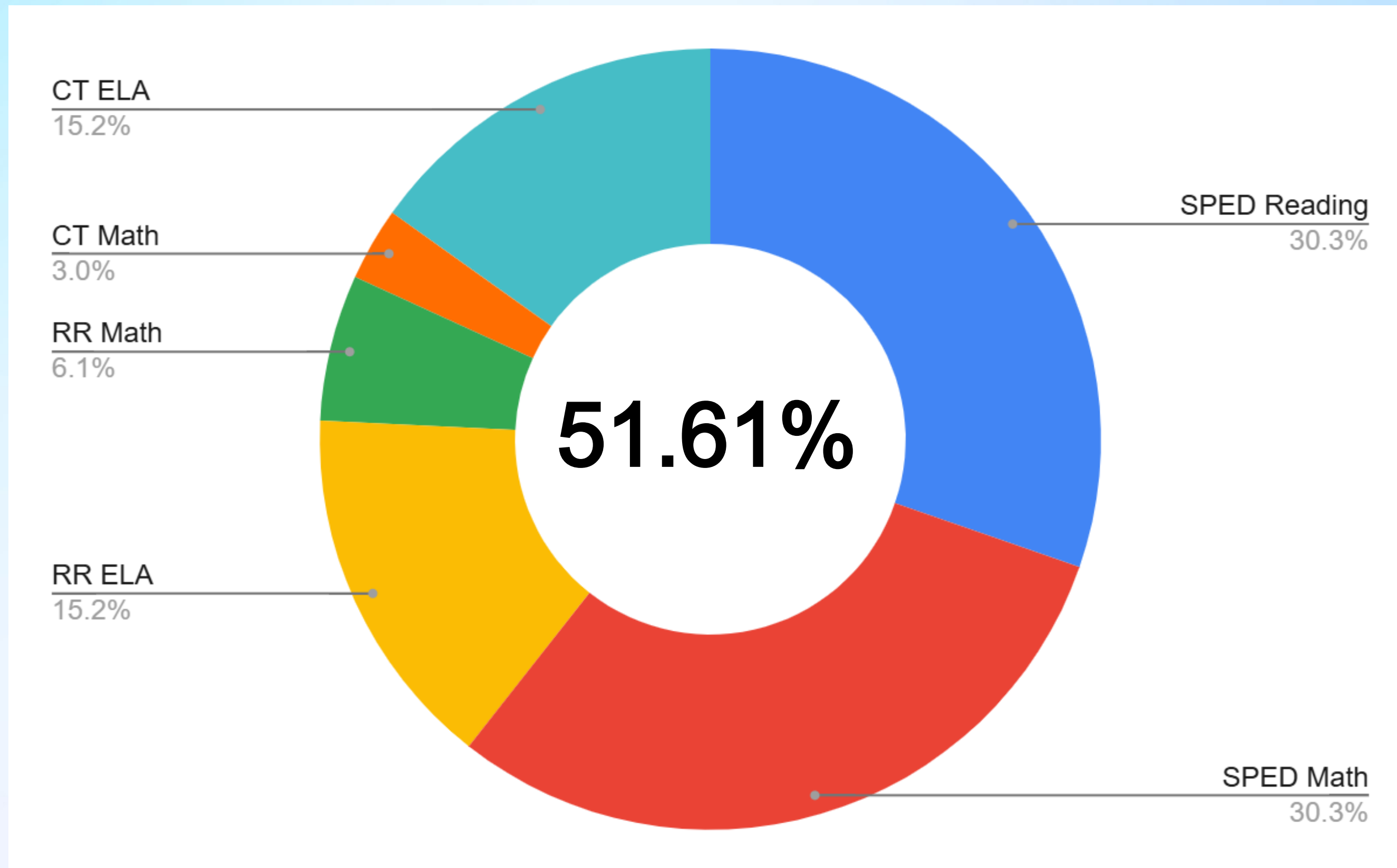
Improved Outcomes
for Students with
Disabilities

- Significant progress for many students with disabilities

Challenges	Changes Made
Resource Limitations	Building Community Partnerships
Training Gaps	Strengthening Professional Development
Family Engagement	Implementing Feedback Mechanisms



What does the data say?



CT-Consultant Teacher

RR - Resource Room

SPED- Special Education Classroom

What *e/se* does the data say?

Academic Readiness



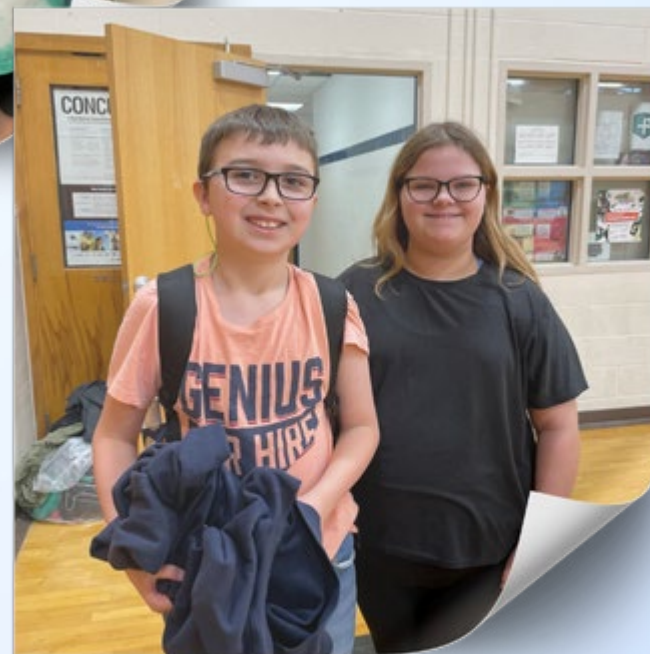
8th
Grade



Peer Relationships



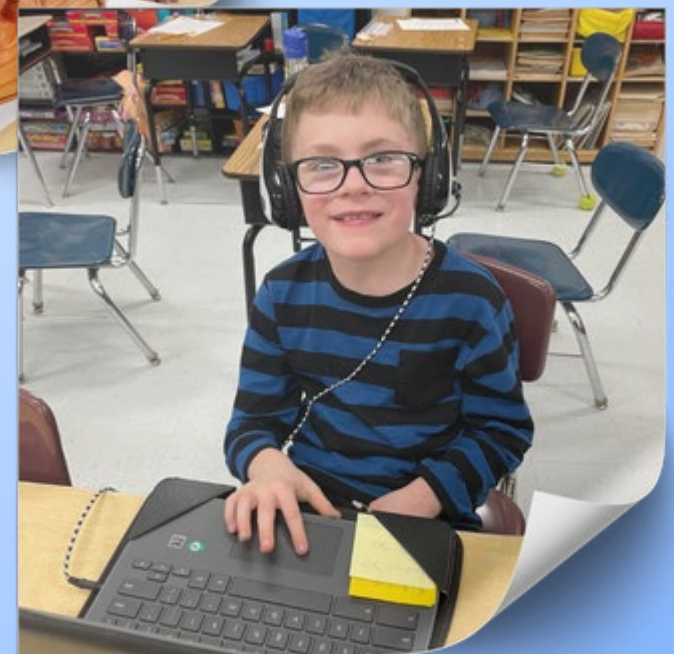
5th
Grade



Social-Emotional
Development



3rd
Grade



Rochester CSD Panel Members



Dr. Eva Thomas

**Executive
Director of Early
Childhood**



Amanda Hefferon

**Director of Children's
Services - Happiness
House (CBO)**



**Kathryn
Arzuaga**

**Academy
Director of
Early Childhood**

Rochester CSD



2,764 PK3 and PK4 Students
25 Elementary Based School Sites
1 District Based Program Site
23 Community Based Organizations (CBO)
16 Special Classes in an Integrated Setting
7 Special Classes 8+1+3





Rochester CSD UPK Program Supports



Instructional Focus and Support

PreK Support Team:
Coaches
Music and Movement Specialist
Social Workers
Lead Paraprofessional
Adult Family Educators

Collaboration



Community Partnerships

Professional Learning Opportunities





happiness HOUSE

an Ability Partners agency



- 1 Integrated Pre-K (SCIS)**
 - * 8 students with IEPs**
 - * 8 general education students**

**Partnership began
September 2022**



Ensuring Access, Participation & Support



Individualized Programming
Utilizing a Strength Based
Approach



Active participatory &
hands-on learning



Collaborative Play
Cooperative Learning
Enhanced Communication

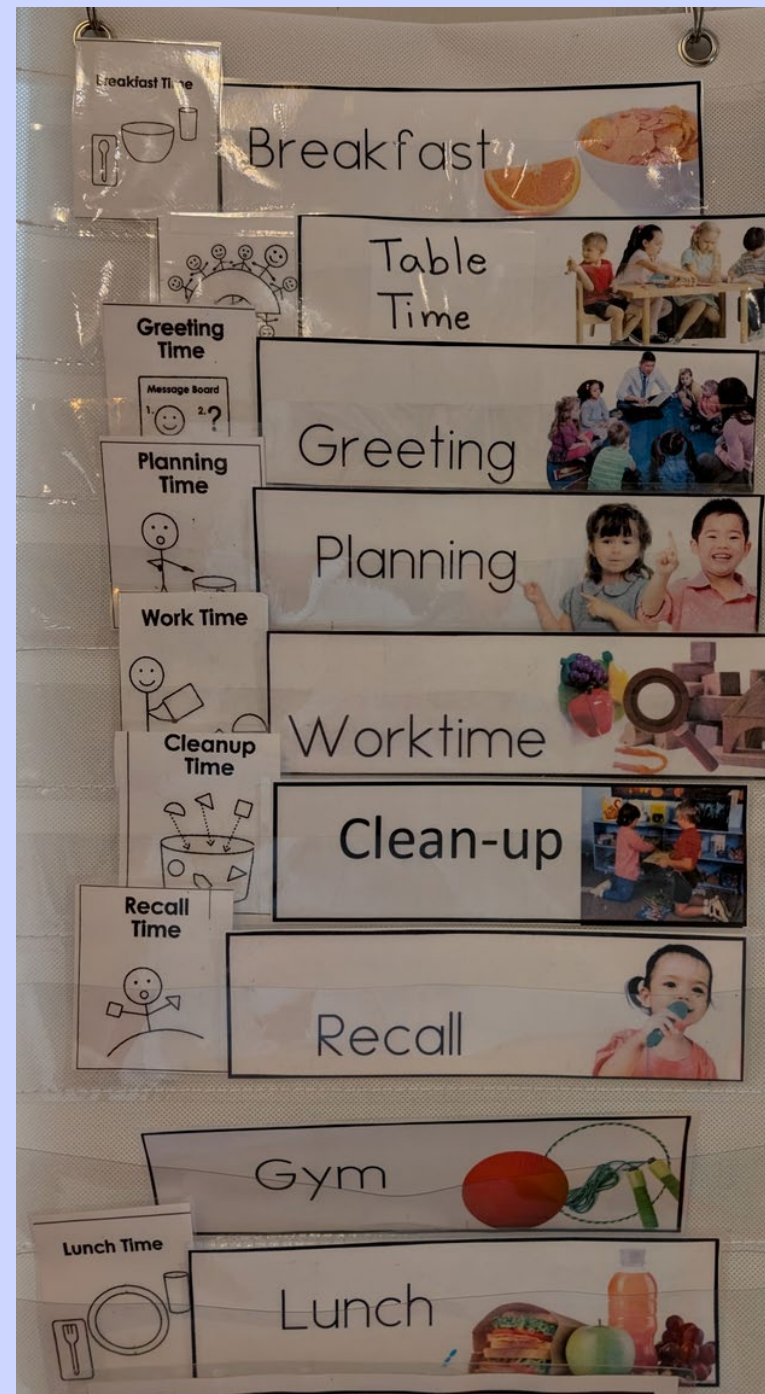


Individualized Programming Utilizing a Strength Based Approach



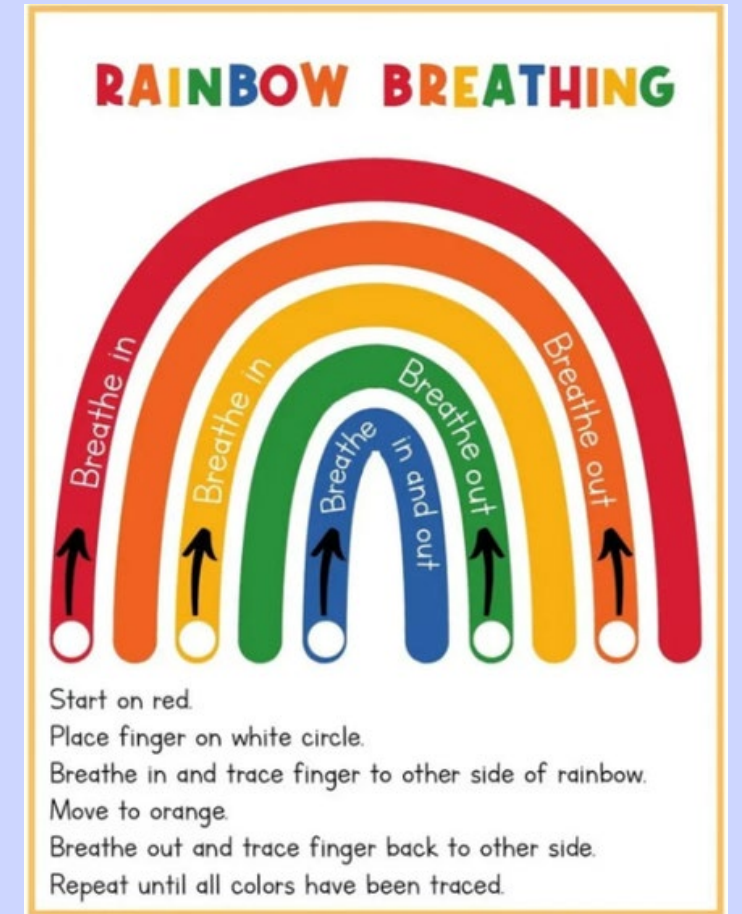


Collaborative Play Cooperative Learning Enhanced Communication





Environmental Supports





Building a Community



Empathy



Confidence

Acceptance

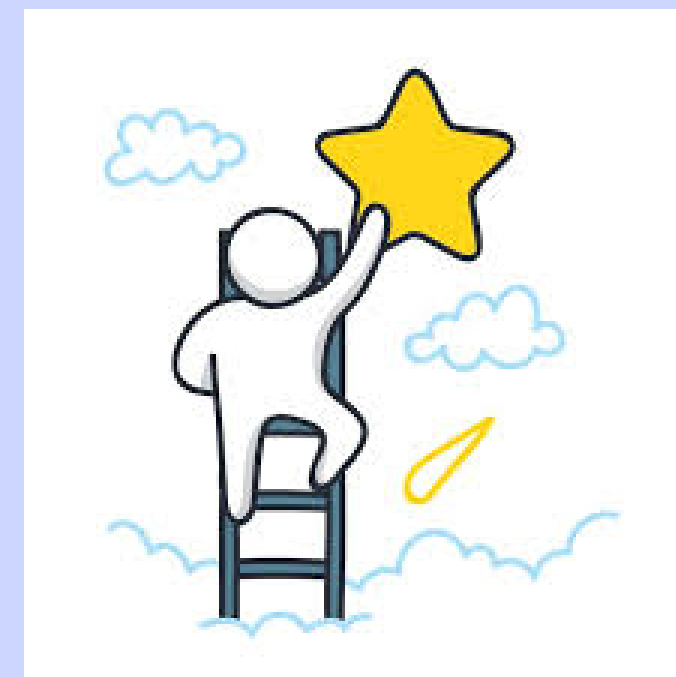
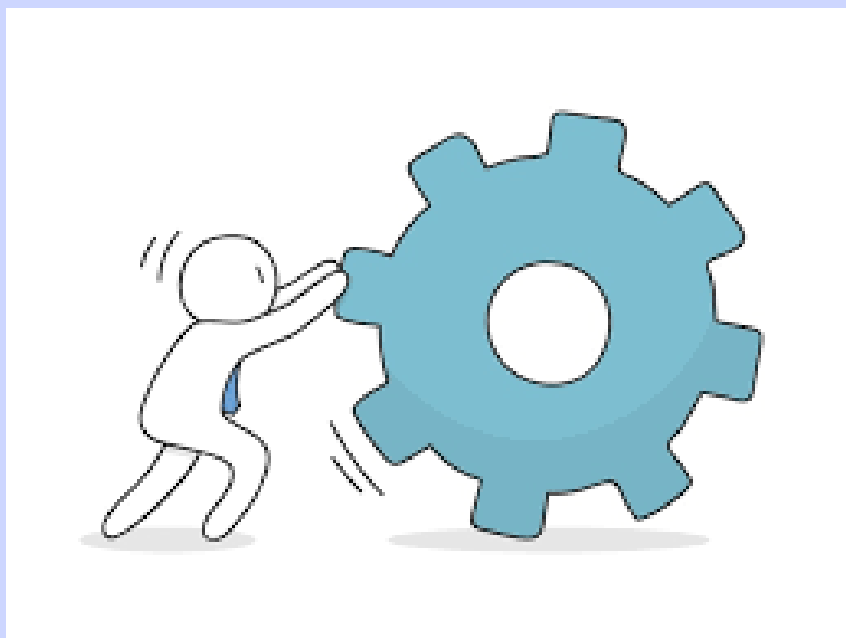
Leaders



Success

opportunities to engage with their
neurotypically developing peers

parent support & engagement



Challenge

undiagnosed areas of developmental
concern

limited service providers

Tiegerman Schools' Panel Members



Erica Citrin
Administrator
Tiegerman

Preschool/Elementary School

Michelle Neitz
Administrator
Tiegerman

Preschool/Elementary School

Karen Katzman
Principal
Tiegerman

Preschool/Elementary School



Tiegerman Schools



- NYS Approved, Non-Public
 - 4410 and 853 programs
- Providing language-based programming for students from Preschool through High School across 6 campuses on Long Island and in Queens

Tiegerman Preschool/Prekindergarten

Preschool & Prekindergarten Programming

- 1 Integrated Preschool class (3-year olds)
- 3 Integrated Prekindergarten classes (4-year olds)
- 6 Self-Contained Preschool , Prekindergarten classes



Tiegerman Preschool/Prekindergarten

Inclusion: Access, Participation and Support

Access

- Rich language opportunities
- State learning standards

Participation

- Meaningful
- Accommodations/modifications
- Individual screening and progress monitoring
- Integration of children's individual learning goals (IEP goals) throughout the curriculum



Support

- Ongoing professional development and training opportunities
- Monthly parent trainings
- Community partnerships
- Families as partners
- Co-teaching model
- Transdisciplinary model

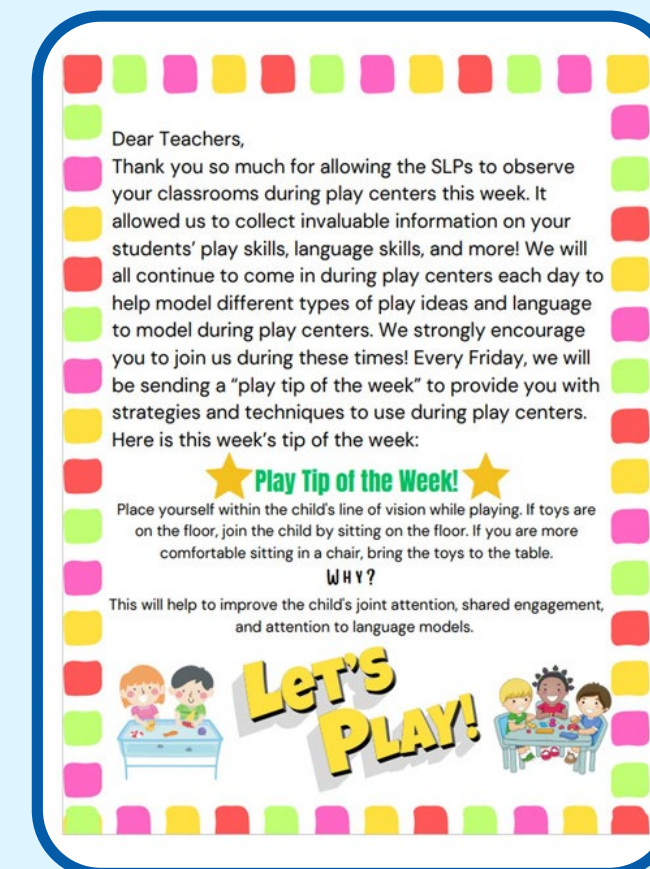
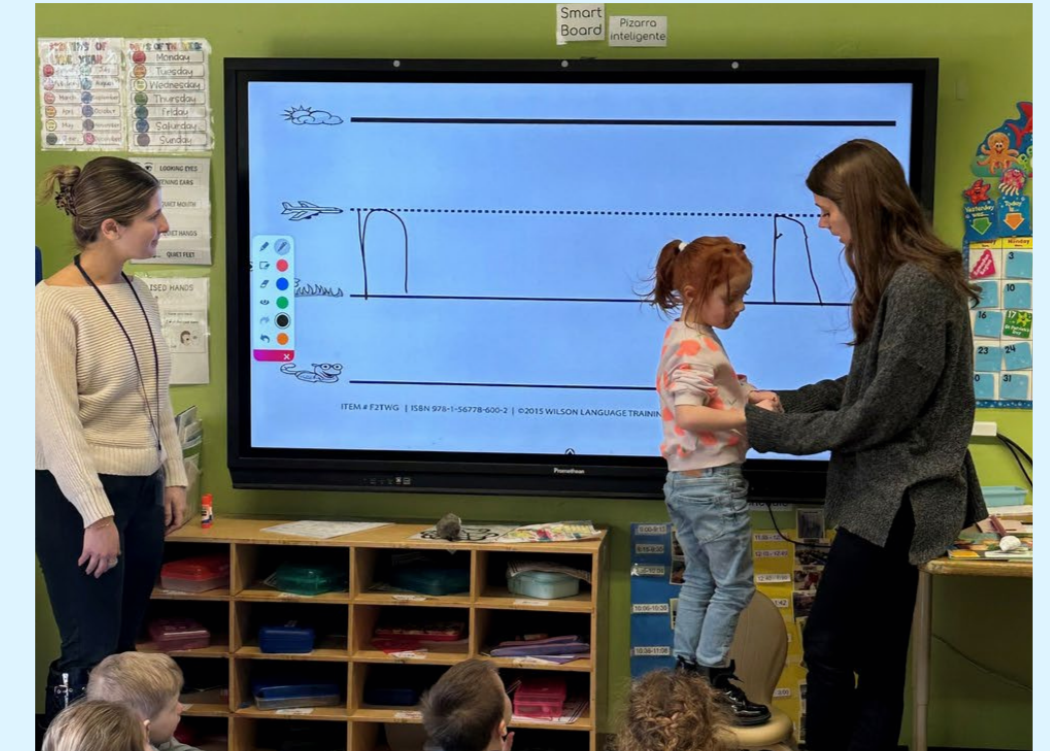




Tiegerman Preschool/Prekindergarten

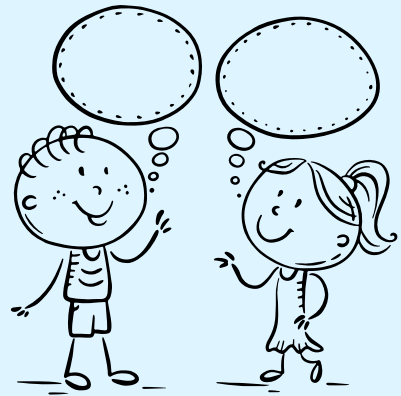
Inclusion: Supports for Teachers

- **Collaboration Within and Across Disciplines**
 - **Co-Teaching Model** - Each class taught by 2 teachers (1 Special Education, 1 General Education Teacher)
 - **Transdisciplinary Model** - Collaborative problem solving among teachers, specialists and support staff
 - *Example: "LET'S PLAY!"*
- **Professional Development and Training**
- **Monthly Classroom Team Meetings**
- **Mentorship Program**
- **New Teacher and TA Trainings**
- **Teacher and TA Evaluations 3x per year**



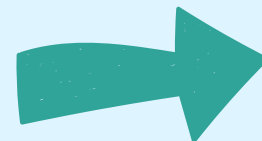
Tiegerman Preschool/Prekindergarten

Inclusion: Supports for Teachers and Teaching Assistants



Emphasis on Language Development as a Foundation for Learning

- Children are immersed in language throughout the day to stimulate and support the development of their oral language skills
 - Language Development Strategies
- Facilitates all children's participation in and achievement of high learning expectations outlined in the NYS Prekindergarten Learning Standards



Language Strategy		Example:
Modeling	A model (i.e., statement or comment) of the target sound, word or language form, <i>emphasizing the target feature</i>	(when working on verb + -ing) Adult may describe what students in classroom are doing (i.e., "Johnny is sitting." "Now he is standing.")
Focused Contrasts	A production by an adult that shows the difference between the child's speech or language and the adult's Done by modeling or providing corrective feedback	Modeling: (when working on plural -s) - Continually request 1 and then 2 other items from child during play, highlighting the difference (i.e., 1 "car," 2 more "cars") Corrective Feedback: "You said 'Otay' but I said 'Okay'." (could then further explain the difference between /t/ and /k/)
Event Casts	An ongoing description or narration of an activity (similar to a voice over, sports commentary or "Think Aloud") Can describe either what the child or the adult is doing	Adult may describe what she is doing, as she is doing it ("First I have to open the frosting. <u>I'm</u> scooping out some frosting with my spoon and putting it on my cookie. Now I'm spreading the frosting on my cookie...")
Expansions	Adult repeats the child's utterance and fills in the missing components	Child: "This heavy." Adult: "Yes, this pumpkin is heavy."
Recasts	Adult maintains the basic meaning of the child's utterance but changes the grammar	Child: "He stands up now." Adult: "Yes, he is standing up now."
Open-Ended Questions	Questions with a variety of possible answers that can generate more language, as the child can construct his/her own response As opposed to a <u>close-ended</u> question which may have a specific or a single correct answer, or a limited number of responses (e.g., yes/no ques., multiple choice ques., "Where does a pig live?")	"What do you see?" "What do you think is going to happen next?" "Why do you think the boy did that?"
Redirects & Prompted Initiations	Redirect: When a child makes a request to an adult that could/should be made to another child, the adult <i>redirects</i> the child's initiation by suggesting he/she talk with the other child (adult could provide a model of how to do this for the child) Prompted Initiation: When the child <i>does not</i> make a request to an adult; instead the adult suggests or prompts the child to approach another child to play or request an item.	<u>Child who is waiting for a turn with a toy truck approached an adult and says, "I want to play with the truck."</u> Adult <i>redirects</i> the child's initiation by suggesting the child talk with the other child playing with the truck. Adult can model (e.g., "Tell Sam, it's my turn.")

Tiegerman Preschool/Prekindergarten

Inclusion: Successes and Challenges

Successes

- Expand and diversify our school community
- Promote interaction and understanding within the classroom and school community
- Co-teaching model benefits all
- Students learn from each other

Challenges

- Initial concerns of families
- Maintain teacher focus on individual vs. group differences
- Larger class size
- Planning time
- Staffing

&

Changes

- Open House & Back to School Night
- Teacher training: Differentiation
- Teacher training: Co-Teaching Models
- Weekly Common Planning Period
- Expanded outreach for potential candidates



What was one thing presented by our panelists that you are excited to bring back to your team?



- What is the current state of inclusive practices in your district's UPK program including collaborating partners?
- Are inclusive practices a priority for your entire program and district-wide? Is the message clear and well communicated?
- Has your district created the necessary systems and processes to build a more inclusive program?
- What does your data say about inclusive practices and student progress?



Contact Us:

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THANK YOU!