

A young boy with dark hair, wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt, is standing and high-fiving a teacher. The teacher is a Black woman with long braids, wearing glasses and a blue denim shirt. They are in a classroom setting with shelves of supplies and a TV in the background. A semi-transparent blue box contains the title text.

Closing the Gap for All Students

3-5 year Plan



Student Achievement Committee - September 22, 2026



WAKE COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

Desired Outcomes



- Review Special Education Indicator Data and other data sets to identify celebrations and challenges
- Make connections between what we see and where we are going
- Discuss shifts in training, expectations and mindset that will assist us in arriving where Wake County Public Schools must go to create better outcomes for all students





Data Review

Celebrations and Challenges



WAKE COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

THE SUCCESS JOURNEY OF OCS SENIORS

ENTERING THE OCS DIPLOMA TRACK:
191 SENIORS TOTAL



RIGOROUS
VOCATIONAL
TRAINING



OCCUPATIONAL
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT



MENTOR



186 STUDENTS
ACHIEVED THE DIPLOMA



HIGHER EDUCATION



CAREERS &
TECHNICAL SKILLS



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Wake County Students with Disabilities (SWD) Outcomes Snapshot



Wake County Special Education Outcomes Snapshot What the Data is Signaling

Indicator 1 FFY 2024

Graduation

FFY 2022 Data	FFY 2023 Data	FFY 2024 Data	FFY 2024 Target	2024 Status	2024 Slippage
76%	80.36%	82%	80.77%	DNM	No

Indicator 2 FFY 2024

Dropout

FFY 2022 Data	FFY 2023 Data	FFY 2024 Data	FFY 2024 Target	2024 Status	2024 Slippage
21%	17%	16.7%	10.66%	DNM	No

Indicator 3B Reading FFY 2025

Proficiency on Grade Level Standards

Group	FFY 2024 Data	FFY 2025 Data	FFY 2025 Target	2025 Status	2025 Slippage
4th Reading	13.53%	17%	24.25%	DNM	No
8th Reading	8.84%	9.71%	20.70%	DNM	No
HS Reading	12.53%	11/67%	24.57%	DNM	Yes

Indicator 3B Math FFY 2025

Proficiency on Grade Level Standards

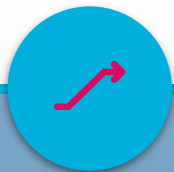
Group	FFY 2024 Data	FFY 2025 Data	FFY 2025 Target	2024 Status	2024 Slippage
4th Math	16.14%	18.14%	22.28%	DNM	No
8th Math	10.45%	12.71	11.24%	DMN	No
HS Math	6.84%	7.36%	18.58%	DNM	No

Celebrations & Challenges





What do we see?



Celebrations

- Graduation rate for students with disabilities is increasing
- Drop out rate is decreasing
- Most proficiency rates for Math and Reading are moving in a positive direction



Challenges

- Dropout rate is not decreasing fast enough
- Proficiency rates are not moving fast enough to meet the target in the near future
- Achievement gaps are not closing and in many cases are growing



Wonders

- Consider the graduation rate with the high school proficiency rate
- How could positive progress in preschool outcomes propel us to make greater gains in K-12
- What do we need to do differently to close these gaps



Now that we see the past, what will we do
about the future

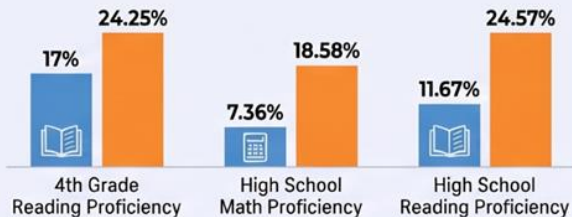
Bridging the Gap: Moving from Compliance to Instructional Excellence for Students with Disabilities

The Performance Challenge

Academic Proficiency Below Targets, Widening Proficiency Gaps, and High Dropout Rates.

Academic Proficiency Below Targets

■ Actual Data ■ Target Goal (FFY 2025)



Widening Proficiency Gaps

Significant performance gaps persist between students with IEPs and the general student population.

16.7% Current Rate for Students with Disabilities
10.66% Target Goal

Strategic Shifts for Improvement

Transition to a strategy rooted in high-quality core instruction and specialized teacher expertise.

Prioritize Core General Education

Shift toward delivering core instruction in general education settings by highly skilled classroom teachers.



Expertise Over Generalization

Ensure students have access to teachers with deep subject-specific expertise rather than generalist support.

Leading Practice, Not Just Compliance

Transition leadership focus from managing paperwork and compliance to driving instructional quality and practice





How will we shift our focus to make
increased gains for Special Education
Students in Wake County

From Shifts to Systems:

Building Strong Instructional Systems that Drive Improved Outcomes for All Learners

Six Shifts to Improve Special Education and Other Interventions

A COMMONSENSE APPROACH
FOR SCHOOL LEADERS



NATHAN LEVENSON



Shift 1
From Special
Education to General
Education



Shift 2
From More Adults to
More Time



Shift 3
From Generalists to
Specialists



Shift 4
From Deterrence to
Prevention to Better
Address Social,
Emotional and
Behavioral Needs



Shift 5
From One Good
Schedule to Many
Great Schedules

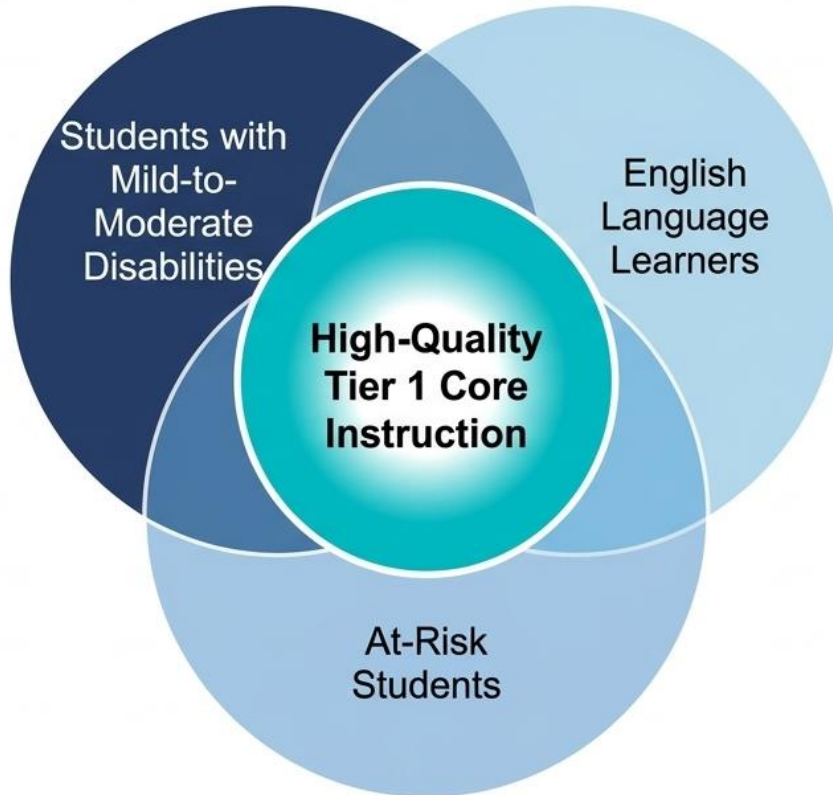


Shift 6
From Managing
Compliance to
Managing Practice,
Too



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Shift 1: The general education classroom is the primary engine for academic growth.

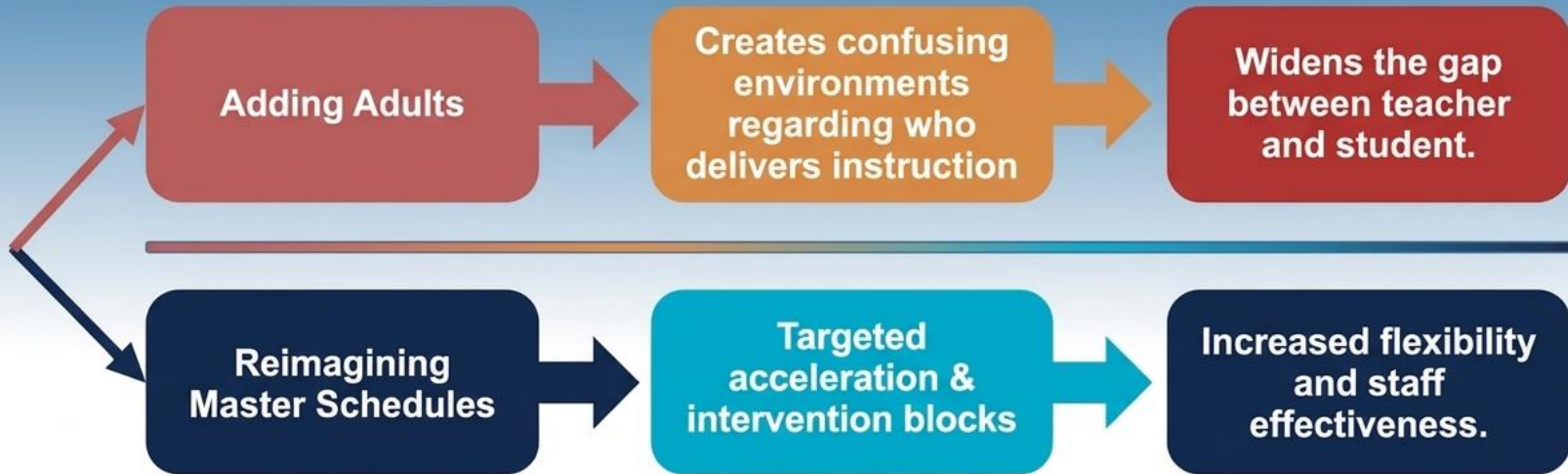


- General education teachers must ensure access to core instruction.
- Provide training in High Leverage Practices (HLP) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

Shift 1 - How do we get there

- Provide training and support for general education teachers in High Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities from Academic Advancement Team (AAT)
- Provide training and support for general education teachers in using Universal Design for Learning strategies from AAT
- Both of these training endeavors will support students with disabilities and all learners to made progress in core instruction

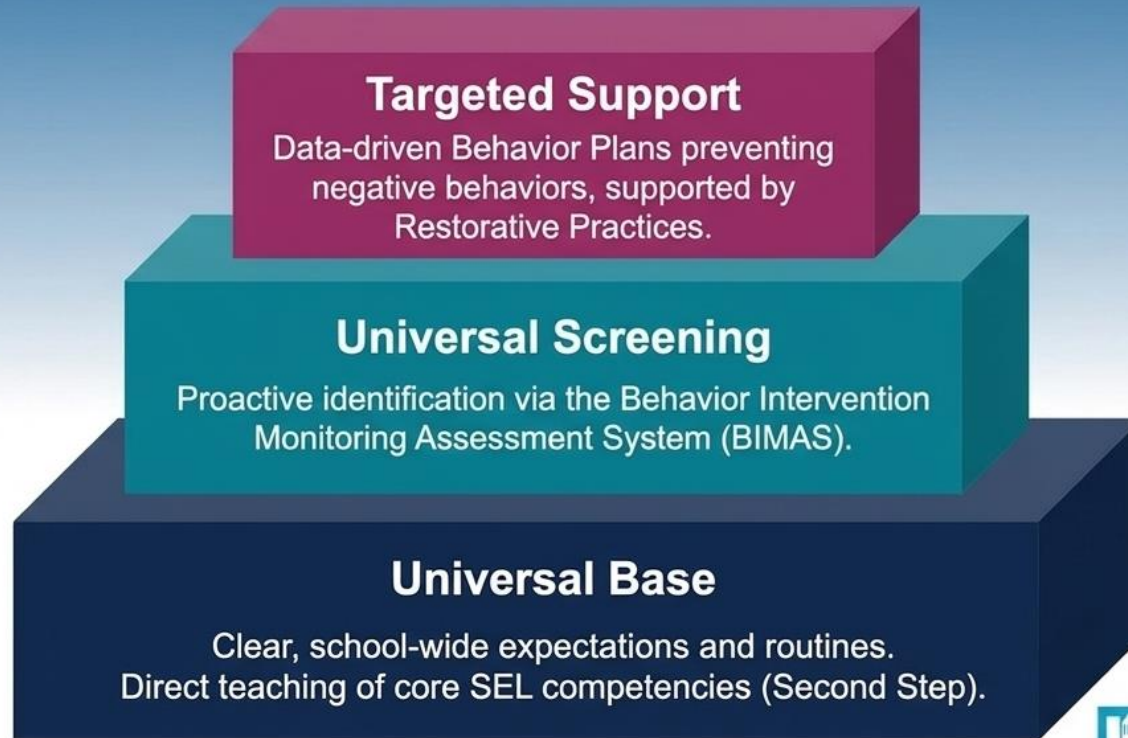
Shift 2: Maximize instructional time with content experts rather than adding generalized adult support.



Shift 2 - How do we get there

- AAT will work with area and school leadership teams to reimagine scheduling that maximized staff effectiveness and increases flexibility so that all students receive what they need in the school environment
- Leaning on times of the day to provide acceleration, intervention and enhancement will provide time for all students to receive the support they need to excel in school

Shift 4: Engineering environments for prevention through universal expectations and targeted supports.



Shift 4 - How will we get there

- Schools must self-assess to determine their needs related to preventative measures for social emotional learning in their schools
- Schools will continue to be expected to use the Behavior Intervention Monitoring Assessment System (BIMAS) as a universal screener for social emotional competencies
- Schools will continue to use Second Step to provide direct instruction and support for social emotional competencies
- Students identified with behavioral needs will be supported with Behavior Plans including interventions that prevent negative behavior. These plans will be updated regularly use data
- Schools who demonstrate readiness will be trained in restorative practices as another layer of support

The District Blueprint: Central Services Planning and Support



High Leverage Practices

Instructional Services & Special Ed staff identified as trainers



Universal Design for Learning

AAT teams assembled to leverage UDL strategies



Restorative Practices

Student Support & Special Ed teams training for school implementation



Accountability

AAT developing clear expectations for transparent communication

Resources



- [Book study on Six Shifts to Improve Special Education and Other Interventions](#)
- [High Leverage Practices Website](#)
- [High Leverage Practices Alignment Tool](#)
- [Wake County SWD Outcomes Snapshot](#)



QUESTIONS?