

## Special Education Data Report – September 2022

Issued October 3, 2022

The 2021-22 school year marked the DOE's return to full-time, in-person instruction following the period of blended and remote learning between March 2020 and August 2021. The DOE's long-standing efforts to prioritize the provision of IEP-recommended programs and services resulted in marked year-over-year improvements in nearly all program and service areas, despite the staffing challenges in key positions brought about by the pandemic. These gains are the result of the DOE's ongoing efforts to address the shortage of special education teachers and related service providers, expand bilingual special education programs, and strengthen our communication with families.

We have engaged in an ongoing analysis of the special education teacher gap across the system and have identified that the need for certified special education teachers continues to be concentrated in a small number of schools with significant need. This concentration offers an important opportunity to focus support and resources on a relatively small number of schools for an outsized gain in delivery of services. The small cohort of schools with the greatest teacher gap have received direct, ongoing support to hire certified teachers to address unserved mandates. To accomplish the goal of increasing the number of special education teachers where they are most needed, the Office of Teacher Recruitment and Quality (TRQ) has implemented several key activities:

- TRQ has continued to support and expand teacher pipelines to meet the hiring needs of our schools. In addition, the office continues to build partnerships throughout the DOE and with external stakeholders to facilitate continuous recruitment cycles to be responsive to the special education hiring needs of our schools.
- Over the past year, the DOE's Alternative Certification pipelines accounted for more than two-thirds of all new hires in secondary special education.
- The DOE created recruitment programs and virtual hiring events specifically for District 75 to ensure schools had access to the talent they needed.
- The DOE launched a resources section on special education staffing on the principal facing site [HIRE](#) Connections and held a special education staffing webinar for all hiring managers.
- The DOE expanded access to subsidized special education certification programs for current teachers. Approximately 270 teachers are participating in these programs.
- The DOE also is promoting policies to ensure teachers have the training and credentials to support students with disabilities. Throughout the hiring season, the recruitment team partnered with BCOs and now District teams, as well as divisional partners, to host frequent virtual events for school leaders to connect with teacher candidates.

We have also seen substantial improvement in related services staffing levels. Since July 2021, we have hired approximately 690 occupational, physical, and speech therapists, with a priority placed on Bronx schools in Districts 7-12 and in District 75. The DOE continues aggressive staffing efforts; to date in the 2022-23 school year, we have hired more than 155 new therapists, approximately one quarter of whom are placed in the Bronx. We continue to review candidates and process new hires.

Historical OT/PT/SP Hiring Snapshot:

FY	D1-32				D75				Total			
	OT	PT	SP - Mono	SP - Bi	OT	PT	SP - Mono	SP - Bi	OT	PT	SP - Mono	SP - Bi
FY 2018	59	7	155	17	42	5	29		101	12	184	17
FY 2019	78	10	190	39	75	7	48	2	153	17	238	41
FY 2020	110	18	209	51	84	7	79	3	194	25	288	54
FY 2021	26	0	49	21	41	2	66	4	67	2	115	25
FY 2022	133	17	264	36	75	8	60	8	208	25	324	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>867</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>1,149</b>	<b>181</b>

**Implementation of Special Education Programs:**

As of June 15, the percentage of students receiving their recommended special education programs in full was ~88%, and the percentage of students fully *or* partially receiving their recommended programs was ~99%. Since 2015, the percentage of students fully receiving their ICT, special class, and SETSS has risen from ~60% to 88%, and this year's figures represent ***the highest performance ever reported for this time in the school year.*** These rates are a snapshot in time but are a useful reflection of the status of special education program and service delivery and demonstrate a positive trajectory toward providing recommended services to all students with IEPs. That said, the 13-percentage point gap between fully and partially served programs points to critical areas for improvement that drive work going forward, as described below.

Under the new operational structure, superintendent teams have continued to engage in deep reviews of district and school-level data, with a focus on actionable improvements. Each year, every district team participates in support sessions aimed at building their capacity to directly support schools in this work. Since early September 2022, all new superintendents and their teams have participated in direct support sessions with the Special Education Office to target specific areas of improvement.

Principals are participating in ongoing professional learning focused on the weekly reports they receive to identify and eliminate service gaps. These sessions provide school leaders with the tools to review and utilize the information in these reports to improve their schools' delivery of special education programs, to support them in implementing a resolution team structure to identify and correct unserved recommendations and system reporting errors, and to take appropriate steps to fully serve all students.

**June 2021 Compared to June 2022**

	June 14, 2021	June 15, 2022	
Primary Program Type	Percent Fully Receiving	Percent Fully Receiving	Change in Percentage Points
Integrated Co-Teaching Services	86.9%	88.9%	+ 2.0 points
SETSS	87.3%	87.0%	- 0.3 points
Special Class	86.3%	87.4%	+ 1.1 points

<b>Total</b>	<b>86.7%</b>	<b>88.2%</b>	<b>+ 1.5 points</b>
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**Implementation of Related Services:**

During 2021-22, the DOE's related service provision rates returned to pre-pandemic levels. *As of June, citywide service levels were at ~95%, with six of nine of the former BCOs above 95% of IEP related service recommendations fully served.*

**June 2021 Compared to June 2022**

Related Services Recommendation Type	June 14, 2021	June 15, 2022	Change in Percentage Points
	Percent Full Encounter	Percent Full Encounter	
<b>Counseling Services</b>	91.3%	93.6%	+ 2.3 points
<b>Counseling Services Bilingual</b>	64.8%	79.2%	+ 14.4 points
<b>Hearing Education Services</b>	93.9%	95.9%	+ 2.0 points
<b>Occupational Therapy</b>	91.7%	93.3%	+ 1.6 points
<b>Physical Therapy</b>	91.2%	95.5%	+ 4.3 points
<b>Speech-Language Therapy</b>	94.6%	97.4%	+ 2.8 points
<b>Speech-Language Therapy Bilingual</b>	83.4%	87.0%	+ 3.6 points
<b>Vision Education Services</b>	89.9%	90.1%	+ 0.2 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>92.5%</b>	<b>95.0%</b>	<b>+ 2.5 points</b>

Strategies for making further progress towards the goal of full service provision include:

- Working with providers and their supervisors to serve as many students as possible, consistent with IEP recommendations, and to ensure that any unserved recommendations are identified and communicated quickly and effectively for action.
- Hiring aggressively, despite well documented labor market headwinds, to meet remaining unserved needs, with a priority on our hardest to serve communities.
  - In collaboration with Division of Human Resources, intentional recruitment practices, including loan forgiveness and scholarship programs specific to high needs communities/settings and aggressive provider recruitment across all platforms
- Consistently monitoring and aggressively following up with contract agencies utilized to meet needs not served by DOE staff.

- Regularly providing superintendents and borough/citywide teams with the data needed to support strategic action to improve service provision.
- Consistent use of Related Services Supervisory data tools for continued monitoring, tracking and targeted follow-up of service provision
- In the longer term, reimagining the structure of related services contracts to be more flexible and responsive to DOE needs

Despite the many persistent challenges brought on by the pandemic, we continuously work to improve how we serve our students with IEPs. No aspect of in-person learning has gone untouched by the pandemic, including getting to and from school. The DOE has made great efforts to resolve challenges related to staffing paraprofessionals and school bus transportation, and the DOE will continue to make every effort to maintain continuity of services safely.