

Steering Committee: Improve Experiences and Outcomes for Students with Disabilities Meet on September 19, 2019

A report with data from the Statewide Survey of educators given in March of 2019 will be published soon. No exact date is set yet. The report will also have an executive summary or overview of the entire report.

Out of all participants in the Statewide Survey 75 educators volunteered to also participate in a Virtual Teacher Focus Group. This focus group was designed to have a diverse group in both experience in education and between general educators and special educators. They were asked:

- “What do you think Ohio needs to focus on first in order to improve the educational experiences and outcomes for students with disabilities?” Staffing, Equity, Professional Development (that provides support and best practice to both general educators and special educators), and confusion over the term inclusion were the top responses.
- “What actions should ODE take to improve educational experiences and outcomes for students with disabilities?” Communicate, change how we assess students (state testing) and reduce paperwork were their top answers.
- “What else do you want ODE to know?” They responded that they want ODE to know that they work really hard and that their efforts to build the students up with differentiation and modifications and it might not show in testing results.

Thirteen Town Hall meetings were held across the state of Ohio to gain feedback regarding their experiences with their special need students. Below are the things they felt make a positive impact:

- Caring and supportive staff make a difference
- Leadership Matters
- Positive School Culture
- Schools who build partnerships with parents/school
- Professional development
- Support navigating the special education process

Four Student Voice Focus Group meetings were held across Ohio. 33 students participated. All students were 14 years or older. Students that participated came from all demographics. They provided the following feedback regarding their experiences:

- Relationships and fun make school enjoyable
- Academics can be the hardest part of school
- IEP meetings depend on relationships
- Teachers are at the heart of education

The students also provided the following recommendations:

- They need help with homework
- They want more options
- Bullying is real
- Don't take them out of classes they like to get services (art, music, etc)

The remaining part of our time was to give feedback on the work team's (literacy, disproportionality, effective leadership, and transition/graduation) action recommendations for the plan.

ODE will be developing a cross-agency group which will help with implementation of a drafted plan. TBD

