



# When Innovation Meets Compassion: Reimagining Preschool Inclusion



27J Schools Intensive Flex preschool program

## Background

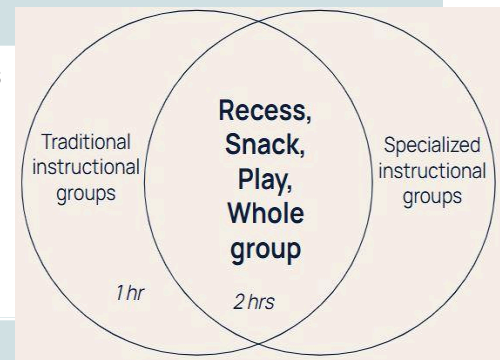
- 4th highest district for growth but 175/178th for funding
- Large geographical area covered and still growing

## The Problem

- Increase in significantly-impacted students with autism and global developmental delay
- Fully-integrated programming not meeting the needs of students

## The Solution

- Creation of innovative programming for most impacted students
- Mix of integrated experiences and intensive instruction (not fully integrated or fully self-contained)
- Minimum of 50% of day integrated with neuro-typical peers
- Teams of teachers with partner classrooms working together
- Dedicated MH, OT, SLP and specialized administration
- Expectation of ongoing and active collaboration



## Core Beliefs

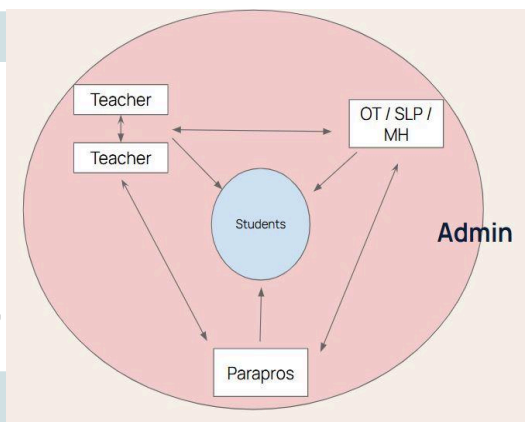
- Strengths-based approach/mindset for both students, staff, and family communication
- Student readiness to increase integration time consistently reviewed and implemented

## Innovative inclusion AND intensive instruction

- Automatic and meaningful inclusion during recess, snack, play, whole group instruction
- Strategies for engagement and communication are embedded during entire day to provide true wraparound supports
- Neuro-typical peers are taught directly and indirectly how to communicate and interact
- Intensive students separated from neuro-typical peers for specialized instruction of IEP goals and differentiated traditional curriculum

## Staff supports

- Ongoing PD provided to all Classified staff
- Structured problem-solving with Teachers, RSPs, & Admin
- Collaboration to embed IEP goals into specialized, differentiated instruction
- Collaboration between Teachers and Teachers, Teachers and Classified
- Related Service Providers provide in-class coaching, modeling, and problem-solving in addition to direct service minutes



## Outcomes

- Individual student growth and anecdotes from families
- Constant program evaluation leading to refinement of program every year
- Cost-effectiveness and systemic impact on district
- Comparison to quality indicators for inclusion and EBPs for students with autism
- Distinguished reputation leading to University and District interest



## Impact statements from key stakeholders

**27J Schools Superintendent:** "Intensive Flex Programming is a brilliantly simple creation. Engage every service provider together collaboratively to find creative solutions for students. While that sentence says it all, it is absolutely incredible to observe a group of people living up to this statement for the betterment of each of our preschool students. The IF program models the care, the mindset, the problem solving, and the collaboration that we can only dream of for every student, pk-12th grade."

**Executive Director of Schools:** "IF models believing in every kid, and *Admin* believing in every staff member to make a difference, and them believing in themselves. Tireless effort focused on every kid, and what's best for them. No ego from the team. Selfless."

**Family:** "They helped us create and understand our son's IEP, so he could receive the best education and support. We had so much support, not only while my son was a student there but also when my son was moving on to kindergarten. They work well as a team and my family will always be grateful for all their help! Thank you all."

**Family:** "We have never encountered a dedicated staff, and transformational place as *Intensive Flex* before and we are not sure if there is any place like it elsewhere. My wife and I always wished that only every child in Colorado could have that kind of preschool experience. Our journey with you guys was transformational. Your team has a keen ability to identify each kid's needs and meet them where they are at and nurture them to become amazing little people."

**Family:** "The support for us parents was also just amazing. We attended the monthly meetings that helped with education about and community for our special girl. By the end of her second year, everyone in the building felt like family. They not only taught and supported our daughter, every single person loved and cared for her like their own. We couldn't end the school year without a photo of all her "friends" from the past 2 years."

**Staff:** "I chose to work at Bright Beginnings and stay in the Intensive Flex program because of the support I receive. It is one of the most collaborative environments I have worked in and I never feel alone when trying to figure out a solution for a student. It's a team effort where we are all working TOGETHER to do what is best for kids!"

**Staff:** "Working in the Intensive Flex Program can be a challenge sometimes, but the students are the most rewarding part. Seeing their joy, growth, progress, and accomplishments is very fulfilling. They excel at exceeding their potential at every turn, regardless of their needs."

**Staff:** Why I choose to stay working in the program is because once I stepped foot in Jill's room I knew I could make an impact. I knew from the moment I worked with each child they could impact my life as well. Everyday is different but everyday is rewarding. There is really no place I'd rather be. I appreciate all the training and support I have got and I look forward to watching every child grow."

**Staff:** "I believe that every child deserves a loving, safe and supportive classroom where they are challenged and can make progress. Their world is hard and I want to make it easier for them to navigate the best I can. I want to help them build the skills they will need to communicate and be respected by their peers. We all are special and bring so much to this world that I want them to feel that way too. When I hear from families that they are using their words more, that bathtime isn't as hard, or that they shared a toy with their siblings, it is all worth it. This job is hard but rewarding and I am grateful to be a part of it."

### For questions, more information, or to set up a time to visit:

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