



# Making Connections to Improve Support Students

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# Session Objectives

- Provide overview of the West Chester Area School District (WCASD)
- Summarize key challenges faced by WCASD from the COVID-19 pandemic and remote instruction
- Share solutions found through:
  - Roundtable discussions focused on challenges, successes and lessons learned
  - Strategic partnerships
  - Utilization of paraprofessional staff and BCBA's to support remote learning

# West Chester Area School District: Perspective

- **The West Chester Area School District** serves a 75-square-mile suburban, urban, and rural region in central Chester County, Pennsylvania.
- **A \$269.8 MILLION BUDGET (2020-21)** supporting more than 11,950 students in ten elementary schools, three middle schools, and three high schools, and nearly 4,000 non-public school students.
- **THE STAFF**, headed by Superintendent Dr. Jim Scanlon, includes more than 950 teachers, 60 administrators and 400 support staff.
- **THE STUDENT BODY** is diverse consisting of: 76.6% white, 6.9% Hispanic, 4.5% Black, 9.1% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 2.9% Multi-Racial.

# COVID-19 Pandemic: Challenges Faced

- **Meeting the needs of each students across multiple modes of instruction**
  - In Person- five days per week
  - Hybrid- in person two or four days per week
  - Remote- five days per week synchronous instruction
  - Cyber- asynchronous instruction
- **Supporting staff and students in school**
- **Supporting students and families with behavioral challenges in the home**

# West Chester Area School District: A History & Implications of COVID-19

***To understand where we are presently, it's important to know how we got here.***

- Changed paraprofessional model several years ago and consulted with Aveanna about the changes. The positive impact has been felt during the pandemic.
- Personal Care Assistant (Old Model) to Personal Care Assistance (New Model).
  - Allows flexibility to interchange paraprofessionals and adults who work with students
  - Allows a paraprofessional to work with multiple students throughout the day
  - Decreases dependency of a student needing to have adult support at all times throughout the day.
- Two years ago, received \$400,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. Some of the monies have been used to support the initiatives with Aveanna.
- Two years ago, the district was cited for disproportionality and needed to spend 15% (\$240,000) of IDEA monies towards early intervening services. Some of the monies have been used to support the initiatives with Aveanna.

## Solving the Challenges

- **How did we attack the problem?**
  - District representatives held multiple virtual roundtable meetings to listen and learn from internal and external stakeholders (i.e., teachers and parents).
  - Challenges were categorized and district personnel were called upon to lead different initiatives.
    - Special ed, regular ed., nursing, facilities, IT, finance, etc...
  - For initiatives we could not support exclusively with internal resources, we called upon some of our vendors to provide support.
    - Aveanna is one of over a dozen vendors we use to support students and staff.

# Finding Solutions

## ***Collaborative process between the district and Aveanna.***

- Leigh Ann Ranieri met with Aveanna's Clinical Director, Norm Dahl, Ph.D., BCBA-D to discuss challenges and possible solutions.
- We developed a model utilizing the Multi-Tiered System of Supports Team (MTSS) procedures.
  - If a student experiences behavioral challenges, a referral is made to an internal MTSS team.
  - A packet/workbook developed by Aveanna is completed by internal staff over the course of 4-6 weeks in an attempt to understand and address the problem internally.
  - If/when internal supports were not successful, the MTSS requests additional support from by sending the completed packet to Dr. Ranieri for review.
  - Dr. Ranieri recommends additional internal efforts or approves external services/supports.
  - Most referrals are sent to Aveanna and processed/triaged by Dr. Dahl who often assigns a BCBA staff to support students and their teams.

# West Chester Area School District: Covid Response

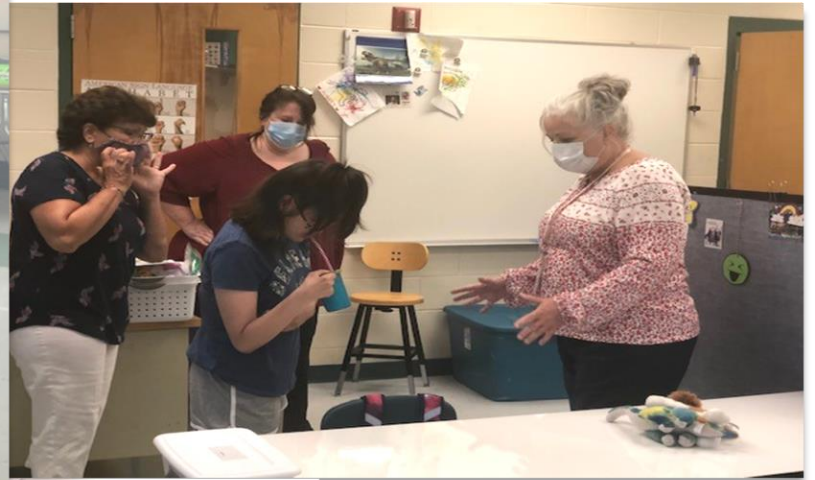
## ***Bringing students back in person starting in the summer 2020***

- Brought the intensive students in first as a pilot over the summer, then five days a week, in person, in the fall. Then, all other students with an IEP were brought on four days per week.
- Other students had the choice to be cyber, remote or hybrid (2 days in person, 2 days remote and 1 day asynchronous)
- A plan was developed to provide paraprofessional support virtually for students on the hybrid remote days. The plan has since expanded plan to provide in-home support if a school building needs to close.
- Utilized MTSS - Teams are looking at regular ed students to determine who to invite in person four days per week based on need and space.
- Next steps - Develop a plan to address learning loss due to school closure and change in instructional model during the pandemic.



# W C A S D

# S t u d e n t s



# Outcomes: 2019-20 Aveanna Data

- 69 behavioral referrals were made
- 33 paraprofessionals were utilized in the district
- In each building that paraprofessionals were placed, ½ day of BCBA support was provided.
- 11 regular education students received services through the grant.
  - Of these 11 students, three ultimately were approved for special education services.
  - Other students received on-going BCBA consultative services until challenges improved.
- For students with IEP's, BCBAs set up data systems to track their progress.

# Success Stories

- Harry- A HS student with significant behavioral concerns two years ago and was recommended for an Approved Private School. Currently, doesn't need Personal Care Assistance(PCA) in the school setting.
- Mary- An elementary student who is unable to stay on task during zoom instruction. A PCA is in the home on remote days
- Alex- A student identified with emotional disturbance and is school avoidant.

# Why is it successful?

- Continuous collaborative relationship with Aveanna over time.
- Flexible services tailored to the needs at the district, building and student.
- Novel approaches in an ever-changing environment.
- Aveanna staff has fully integrated into the WCASD system.
- Ultimately, we're supporting staff, families and meeting the needs of individual students.

# Fiscal Implications

- Efficiency- Lessens the number of paraprofessionals that are needed to support students
- Placements- Lessens the need to identify a student with a disability and/or needing to move to a more restrictive environment
- Compensatory Services- Lessens the potential need or amount that a student might require
- West Chester- 2019-20, spent \$22,000 to support students and families through the grant
- Monies were prioritized from the grants and also budgeted each year. (Supports for students with IEPs are built in the annual budget, while grant funds helped support students without IEPs)/,
- **Why Aveanna?** The district has contracts with multiple vendors. We use Aveanna because their people are well trained and very reliable. The administrative staff is very responsive to our needs and clinical practices are overseen by a BCBA-D with >30 years experience in the field.

# Aveanna Healthcare



EDUCATION  
SERVICES

- Aveanna's Education Services offer a complete approach to healthcare and wellness in schools.
- We provide a variety of customizable educational supports to help identify and remove roadblocks to learning.
- As a national leader in pediatric care, we have extensive experience working with families, schools, and school systems to meet their specific education or acuity levels.
- Our expert clinicians and caregivers work collaboratively with schools and families to develop and maintain programs that help students reach their full potential.
- Our universal programs and client services allow a seamless onboarding and retention process with 24/7 support to staff on shift.

BCBAs / BEHAVIOR TECHNICIANS /  
PARAPROFESSIONALS



NURSING



THERAPY: PT | OT | SLP



TEMPERATURE SCREENING  
AND WELLNESS



## COVID SERVICES:

- WellEntry Screening
- COVID-19 Testing
- COVID-19 Vaccination
- Wellness Oversight

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