



# Inclusion in PreK

## BEST PRACTICES FROM THE FIELD



Navigating PreK Day 2024





# Participants Will:

- Learn the Why of Inclusion
- Learn Best Practices
- Identify Potential Next Steps





# WHY INCLUSION?



- **Federal and State priority.**
- **It's a child's right.**
- **It benefits everyone.**
- **Inclusion = Good Teaching for All!**



# What is Inclusion?



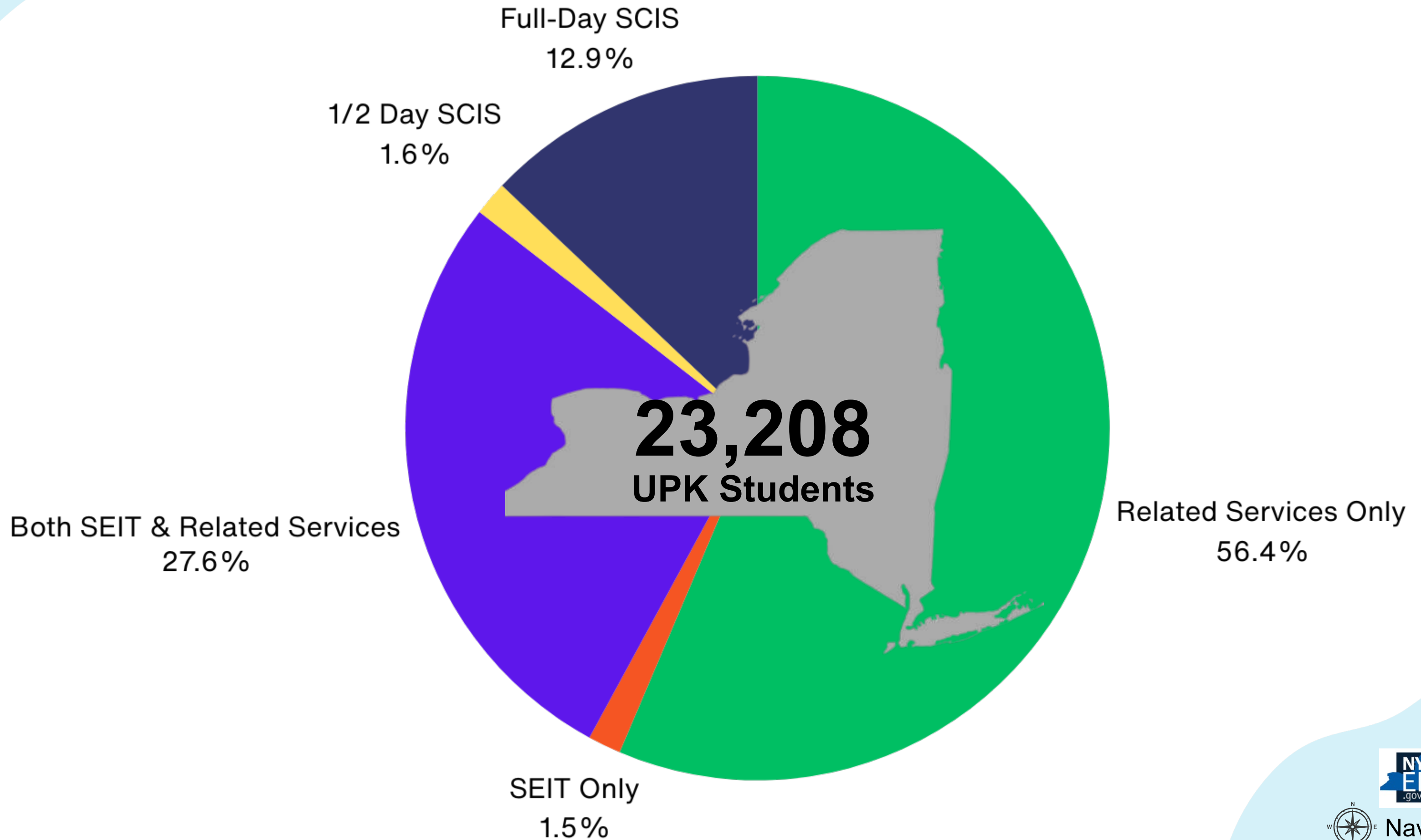
- ACCESS
- PARTICIPATION
- SUPPORT







# The State of UPK Inclusion in NYS







# Panelists



**Rachel Southworth**

Integrated Pre-K Teacher  
Brushton-Moira Central  
School District



**Todd LaPage**

Superintendent  
Brushton-Moira Central  
School District



**Ashley Davoli**

Director of Early Childhood  
Education  
Syracuse City School District



**Kerry Roland**

Special Education  
Liaison  
Syracuse City School District







# Brushton-Moira CSD





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# PreK Classroom



September 20 15



April 20 24





## Pre-K Students Served:

- **48 total students**
- **2 Universal Pre-K (UPK) Classrooms: 18 Students per Class**
- **1 Integrated Pre-K (IPK) Classroom: 12 Students**
  - 6 students with IEPs (12.5%)
  - 6 General Education Students
  - IPK Program Serves Multiple Districts





# Teacher Qualifications:



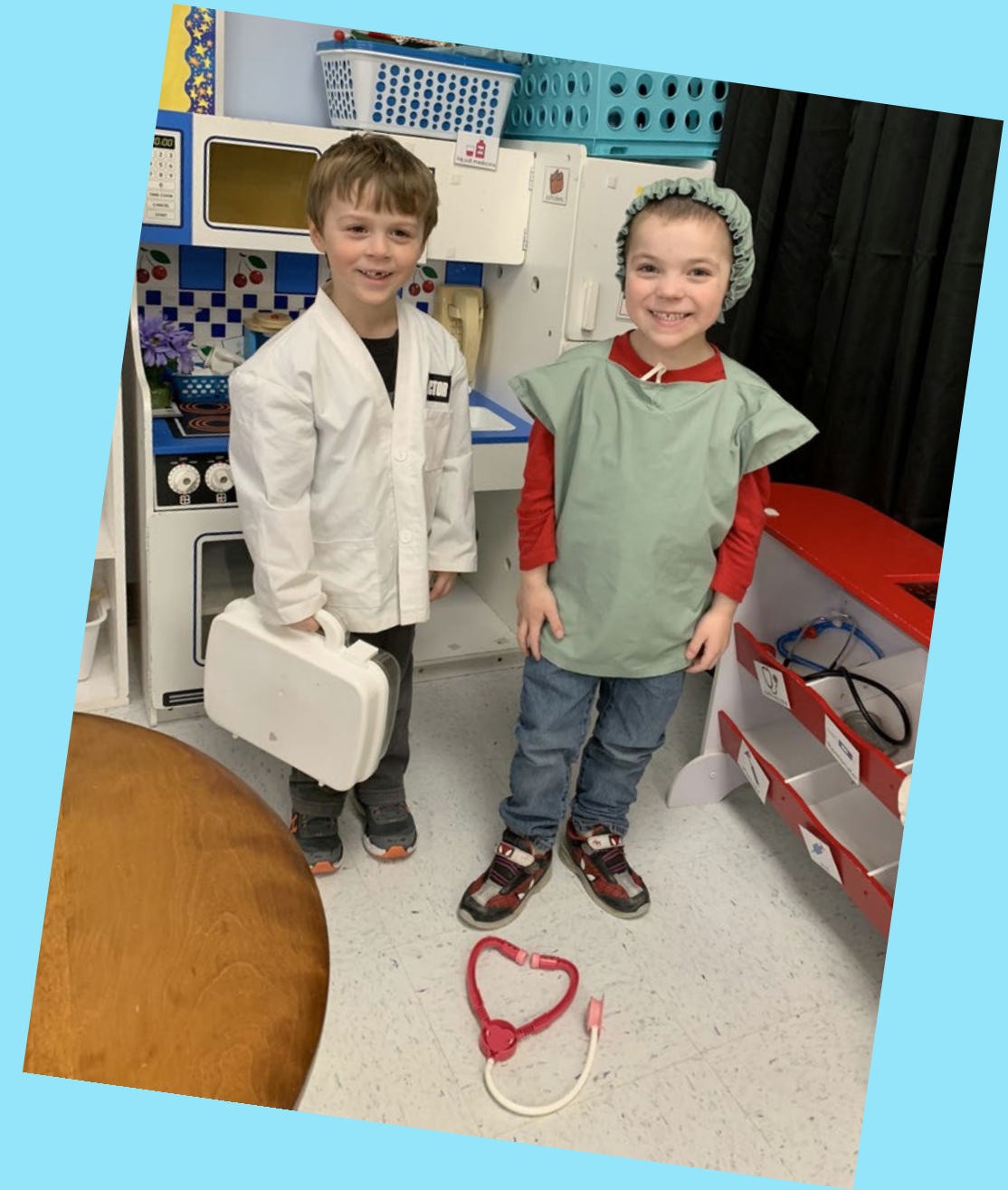
**UPK: 1 Certified Early Education Teacher & 1 Teaching Assistant/  
Aide (per classroom)**

**IPK: 1 Certified Special Education Teacher,  
1 Teaching Assistant/ Aide, 1:1 Aides (if needed)**



# Support Services and Scheduling

- Speech and Language (SLP): Currently Contracting Through Canton -Potsdam Hospital
- Occupational Therapy (OT) : No County Providers Available
- Physical Therapy (PT) : No County Providers Available
- School aged OT/PT providers will pick up Pre -K students if there is room in their schedules





# Inclusive Practices, Strategies and Techniques:

Our goal is to provide students with a sense of belonging, offer an open and welcoming environment, encourage participation, and focus on boosting and maintaining student motivation.





# Differentiating Instruction:

- Our philosophy is progress, not perfection. Pre -K is all about exposing students to a learning environment and working on the social skills necessary to be successful both in and out of the classroom.
  - Learning Centers
  - Varied Materials
  - Visual Supports
  - Peer Modeling
  - Interest Based Activities
  - Circle Time Supports



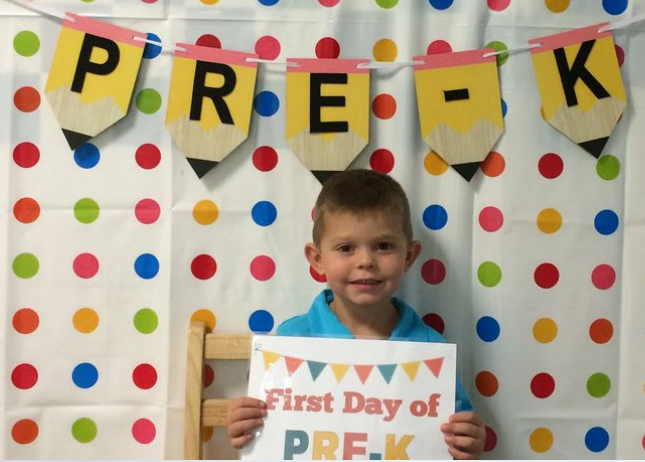


# Managing Diverse Needs:

- Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
- Behavior Management Strategies
- Differentiated Instruction
- Small Group Instruction
- Sensory Integration
- Multidisciplinary Team Collaboration
- Parent Involvement and Education
- Visual Supports
- Continued Professional Development
- Flexibility and Patience











**Rachel Southworth**  
**rachel.southworth@bmcsd.org**



**Todd LaPage**  
**tlapage@bmcsd.org**



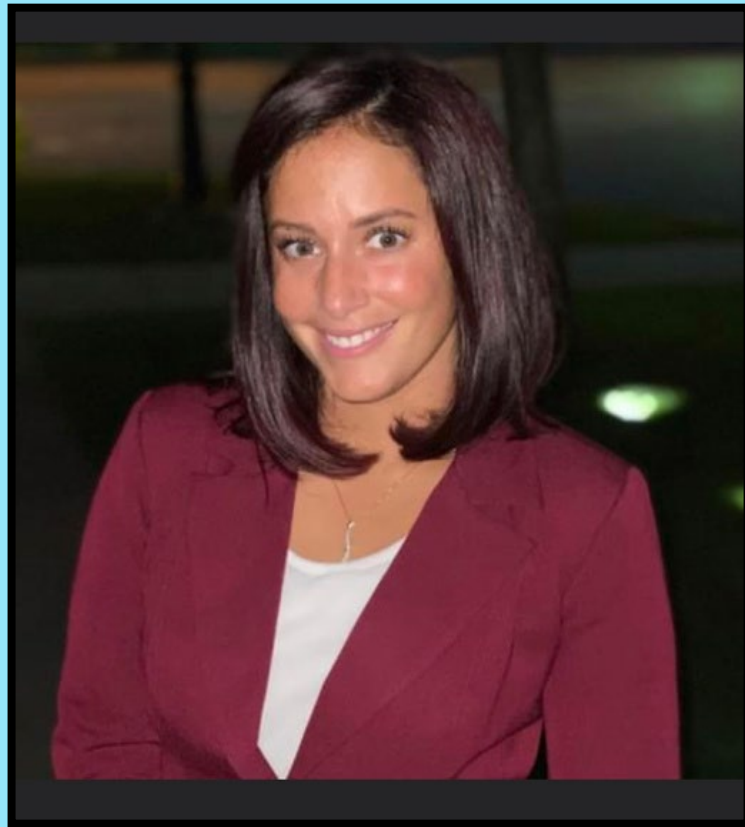


**SC**  
**SD** SYRACUSE  
CITY SCHOOL  
DISTRICT





# Syracuse City School District Panel Members



**Ashley Davoli**  
Director of Early  
Childhood Education  
Syracuse City School District



**Kerry Roland**  
Special Education  
Liaison  
Syracuse City School District





## **23-24 Student Count**

**950 students enrolled in UPK**

**378 students receiving special education services  
(40% of our student population)**

**197 students placed in Special Education Modeled classrooms through CPSE**

**13/16 SLP providers, 10 OT providers, 6 PT providers & 7 SEIT teachers who  
work directly for the PreK department and service PreK students only, across  
59 classrooms**



# Current Pre-K Programming

**59 classrooms across 19 Elementary buildings**

- **4:** 3-yr-old FD SEIS Inclusion classrooms
- **7:** 4-yr-old FD SEIS Inclusion classrooms
- **6:** Half Day SCIS classrooms (3's & 4s)
- **11:** Full Day SCIS classrooms (4's)
- **4:** Full Day Gen Ed 3-yr-old rooms
- **14:** Full Day Gen Ed 4-yr-old rooms
- **13:** SCSD Montessori rooms - 4 SEIS Inclusion rooms





# Classroom Models/Levels of Support

Full day classrooms follow the school's hours- 6 1/2 hrs.

Half day classrooms are 2 hrs. & 45 mins.



## **General Education Classrooms- 18 total students**

\* Includes students who receive related services only, SLP, OT, PT

\* Full day 3 yr. old classrooms - 1 Early Childhood Certified teacher & 2 teaching assistants

\* Full day 4 yr. old classrooms - 1 Early Childhood Certified teacher & 1 teaching assistant



# Classroom Models/Levels of Support cont.

## Special Education Modeled Classrooms- 18 total students

### **SEIS (Special Education Itinerate Services) Inclusion classrooms – 5 identified students placed by CPSE, 13 gen ed students**

- Full day for 3yr. old students- 1 Early Childhood certified Teacher & 2 teaching assistants + traveling special education teacher assigned to classroom to service qualifying students
- Full day for 4yr. old students- 1 Early Childhood certified Teacher & 1 teaching assistant + traveling special education teacher assigned to a classroom to service qualifying students

### **SCIS (Special Class Integrated Setting) classrooms- 6 identified students placed by CPSE, 12 general education students placed by PreK department**

- Full day for 4 yr. old students- 1 dually certified Sped/Early Childhood Teacher, 2 special education teaching assistants and 1 general education teaching assistant
- Half day for 3 & 4 yr. old students- 1 dually certified Sped/Early Childhood Teacher, and 2 special education teaching assistants and 1 general education teaching assistant



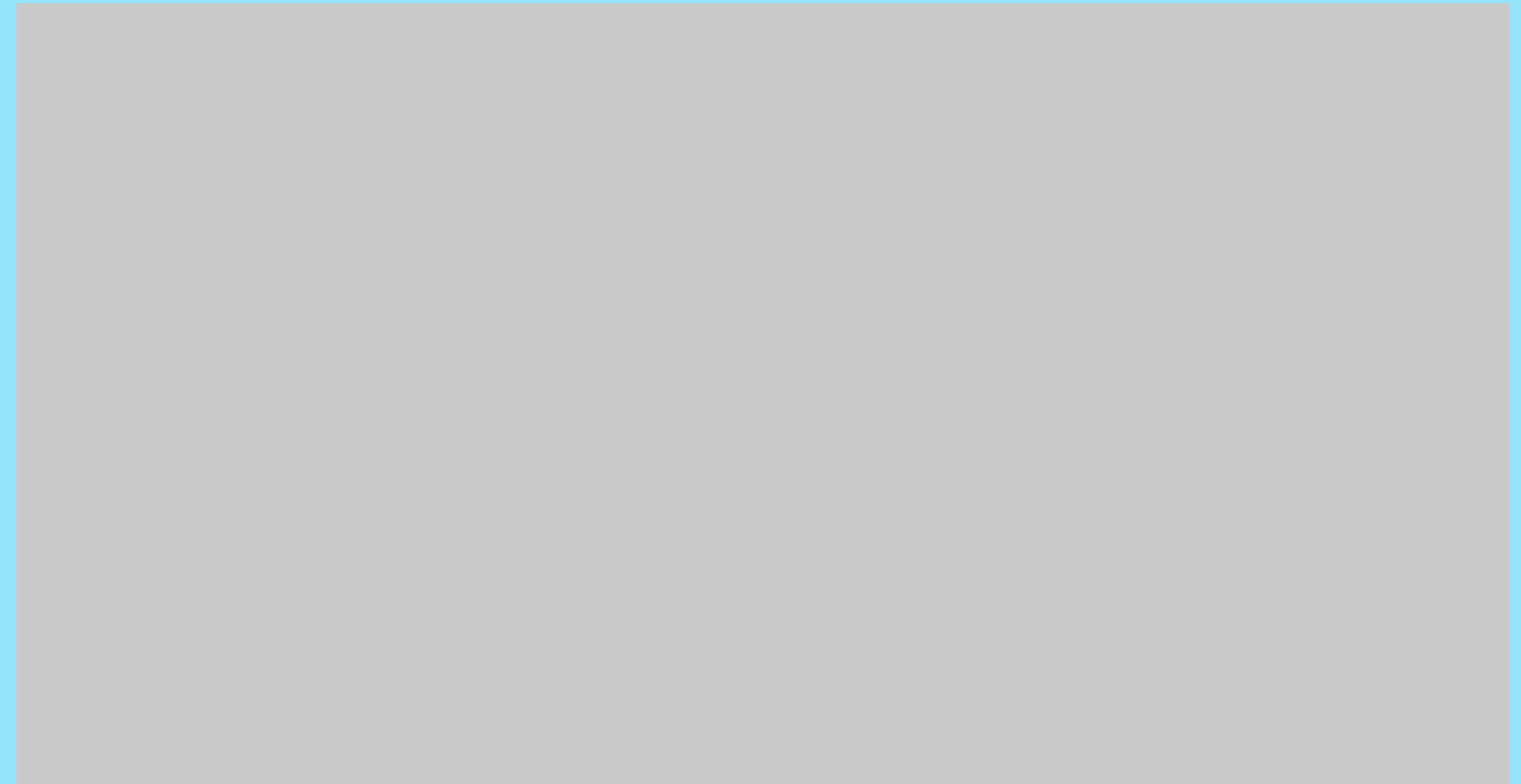
# How we Support Inclusion

- Special Education Liaison
- Support teams attached to each classroom (instructional coach, social worker, psychologist, SLP, OT, PT, & play therapist)
- Monthly team meetings with every class, that all team members attend
- Shared 365 folder for seamless communication among team
- Monthly support staff meetings for SCIS and SEIS classrooms
- Monthly coaching meetings for new teachers
- Detailed evaluation procedure with language guidance for staff
- Teacher concern checklist
- Individual plan template to ensure purposeful programming for students who need adult support for every minute of their day
- Individual Education Plans
- Detailed Annual Review/CSE transition process
- Bimonthly department meetings (Social Workers, Psychologist, SLP, OT, PT)
- 1 hr. after-school department-specific professional development each month
- Monthly Parent Engagement Opportunities
- Sensory integration/ spaces
- Visual-rich environment
- Specialized seating
- Continuous professional development





# Breaking the barriers to equitable access





# Inclusion in action





# The power of Inclusion



# Team work



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# Contact Information

**Ashley Davoli**  
**adavoli@scsd.us**  
**(315) 435-4276**

**Kerry Roland**  
**Kroland@scsd.us**  
**(315) 435-4276**



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CITY SCHOOL  
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# Panel Questions

- How are you navigating workforce shortages relating to preschool special education while ensuring student IEP needs are met?
- What supports are provided for PreK teachers in both district and CBO classrooms?
- How do staff members ensure that all students are provided equitable access and opportunities?
- How do teachers in your district create spaces that bring together and promote a sense of belonging for all children?



# What Makes Inclusion Work:







## What's your WHY?

- What is the current state of inclusive practices in our district's UPK program including our collaborating partners?
  - Are inclusive practices a non-negotiable for our entire program and district-wide? Is the message clear and well communicated?
  - Has our district created the necessary systems and processes to build a more inclusive program?
  - What does our data tell us about our inclusive practices and student progress?





# Resources:



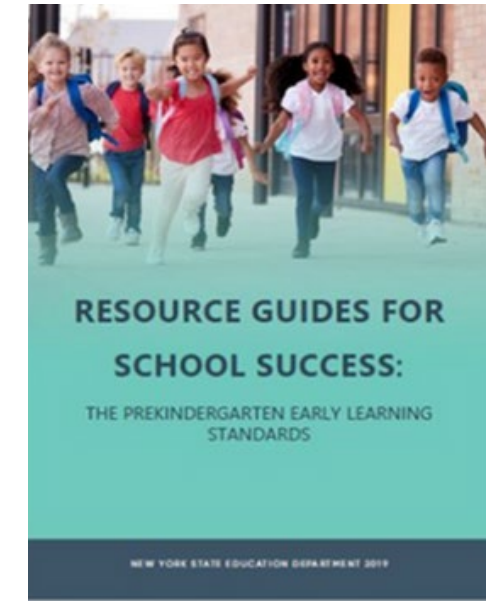
[Office of Early Learning Webpage](#)



[Early Learning Video Series](#)



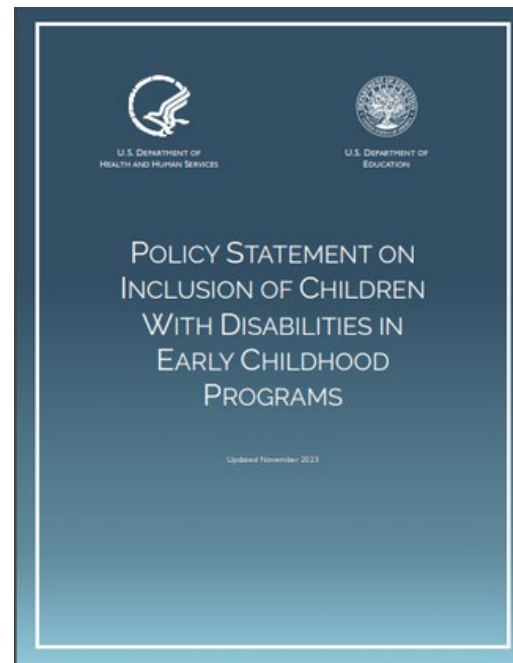
[Planning for High Quality Prekindergarten Instruction](#)



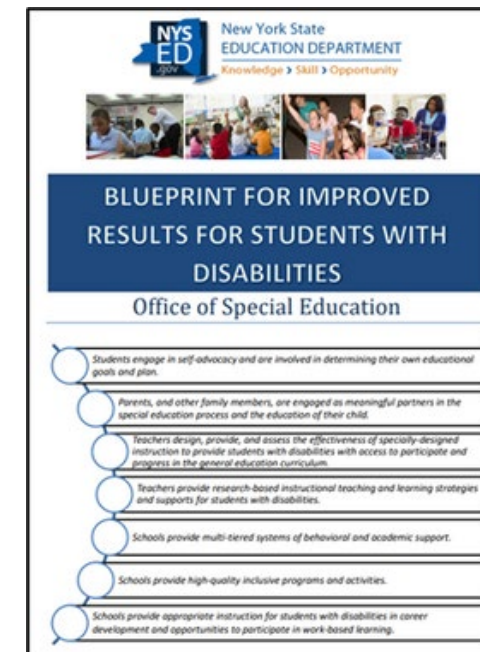
[Prekindergarten Learning Standards](#)



[Preschool Special Education Guidance](#)



[US DOE POLICY STATEMENT: Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs \(Nov. 28, 2023\)](#)



[Blueprint for Improved Results for Students with Disabilities](#)



[The Office of Special Education – Educational Partnership](#)



[A Resource to Special Education Support Services](#)



# THANK YOU

Contact Us:

Office of Early Learning

 (518) 474-5807

 OEL@nysed.gov

 [www.nysed.gov/early-learning](http://www.nysed.gov/early-learning)

Brushton-Moira CSD

Rachel Southworth  
[rachel.southworth@bmcsd.org](mailto:rachel.southworth@bmcsd.org)

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