



Canterbury Public Schools Pupil Services Office

Cori Beckwith, Director of Pupil Services
45 Westminster Road Canterbury, CT 06331
(860) 546-1040 □ cbeckwith@canterburypublicschools.org
<http://www.canterburypublicschools.org/special-education/>

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Dear Families,

I hope this letter finds you happy and coping well with the challenges presented by our ongoing pandemic. I hope you are finding that school is a welcomed piece of normalcy for your children and your family. I know we are cherishing the time we have together in school while preparing for any needed changes that may or may not arise given the condition of our community.

We are well underway with our special education functions in Canterbury Public Schools. As a Pupil Services department, we are also helping to guide the pre-referral process and to support social emotional learning of all students in our school district. In your meetings with us, you may hear us use the phrase, “tiered interventions.” Tiered interventions are a systematic way for our school system to offer scientific, research-based instruction. We measure whether students respond to instruction at each tier, and move up the tiers when students do not show growth using data from as many sources as we can. We are fortunate to have iReady reading and math as data points this year, plus DRA, traditional unit assessments, social emotional screeners, and Second Step instruction for all to bolster the data we can use to make instructional decisions for students. All of this data helps us to monitor a student’s growth in targeted areas. It also helps us determine whether specially designed instruction, or special education, is required for student achievement. Special education is a more restrictive plan, and requires individual evaluation in addition to the data collected through tiered interventions. In the state of Connecticut, approximately 12-13% of students require this level of support in school.

The DESSA (Devereux Student Strength Assessment-mini) is a social emotional screener that was sent home for parents to gauge the well-being of their children in Kindergarten through 8th grade. Ninety five families completed the DESSA on the first and second electronic distribution. Today, paper copies were placed in children’s backpacks throughout the district. If you have not completed the DESSA electronically, and still wish to, please complete the paper DESSA and send it back to your child’s teacher by Friday 10/23/2020. This information will help us identify district needs and support students who may need it most. If you have completed the DESSA electronically, you do not need to complete the paper form.

In the field of education, we are accustomed to adjusting to the challenges with which we are faced. This year is no different. We have an obligation to you and your children to do what is right, kind, and grounded in best practice and research. I appreciate your partnership and problem solving, and will provide more information from the Pupil Services Department on an ongoing basis.

Sincerely,
Cori Beckwith



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