

School Annual Education Report (AER) Cover Letter

2-15-24

Dear Parents and Community Members:

We are pleased to present you with the Annual Education Report (AER), which provides key information on the 2022-23 educational progress for Bridgeway. The AER addresses the complex reporting information required by federal and state laws. The school's report contains information about student assessment, accountability, and teacher quality. If you have any questions about the AER, please contact Becky Goodwin for assistance.

The AER is available for you to review electronically by visiting the following website https://www.mischooldata.org/annual-education-report-1?Common_Locations=1-S,11513,1747,115, or you may review a copy in the main office at your child's school.

For the 2023-24 school year, schools were identified based on previous years' performance using definitions and labels as required in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). A Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) school is one that had at least one underperforming student subgroup in 2022-23. An Additional Targeted Support (ATS) school is one that had a student subgroup performing at the same level as the lowest 5% of all schools in the state in 2021-22. A Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school is one whose performance was in the lowest 5% of all schools in the state or had a graduation rate at or below 67% in 2021-22. Some schools are not identified with any of these labels. In these cases, no label is given.

Our school was not given one of these labels.

Due to the nature of the students' disabilities and the limited number of students taking state assessments, there is little assessment data available in the AER reports. When fewer than 10 students take an assessment, the state does not report the "percentage of students proficient," and few conclusions can be drawn regarding student achievement. While all of our students participate in state testing within the grade levels that testing is offered, our decreased number of students within each grade level taking a given test results in decreased availability of combined data related to proficiency.

Additional challenges arise from the nature of the disabilities of the students in the program in the following non-academic areas: dysregulation, receptive and expressive

language difficulties, lack of engagement, and lack of independence. In addition to academics, these areas have been identified as Bridgeway program priority areas.

State law requires that we also report additional information for the two most recent school years:

- Bridgeway is a center-based program for students with complex disabilities characterized by traits commonly associated with autism. The program consists of 13 classrooms across three buildings and services students from 3 years old through 12th grade. Each classroom has up to 8 students and is led by a teacher skilled in teaching students with complex disabilities and has at least one teaching assistant.
- Students enter Bridgeway programs when their disabilities significantly impact their ability to access and make progress in their resident district to the extent that an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team determines that the students' needs cannot be met in the resident district and that the benefit of attending the program outweighs the potential harmful effects of being in a setting where 100% of the students who attend the program have IEPs and similar needs.
- The following evidence-based practices are Universal Supports in the Bridgeway program: Antecedent Based Interventions, Reinforcement, Modeling, Prompting, and Visual Support.
- Our staff is made up of multidisciplinary teams that include special education teachers, a school psychologist, a school social worker, a physical therapist, occupational therapists, speech and language pathologists, teacher assistants, behavior specialists, and a nurse. Our team also includes a part-time Department Chair and a Program Coordinator, both who are Board Certified Behavior Analysts. The teams collaborate to ensure high quality instruction and implementation of our universal supports.
- The Bridgeway program focuses on teaching non-academic program priorities including regulation, engagement, communication, and independence, in the context of Michigan Common Core or Alternate Standards. We use differentiated instructional strategies relative to materials, instructional techniques, and assessment based on individual student needs. In addition, our programs include community-based instruction to allow students opportunities to practice skills within natural environments. For additional information, please contact Leigh Kennedy at 231-922-6393 or lkennedy@NorthwestEd.org.

- Our school improvement plan contains goals focused on increasing student access to education and academic outcomes by improving engagement, regulation, independence, and communication and the use of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports including the universal implementation of the following Evidence Based Practices for students with Autism: Visual Supports, Modeling, Reinforcement, Prompting, Antecedent-Based Interventions. In addition, our teams have been working in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to identify ways to enhance the teaching environment for their students using the Classroom Environment and Teaching Assessment (CETA) tool.
- Although students enrolled in a Bridgeway program generally do not take local competency or nationally-normed achievement tests, we collect benchmark data in our priority areas for all students three times a year. This data is reviewed using a systematic process in order to inform decisions around instruction and intervention. State Assessment decisions are made according to the assessment selection criteria outlined by the Michigan Department of Education.
- Students who attend Bridgeway programs into high school do not earn high school credits as they are all participating in curriculum aligned to the alternate state standards leading toward a certificate of completion. Additionally, no students participate in dual-enrolled programs or college-equivalent courses. Most students within our programs continue on with their education after high school to work on transition skills at the Life Skills Center through Northwest Education Services.
- Parent communication and participation is an important part of our work. Individual teachers communicate with parents on a regular basis regarding day to day activities. In addition, parents participate in IEP meetings as well as other meetings throughout the year to address concerns related to their child's education.

We are proud of the work we do and the progress that students make and feel fortunate to have talented staff who go above and beyond to meet the needs of some of the most complex students in the region.

Sincerely,

Becky Goodwin
Special Education Supervisor
Northwest Education Services, Bridgeway Program