

**Newton Public Schools  
Elementary Special Education  
Structure Update**



**Student Services Department  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
April 28, 2014**

# Background



- **Form committee 2012-2013 to explore compliance, service delivery, and consistency**
- **Need for more consistency in the flow of communication and compliance maintenance at the building level**
- **Reorganize the administration of elementary special education to improve consistency, compliance, communication, and collaboration, and provide building-based supports across all elementary schools**

# Process 2012-2013



- Visits to local school districts
- Structure review of other local school districts
- Focus groups
- Internal review of data and supports

# Former Leadership Structure



- 2008-2009 Two Co-Directors of Elementary Student Services**
- 2012-2013 One Director and one Interim Assistant Director**

# Current Leadership Structure 2013-14



**Director of Elementary Special Education**

**Two Assistant Directors of Elementary Special Education**

- **Team Specialists**
- **Inclusion Facilitators and Special Educators (co-taught, citywide, learning center teachers)**
- **Related Service Providers**

# Responsibilities of Director



- Provide department with long range planning including budget input, facility considerations, and program development
- Plan professional development
- Evaluate and supervise assistant directors and team specialists
- Oversee extended school programming
- Collaborate with principals, coordinators, central staff, special education administrators
- Hire new staff

# Responsibilities of Assistant Directors



- **Evaluate and supervise special educators across 15 elementary schools**
- **Conduct monthly staff meeting**
- **Coordinate ESY programming**
- **Provide procedural guidance/support to Teams**
- **Train special education teaching assistants**
- **Collaborate with principals**

# Responsibilities of Team Specialists



- **Coordinate, schedule, and conduct Team meetings**
- **Ensure compliance with oversight of IEP process including progress reporting**
- **Communicate with families and building based staff**
- **Transition students from Pre K to K and 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grades**



# Gathered Information: Staff Survey



**Question 1: Has the role of team specialist decreased the amount of time spent on required paperwork?**

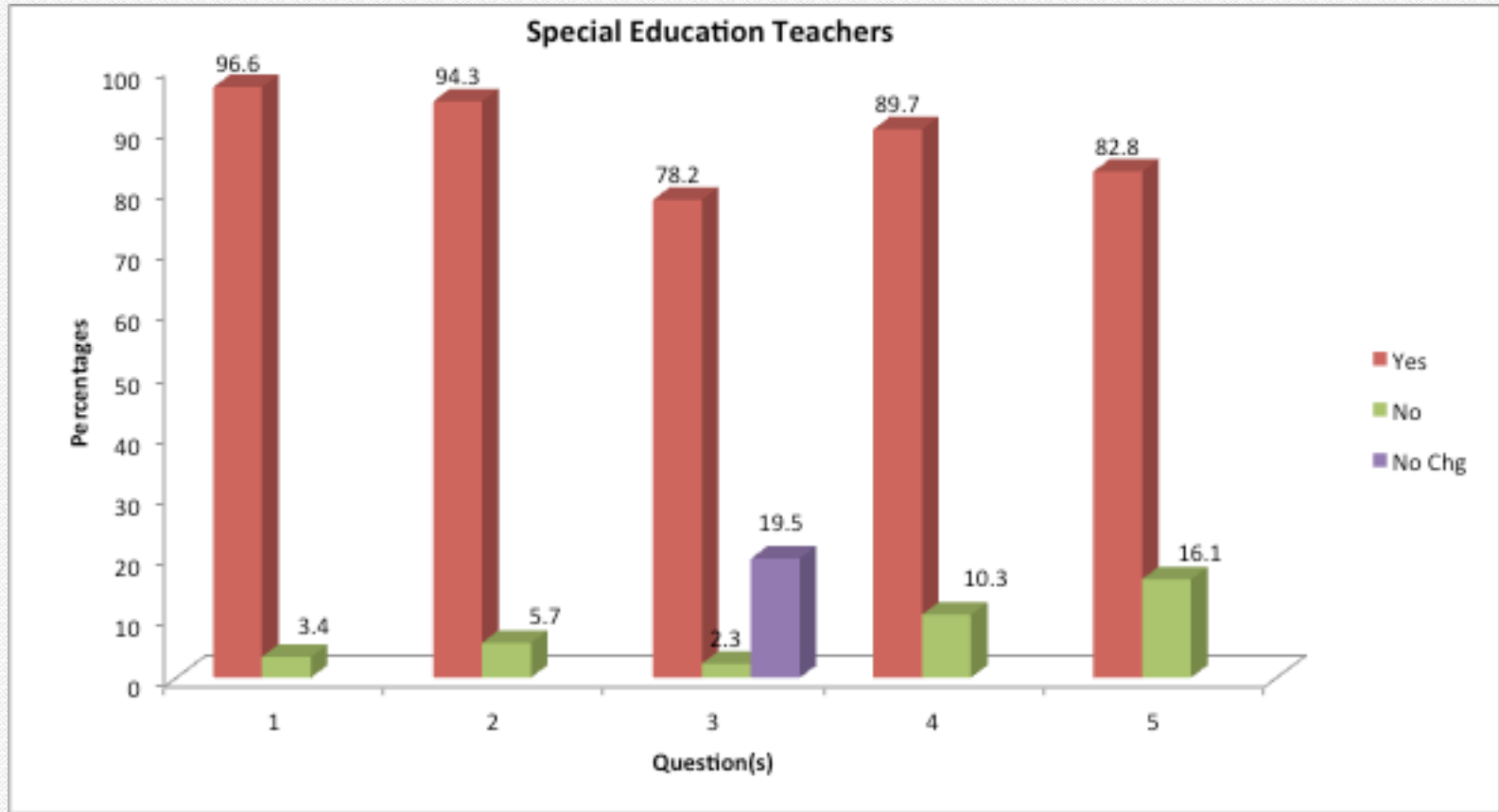
**Question 2: Have you been able to complete required paperwork for your position in a timely fashion?**

**Question 3: Has the role of team specialist allowed you to focus more time on direct services?**

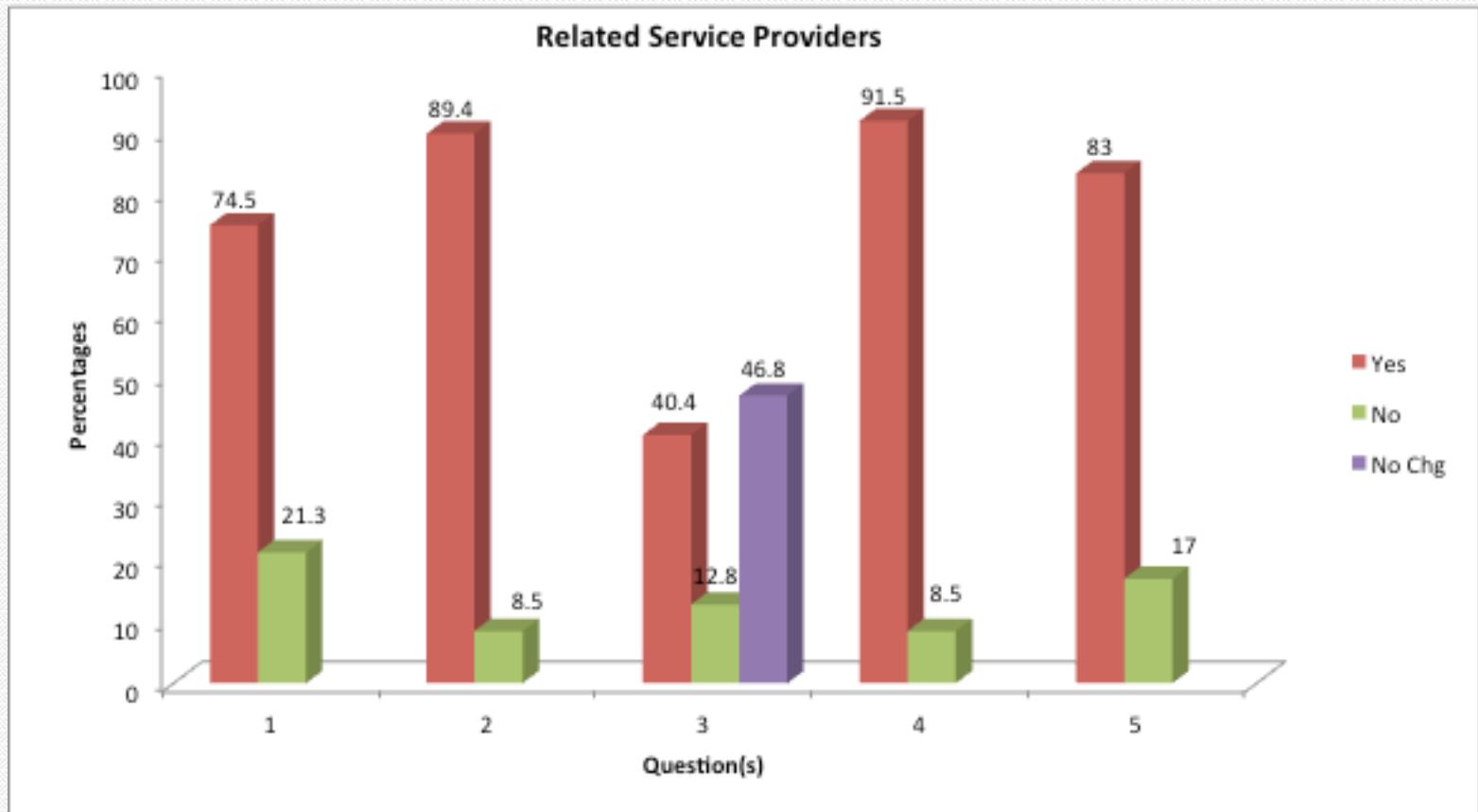
**Question 4: Have you been able to maintain communication with parents?**

**Question 5: Has the team specialist communicated district wide information to you?**

# Survey Results Special Education Teachers



# Survey Results Related Service Providers



# Gathered Information: Principals



**March 2014**

- **Positive experience - more time to work with kids**
- **Glad that we have these positions - families still getting the care they need**
- **Things are so much better - coherence, consistency – it works brilliantly.**
- **Stronger organization - freedom for people to do what they need to do - all improvements - exactly what was needed here.**
- **Splitting the position jeopardized relationships**

# Gathered Information: Parents



**December 2013 and March 2014**

**Special Education Parent Advisory Council (PAC):**

- **Appreciate this role**
- **Efficient, on time, compliant, and calm**
- **Terrific experience with the team specialist - extremely professional, efficient, and it felt like her presence allowed the literacy and psychology staff to spend more high quality time with students.**

# What We Have Learned



- Meeting with the team specialist on a regular basis creates consistency in communication and compliance
- Continuing professional development on special education laws and regulations is central for the role
- Dividing a single FTE position between schools poses challenges
- Communication with special education administrators at other levels is essential for transition