

# Building Systems to Last:

## *How a large urban district used our Compliance Systems Review series to strengthen its service delivery model*

### THE CHALLENGE

Not every partnership starts with a problem. Some of the work we are proudest of has been alongside districts that have already built something strong and want to keep pushing for what's possible. We found this in a large, urban school district with over 50,000 students. Their leadership had built a longstanding service delivery model focused on providing students with disabilities access to high-quality supports. Leaders wanted an honest, outside perspective on what was working, what could be better, and what systems would help their staff do their best work for students with disabilities.

### OUR APPROACH

We spent significant time inside the district's system. Our team visited 12 school sites, surveyed more than 330 leaders, staff, and families, reviewed 31 student IEPs, and held conversations with stakeholders at every level of the organization.

We talked to program directors, paraprofessionals, and classroom teachers. We asked families to share what they were seeing at school and at home. We reviewed IEP documents with fresh eyes and walked through classrooms with structured observation tools. Our mixed-methods approach was intentional; we knew the key to making strong recommendations was having a complete picture.

In all of our discussions, staff described a district with **strong practices already in place**: data use, individualized supports, and structured approaches that serve as a solid foundation for a lasting service delivery model.

-SPED Strategies Team



## THE SOLUTION

There was a lot to celebrate in this district's service delivery model. The educators we met showed up every day with real dedication. Classrooms were well-organized and thoughtfully structured, with strong visual supports and predictable routines that helped students feel safe and ready to learn. Staff were using data to drive instruction. Families reported meaningful progress in their kids' communication, behavior, and overall engagement at school.

We also identified clear opportunities to build stronger systems around those committed educators. When we looked across all our data, a few themes emerged: implementation varied across sites, staff needed more clarity on roles and decision-making structures, and training systems needed to be more structured and accessible. None of these are uncommon in large districts. What matters is having the will to address them, and this district was fully committed to the work. Our findings contained a set of clear focus areas for the district, including:



## THE CLEAR PATH FORWARD

Our recommendations came with a multi-year roadmap built to be realistic and sustainable. Year 1 lays the foundation. Years 2 and 3 bring the work to life across school cohorts, with ongoing coaching, fidelity monitoring, and continuous refinement. By Year 4, every site is operating within a shared, well-supported framework. Our mutual goal with this district wasn't just a better program on paper; it was building something that lasts, alongside the people who show up for students every day.

*This is the kind of work at the core of our Compliance Systems Review series. If you are ready to get a clearer picture of where your district stands and keep pushing toward what's possible for your students, we'd love to help. Schedule a time to meet with our team using the QR code, and let's see what we can build together.*

**Contact Us**

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