



# Special Education in Action

Engaging Stakeholders through Promising Practices and Program Development

**Did You Know?** about these **NEW Resources**



## The Teacher's Perspective Rejuvenating Collaborative Teaching: The Waldwick Experience (Bergen County)

with Ms. Nicole Magner, Teacher at Waldwick Middle School

**Question:** How would you identify the inclusive culture at Waldwick Middle and High School?

**Answer:** Collaboration among teachers and inclusion among students have always been a priority in Waldwick. Teachers utilize the collaborative model of instruction (also known as co-teaching) to ensure students receive high-quality, individualized supports for their academic, behavioral, or social-emotional needs, in the general education setting, when appropriate.

**Question:** When and how did this model come to fruition?

**Answer:** In the fall of 2021, the Waldwick administration team recognized a need for more special education teachers to be assigned as collaborative pairs for their college preparation (CP) classes. At that time, supports were provided by paraprofessionals. During the transition, administration recognized the importance of training on the various co-teaching models and strategically designed schedules that fostered an increase of collegial collaboration and planning in order to individualize the instruction for all students in this setting. Then during the spring of 2022, the administration team secured training and technical assistance from the Office of Special Education's Dr. Chinwe Osondu and Ms. Erice Reid. This support included a series of training sessions, the development of practical action plans, and alignment to the implementation science model.

**Question:** What is the future of co-teaching in Waldwick?

**Answer:** With frequent turn-over, the pandemic impacts, and emerging student needs, Waldwick Middle and High School have continued ongoing training. Dr. Osondu and Ms. Reid have evolved their supports to cover many other aspects of collaborative teaching, including communication and planning, shared classroom management, and navigating professional barriers. An important takeaway from these sessions was understanding that **collaborative teaching involves more than just teaching together; it requires the pairs to build trust with one another in order to ensure sustainable programmatic success.** Collaboration between the co-teaching pairs makes the curriculum more accessible to students with disabilities, while also addressing the students' individual needs. Co-teaching also allows educators to grow professionally, improve their instruction, engage all students, and provide a sense of belonging for everyone in the class - both students and staff.

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### Call to Action in Special Education

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**Celebrate Autism Awareness Month**  
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[Call for Members for Advisory Panel on Programs Serving 18- to 21-Year-Old Students with Disabilities \(Deadline: April 28, 2023\)](#)

### Professional Development Opportunities



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### The Family Connections Corner "Stronger Together"



#### **SPAN Resources and Materials**

by age groups, by topic, and in over 12 languages



The NEW NJ Parent Link Resource for **Developmental, Behavioral & Mental Health Older Siblings, Teens & Young Adults**