

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

The public education labyrinth

Last month, I published a social media post from an anonymous teacher about the tribulations of classroom teachers in public schools today.

In response I received an email from a recently retired teacher who noted I didn't mention any solutions to making teaching more manageable, "and," he wrote, "I don't have any suggestions either."

"I'm afraid that our society has come to the point where in trying to please everybody all the time, that we please almost nobody any of the time," he wrote.

Fifty years ago, most school employees were teachers. But in recent decades, there has been a proliferation of specialists and support staff: special education teachers, psychologists, "mental health" professionals, therapists, clinicians, and teacher coaches — plus dozens of aides.

The more specialists we employ, the more disabilities they diagnose in students.

In Pottstown, the percentage of special education students has grown sixfold since 1980.

The number of programs for students has likewise mushroomed in recent decades. Seemingly every special interest group in Pennsylvania has had a hand in creating a byzantine system of rules and regulations with the assumption that public schools can solve every problem in society, if we just spend enough money.

The charts below illustrate some of the multitudinous services we offer in Pottstown, plus a very small sampling of the dozens of acronyms the education establishment now employs.



Commentary by
Tom Hylton

Pottstown student services programs:		
BLSL (Beech St. Learning Studio)	PIMS	Virtual and Alternative Learning
Retention	Registration	School counseling and Guidance
Early entrance	Homeless/Foster	Chapter 339 Career Readiness
Residency checks	Homebound	Program development
Affidavits	Homeschool	Disciplinary hearings
Mental health	Transition	Family resources
Gifted	Truancy	Court Liaison
Title IX	504	School safety and security
Nurses	AEDY	Building Support
ESL (English as second language)	SAP	McKinney Vento/Foster Care
Alternative education	Title III	Complaint resolution
IEP	Individualized Education Program	
SAP	Satisfactory Academic Progress	
LS	Learning Support; also ES, Emotional Support.	
MTSS	Multi-Tiered System of Support, which used to be called RTI (Response to Intervention), and RtII (Response to Intervention and Instruction) previously called Chapter 1, also called Title I, extra support for low-achieving students in schools with a significant number of low income students.	
PIMS	Pennsylvania Information Management System.	
TSI	Targeted School Improvement, aimed at schools whose students underperform on standardized tests; a state-mandated plan showing how that's going to be fixed. (also A-TSI, Additional Targeted School Improvement.)	
AEDY	Alternative Education for Dysfunctional Youth.	
SEL	Social Emotional Learning.	
ACE	Adverse Childhood Experiences.	
PBSP	Positive Behavior Support Plan.	
504	A less rigorous form of special education	