



HYDE PARK DAY SCHOOL

2019 Hyde Park Day School Transition Study Parent Report

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Hyde Park Day School Transition Study 2019

I. Background

Since 2004, Hyde Park Day School (HPDS) has conducted annual interviews with the parents of students who recently transitioned out of the school. In 2019, Justkul Inc. (Justkul) was hired to provide this research. The team at Justkul specializes in providing research through surveys and interviews, and several members of the Justkul team have managed this project in prior years, including conducting the interviews.

As in the previous studies, the objective of this project was to assess parents' satisfaction with HPDS and with the transition process. In summer 2019, over a period of four months, Justkul conducted interviews with parents of 22 of the 33 students (66%) who transitioned out of HPDS during or following the 2017-18 academic year. This report will summarize their ratings and comments in the context of previous years' responses to the same questions.¹

We are very grateful to the parents who took the time to share their insights and perspectives with us, so this report can be possible.

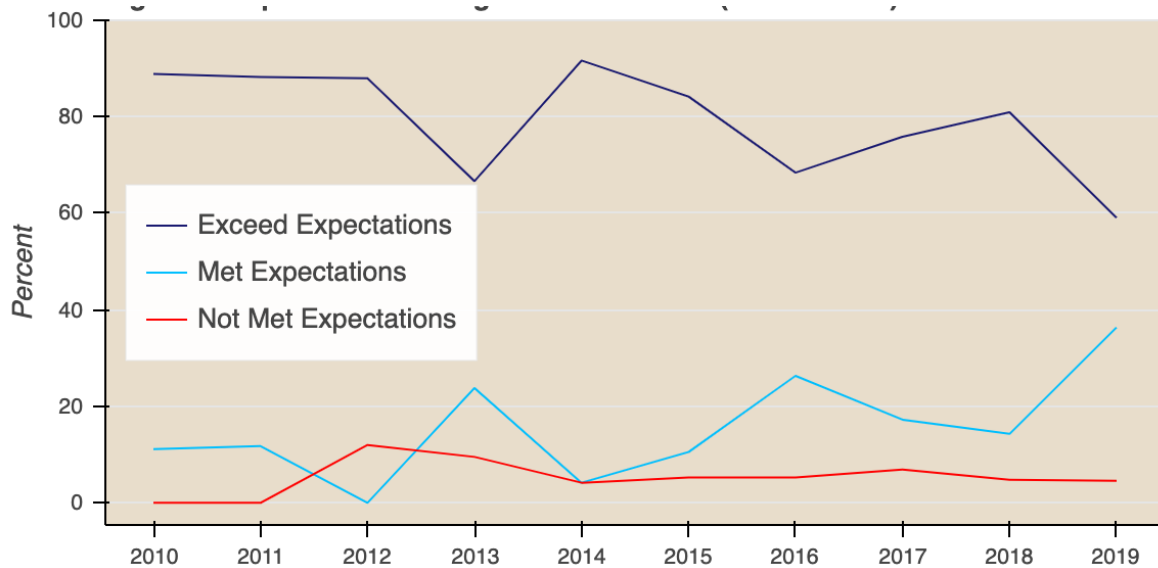
This report includes the following sections:

- I. General Evaluation of Hyde Park Day School
- II. Learning at Hyde Park Day School
- III. The Transition Process
- IV. Students experiences in their post-transition schools
- V. The social and emotional impacts of learning disability
- VI. List of Transition Schools

¹ Some quotations that appear in this report have been modified by removing names and personal identifiable information.

I. General Evaluation of Hyde Park Day School

Parents were asked to rate how well Hyde Park Day School had met the expectations they had formed before their child’s enrollment, using a five-point scale from “Far exceeded expectations” through “Failed to meet expectations”. 94.9% of respondents (21 respondents) said that it met or exceeded their expectations, with 59.1% of parents reporting that HPDS had exceeded their expectations either slightly or by far (see **Figure 1** below). An additional 36.4% indicated that HPDS met their expectations. This represents a shift from exceeding expectations to meeting expectations.

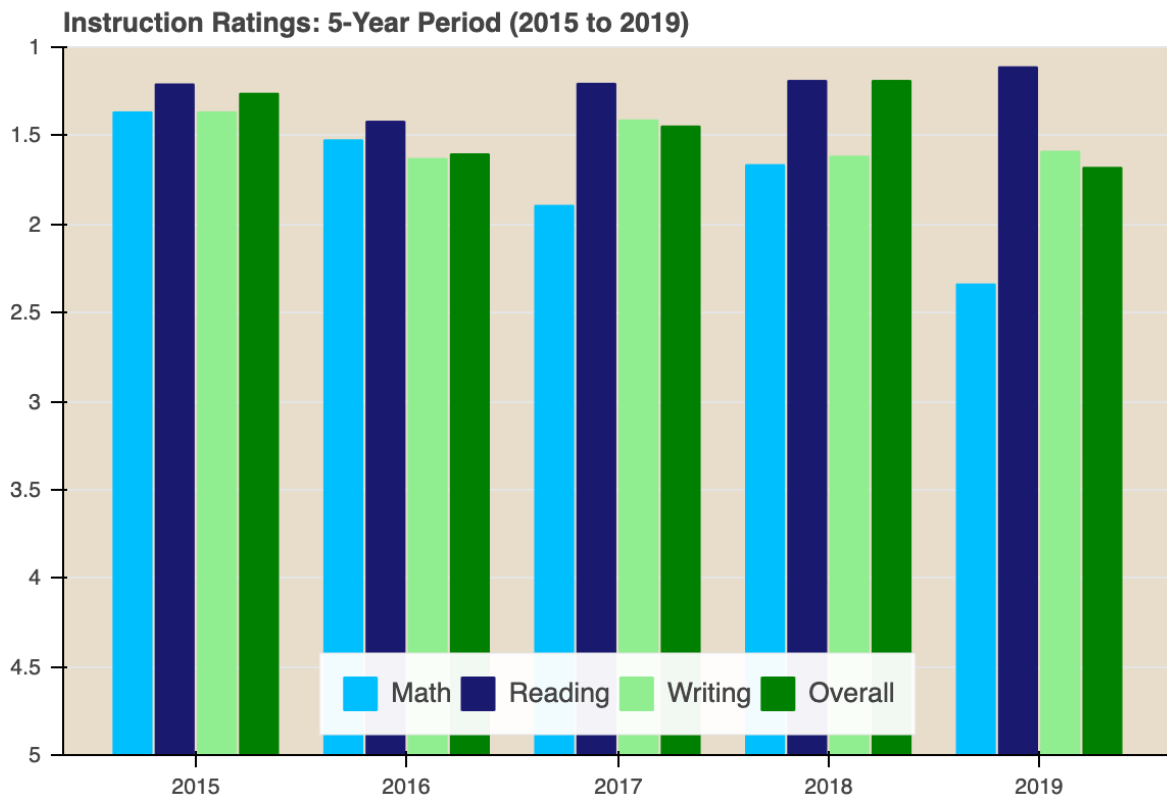


It is worth noting that meeting expectations relies in part on a prior understanding of an expected situation, an understanding that can be tempered by prior expectations. For instance, one respondent admitted that she had "perhaps unreasonably high" expectations going into the program. Another respondent said the program only "met expectations" because of individual issues such as their child's ability to socialize or the value of the program given the perceived cost.

II. Learning at Hyde Park Day School

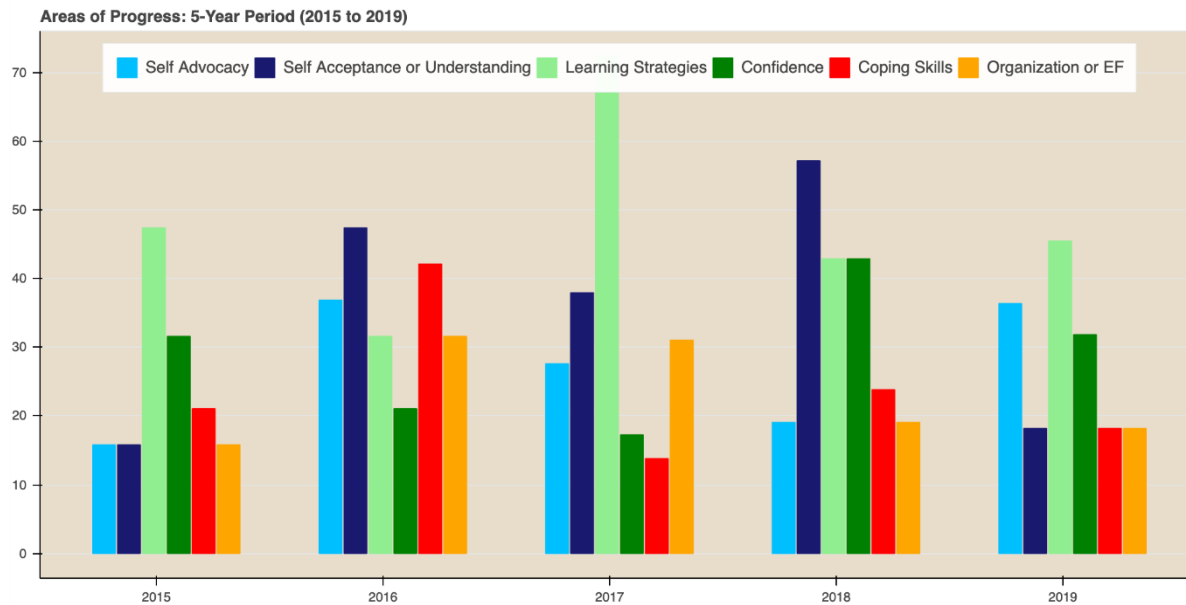
Parents were asked to rate the different elements of Hyde Park Day School’s academic program on a scale from 1 (excellent) to 5 (poor). They rated instruction in reading, writing, and math, and were also asked to give an overall rating for the school’s academic instruction. (Because of the scale used for these questions, lower numbers signal a more positive rating for that program.)

As in prior years, all academic programs were rated between “above average” and “excellent.”



Parents gave their highest ratings to HPDS’ reading instruction (mean rating 1.11), and were least satisfied with math instruction (mean rating 2.34) with writing instruction being in the middle (1.59).

An open-ended item asked parents to consider everything their child had learned at HPDS and to explain what had been most helpful. (Parents could cite as many areas as they wanted to, so the percentages given to various topics will sum to more than 100%.) The responses were then coded and grouped into general themes, many of which mirrored the comments parents have made in previous years. (See *Figure 4* below.)



Learning strategies:

"She learned how to read. She learned the tools to do that."

"Decoding words and reading."

"He is a different child now. The individual learning plan gave him what he needs."

Self-advocacy:

"Self-advocacy or advocating for help and using support systems. His willingness to talk about his learning disability with teachers or anybody. There's no shame. The student skill - you have to listen to what the teacher wants, know what's on the test, ask questions, etc."

Self-awareness/confidence:

"I think normalization of her experience. She came with a belief she had, that she was somehow wrong. It came from a painful place. At HPDS she saw children swinging their bats, dealing with their disabilities, participating. She grew as a human being. She also said that she, 'Learned what true friendship was.'"

She gained an appreciation for others. She is a very kind, considerate and inclusive child. She really learned to speak to kids about her disabilities."

Teachers, or particular teachers were also mentioned throughout the survey as particularly effective:

"How they teach. Very good teachers."

"The whole program was worth it though because of the staff."

When it came to areas of progress, the most commonly cited factor was "reading," mentioned explicitly by 18 out of 22 parents (81.8%).

"Reading. She came from struggling with reading to becoming someone who saw herself as a reader, even though she listens to books on tapes, she loves reading now."

"Didn't believe [the progress] was possible."

Although other students made progress in language more generally:

"He loved the play and the talent show and the conference because he was the person in charge and calling people to the stage and asking them questions. You no longer saw a person who struggles with language. He would crack jokes and engage the audience and became a different person."

IV. Transition

When the time comes for a student to leave, Hyde Park Day School provides a range of services designed to help parents select an appropriate transition school and to inform the transition school about what will be needed to support the student academically. We asked parents to evaluate the transition process and to pass along any suggestions for how we can improve that experience for them.

Eighteen out of 22 parents (81%) gave the program positive ratings, saying things like:

"[My child] was very prepared. She had everything."

"HPDS has been incredibly generous."

"They were SUPER [Respondent's own emphasis] helpful in the transition, making sure Lab [School] knew about the challenges he had, getting it in writing what he needed with extended time and assistive technologies. Also letting us know that their [HPDS] teachers could tutor [Student]."

Some parents pointed to specific factors that contributed to their children's success:

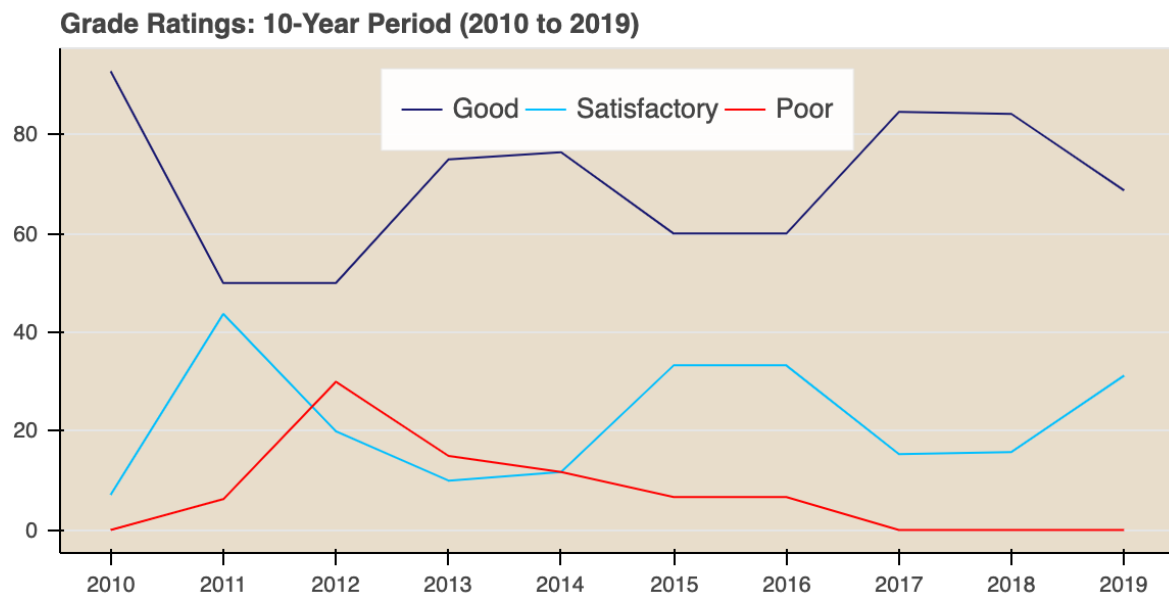
"It was really helpful that they brought back other students and parents to talk with us."

Parents also made suggestions for improving the transition process:

"They need to do a better job with "marketing" their approach. Every school has their own approach, and they need to convey and sell their tools without creating tensions."

Academics

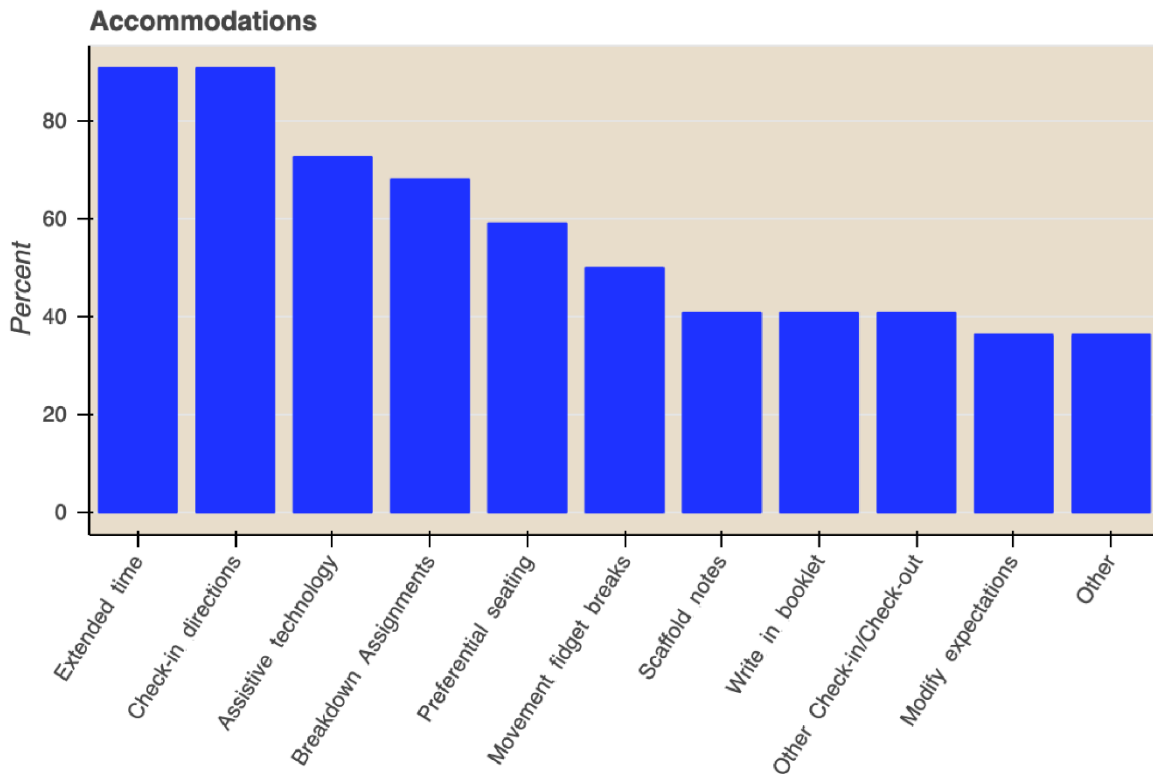
Using parents' detailed estimates for how many of each letter grade their child's report card showed, we were able to compute the approximate grade point averages for each child. The overall mean GPAs across all schools, private schools and public schools were exactly the same as prior years, within rounding error: 3.5 Overall GPA, 3.6 in private schools and 3.3 in public schools. As in prior years the private school students' GPA average was slightly higher than the public-school students. 6 out of the 16 students who received grades (37.5%) made the honor roll.



Accommodations and Services

Part of Hyde Park Day School's mission is to give students and parents an understanding of the tools, techniques, and supports that can foster the student's lifelong success. This knowledge can then be used when working with a transition school to construct the most appropriate educational program for the student. As part of our study of the transition process, we try to document the amounts and kinds of professional assistance (inside and outside of schools) that former students are receiving. We also ask about the teaching strategies, accommodations, and modifications that schools use when designing curricula and classroom interventions.

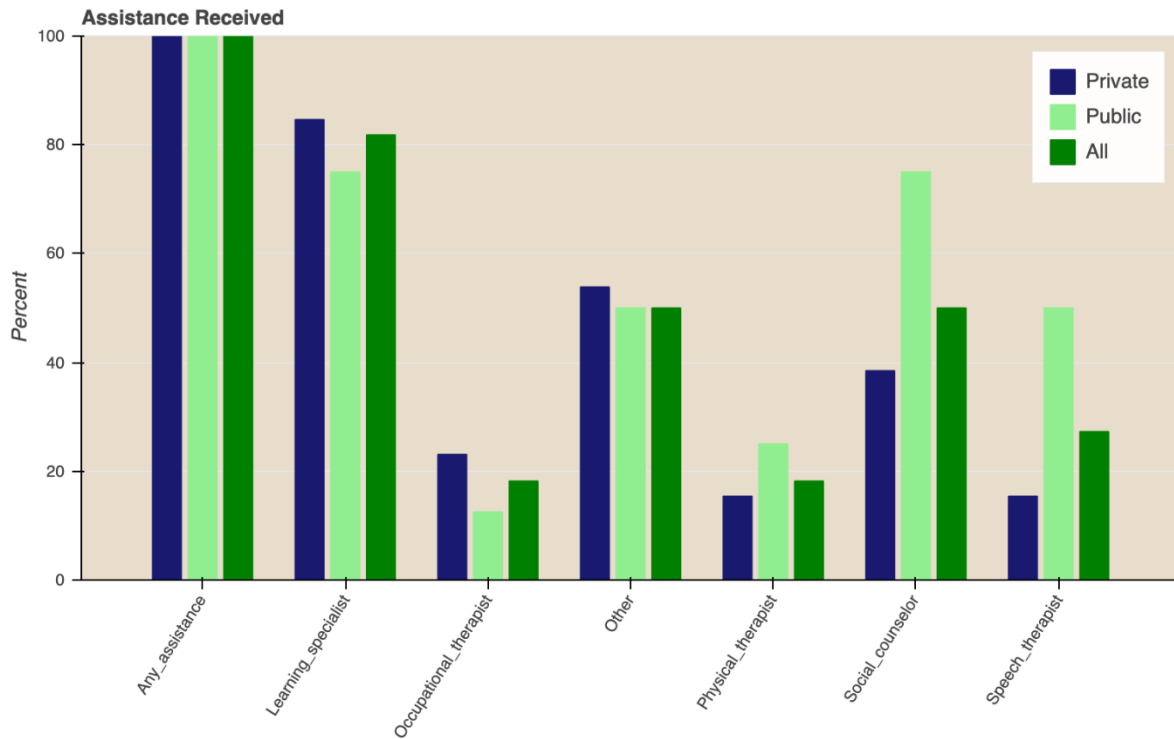
As in prior years, every one of the 21 parents to which this question applied mentioned at least three accommodations that were being provided by their school. This year, however, the distribution was different than prior years. The main accommodations overall were extended time and check-ins for directions, each of which were mentioned by 20 respondents (95.2% of 21). These were followed by 16 respondents (76.2% of 21) mentioning assistive technology, 15 respondents (71.4% of 21) mentioning breakdowns of assignments into components and 13 (61.9% of 21) mentioning preferential seating. These are summarized in the figure below.



Overall, students took advantage of an average of 6.6 accommodations, with a range from 3 to 11. Public-school and private-school students used about the same number of accommodations (6.5 and 6.6, respectively).

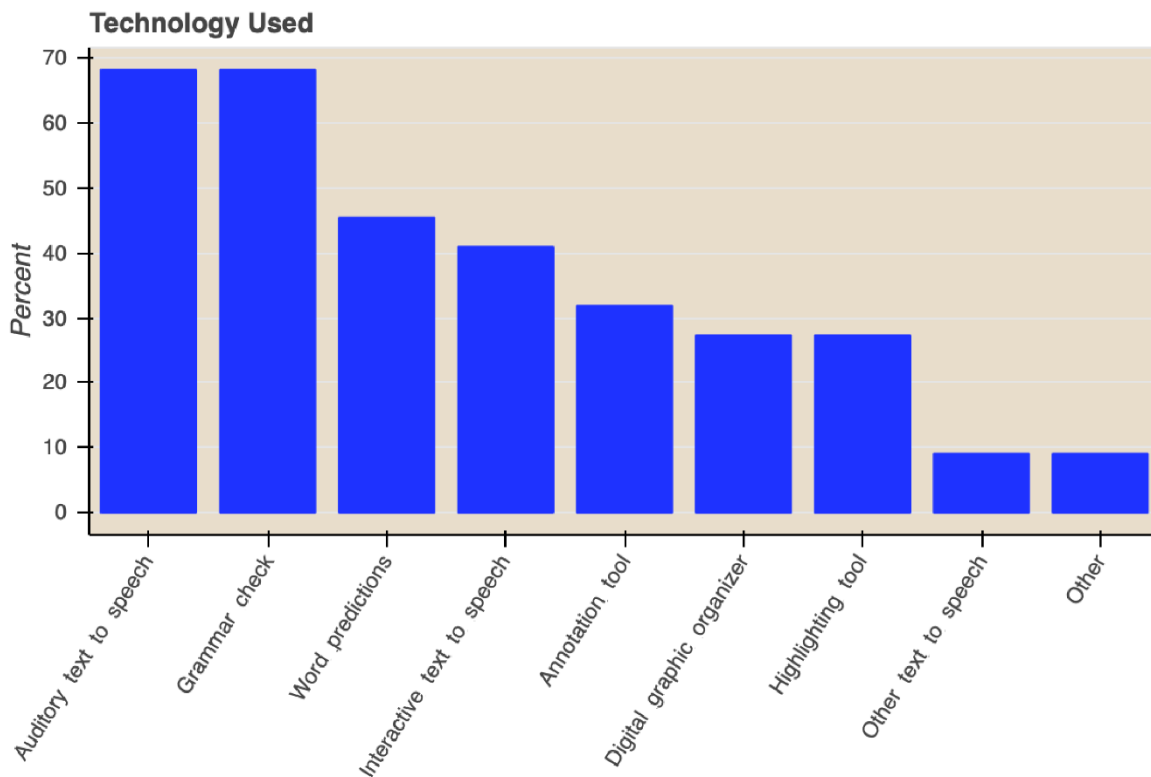
As can be seen in *the figure* below, the percentage of students receiving any services differed only slightly between public school and private school students, the most significant exceptions being that far more public-school students met with a social counselor or speech therapist, and a few more private school students met with occupational therapists.

Considering services received both in and outside of schools (see table below), the average number of people who provided out-of-school assistance to children was approximately the same across both private and public schools, although there was greater variation when it comes to in-school assistance, with public school students receiving nearly twice as much assistance as private schools.



Assistive Technology

Over the last several years, Hyde Park Day School has made a significant effort to fully integrate assistive technology into the instructional repertoire of the school. We have kept the contents of the Transition Study coordinated with the suite of assistive technologies, learning programs, and electronic devices in current use at the school, and are therefore able to use it to track the continued use of these items by students after they leave HPDS. (Because parents are typically less tech-savvy than students, may not have it within their power or desire to monitor the particular programs their children are using to do their schoolwork, and some of these devices have entered into general usage, these percentages should be considered a lower bound for the likely levels of use among our transitioned students.)



IV. The social and emotional impacts of learning disability

Parents were asked two open-ended questions: one in which they were asked to describe “What impact, if any, does the diagnosis of a learning disability or receiving tutoring or remediation have on your child socially?,” and one which focused on the emotional impact.

One-third of parents (36.6%) reported that their child’s learning disability diagnosis had little or no impact on them socially. Several parents mentioned it as a positive in their children’s particular school environment:

Currently, he’s in a school with other kids with learning disabilities, so it doesn’t matter. He has friends outside of school who don’t know he has learning disabilities. It doesn’t have a huge effect on him right now.

For other students it had little to no impact because HPDS helped them gain the confidence to disarm potential adversarial social interactions by speaking plainly or with humor:

“Kids have pointed out his spelling, unintentionally unkind comments about his spelling, and he gets embarrassed about his writing and spelling. However, when it happened [socially], he handled it well: “I agree with you; spelling is not one of my strengths.”

Fifteen out of 22 of our parent respondents (68.2%) said that having a learning disability had left an emotional impact of some kind on their children, with 12 (54.5%) saying it was negative.

On the positive side, three parents (13.6%) said being diagnosed with an LD actually ended up having positive impacts on their children either by giving them the resources to succeed or making their children more resilient:

“It was initially difficult and hurtful for her to acknowledge her limitations. However, afterwards the diagnosis really unlocked help and support, so it eventually became a strength for her.”

“Made him more resilient”.

“Big impact on how she sees herself. She realized the benefits of help. It also led her to be more concerned about others.”

Of the parents who saw negative impacts, many mentioned their children's frustration or lack of self-esteem:

“She gets frustrated and feels insecure sometimes.”

“She is still quite hurt. She is finding ways to mitigate that hurt. She received feedback from HPDS that she is really hard at judging herself. It has a lot to do with her experience. She has incorporated it into her character historically, so it may remain with her.”

“Some days he was just extremely exhausted.”

“It definitely is a struggle. She doesn't feel like she's smart, doesn't have confidence [in her academic abilities].”

One parent went into detail about how her child's LD can lead to stressful and exhausting situations:

“I think he's done well with it. It has made him depressed by it in the past. It's hard to realize you're carrying something forward when you're 10 or 11. It's not easy. His depression in part is related to that burden / responsibility / fact. He handles that well at this point, however. It's not a huge emotional burden, but it's always there. There are things that are difficult for him in larger society. Example: he can't find something in a grocery aisle because it's too overwhelming for him. This is his disability affecting his day in and day out life. We strategize how to get over it, but it's a struggle. There are words everywhere, so even if you read, it can bring you back to that place where you couldn't read. When he's on the train and the stops are scrolling on the sign, he can't read it. He'd ask the conductor, and the conductor would tell him to read the monitor, and that was stressful. He figured out that he could go out to a platform and ask someone because there was no monitor there. Even though he's reading, there are still places where the disability is very real and in his face. That is exhausting sometimes.”

Another parent mentioned the transition out of HPDS had been rough for her child emotionally:

“She is sad sometimes. She misses HPDS a lot.”

VI. Transition Schools List

The 33 students who left HPDS in 2018 transitioned to a total of 22 different schools:

Adlai Stevenson High School	Jones College Prep
Ancona (2)	La Lumiere
Avoca West	Prospect High School
Baker Demonstration School	Reavis High School
Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School (3)	Roycemore School (2)
Central School, Glencoe	Sacred Heart School, Chicago
Christ the King	Sacred Heart School, Winnetka
Cossit Avenue School, LaGrange	St. Clements
Evanston Township High School	Sycamore Middle School
Edgewood Middle School, Highland Park	University of Chicago Lab School (2)
Gateway School, New York	Woodlands
	Wolcott (5)