

TJ Consultants believes that students will always be at the core of our educational systems. Our focus is on helping guide systemic improvement, with a particular emphasis on supporting students with diverse educational needs. Systemic growth stems from a shared belief that all learners with diverse needs should have access to compelling, equitable, and high-quality learning opportunities. TJ consultants believe that educational systems can continue to advance in their customized efforts to provide outstanding, future-driven education to their educational communities.

For over a decade, TJ Consultants has collaborated with many districts through a customized continuous improvement process, reviewing and advising them on programming and services that positively influence their focus on meeting diverse needs. With decades of educational experience as educators and superintendents, TJ consultants have great insights and understanding of the wide range of needs, interests, complexities and challenges that school districts have and continue to refine and evolve in this work to best address the unique aspects of each district's focus. The collaborative nature of the partnership with districts has allowed the collective efforts to support growth opportunities and system changes that reflect shared interests, a common understanding of terms and processes, implementation strategies and thoughtful and reasonable steps to advance the plans through an engaging, collaborative process.

TJ Consultants was contacted by district administrative leadership at Center Cass School District 66 in August 2025, expressing interest in pursuing a specialized audit of their special education programs and services. In October 2025, TJ Consultants initiated a preliminary conversation with the Superintendent and the Student Services leader. The discussion included important district background information, the current district focus areas, and planning for an upcoming strategic plan scheduled for late 2026. There are many positive aspects of special education throughout the district and an interest in learning more about what additional focus areas and recommendations could advance efforts across the district. Based on the interests and thoughtful questions posed during the discussion, a comprehensive review would be valuable in providing a deeper understanding of the school district's special education programming and services, thereby assisting the district in advancing its ongoing pursuit of excellence on behalf of students and families in Center Cass School District 66.

The broad areas of focus identified by the district include the following key areas:

- Continuum of services and practices
- Alignment with state and federal requirements
- Program effectiveness
- Resource efficiency
- Recommendations for improvement/advancement of systems

In a customized review process, the key areas identified would be addressed through a comprehensive focus on the following review questions:

Learning Outcomes and Instructional Environment

- a) Does the district have an effective continuum of programs and services in place to meet the range of student needs across the district?
- b) Does the district have effective systems of support in place to address the needs of students?
- c) Is there compelling evidence that the district demonstrates strong compliance related to the indicators at the state and federal levels?
- d) Do the district processes reflect identification and support in line with other comparable districts, state and national averages?

Essential Supports

- a) How does the district demonstrate a shared collective efficacy regarding diversity of student needs and in what ways can advanced efforts enhance a shared vision and opportunities for growth for the future?

Environmental Vision and Supports

- a) Is there a defined process and system in place to determine workloads aligned with staff roles and student needs?
- b) Does the district have staffing that appropriately meets the needs of the student population?
- c) Does the district have the resources and systems in place that are appropriately aligned to meet students' needs?

- d) How does the district reflect a cost-efficient allocation of resources that are effectively and equitably aligned to meet the needs of all students?

Review Methods, including Qualitative and Quantitative Measures

The data collection process for this review would include interviewing, surveying if appropriate, observing, and reviewing relevant permanent products. The data sources may include, but are not limited to:

- Staff, administration and parent interviews and forums
- Observations as determined in collaboration with the department
- Review of problem-solving meetings and action planning schedules
- Related district trend data on enrollment, staffing patterns, and identification rates
- Staffing decision-making artifacts
- Program descriptions and related personnel roles and responsibilities
- Student placement trends
- Random IEP plan reviews for evaluation and goal progress
- System summaries, evaluations, IEP minute summaries, etc.
- District strategic plan artifacts, associated measures and updates
- Student services goals, updates
- Infrastructure/organizational design Information
- Committee focus areas
- District, school meeting designs – team meeting note sample
- District report card data review and comparative trends
- Facilitated focus groups, qualitative information (staff, parents, students, leaders)
- Special Education Procedural Handbook or other guides
- Professional Development plans/calendar focused on special education/position focus
- Review of district complaints/mediations and due process summaries
- Other relevant district documents, as deemed appropriate
- Associated research

Review Results and Recommendations:

TJ Consultants will generate a comprehensive report based on the qualitative and quantitative data gathered, reviewed, and analyzed within the context of evidence-based high-leverage practices. This report addresses the customized questions agreed upon that shaped the audit's focus. It will include strengths, barriers, and recommendations related to the identified priority areas. The report will also identify potential growth measures to monitor and evaluate progress, and will provide important information to inform the upcoming district strategic plan process.

Proposed Timelines for Audit Process

November 2025: Submit Proposal

December 2025: Proposal reviewed with the Board of Education of Center Cass School District 66

Spring, 2026: Complete the first phase of the review (i.e., data review, initial interviews, initial small group forums, observations, etc)

Summer, 2026: Compile data, complete data analysis and comparative data

Fall, 2026: Complete written report and provide final report/presentations

Compensation

This extensive and comprehensive customized special education review requires a combination of qualitative and quantitative data review, in-person interviews and forums and comparative data review and associated research. Total compensation to TJ Consultants is \$22,000.00.

- \$11,000.00 to be paid upon the signed agreement between Center Cass School District 66 and TJ Consultants to conduct the comprehensive audit
- \$11,000.00 to be paid upon completion of the comprehensive audit, final report provided and presented per district preference.

Respectively Submitted:

Dr. Judy Hackett and Dr. Tim Thomas

TJ Consultants