

New Story State of the State: Pennsylvania

A Year of Growth, Innovation, and Community

2023-2024 School Year



Letter from our Leadership

This year, our team across New Story Schools, Green Tree School and Services, and River Rock Academy demonstrated extraordinary dedication to the students and families we serve. Our recognition as a Most Loved Workplace® by the Best Practice Institute and one of America's Most Loved Workplaces® by Newsweek highlights the passion and commitment of our staff. Their collaboration and tireless efforts have created supportive, inclusive environments where students can thrive.

We also prioritized delivering the highest quality education through several initiatives. Our school leaders did a comprehensive audit of curriculum tools and resources and collaborated to share best practices and learning on effective special education curriculum. River Rock Academy expanded its reading program to enhance instruction tailored to students' unique needs. At Green Tree School & Services, continued emphasis on educator development with reading and language arts instructional tools helped our Elementary students exceed annual goals on Reading proficiency. Literacy focused activities including reading competitions and on-site book fairs have been successful in bolstering student interest and engagement with reading.

Growth has been a cornerstone of our success this year. Our in-district placement programs expanded, keeping students in the least restrictive environment by bringing them our teams and evidence-based programming that has proven successful for over 25 years. The continuum of services bridges the gap between general and special education while ensuring students receive the supports they need to succeed. Together, our out-of-district and in-district services continue to meet the growing demand for special education and alternative education programs, making a meaningful difference in students' lives.

Thank you for your continued trust and partnership as we build brighter futures for the students and families of Pennsylvania.



Christina Spielbauer,
Senior Vice President,
New Story Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Snapshot

New Story Pennsylvania includes three companies: Green Tree School and Services, New Story Schools, and River Rock Academy. Our out-of-district placement schools and public-school based programs encompass special education and alternative education programs for students with autism spectrum disorder (autism), special education, emotional and behavioral support needs.



1804
students enrolled

28
schools in Pennsylvania



New Story Schools in Pennsylvania provides exceptional special education and therapeutic services for students aged 5-21 with complex educational, behavioral, and developmental needs. With 15 campuses across the state, New Story Schools collaborates with families and school districts to create individualized education programs tailored to each student's goals. Their services include a combination of academic instruction, behavior management, speech and occupational therapy, and social skills development, all delivered in a structured, nurturing environment.



**River Rock
Academy**

River Rock Academy is a premier provider of alternative education and special education programming, dedicated to helping students overcome challenges and achieve personal and academic growth. Serving students in grades 6-12 in 12 campuses across the state, River Rock specializes in supporting those with emotional, behavioral, and academic needs. With a legacy spanning over two decades, River Rock Academy partners with school districts to offer individualized education plans, small class sizes, evidence-based interventions, and therapeutic supports.



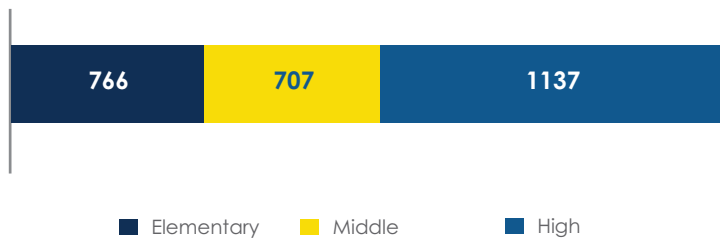
Green Tree School & Services (GTSS) is a trusted leader in special education, offering comprehensive academic, behavioral, and therapeutic support for students ages 5-21 with autism spectrum disorder and emotional support needs. Located in Philadelphia, Green Tree provides a nurturing environment where students receive individualized instruction, evidence-based interventions, and related services, including speech, occupational, and physical therapy.

Pennsylvania Snapshot

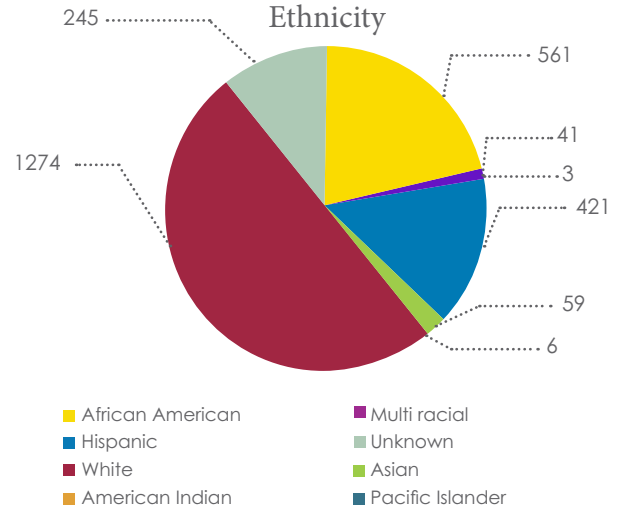
Our Students:

Our students come from a variety of backgrounds, with unique experiences and needs.

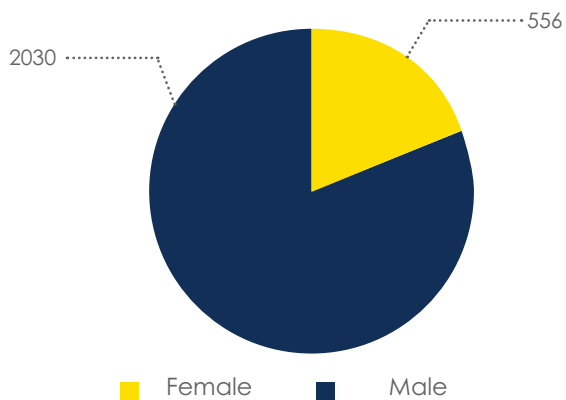
Grade Level



Ethnicity

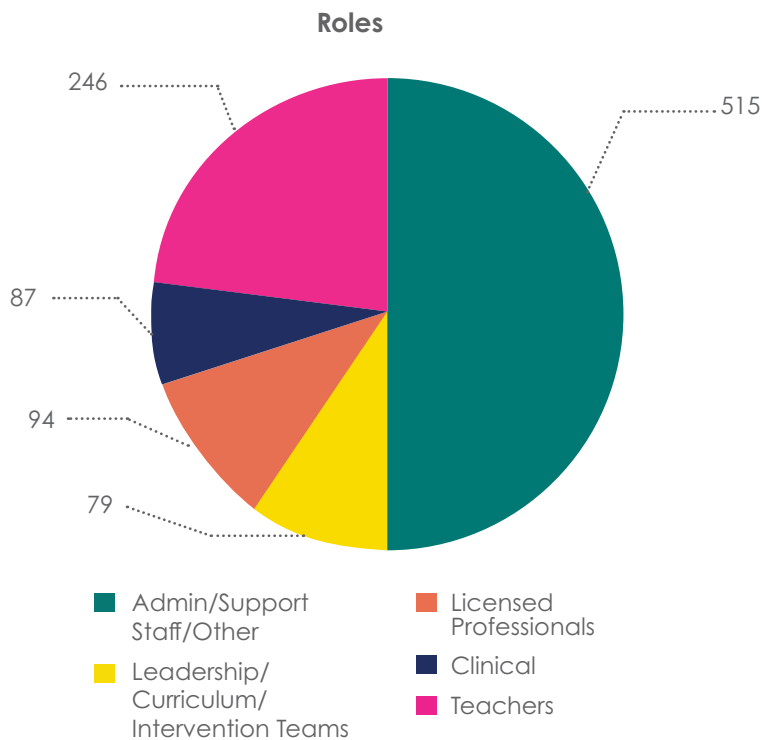


Gender



Our People: Better Together

At New Story Schools, Green Tree School and Services, and River Rock Academy, our dedicated team of educators, therapists, and support staff are the driving force behind our students' success. In the 2023-2024 school year, we celebrate the passion, collaboration, and innovation that define our people. From recognition as one of America's Most Loved Workplaces® to stories of mentorship, teamwork, and leadership, we're proud of the individuals and teams who go above and beyond to make a difference in the lives of our students every day.



1021 employees

Better Together



Marina M.
Autism Support Teacher
New Story Schools, Pennsylvania

In Fall 2023, New Story launched its mission, vision, values, and purpose collectively known as “Better Together.” Better Together reflects our commitment to unity, collaboration, and the collective impact we can create when we stand shoulder-to-shoulder, united by a common purpose. Marina M., an Autism Support Teacher at New Story Schools Pennsylvania, talked about how New Story Schools creates an inclusive environment where students and staff can thrive.

“I always knew I wanted to be an autism support teacher because I have autism myself. I didn’t have an inclusive and accepting upbringing in the education system. When I was a child it was a completely different viewpoint on how to support autistic needs. When I found that there was a school where I could be an autism support teacher, it was my dream come true! I knew I could empathize with the students and give my unique perspective on their needs. I can relate to them in many ways, so I look to make sure this generation feels less alone and give them all the opportunities they need to succeed... Since coming to New Story Schools, nobody has ever doubted my ability to perform at this job. We are inclusive not only to the diverse needs of students, but also to staff.”

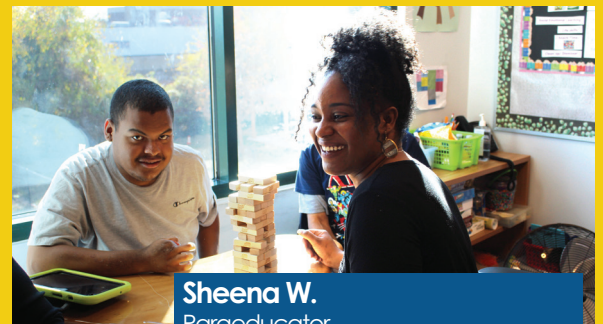
Our People: Better Together

Top 200 Most Loved Workplaces® Designation by Newsweek

New Story received its certification as a Most Loved Workplace® by the Best Practice Institute, and recognition by Newsweek as one of America's Most Loved Workplaces®. This prestigious certification is awarded to companies where employees are happiest and most satisfied.



Growing Roots, Shaping Futures



Sheena W.
Paraeducator
Green Tree School and Services

Through a company-wide leadership in development program, tuition reimbursement, university partnerships, and clear pathways for growth, our staff have multiple ways to grow their careers at our schools.

"I worked in special education since I was 19 years old. I knew this was something I wanted to do because I wanted to make a difference in people's lives. I love seeing that I have impacted so many students. I have seen some former students in place like the mall and reaching out to me on social media to tell me that they enrolled in school to become a special education teacher. In the next three years, I will be a teacher here at Green Tree School."

74

employees took part in the New Story Leadership Development program

Quality Matters: Enhancing Education and Community Support

New Story Schools, River Rock Academy, and Green Tree School and Services demonstrate a steadfast commitment to delivering exceptional educational experiences through innovative programs and strong community partnerships. From creating a streamlined curriculum toolbox with expert training and cross-state collaboration, to developing evidence-based reading programs tailored to individual student needs, these initiatives prioritize high standards and meaningful outcomes. Additionally, bi-annual events hosted by Green Tree School and Services, in partnership with local organizations, provide sensory-friendly activities and resource fairs to support families with autism needs, strengthening the connection between schools and the communities they serve. Together, these efforts reflect a shared dedication to ensuring every student achieves their potential.

Curriculum Enhancements: Tools, Training, and Partnerships

New Story Schools prioritized creating a robust curriculum toolbox to ensure all students have consistent and equitable access to high-quality curriculum. A school-wide assessment identified the most effective resources from the vast array introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic, addressing challenges with standardization while maintaining flexibility for educators to tailor lesson plans to student needs. To guide this process, an online curricular resource vetting committee of regional leaders, school leaders, and education staff evaluated tools, ultimately selecting a unified platform for English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, including integrated assessment features. Comprehensive training ensured educators could implement these tools effectively, with plans to expand the process to additional subjects such as Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

Building on this foundation, New Story Schools collaborated with several partners to identify best practices for curriculum and curricular resources that best meets the needs of our learners. These collaborations provided support for online resources such as lesson plans, curricular resources and manipulatives that support the development of our curriculum framework to meet the diverse and individualized needs of our students. These efforts underscore New Story Schools' commitment to equipping staff with consistent tools and training, ensuring students achieve their IEP goals and build skills for life beyond the classroom.

341

students graduated or returned to their district schools

284

district partners

100%

of districts are satisfied with the progress New Story Schools students are making

86%

grade average across all schools

Quality Matters: Enhancing Education and Community Support

Raising the Bar in Reading

River Rock Academy (RRA) staff and partner districts recognized a growing need for enhanced support to improve students' reading skills, prompting the development of a robust reading program. Using Achieve 3000, a platform familiar to many Pennsylvania school districts, RRA ensured seamless integration for students. A full-time reading teacher, supported by the Director of Curriculum, crafted a program tailored to meet diverse student needs. The program provides direct, explicit instruction in key areas such as phonics, phonological awareness, and foundational reading skills, with individualized support for older elementary, middle, and high school students and group sessions for younger learners. This approach has fostered significant improvements, particularly among students struggling with reading.

The program's success has been rewarding for staff, families, and districts, as students demonstrate measurable progress. Initially exclusive to the Spring Grove campus, the program is now being implemented across additional RRA locations, with aspirations to expand to every campus. The program's personalized, evidence-based approach continues to empower students to build confidence and advance their reading skills, preparing them for greater academic success.



98%

of districts are satisfied with their overall experience partnering with River Rock Academy

93%

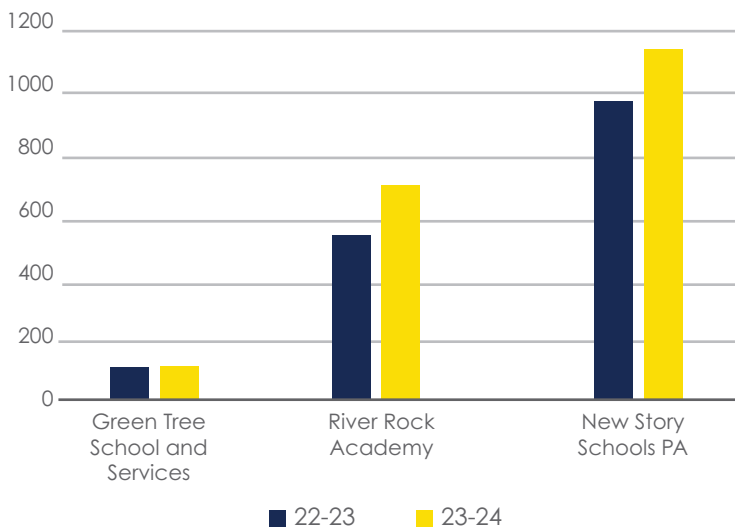
families are satisfied with their overall experience at Green Tree School and Services

Growth: A Continuum of Excellence

Building Community Connections

In the Spring, GTSS hosted a Neurodiversity Resource fair to help connect families of neurodivergent children with a host of community-based supports, including outpatient behavioral health treatment providers, intellectual disability support providers, and respite & advocacy providers. The fair creates a space for families from GTSS, as well as other families from the larger community, to meet other parents, strengthen peer relationships between neurodivergent kids, and build connections with local providers who can help support the whole family.

Enrollment



Growth: A Continuum of Excellence

Through our out of district schools, and our in-district services, we're proud and humbled to bring much-needed special education and alternative education programs to over a thousand students in Pennsylvania. In the 2023-2024 school year, our schools grew by 17% and our in-district placement program expanded to four partnerships with public schools. Working together with district partners and families, our goal is and has always been to keep students in the least restrictive environment, while ensuring they have the programming and support services they need to thrive.



Purposeful Partnerships

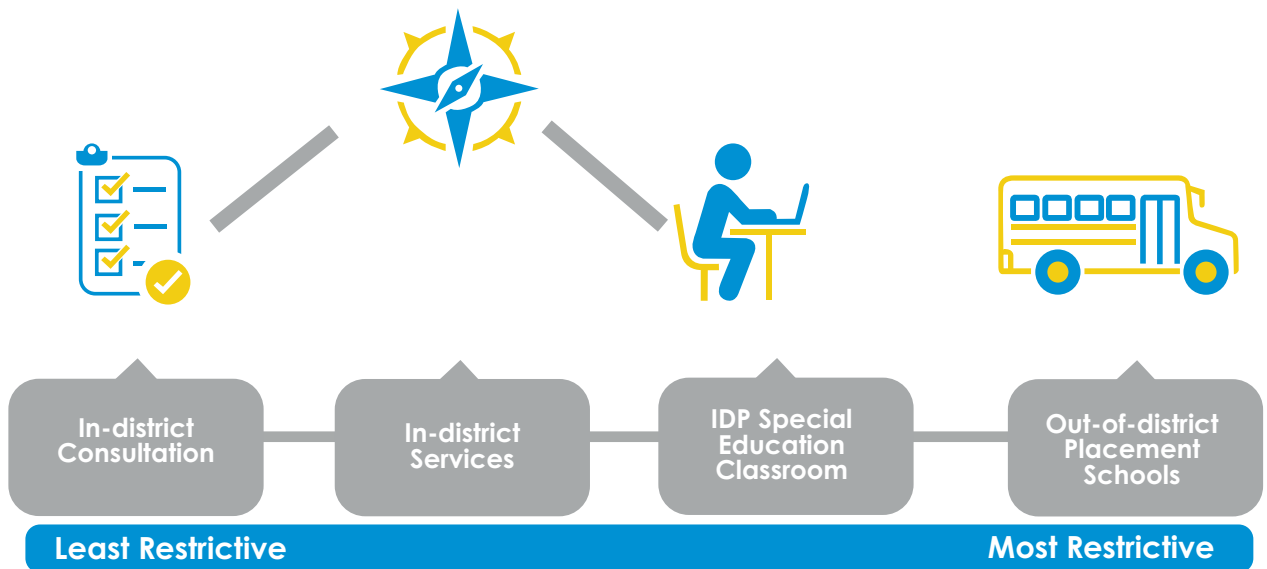


At New Story Schools State College, our partnership with Pennsylvania State University (Penn State), creates a unique bridge between education, community engagement, and mentorship. These collaborations provide opportunities for Penn State athletes and students to engage with our school community, fostering meaningful connections and promoting mutual learning. For New Story students, connecting to local role models, brings excitement and inspiration; whether through shared activities like arts and crafts, sports, or community events like Penn State Homecoming Parade. These experiences enhance our students' social and emotional growth, helping them build confidence and lasting memories.

Growth: A Continuum of Excellence

In-district to Out-of-district Continuum

New Story Schools' In-district Placement (IDP) program is a unique and effective model designed to support students with behavioral, mental health, and learning needs within the public school district and in the least restrictive environment. Designed to support students with both special education and emotional support needs, IDP is staffed by New Story Schools and River Rock Academy teachers, support staff, and clinical or therapeutic professionals, creating an inclusive environment that integrates students into their general education environment while providing the necessary support for their success. When an out-of-district placement isn't necessary or appropriate, the IDP classroom provides a transitional step for students needing more assistance than the traditional general education setting provides. This allows students to remain within their district, maintaining connections with their general education peers, and accessing electives or specials activities such as music, art, gym, and library. This transitional approach helps students adapt gradually, fostering a more inclusive and supportive educational experience.



15+
new district partners

About Green Tree School and Services

Green Tree School and Services (GTSS) provides full-time, out-of-district placements for students with emotional support or autistic support needs. GTSS supports the development of the whole child by providing speech therapy, occupational therapy, school counseling, and nursing services, in addition to special education classrooms. Students are provided well-rounded education with community integration, service learning, art, music, and more. GTSS strives to help students return to their home community schools and prepare them for life after school by providing vocational training and job readiness training. GTSS is an Approved Private School (APS).

About New Story Schools

New Story Schools has 15 locations across Pennsylvania, and supports children and young adult students ages 5-21 in kindergarten through grade 12 experiencing social, emotional, educational, and behavioral challenges. New Story Schools partners with families and school districts to meet the needs of students in a safe learning environment. As a leading special educational and autism support provider, New Story Schools offers authentic learning environments, small class sizes, and individualized learning plans focused on empowerment, skill-building, and academics. Our multi-disciplinary teams of educators, behavior analysts, therapists, and support staff apply evidence-based strategies to promote growth and development in support of students' personal goals. All New Story Schools across Pennsylvania adhere to the licensed private school code and are licensed by the PA Board of Education. New Story Schools in PA are licensed to educate students with disabilities grades kindergarten through 12. Students may fulfill graduation requirements established by the state.

About River Rock Academy

River Rock Academy was founded in 2005 and is committed to providing the internal power to change, affect, and improve the lives of the students we serve. River Rock Academy's vision is to become a premiere provider of alternative and special education services. RRA is a Pennsylvania Department of Education Approved Licensed Academic School and Private Provider.

About New Story

New Story is a leading provider of special education and therapeutic services in the United States. Through our network of schools and services, we embrace the incredible potential of each child and young adult. Our tailored education and therapeutic programs are designed to support their unique needs, fostering achievement, growth, and development. We offer a comprehensive spectrum of support for children and young adults with special needs, leveraging the diverse expertise, methodologies, and legacies within our network. Together, we empower every child and young adult to reach their highest potential.

Contact us
info@newstory.com

