

Student Services Report to School Committee

June 6, 2016

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Mrs. Lambo's 3rd Grade Class 2015

OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES

An outside program review was conducted by Colleen Dolan and EDCO earlier this year to evaluate where Weston Public School Special Education, Pre-K through Post Graduate programming could improve to ensure the highest quality educational opportunities to children who are eligible for special education and related services under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Much of the work that is conveyed in this report is based on the EDCO Review and that document will assist in guiding the work that will be done over the next number of years.

http://www.westonpac.org/uploads/3/1/5/0/31506421/sped_external_program_review_report_final.1.11.161.pdf

There have been many relatively significant changes to special education in Weston beginning in the 2012-2013 school year. These include the creation of in-district programs including Language Based and ACCESS programs at the elementary and middle school levels. The Bridge Program at the high school began that same year which supports both students in general education and special education. These programs and other services and providers allow Weston students who have disabilities to remain within the Weston Public Schools when appropriate.

The Office of Student Services for the Weston Public Schools hosts a broad range of student services, programs and supports including:

- Special Education and Related Services (pre-school to age 22)
- 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- English Language Learners Chapter 71A
- Guidance
- McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
- Nursing
- Home-based Services

Many of these services are in place as the result of federal and state laws and regulations. There are other services included in this list that are in place in schools for the overall well being of all students that attend the Weston Public Schools.

Overall Goals for the Office of Student Services

Continue to provide the students of Weston that are eligible for special education under IDEA with the highest level of education opportunity and experiences that are possible and appropriate.

Continue to improve communication between families and special educational professionals to build a higher level of trust and understanding.

Continue to develop and improve the in-district programs with an aim toward consistency in programming K-12 when cohorts allow for that programming.

Working with Pre-K -12 administrators and teachers looking at the social and emotional well-being of students.

Numbers of Students by Disability FY 11- FY-16

| Primary Disability | FY 11 | FY 12 | FY 13 | FY 14 | FY 15 | FY 16 | 3/1/16 |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Autism | 26 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 37 | 34 | 36 |
| Communication | 31 | 28 | 39 | 43 | 43 | 30 | 27 |
| Developmental Delay | 38 | 32 | 36 | 50 | 47 | 42 | 45 |
| Emotional | 15 | 16 | 14 | 15 | 19 | 19 | 22 |
| Health | 80 | 85 | 91 | 94 | 90 | 83 | 84 |
| Intellectual | 12 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 10 | 8 | 10 |
| Multiple Disabilities | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| Neurological | 7 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 19 | 18 |
| Physical | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Sensory/Deaf Blind | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sensory/Hearing | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Sensory Vision | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Specific Learning Disability | 141 | 129 | 124 | 136 | 136 | 124 | 132 |
| Out Of District | 20 | 18 | 25 | 28 | 33 | 27 | 30 |
| Total: | 388 | 368 | 388 | 423 | 440 | 397 | 410 |

*Note: The number of students on Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) can be assigned multiple disability codes. Therefore, the number of students on an IEP in this table may not agree with the total enrollment table.

Both Weston and the State of Massachusetts are reporting increases of students in the areas of Autism and Emotional Disabilities.

Percent of Children with Disabilities by Disability Compared to the State Ages 6-21

| Primary Disability | Weston | State |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Autism | 10.2 | 7.9 |
| Communication | 6.1 | 18.1 |
| Emotional | 6.1 | 10 |
| Health | 24.5 | 10.9 |
| Intellectual | 2.9 | 7.3 |
| Multiple Disabilities | .6 | 3.3 |
| Physical | 0 | .9 |
| Sensory/Deaf Blind | 0 | .1 |
| Sensory/Hearing | .6 | .8 |
| Sensory Vision | .3 | .1 |
| Specific Learning Disability | 38.5 | 34.8 |
| | | |

*Developmental Delay is only allowable through age nine, so a 6-21 percentage cannot be calculated. There are 5% of Weston Students currently in this category.

*Neurological is currently 5.2% in Weston.

There is some variability seen in the numbers when Weston is compared with the state. Weston has a higher percentage of students being found eligible for special education under Other Health Impairments. IDEA section 300.8.9 defines this category: (9) Other health impairment means having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that--

- (i) Is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette syndrome; and
- (i) Adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Most students in Weston that are found eligible for special education in this category are diagnosed with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.

This diagnosis is consistent with the State of Massachusetts as well as neighboring towns.

The Number of Students Eligible Under IDEA as of March 1, 2016

| Grade | Number of Students | Total |
|--------------|--------------------|-------|
| Pre-K | 31 | |
| K | 11 | |
| Grade One | 15 | |
| Grade Two | 20 | |
| Grade Three | 27 | 104 |
| | | |
| Grade Four | 28 | |
| Grade Five | 29 | 57 |
| | | |
| Grade Six | 26 | |
| Grade Seven | 33 | |
| Grade eight | 31 | 90 |
| | | |
| Grade Nine | 34 | |
| Grade Ten | 32 | |
| Grade Eleven | 29 | |
| Grade Twelve | 33 | |
| Post | 1 | 129 |
| | | |
| Total: | | 380 |

*The numbers for Pre-K are accurate but often after receiving intervention at that early level the number of students requiring specialized instruction does tend to decrease by kindergarten. Many of the students included are service only children meaning they may need OT, PT or Speech and Language Services only.

Students Placed in Out of District Placements by Disability FY 14, FY 15, FY 16 and March 1, 2016.

| Primary Disability | FY 14 | FY 15 | FY 16 | 3/1/16 |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Autism | 8 | 10 | 9 | 9 |
| Communication | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Developmental Delay | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Emotional | 4 | 6 | 7 | 10 |
| Health | 0 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Intellectual | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Multiple Disabilities | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Neurological | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Physical | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sensory/Deaf Blind | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sensory/Hearing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sensory Vision | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Specific Learning Disability | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| Total: | 28 | 33 | 27 | 31 |

Again, we see the number of students who are requiring out of district placements for emotional disabilities is growing. Currently a number of Weston students are hospitalized for a variety of reasons that do not appear on the above table. Some will be able to return to Weston Public Schools and some may require an out of district placement. A Team decision will be made upon discharge from the hospital working closely with families and providers.

OUR PROGRAMS

ACCESS Programs

This program is housed at the Country School, The Field School and the Middle School and there will be a program at the High School in the fall as a cohort of students moves up a grade level. These programs primarily service students who have a primary diagnosis of Autism, Communication Disorder and/or Neurological Disorder. Many students in these classrooms require highly individualized programming in all academic and social areas. These students often have a concomitance of disabilities and do not fit into just one category but do sometimes require intensive related services including OT, PT, Assistive Technology and Speech and Language.

Language-Based Programs

The language-based programs are at all of the elementary schools and the Middle School. Students who receive services in these programs have a language-based learning disability most often dyslexia. As a result of their disability these students require specialized instruction primarily in reading and writing but many also require the same level of support for math, science and social studies. Many of the students in the programs benefit from instruction in research-based, highly structured reading programs including Orton Gillingham and Wilson. We have professionals trained in one of these across the district. The Language-based programs provide a much smaller educational setting where students who are eligible receive their instruction by a certified special educator.

Learning Center

Learning Center is located at the three elementary buildings and supports student with both reading, writing and mathematics. The specialized, direct education service is provided by a special educator and are provided both in 1:1 sessions, as well as small group instructional settings.

Special Education Programing at the Elementary Level

| Type of Service | Number of Students K-3 | Number of Students 4-5 |
|-----------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Learning Center | 24 | 39 |
| Language-Based | 23 | 8 |
| ACCESS | 8 | 4 |
| Co-taught | 0 | 6 |

Academic Strategies

This program was formally called Skills and is at both the Middle and High School. Students who receive services in these programs are most often eligible under the categories of Specific Learning Disability or Health. These programs service by far, the largest number of students in Weston Public Schools on IEPs. Students are assigned a certain number of Academic Strategies blocks in a school week cycle depending on the level of required need of the student to access the general education curriculum. Some of the participating students are scheduled in Strategies classes every day and some for just one or two blocks per week. The classes are designed to meet the individual goals of the student's IEPs and are intended to provide both direct instruction and support to students with the academic requirements of school.

GOAL Program

Goal is a Weston High School program for students with complex learning and social profiles that educates students from high school to the age of 22. In addition to academic curriculum students learn vocational and community skills in a small instructional setting.

| Type of Service | Middle School | High School |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Academic Strategies | 68 | 71 |
| Co-taught | 53 | 55 |
| Goal | 0 | 2 |
| Language-Based | 4 | 0 |

Bridge Program

Bridge is a general education program that began in 2013-2014 and has grown every year since its inception. It was developed and is used primarily as a place for students to transition back to the high school after a hospitalization for any reason, extended evaluation, or some facing emotional and/or social/ stressors that require more structured therapeutic support. Bridge has also been used this year as the home base for students who did in-house extended evaluations so that the Team could get a better idea of the needs and supports the student may need to be successful at the High School. As this program continues to grow there have been faculty and staff added to meet the needs of students. All students in Bridge are accessing the general education curriculum to varying degrees with varying supports. Each student's schedule has been altered on an individual basis to increase the likelihood that they are able to meet the demands of their classes and remain in an emotionally healthy state. Some students access it once a day and others access the Bridge classroom many times in a day for academic and emotional support.

Bridge

| | SY 2013-2014 | SY 2014-2015 | SY 2015-2016 |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Number of Students | 16 | 23 | 29 |

OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES 2015-2016 SCHOOL YEAR

As stated earlier the EDCO Program Review guided much of the work that was conducted through the Office of Student Services this year.

Assistant Director

A part-time Assistant Director of Students Services was hired after two searches failed to find a viable candidate. In August Weston hired an Assistant Director of Student Services, Gerald Kupperschmidt. Jerry has worked very closely with the Director working at all levels but primarily in the pre-schools and elementary schools with administrators and teachers on behalf of the students of Weston. His insight, experience and kind, measured manner has been an asset to the Weston Public Schools.

Bridge Program

A special education teacher Rachel Bergeron, was added to support the Bridge Program to assist in meeting the growing population and needs of the students. Bridge does support both students on Individualized Educational Plans (IEP) and students in the general education setting. The special educator being added to Bridge has allowed students on IEPs to receive the specialized instruction within the Bridge classroom where they feel safe and supported.

This year protocols were developed in order to help ensure that students returning to school after what can often be extended absences will go as smoothly as possible. These protocols assist the individual students and families to communicate more effectively and transition students back in ways that are in the best interest of the students overall well being.

Orton Gillingham

Ten teachers were trained in Orton Gillingham (OG) this spring and will continue their training over the next school year. Orton Gillingham is a research-based reading method that was created at the turn of the 19th century by Dr. Samuel Orton, a neuropsychologist and Anna Gillingham an educator and psychologist out of Columbia University. These interventions provide a systematic, intensive technique to teach the phonetic structure of our language. They are multi-sensory in their approach and are taught both individually and in small group instructional settings depending on the level required by the student. Students who most often benefit the most from OG are students diagnosed with dyslexia.

Team Chair

A Special Education Team Chair added to the High School. Cathy Klein was the Team Chair at the High School and the special and general education teachers have found this position to be invaluable in maintaining compliance with the many laws and regulations associated with IDEA.

Professional Development

Professional Development was provided to all teachers in the area of the law and special education CMR 603 28.00. Mary Ellen Sowyrda, an attorney with Murphy, Hess, Toomey & Lehane whose area of expertise is special education law, provided professional development to all of the teachers in the district. She also had a follow-up breakout session that was very well attended on that same day. During the March Professional Development day, a breakout session that was also provided, was led by the Director of Student Services and a number of Team Chairs. This session was also very well attended.

Additionally, Professional Development was made available to all learning assistants in the new restraint laws and requirements. One of our district-wide Board Certified Behavioral Analyst (BCBA), provided the training over the course of the school year. This training is required as part of the new restraints law, 603 CMR 46.00 Prevention of Physical Restraint and Requirements "if" Used, that was recently passed and went into effect January 2016. The annual training is now a requirement.

Nursing

There was a new nurse hired for the Woodland School Joseph Karbowski, who started at Woodland in the fall. The nurses in Weston continue to care for our children and this year they had visits 16,818 and of those visits 16,115 returned to class which represents a 95.8% return rate compared to the state average of 93%. They also had 484 visits from faculty and staff and of those 476 returned to work. Patty Wright was able to secure, at no cost to the Town of Weston an EpiPen and a Narcan dose in every building. Patty also provided professional development to school-based personnel in the proper use of these medicines.

PAC

Student Services collaborated with PAC throughout the year. One key opportunity was when Dr. Nadine Gaab, Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Boston Children's Hospital and Harvard Medical School was brought to Weston Public School by the PAC for her presentation entitled Developmental Dyslexia: Early Identification, Brain-correlates and Remediation Strategies. Many teachers, service providers and administrators were able to attend the session and as a result of that presentation as well as ongoing work with the kindergarten team, the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, literacy teachers, specialists and school principals we have decided to change some of the processes and timelines for kindergarten screening. The first change is that incoming kindergarten students will have an initial screening in June using tools we have always used, The Gesell and subtest one of the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP). Historically in Weston this has been conducted in the fall however many surrounding communities gather this information in the late spring. By moving this to the earlier date we can gain critical information and identify any students who may need extra support over the summer and/or to make more informed decisions about the fall. In the fall the teachers will use other sections of the CTOPP to identify any students who may have challenges in learning to read. This process will allow school-based professionals the ability to identify student in need earlier and then provide comprehensive interventions to address those needs.

Although our work with PAC is on-going, there were three other specific occasions in which the schools and PAC collaborated to bring information to families. A number of Weston school-based administrators and other in-district professionals presented to PAC at their monthly meetings. The three presentations, Evaluations, IEPs and Autism shared with parents both the expertise of special educators in Weston but also the eagerness and willingness of the special education professionals to work with families of Weston to help ensure that all children get what they are eligible for under IDEA.

DCAP

District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) was rolled out to the district through collaboration between The Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and The Director of Student Services. <http://www.westonschools.org/index.cfm?pid=41496> .

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 38 Q, Section 38Q1/2 states, in relevant part:
A school district shall adopt and implement a curriculum accommodation plan to assist principals in ensuring that all efforts have been made to meet students' needs in regular education. The plan shall be designed to assist the regular classroom teacher in analyzing and accommodating diverse learning styles of all children in the regular classroom and in providing appropriate services and support within the regular education program including, but not limited to, direct and systematic instruction in reading and provision of services to address the needs of children whose behavior may interfere with learning, or who do not qualify for special education services under chapter 71B. The curriculum accommodation plan shall include provisions encouraging teacher mentoring and collaboration and parental involvement.

This document was presented to each of the schools by administration in order to be in compliance as well as to help meet the diverse needs of our student body. (MA DESE)

GOING FORWARD

New Assistant Director of Students Services

Weston Public Schools has hired a New Assistant Director of Students Services, Jennifer Truslow. Jennifer will begin work this summer, and although she will be working at all levels, her primary focus will be Pre-K through grade five.

EDCO

Student Services will continue using the findings from the Review of Special Education Programming and Services conducted by EDCO to guide special education and related services to be more consistent, compliant and aligned across the district with the goal being to provide the highest level of education opportunity and experiences that are possible and appropriate.

Special Education Chairs

Beginning in the fall there will be Special Education Chairs at each of the five buildings. These positions will help to assure legal compliance and consistency when appropriate, from Pre-K through twelfth grade. The Director and Assistant Director of Student Services along with School-Based Administrators will work closely with Team Chairs to develop protocols and practices that will best serve students who are eligible for special education under IDEA.

Programs

Continue to evaluate, adjust and develop when necessary and able, programs and interventions that will meet the diverse needs of students that are under the special education penumbra.

Working with Families

Through the PAC and other outreach opportunities, the Office of Student Services looks forward to continued work with families in a collaborative and proactive manner.

Achievement Gap

Office of Students Services will work in collaboration with the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and other system-wide Administrators to formulate a plan to begin to address the identified achievement gap between students in special education and their general education peers as measured by standardized state-wide testing.

Professional Development

The Office of Student Services will work in collaboration with the the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations to identify district-wide goals that will benefit all students in the Weston Public Schools.

Preparing for Program Review 2017-2018

Each school district in the Massachusetts must go through a Coordinated Program Review (CPR) conducted by Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) every six years and a mid-cycle special education follow-up visit three years after the Coordinated Program Review. This review albeit very intense, is looking at compliance with the laws and regulations that surround many parts of education. How this review differs significantly with the EDCO Review in that DESE is not looking for the quality of a program, nor are they looking for input from professionals, families, and other constituents, their sole focus is on compliance. Below is an overview taken from The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education site, of what the DESE CPR will look at during the 2017-2018 school year.

As one part of its accountability system, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education oversees local compliance with education requirements through the Coordinated Program Review (CPR). All reviews cover selected requirements in the following areas:

Special Education (SE)

- selected requirements from the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA-2004); the federal regulations promulgated under that Act at 34 CFR Part 300; M.G.L. c. 71B, and the Massachusetts Board of Education's Special Education regulations (603 CMR 28.00), as amended effective March 1, 2007.

Civil Rights Methods of Administration and Other General Education Requirements (CR)

- selected federal civil rights requirements, including requirements under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title

II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, together with selected state requirements under M.G.L. c. 76, Section 5 as amended by Chapter 199 of the Acts of 2011 and M.G.L. c. 269 §§ 17 through 19.

- selected requirements from the Massachusetts Board of Education's Physical Restraint regulations (603 CMR 46.00).
- selected requirements from the Massachusetts Board of Education's Student Learning Time regulations (603 CMR 27.00).
- various requirements under other federal and state laws.

English Learner Education (ELE) in Public Schools

- selected requirements from M.G.L. c. 71A, the state law that governs the provision of education to English language learners, and 603 CMR 14.00, as well as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. All districts that enroll limited English proficient students are reviewed using a combination of updated standards and a self-assessment instrument overseen by the Department's Office of English Language Acquisition and Academic Achievement (OELAAA) and Program Quality Assurance Services (PQA), including a request for information regarding ELE programs and staff qualifications.