

A Year in Review Special Education

Special Education and General Education
Collaboration
SAIL and STEP

The Importance of Inclusion

- Research has demonstrated that children with disabilities who struggle in reading and mathematics can successfully learn grade-level content and make significant academic progress when appropriate instruction, services, and supports are provided. Conversely, low expectations can lead to children with disabilities receiving less challenging instruction that reflects below grade-level content standards, and thereby not learning what they need to succeed at the grade in which they are enrolled.
- Students with disabilities who had full inclusion placements appeared to outperform similar students who were not included to the same extent in general education classrooms with their non-disabled peers. (Hehir 2014)
- Students with high incidence disabilities who had full inclusion placements, on average, performed better on the MCAS than students with high incidence disabilities who were in substantially separate placements in traditional public schools. (Hehir 2014)
- Students with disabilities who had full inclusion placements had a higher probability of graduating high school than students with disabilities educated in substantially separate settings. (Hehir 2014)
- Students with disabilities who had full inclusion placements were less likely to move subsequently to out-of-district placements than students educated in substantially separate settings. (Hehir 2014)

For a discussion of this research see Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged; Assistance to States for the Education of Children With Disabilities, Final Rule, 80 Fed. Reg. 50773, 50776 (Aug. 21, 2015).

Increased Inclusive Practices This Year

- We revised the criteria for our Language Based Program
- Administrators have been working with teams to change questions asked when determining placement from, “Can this student be included in the general education classroom?” to “What supports and services does this student require in order to be successful in this classroom?” and “Can we provide those supports and services?”
- We have been working closely with the IT department and principals to ensure that we have assistive technology available for students in the classroom
- Special Education Liaisons are pushing into more classrooms rather than older pull out model.

Inclusive Practices

- Special Education Staff have been provided professional development with a focus on inclusion. Examples include:
 - Teaching Struggling Learners Math
 - Using Assessments to Guide Instruction in Primary Mathematics Classrooms
 - Clear and Concise FBAs- Understanding the function, managing the behavior and designing interventions
 - Multi-tiered systems of support: Strategies for teaching Mathematics from Grades 1-5
 - Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress
 - Mindfulness in the Classroom
 - Cotting School-Use of Assistive Technology in the general ed setting

Inclusive Practices Next Steps

- Expand the use of the inclusion specialist at the middle school.
- More co-taught classrooms at Davis and Lane
- Less students in “pull-out” classes for Math and ELA across all 4 schools.

Co-teaching

- Goal: Over the next year, provided direct instruction, teachers will begin to deliver high-quality, effective, research based co-teaching in inclusive settings in at least one grade per school.
- Last summer, 19 educators across district attended a 4 day co-teaching training. This school year, we have co-teaching at each school.
 - Davis- 3 co-teaching teams
 - Lane- 3 co-teaching teams
 - JGMS- 1 co-taught class
 - BHS- 10 co-taught classes
- Judy DeLucia, Teacher/Owner of Seaside Consultants observed and coached our co-teachers over 4 days

Co-teaching Next Steps

- We have identified 3 additional days for training. Two days this spring and one summer day for 12 more staff members from Davis and Lane Schools.
- Next year, we will continue to expand our co-teaching in each school.
 - Davis-9 co-taught classes
 - Lane- 9 co-teaching teams
 - JGMS- 2 co-taught classes
 - BHS- 9 co-taught classes
- We will continue to work with Seaside consultants through the next school year for consultation and coaching.

SAIL

Socially Aware Independent Learners

The Substantially Separate SAIL Program is designed to serve Bedford Public School students in grades K-2 with educational needs due to a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other related disabilities. Program components include highly structured, individualized programming based on the principals and procedures of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA), intensive communication and language training, social skills training, utilization of natural environments for instruction, positive behavioral programming, educationally-based sensory activities, as appropriate, and inclusion with mainstream peers and activities when appropriate. Small-group and/or individualized instruction can be provided for the entire school day when necessary and appropriate. Modifications to curriculum content and methodology will be carefully considered by the team and tailored to meet individual student's needs. Related services including speech/language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, Board Certified Behavioral Analyst consultation, and counseling are provided based on individual need.

SAIL Sub-Separate Next Steps

- Over the next school year, we will begin planning to expand the program to the Lane School in the 2017-18 school year.
 - Logistics
 - Staffing needs
- We will expand our professional development initiatives to include staff from the Lane School.
 - Consultation with New England Center for Children (NECC)
 - Continued PD for our TAs to become Registered Behavior Technicians

SAIL

Socially Aware Independent Learners

The Inclusive SAIL Program is designed to serve Bedford Public School students in grades K-12 with educational needs related to an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other related disabilities. This program utilizes an integrated model to include students for a majority of their day within the general education setting, with supports, providing a safe, nurturing learning environment to facilitate the growth of language, social, behavioral, life and academic skills. Modifications to curriculum content and methodology will be carefully considered by the team and tailored to meet individual student's needs. Instruction will be provided by both general education teacher and special education teachers. Related services including speech/language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, Board Certified Behavioral Analyst consultation, and counseling are provided based on individual need.

SAIL Inclusive

- Currently, this inclusive program supports 29 students across the district
 - Pre-school- 8 (3-4 in the process of being diagnosed.)
 - Davis-5
 - Lane- 3
 - JGMS-4
 - BHS- 9

SAIL Inclusive Next Steps

- We have increased our BCBA support at both Davis and Lane School. Each school will have a full time BCBA
- We will expand our professional development initiatives to include staff from the Lane School.
 - Consultation from Walker Partnerships for teachers/TAs
 - Professional development around inclusive practices and behavioral interventions for students with Autism for the teaching assistants.

STEP

- The BHS STEP Program is a small, therapeutic program designed to support students 9-12 with social/emotional disabilities who require a substantially separate setting. Students receive academic instruction through a co-taught model that includes a special education teacher and a general education teacher. Students have access to elective courses developed specifically for students with social/emotional disabilities. **Inclusion opportunities are provided to the maximum extent possible depending on individual student progress.** Students participate in therapeutic supports including group and individual counseling, flexible scheduling and community meeting. The focus of the program is to engage learners and to promote social/emotional resiliency both in school and in the community in preparation for post-secondary life.

STEP

- STEP began in January of 2016. Since that time, we have serviced a total of 15 students (3 came back from outplacements).
- Mainstream teachers push into the program to teach content area courses which provides the type of hands-on, enjoyable classroom environment that these students require to be successful.
- Shawn Daily, the school adjustment counselor for the program, presented to the general education staff about social emotional disabilities.
- Our first graduate has been a full time student at Middlesex Community College since last fall and plans to enroll in the dental hygiene program.
- We have one student that has completely transitioned into the mainstream high school. He was close to outplacement last January until we started STEP. He gained the skills and resiliency required to move forward and the staff and his family are very proud of his progress.
- We have two seniors that will be graduating this year and both plan to attend Middlesex Community College in the fall.

STEP Activities

- Umass Lowell campus visit
- "How to" Presentation at the Council on Aging for the use of iPhones
- Shopped for and cooked a full Thanksgiving Dinner and incorporated aspects of the diverse cultures in our group (many of our students do not have this at home)
- Altitude Trampoline Park
- Boda Borg
- Flatbread Fundraising Event
- Museum of Science
- On site visit to Whole Foods to learn how to shop, eat and cook healthy foods
- 1st Annual Cook-Off (fundraising event where each student cooked a recipe from their family or culture)
- Volunteer for The Food Project
- Volunteer with Habitat for Humanity
- 3 day camping trip in NH
- Visits from therapy dog
- Monthly Bake Sales

STEP – Next Steps

- We are adding a Biology class, a Forensics class and a digital art class.
- We will be adding a health class along with PE
- Moving to a new space with 3 classrooms to allow more students and more space to learn and grow.
- We are discussing the possibility of expanding the teachers role to a teach chair.

References

- Hehir, T., Schifter, L., Grindal, T. Ng. M., & Eidelman, H. (2014) Review of Special Education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Retrieved from <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/hehir/2014-09synthesis.pdf>
- Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged; Assistance to States for the Education of Children With Disabilities, Final Rule, 80 Fed. Reg. 50773, 50776 (Aug. 21, 2015). Retrieved from: <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/08/21/2015-20736/improving-the-academic-achievement-of-the-disadvantaged-assistance-to-states-for-the-education-of>
- OSERS Policy Guidance on Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) (PDF) 1/ 7 (Nov. 16, 2015) Retrieved from: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/guidance-on-fape-11-17-2015.pdf>

