BARRINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

AN EDUCATION SERVICES ANALYSIS

PROJECT CONTRIBUTORS

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EXECUTIVE PROCESS SUMMARY

The leadership of the Barrington Public Schools (hereafter, referred to as the District or BPS) commissioned this review of specific areas that support struggling learners. In conducting this analysis, the review team employed proprietary methodology from a pre-established paradigm (i.e., an Educational Services Analysis), which triangulates information gleaned from qualitative and quantitative information.

More specifically, the qualitative analyses comprised: (1) a series of interviews or surveys with special education teachers, general education teachers, service providers, para-professionals, central office administrators, school-based administrators, personnel from out of District placements, and representatives from the special education advisory committee;[1] (2) a review of documents (i.e., IEPs) to ascertain the degree and appropriateness of services; (3) non-evaluative site visits to all the District schools and selected out of district programs to ascertain the array of services and programs available to SWDs.

Quantitative analyses included: (1) multidimensional analyses of information contained within the IEPs; (2) comparative analyses of staffing and corresponding workloads; (3) student outcome data; and (4) financial data pertaining to programmatic expenditures. Given the number of data points, the results that are reported within this document represent recurring themes from the interviews (outlying comments were not included as part of the primary findings) coupled with quantitative data.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to acknowledge District staff and school personnel. This project necessitated a great amount of effort in facilitating logistics and in securing documents; the team is grateful for the efforts of all central office and school-based staff. Throughout the entire process, the cooperative relationship between Futures and the District has enabled the team to work with District leadership in a collegial and transparent manner to maximize the benefits of this analysis for the District.

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALP: *Alternative Learning Program*

ARI: *Availability Ratio Index*

CSD: *Cohort School District*

FTE: *Full-time equivalent*

IEP: *Individualized Education Program*

LRE: *Least Restrictive Environment*

ODP: *Out of District Placement*

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[1] The complete breakdown of interviewees is presented in **Appendix A**

OT:	*Occupational Therapist or occupational therapy services*
PD:	*Professional development*
PT:	*Physical Therapist or physical therapy services*
RIDE:	*Rhode Island Department of Education*
RtI/MTSS:	*Response to Intervention/Multi-Tiered System of Supports*
SEAC:	*Special Education Advisory Committee*
SEL:	*Social-Emotional Learning*
SWDs:	*Students with Disabilities*
S-LP:	*Speech-Language Pathologist or speech-language pathology services*
SWDs:	*Students with Disabilities*

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Continuum Of Supports: The range of programs, personnel, and resources to support all students.

Co-Teaching: A model whereby a special education teacher and a general education teacher jointly plan and deliver instruction to students with and without disabilities.

Effectiveness: The degree to which the services under review promote optimal educational outcomes and student access to the curriculum.

Efficiency: The degree to which the special education services and personnel under review are responsibly, uniformly, and optimally utilized to ensure District resources are being expended in a fiscally sound manner.

Horizontal Alignment: Practices that correlate special education instruction to grade-level expectations.

Ownership: The philosophy whereby general and special education staff view all students as their responsibility.

Vertical Alignment: The degree to which the transition of SWDs, as they progress from one grade, school, or program to another, is seamless.

DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

The staff of Futures is pleased to provide this report of the comprehensive analysis of the programs and services that was conducted from January through May 2019. The primary purposes of this analysis are to describe, and to provide suggestions to improve, specific areas within its education delivery system that include:

(1)   Related Services

(2)   Utilization of Para-Professional Supports

(3)   Out of District Placements

(4)   Continuum of Services

(5)   Organizational Structure and District Coordination of Programs and Services

Because these five areas are presumed to overlap, the report considers these with respect to *Organizational Considerations* and *Continuum of Services*. In turn, each area is divided into Overview, *Findings* (comprising *Driving Questions),* and *Areas of Opportunity*.

METHODOLOGY

- Eighty-two (82) confidential interviews with central office leadership, school-based administration, certified teachers, non-certified instructional staff, related service providers, out of district representatives, and parents of students with disabilities (please see **Appendix A** for interviewee roster)

- Non-evaluative on-site visits to all six District schools and selected out of district placements

- Comparative data to Massachusetts Cohort School Districts (CSDs):   Lexington Public Schools, Needham Public Schools, Wayland Public Schools, Wellesley Public Schools, and the Weston Public Schools.

- Quantitative personnel comparisons to other Rhode Island and national data bases

- Documents provided to the Futures staff (e.g., Staff Rosters, Organizational Charts, etc.)

- Data retrieved from the District's IEP system

- Student data from the Rhode Island Department of Education (http://www.ri.gov/) and Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (http://www.doe.mass.edu/) websites.

CLIMATE, CULTURE, AND ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

OVERVIEW

The authors intentionally begin this document with a consideration of the cultural capacities of, and within, the special education delivery system. The reason for this is that without the requisite capacities, the forthcoming recommendations concerning the programmatic and fiscal enhancements will have less potential for successful implementation.

With respect to personnel as addressed in Driving Questions 5, it is not possible to consider the efficacy of the District's continuum of services and the concomitant horizontal and vertical alignment without an understanding of the current staffing models. To this end, the personnel under review available to support SWDs was gauged by benchmarking the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff members to this overall

District special education population of 370 Pre-K-12 SWDs (as per the most recent data).[2] In essence, this statistic is an "availability ratio index (ARI)" and allows an equivalent comparison of other districts with respect to staffing from a "macro" perspective.

FINDINGS

Driving Question #1: Is there a healthy culture of student "ownership" within the District?

- BPS is to be commended for initiating educational best practice and evidenced-based program options designed for meeting the needs of all students in the least restrictive environment. The six principals interviewed as part of this program review have acknowledged the importance of their leadership role in support of an inclusive school environment. Relatedly, the question of BPS building principals' role regarding their skill sets in overseeing special education in their schools is related more to their commitment to the belief that all students are general education students first than it is to specific skill sets in special education.

- As described by interviewees, an all student agenda is not shared by some staff members. Although there is a very high acceptance of students with disabilities, there still remain pockets of "your kids-my kids" versus "our kids" within the ranks of general as well as special education staffs. Overall confidence in the LRE as the optimal service delivery model is impacted by a desire to either "protect" students, shield students from academic challenges, or shift responsibility.

- To the degree that inclusionary models are correlated with Culture and Climate (among other factors), it is interesting to compare the District's data on Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). As indicated below in **Figure 1**, the percentage of SWDs spending at least 80% of their day in general education is 73%, comparing to a CSD average of 75% and a State Target of 63%. As shall be discussed in the subsequent section, this data corroborates the interviewees' perception than an expansion of the District's continuum, inclusive of integrated co-teaching, could be bolstered.

Figure 1: *The Percentage of SWDs Spending At Least 80% in the General Education Environment*

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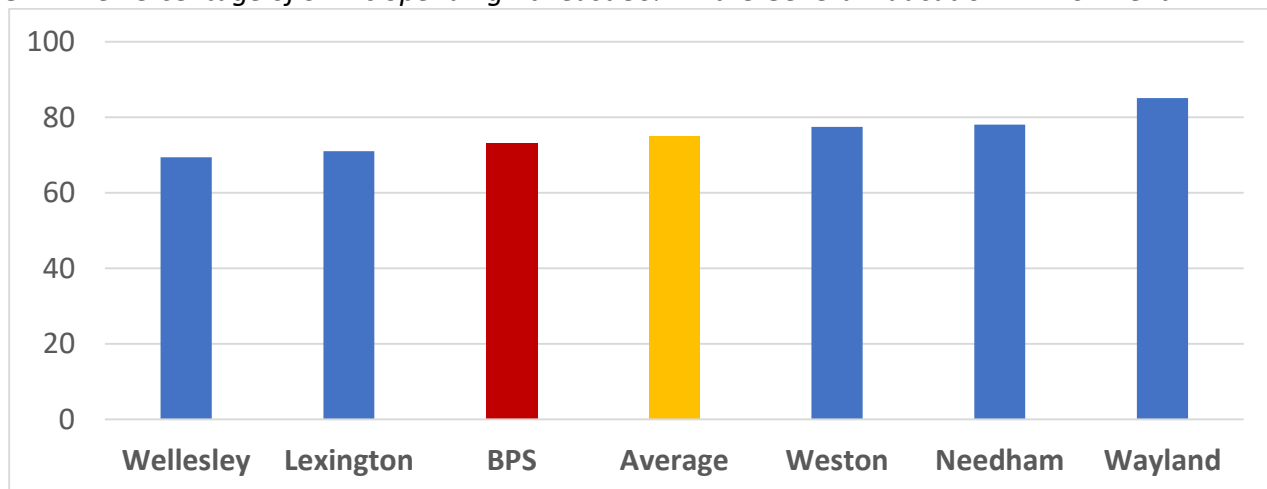
[2] This excludes the 25 pre-school SWDs who are receiving "walk-in" speech-language services; the numerator for S-LP was 390 inclusive of the walk-in students

Driving Question #2: Are IEP Meetings and Processes Conducted in a Manner that is Efficient?

- With respect to engagement of parents at the "IEP table" it appears the concepts of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and Free Appropriate Education (FAPE) are generally conveyed to, and understood by, the team members. Although there is a small cadre of parents who resist the IEP team decisions regarding dismissal or diminution of services, it was reported that these team decisions to dismiss or diminish services are celebratory in nature, emphasizing student acquisition of IEP goals.

- Exacerbating potential contentiousness at IEP meetings regarding FAPE and LRE is that the current number of school-to-school transitions is such that, in some cases, there is a reluctance to reduce or terminate special education services fearing that services will be compromised in the new school setting. Due to the provision of services such as reading through MTSS, rather than by IEP services providers, contentions may arise between team members regarding necessary services, delivery models and eligibility determinations.

Driving Question #3: Do Staff Perceive That They Have Sufficient Resources, Materials and Professional Development?

- Generally, respondents indicated that the District provided staff with sufficient supplies, materials and instructional technology to optimize the teaching-learning processes.

- Having identified a gap in the academic achievement of students with disabilities and their general education peers, BPS schools have initiated, in varied degrees, tiered instructional supports, co-teaching, focused literacy and math supports, behavioral supports and embedded social-emotional professional development.

- Admirably, the BPS 2018-2023 Strategic Plan includes a district-wide goal designed to change the culture of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) in the district. These are district-wide, interdepartmental initiatives. Effective implementation, however, is dependent upon continued and enhanced principal leadership and special education collaboration.

- However, as conversations continued in interviews, there is widespread desire for additional training in specially designed instruction, IEP development and monitoring, MTSS, and behavior intervention.

Driving Question #4: As Currently Constituted, Is Central Office Staffed to Meet the District's Needs?

- Currently, in addition to the Director of Pupil Personnel Services (PPS), there is a Student Services Systems Coordinator who is split between her time as a direct report to the Director and to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. Although this position was created to add another level of support for the Director and the District, per report from numerous stakeholders it is not meeting the outlined goals and objectives.

- From a quantitative perspective, the administrative structure for PPS is leanly staffed. The 1.5 FTE administrators to oversee 425 SWDs (Pre-K-12 in-District and Out of District), equates to a ratio of 1:283, and compares to an expected range of 1:150-1:250.

Driving Question #5: At the Instructional Level, How Does the District Compare to Other Districts?

▪ As delineated in **Figure 2**, the District is: (1) generously staffed for certified special education teachers; (2) within expectations for S-LP, OT, PT, psychology, and para-professional services; and (3) lightly staffed with respect to behavioral health staff.

Figure 2. The availability ratio index (ARI) for special education teachers

Discipline	FTE	District ARI	Expected ARI	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Certified Teachers	49	7.6	11:1	3	Generously Staffed
Para-professionals	50	7.4	8:1	3	Staffed to Expectations
S-LP	5.6	71	60:1	10	Staffed to Expectations
OT	2.6	154	180:1	30	Staffed to Expectations
PT	.6	616	430:1	100	Staffed to Expectations
Psychology	3.5	867:1	Range 700-1,000	--	Staffed to Expectations
Behavioral Health	13.5	27.4	24	3	Lower Staffed to Expectations

Additional Commentary

Speech-Language Pathologists: An analysis of the S-LPs' schedules (**Appendix B**) reveals that 58% of their time is spent providing direct services to students, comparing to an expected range of 55-60%; 38% of that direct time is spent providing individual treatment, which compares to an expected percentage range of 25-50%. The average mandated (IEP-directed) caseload of 41 and the average service weekly service minutes of 45 are within expected limits.

Occupational Therapists: An analysis of the OTs' schedules (**Appendix B**) reveals that 69% of their time is spent providing direct services to students, comparing to an expected range of 60-65%; however, 79% of this direct time is devoted to individual time, which suggests a medical (vs. an educational) service model. The average mandated (IEP-directed) weighted caseload of 29 and the average service weekly service minutes of 47 are within expected limits.

Physical Therapy: An analysis of the PT 's schedule (**Appendix B**) reveals that 61% of her time is spent providing direct services to students, comparing to an expected range of 60-65%; 92% of this direct time is devoted to individual time, which is within expectations given the nature of the SWDs receiving PT services. The average mandated (IEP-directed) caseload of 35 is within expected limits.

Behavioral Health: The psychology ARI of 867:1 compares to the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) recommended ratio range of 1:500 to 1:700 students (general and special education), but it is within expectations based on the authors' data bases. However, if one considers psychologists as part of a behavioral health department (which usually includes social workers and guidance counselors), there are 13.5 FTEs (the 3.5 psychologists, 2 social workers, and 8 guidance counselors), the ARI for SWDs to behavioral health staff is 27:1 (for SWDs); this is mildly below expectations.

Driving Question #6: Are the District's Expenditures Devoted to Special Education Within Expectations?

▪ As indicated the District's expenditures per SWD (**Figure 3**) are approximately $4,000 higher than the CSD average. It is notable the District's lower special education percentage compared to the CSD is a contributing factor as corroborated by expenditures devoted to special education as a proportion of the overall operating budget (**Figure 4**) is slightly below (.2%) the CSD average.

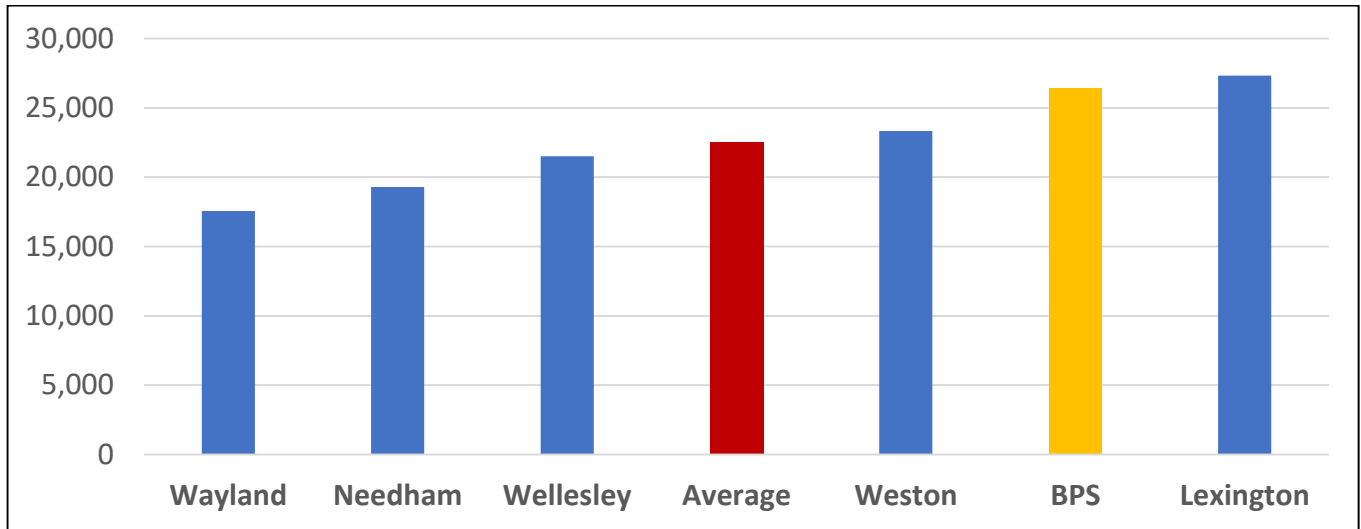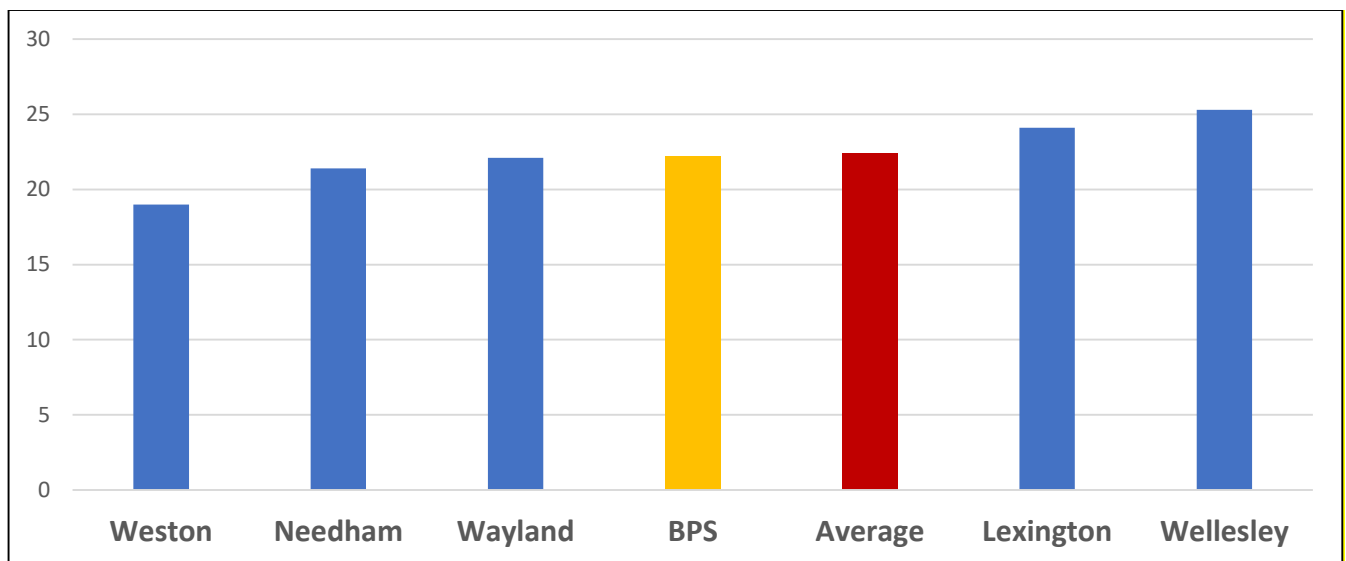**Figure 3.** *Expenditures Per SWD (expressed in actual dollars)*

Figure 4. *Expenditures Devoted to Special Education as a Percentage of the Overall Operating Budget*

AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

- Continue to maximize District PD resources, via a unified PD curriculum for both general and special education teachers to work collaboratively to meet the needs of all students (i.e., with or without disabilities). To ensure the PD meets their needs throughout their employment, and enhance their connectivity to schools and "empowerment," perhaps ask a paraprofessional from each school to sit on PD committees

- To promote harmony, develop a unified vision, and enhance the working environment among general and special education departments across the District, leadership may consider the following:
  - ✓ Integrate of special education and general education personnel in the school-level Professional Learning Communities that focus on teaching, learning, and looking at student work;
  - ✓ Integrate of special education and general education intervention service providers in the district-level Professional Learning Communities that focus on supporting teaching and learning through MTSS, 504, and/or IEP delivery models;
  - ✓ Make explicit the shared ownership between special educators and general educators of the District Mission and Vision of a Graduate, and make this visible to personnel at all schools; and
  - ✓ If contractual parameters allow, expand the teacher evaluation process to include the ownership issue, to recognize those teachers who take ownership of all students, and to provide specific Professional Improvement Plans to those who do not.

- The District is strongly encouraged to revisit the creation of systematic, District-wide entry and exit criteria for all related services and para-educators. The authors shall provide District leadership with examples that will further specify operational parameters (e.g., when S-LPs should consider exiting students).

- As part of leadership's continued plan to update processes and procedures, it may also be beneficial to re-visit the establishment of descriptions that further define the in-District continuum of programs so that students have access to consistent frameworks and curriculum as they progress from grade to grade and from school to school. This would span the forthcoming discussion of ensuring co-teaching models are included to programs supporting students with intensive needs.

  With respect to "rolling" out the information, develop user-friendly formats that could be placed at each school and on the District's website.

- There might be ways in which the re-structing of the PPS could be optimized. Although there are many models, the following may best meet the District's needs: (a) a dedicated Coordinator to support PPS; or (b) creating a stipend Team Chair/special education department heads at each of the six schools to oversee the IEP process, support best practices, and coordinate other aspects of the special education delivery system.

  Furthermore, the assignment of a lead Related Service Provider (RSP), who would carry a caseload but devote a portion of time to other duties, is recommended to ensure: (1) adherence to established exit

and entry criteria through mentorship, modeling, and quality assurance; (2) coordination of professional development (PD) with thematic relevance for the RSPs; (3) assist in the quality review of IEPs and connected progress monitoring ; (4) assistance in the vertical alignment for special programs, particularly as they pertain to the provision of RSPs; and (5) a link between the RSPs and Director of Pupil Personnel Services.

▪ In order to further manage workloads of the related services staff, District leadership may consider enacting a variation of the American Speech-Language Hearing Association's 3:1 model, whereby students are seen for direct treatment for three weeks out of every month (or 7 times per marking period), and the fourth week is devoted for "indirect" services, which may include classroom observation, consultation with the teaching staff, and other student-centric activities that facilitate generalization of learned skills. Although this recommendation follows ASHA, it should be considered for all special education teachers and service providers as a best-practice model.

▪ Consider expanding the District's strong SEAC to the school-level (e.g., hold meetings at specified times at each school throughout the year) to further support representative parent engagement across BPS, it may be beneficial to have school principals host these meetings in conjunction with PPS leadership to ensure this initiative is well-represented and publicized.

CONTINUUM OF SUPPORTS

OVERVIEW

Although the term "continuum of services" is associated with special education, it is useful to broaden this definition to "continuum of supports" because it can be used to conceptualize a system of instructional and programmatic provisions for all students (i.e., students with and without disabilities). Ideally, this continuum provides programming, personnel, and resources to appropriately address the educational needs of students in the general education classrooms; or, if needed, in special education programs designed to be closely integrated with the general education environment.

The other framework that is inherent in a programmatic discussion encompasses the student-centric constructs of *horizontal alignment* and *vertical alignment*. Horizontal Alignment refers to practices that correlate special education instruction and supports to grade-level expectations; it can be measured academically by student achievement and more broadly by the quantity and quality of opportunities that SWDs have with their typical peers. Vertical Alignment is the degree to which the transition of SWDs as they progress from one grade, school, or program, is seamless; vertical alignment requires consistent, uniform, and robust programming that ensures the needs of SWDs are consistently met until they graduate or are deemed ineligible to receive special education services. **Figure 5** illustrates these two dimensions of alignment.

Figure 5. *The Two-dimensions of Alignment*

Vertical Alignment: consistent, uniform, and robust programming across programs and schools

Student

Horizontal Alignment: meaningful inclusion opportunities & achievement within grade-level
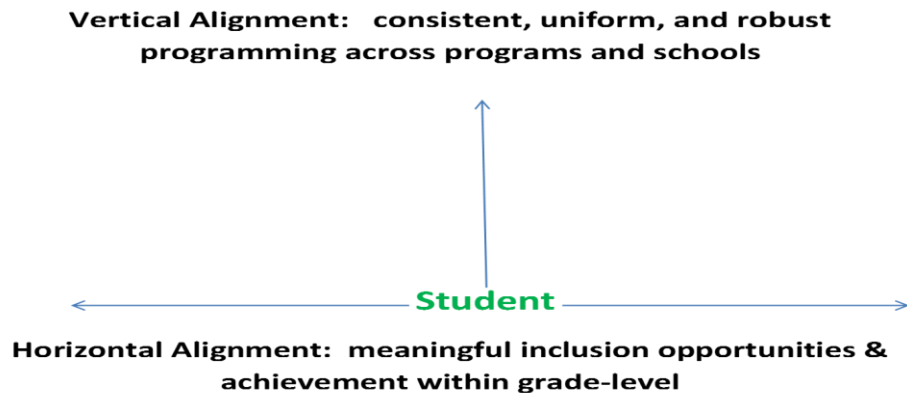
Source: Futures Education, 2019

FINDINGS

Driving Question #7: As Currently Constituted, Is the District's Early Intervening Process Working Well?

- Building principals have committed to a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS); however, implementation varies from school to school and is most developed in the elementary schools. Although each school maintains its own data, there was virtual unanimity that there is no district-wide system for recording the effectiveness of student interventions, what works, and what does not.

- Despite the District's reported challenges with MTSS, the data "paint" a more encouraging picture.   As indicated in **Figure 6**, the District's historical and current special education population is lower than all the districts within the CSD cohort.

Figure 6. *Trend Data in Percentage of SWDs*

BPS — Lexington — Wellesley — Average — Weston — Needham — Wayland
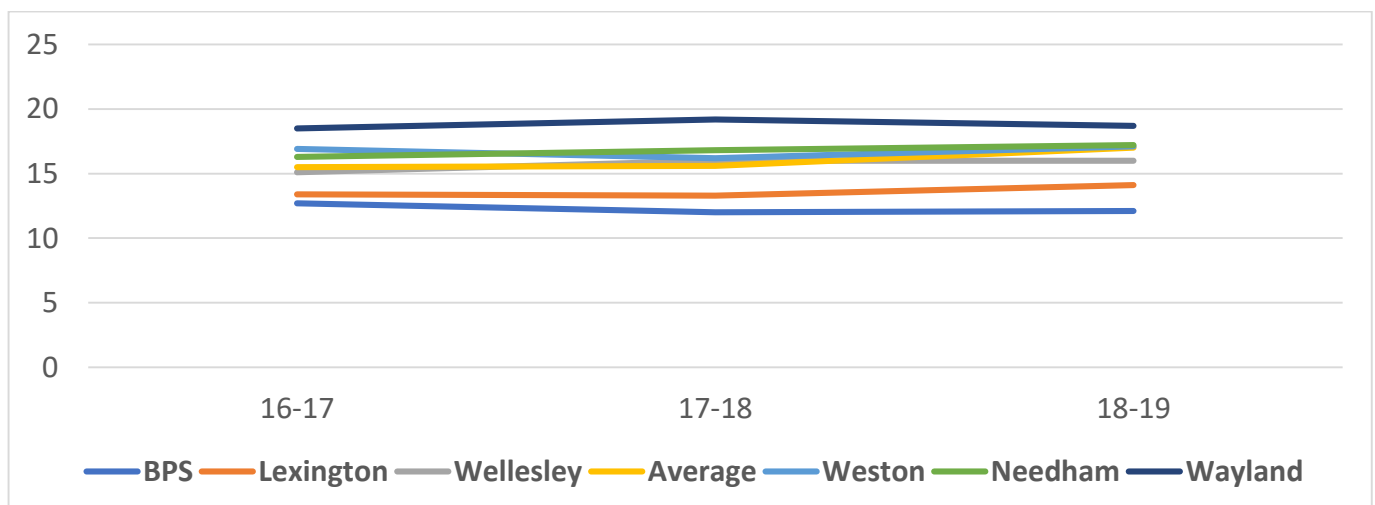
- Another indicator of an effective early intervening process is the degree to which high frequency-lower needs disability categories (i.e., specific learning disabilities, Health, and Communication[3]) may be over-represented in that they are not receiving supports in general education that are meeting their instructional needs. As indicated in **Figure 7**, high-incidence, low need disabilities are higher than the CSD average, resulting from the much higher Communication disability (25% in BPS compared to the 13% CSD average); it is extremely rare to see Communication (Speech-Language) Disability represent the plurality of disabilities.

Figure 7. *The Relative Prevalence of High Frequency-Lower Needs Disability Categories*
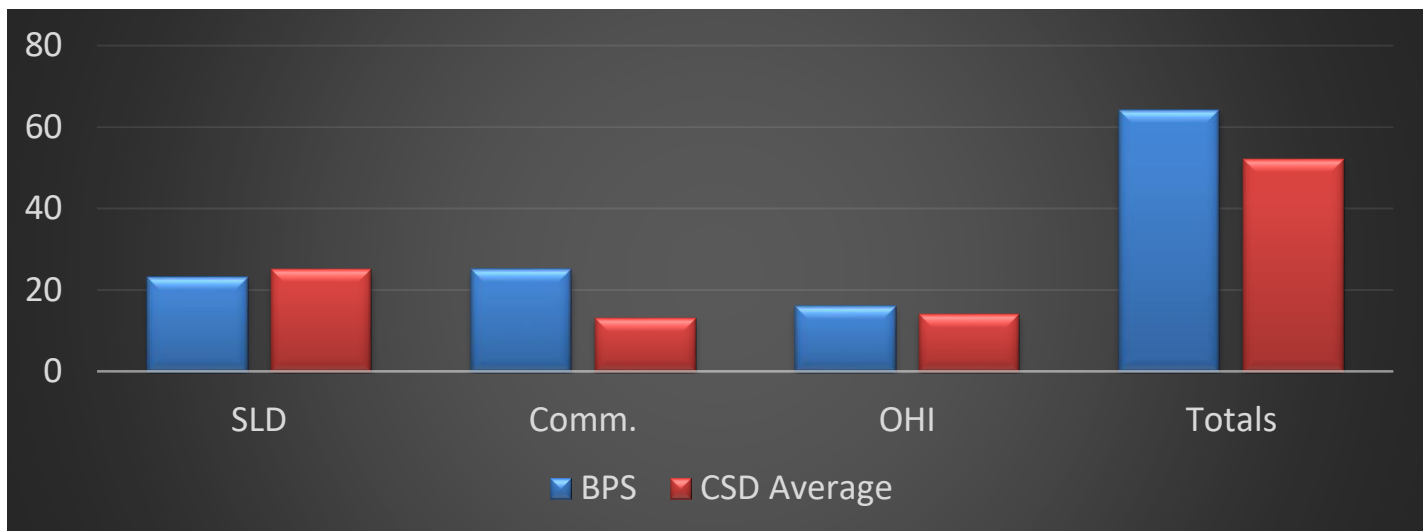
- The effectiveness of tiered interventions in the last few years has been compromised by a rise in the frequency and severity of students who manifest social-emotional and behavioral issues. Teachers have received some intervention training, but they are not well trained in handling severe behaviors or emotional trauma. PBIS has been tried in the district at PK-5 with minimal success.

  In response, BPS has initiated a stronger commitment to social-emotional learning (SEL) and established a District-wide goal to improve tiered interventions prior to referral for special education services. Administrators and teachers across the district will become knowledgeable in evidenced-based approaches (e.g., RULER and CASEL).[4]

- In a related matter regarding possible over-identification, the District is to be commended for its historical record of not having disproportionate representation for sub-groups or for specific disabilities.[5]

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[3] Communication is termed Speech-Language Impairment in Rhode Island
[4] The reader is referred to **Appendix C** for more information on SEL
[5] Disproportionality is over-representation of minority students identified with a learning disability or other type of disability under the IDEA. When a minority group's numbers in special education are statistically higher than they should be, they are considered disproportionate.

Driving Question #8: Once Identified Is the In-District Continuum of Services Meeting Student Needs?

▪ To the degree that special education is meant to "level the playing field," there are several primary IDEA indicators that are the most critical to determine if SWDs are attaining desired outcomes.

✓ With respect to pre-school skills, as indicated in **Figures 8a**. and **8b.**, SWDs within the District have demonstrated excellent outcomes.

Figure 8a: *Of those preschool children who entered the preschool program below age expectations, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program.*
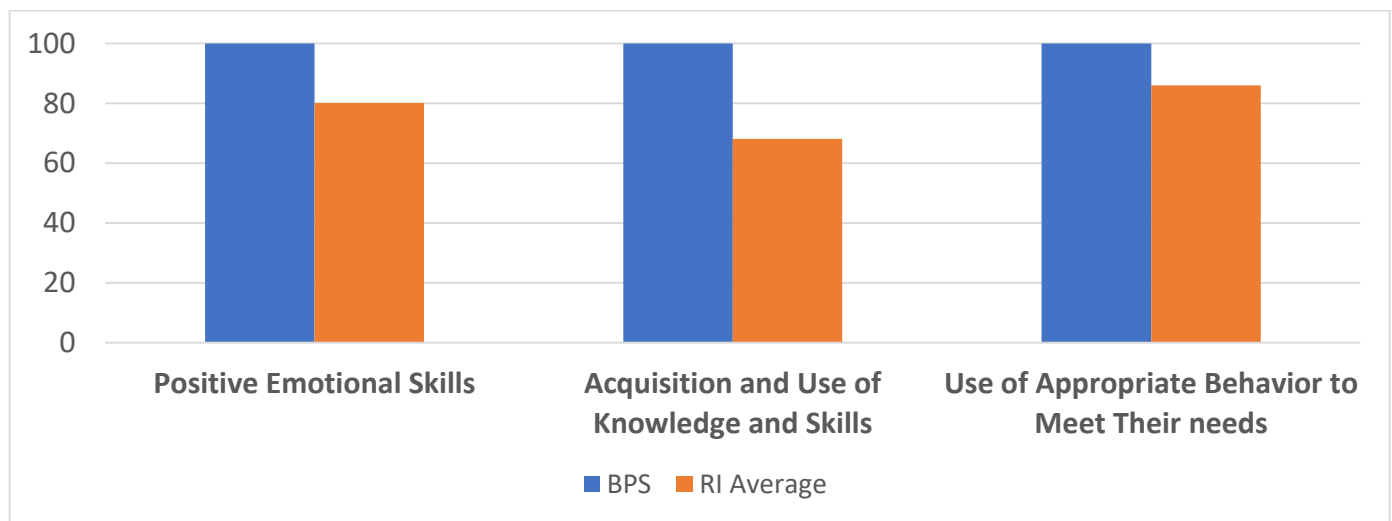
Figure 8b: *The percent of preschool children who were functioning within age expectations by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program*
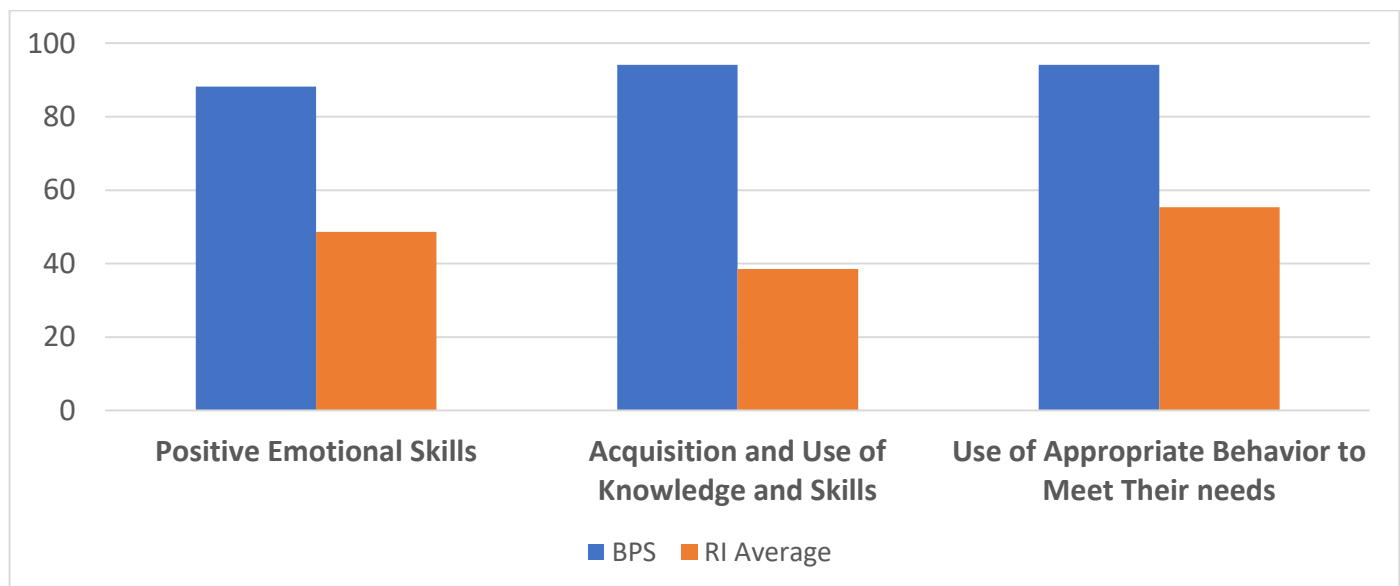
✓ As depicted in **Figure 9a,** the most recently reported graduation rate of the SWD cohort of 77% is 13% below the cohort average; however, as shown in **Figure 9b**., the percentage SWDs who have been employed, enrolled in postsecondary school, or both, within one year of leaving high school compares favorably to the CSD (94% compared to 96%). In a corollary finding, all IEPs for students at least 16 years old contained transition plans that were thorough, descriptive, and quantitative.

Figure 9a: *The Graduation Rate of the 2017 SWD Cohort*
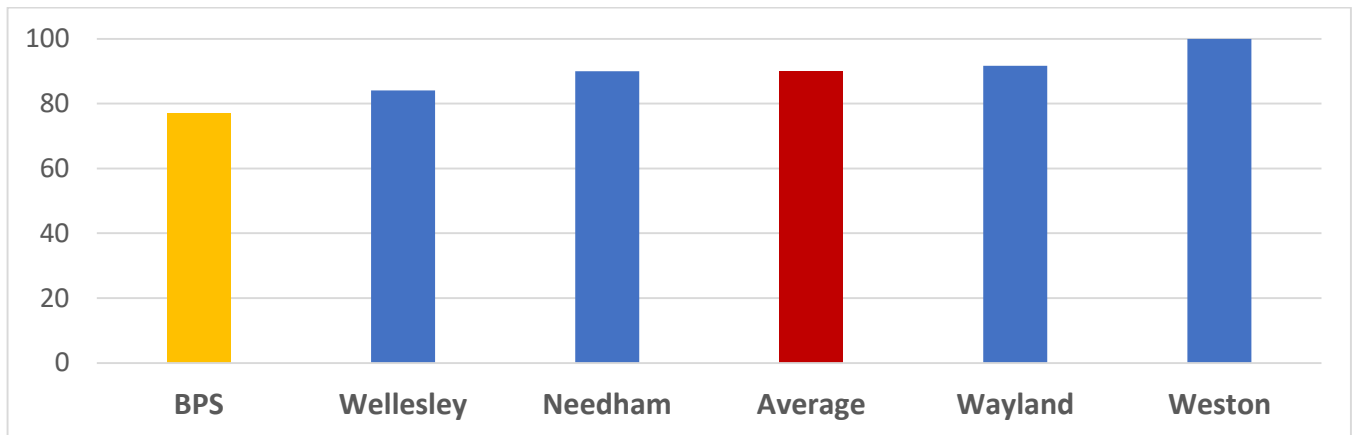
Figure 9b: *The Percentage SWDs who Have Been Employed, Enrolled in Postsecondary School, or Both, Within One Year of Leaving High School*
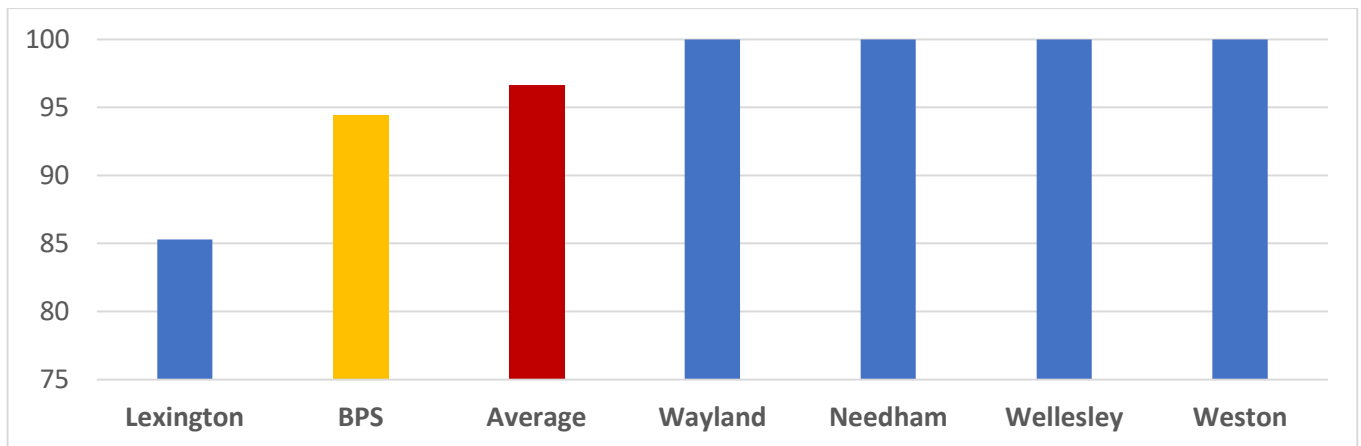
■ A stratified, random review of IEPs (**N**=60) revealed:

   ✓ Present levels of achievement that did not consistently describe the students' needs; and

   ✓ Goals that were frequently difficult to measure. Exactly what skill is the student working on? How will they achieve the goal?

■ During 2017-2018, the Alternative Learning Program (ALP) has expanded to include one classroom at Hampden Meadows Elementary School (Grades 4-5), in addition to the two at the Barrington Middle

School and three at Barrington High School that were already in place. Although interviewees recognize its value in keeping students within the District and its research-centric orientation, the perceptions of the ALP's limitations include:

- ✓ Although behavioral management is a significant program intervention strategy, students demonstrating severe issues managing anger and aggression or psychiatric needs are not well- suited to the program.

- ✓ Challenges in vertical articulation: Upon entering 4th grade at Hampden, the lack of having had an analogous ALP program in the lower grades contributes to ineffective SEL programming. It is notable that, as reference previously, the gaps in vertical articulation the ALP program seem to reflect District-wide challenges in this area.

- Despite co-teaching being an option that affords specially designed instruction to occur in the general education classroom, this does not appear to be a systematic and operational model throughout the District, and, per report, the staff has not been trained in effective co-teaching strategies that incorporate specially designed instruction.

Driving Question #9: Are the Demographics of Students in Out of District Placements Within Expectations?

- Currently, approximately 30 SWDs, or 7% of the District's SWDs are in out of District placements, which is in-line with the authors' experience; ODPs typically constitute 5-10%. Of the 30 SWDs, 29/30 (97%) are classified with high-needs categories (e.g., Traumatic Brain Injury).

- One of the major factors in considering the ODP population is the constellation of the high-needs disabilities. As indicated in **Figure 10**, the District's high needs students, which is 28% of the total SWD population, is just over the CSD average of 26%.

Figure 10. The Percentage of the Autism, Multiple Disabilities (MD), Emotional Disturbance (ED), and Intellectual Disability (ID) Category Among All SWDs
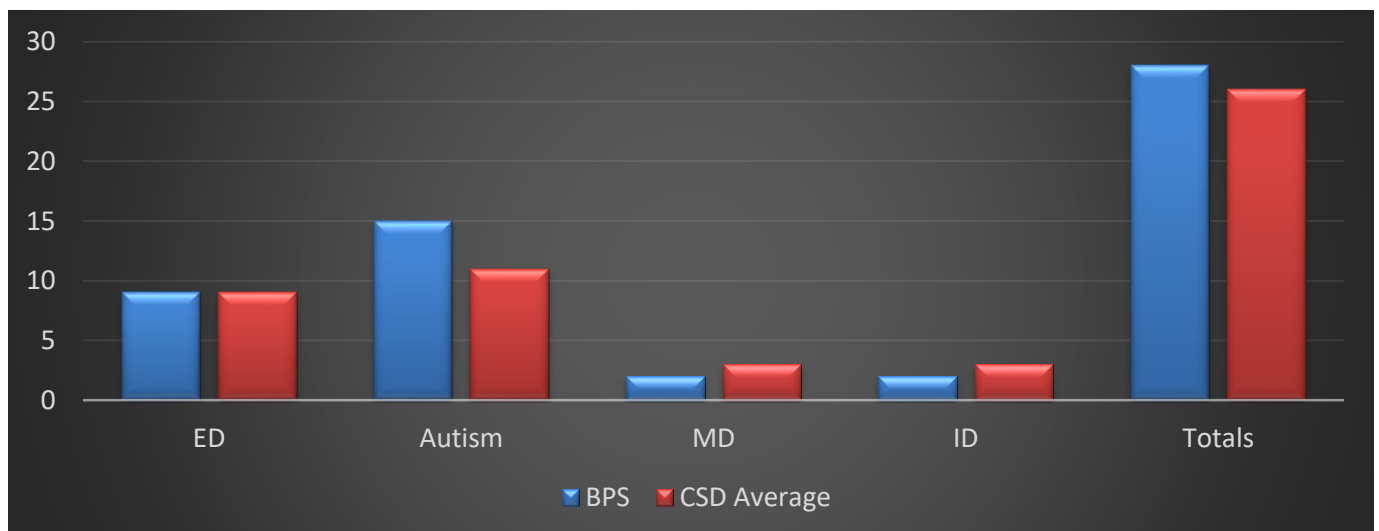
AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

MTSS

Ownership and Capacity

- Leadership at both the central office and school-based level will continue to emphasize the importance that general education teachers see MTSS/RtI as a general education initiative and responsibility, and not as a "pass-through" for IEP referral or solely for the provision of intervention by an interventionist. Moving in this direction will support the District's All Students/Our Students agenda.

- Expectations for MTSS should be reviewed annually and supported through easily accessible and understood protocols.

Data Considerations

- To supplement the qualitative approach to MTSS, it will be helpful to quantitatively "roll up" this data across the District to ensure that school-based administrators can reflect on students who went to evaluation and those who did, or did not, qualify. This data, both in "real time" and longitudinally, will provide valuable data with respect to the efficacy of MTSS within, and across, schools and across content areas (i.e., ELA, math, and behavior). The utility of being able to report referrals for assessments and those students who qualified is reflected below in **Figures 11** and **12** from another public-school district.

Figure 11. *Referrals to IEP-Expressed as a Percentage of the Overall Student Population*
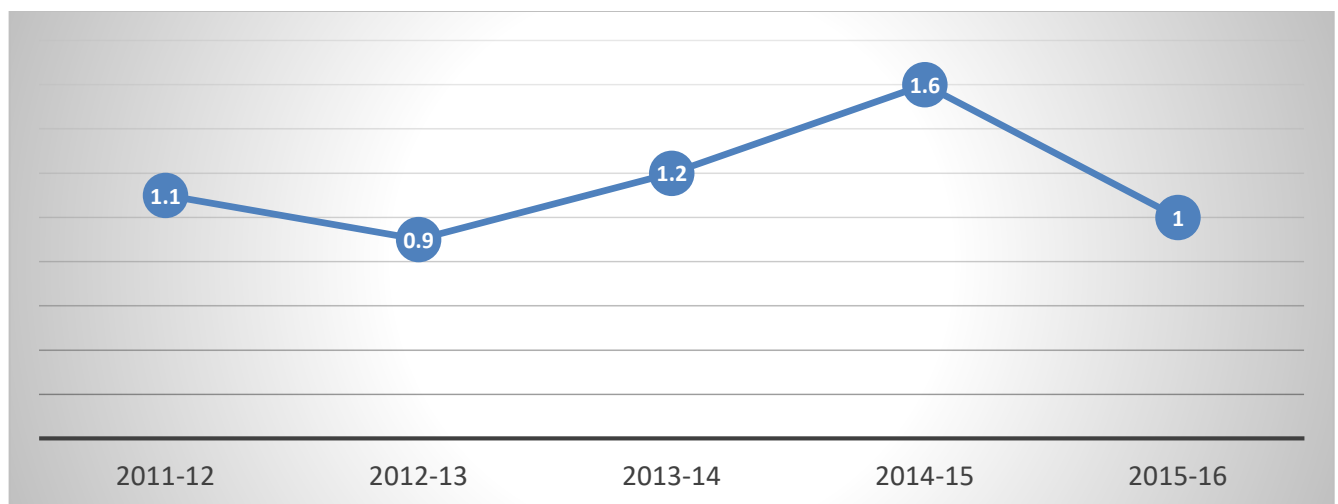
Figure 12. *Referrals to IEP who Qualified-Expressed as a Percentage of Students Who Qualified for Special Education Services*
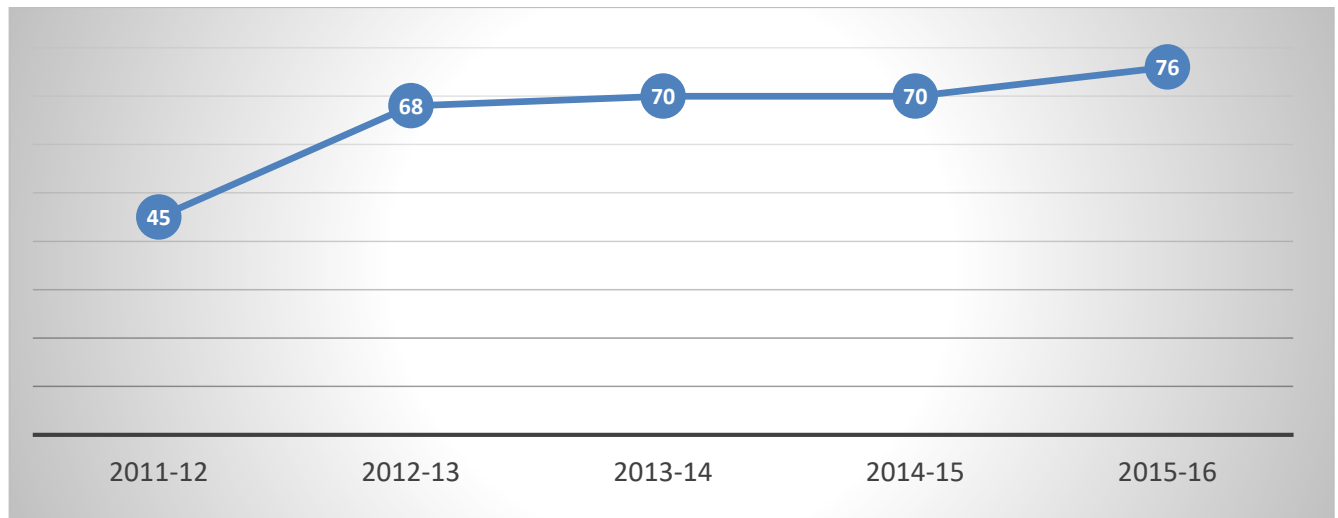
MTSS as a Step Down

▪ Once MTSS is more systematic and operational with respect to processes and procedures (e.g., high quality core instruction, timely/effective interventions, use of data to evaluate/problem-solve issues of student learning) it may be "reversed" (i.e., the MTSS pyramid is in effect inverted) as a systematic step-down for students who are no longer eligible for IEPs.

▪ This is best illustrated by considering two hypothetical students. In this scenario, assuming the students were deemed eligible for exiting an IEP, the tiers comprising the MTSS model may be used to support the students in academic (Student A) and behavioral (Student B) domains. In this sense, the robust nature of MTSS is illustrated because it provides a platform to address student needs "where they are at," irrespective of their previous special education status.

Figure 13. Utilization of the "Step Down" from an IEP
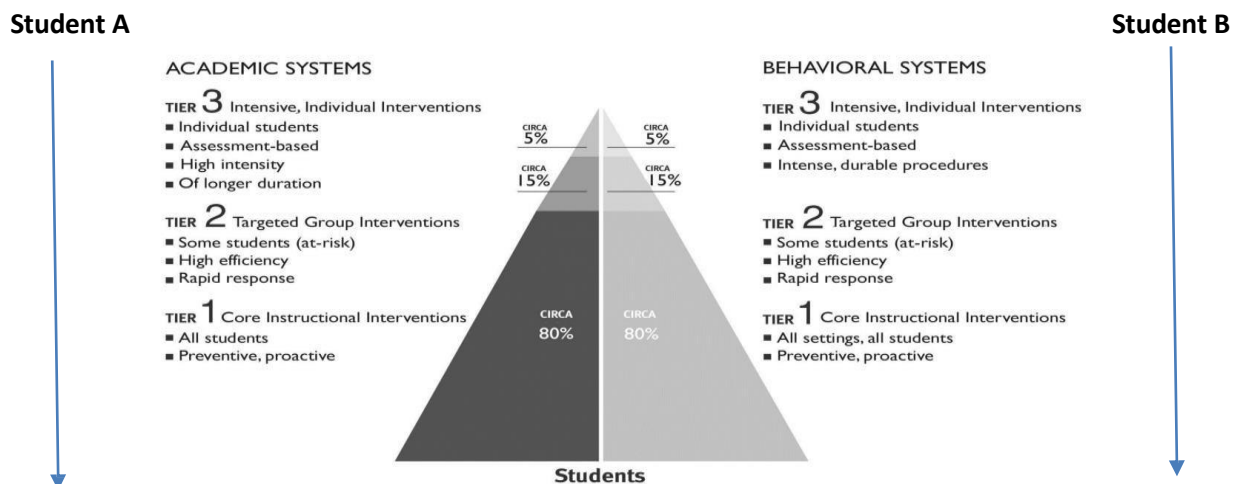
In-District Continuum of Services

▪ Continue to work with staff on writing IEPs that are internally consistent, measurable, and attached to student needs. To the degree practicable, a quarterly Professional Learning Community (PLC) comprising special education teachers and principals to reflect on specific cases may be helpful to enhance capacities for both instructional and administrative staff with reference to specially designed instruction, LRE, and other areas that will promote student achievement.

▪ Re-visit the co-teaching model to ensure that, where it exists, it integrates specially designed instruction. Referring to the leadership capacity, it will be essential for special education leadership and the principals to collaborate on: (1) requisite professional development for the co-teaching dyads; (2) effective scheduling of students; and (3) on-going problem solving.

In this regard, to the degree that struggling students may have their needs addressed by strategy experts, co-teaching will be an excellent supplement to the aforementioned RtI recommendations. The reader is referred to **Appendix D** for principles that underlie effective co-teaching.

▪ Consider the creation of an ALP for the K-3 population. In this manner, the ALP program can provide supports for SWDs from K-12 with common methodologies, programming, and personnel (i.e., there could be a dedicated psychologist that could support all the ALP students). The addition of a District-wide ALP coordinator (with the possibility of an instructional caseload) to oversee the programs including the facilitation of a monthly PLC for the ALP staff would further ensure consistency of programming from horizontal and vertical alignment perspectives.

▪ To supplement inclusivity currently occurring at the high school with respect to the integration of general and special education students in extra-curricular activities, the District may wish to establish a credit-bearing peer mentorship program at the secondary level. This will ensure that the peer interactions remain systematic, meaningful, and interactive. In addition, this initiative should be included in the students' IEPs. The authors will provide District leadership with examples.

▪ Institute "Vertical Articulation" teams for the upper grade of the sending schools and the lowest grade of the receiving schools with an overall agenda to ensure the continuum of services continues to meet the needs of all students. In this manner, it is speculated that the "gap" in vertical articulation between the schools will be addressed and the staff at all schools can be part of ongoing solutions.

Out of District Programs

▪ As it pertains to the potential "bring back" of students currently in ODPs, the challenge is for the District to provide the seminal elements of an "appropriate" educational program (as required by federal and state law) including environment, educational strategies, and (as required by law) to meet the special educational needs of students with disabilities.

The net fiscal, educational, and logistical "cost- benefit" devoted to the creation of special programs within an ODP, the District to address the special education needs of some students, who might otherwise be in ODPs, could potentially be cost-effective and reflect best practice. The number of net savings to the District, and ultimate short- and long-term success of the programs, centers around three primary issues, which District leadership continues to address on an annual basis:

- ✓ Personnel capacity, or the degree to which staff in District programs have the requisite training, competence, and administrative support to serve students currently requiring ODPs;

- ✓ Physical plant capacity, or the degree to which the District can house the programs in a manner that will optimize educational outcomes; and

- ✓ Fiscal capacity-the degree to which staffing, building, and "other" costs will make investment a viable option for the District.

If the District can neither replicate programs from personal, physical plant, and fiscal capacities nor create programs that adhere to the spirit and letter of LRE and FAPE, then it is recommended that students in these ODP programs not be brought back in District.

- ▪ From a vertical alignment perspective, establishing a "point person" (e.g., a psychologist) could provide oversight of programs supporting students with more intensive needs (e.g., those on the Autism spectrum, life skills, and emotional-behavioral needs) within the District and represent the District at IEP meetings. In addition, the staff member could facilitate access to a mental health provider who can support the medication component of students' care and facilitate Wraparound community-based mental health supports.

SUMMARY AND FINAL COMMENTARY

Based on several indicators (e.g., pre-school outcomes, a lower special education rate, and a constellation of disabilities that is within expectations) SWDs are being well-served within the District and in an efficient manner (e.g., special education expenditures that are within expectation). The overall results suggest that there is a high-level of dedication and commitment of administrators, teachers, specialists and support personnel who are working diligently to meet the needs of students; however, there are several capacities that will need to be enhanced to best meet the needs of SWDs as part of a continuum of services.

Although there are many recommendations contained throughout this report, the following are priority areas for District leadership to consider as part of its strategic planning, and to enhance the programs.

Organizational Considerations

1. Revisit Develop and implement a comprehensive District plan for the enhancement of "ownership" of SWDs as a District expectation on the part of all staff, emphasizing an All Students/Our Students agenda; including such components as professional development, recruitment, assessment and retention practices.

2. Implement strategies, including departmental meetings, among others, for the enhancement of communications and collaboration between District level and building level staff regarding special education issues.

3. Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for the support and provision of integrated (e.g. special educators and general educators) professional development, including opportunities of relevance to para-professional staff. As part of this initiative, consider asking a para-professional to sit on PD committees to ensure their voices are "heard."

4. Ensure para-professionals have adequate training upon hire and throughout their employment.

5. Consider either: (a) a dedicated Coordinator to support PPS; or (b) creating a stipend Team Chair/special education department heads at each of the six schools to oversee the IEP process, support best practices, and coordinate other aspects of the special education delivery system.

6. Create a greater presence of school-based Special Education Advisory Committees.

Continuum of Supports

1. Continue the District initiative to implement a comprehensive (K-12) Response to Intervention/MTSS program, in addition to a comprehensive IEP service delivery model. Specific areas of focus should include District-wide best practices:
    a. Measurable IEPs aligned to Standards and Competencies in the area of identified disability
    b. Specially Designed Instruction
    c. Consistent MTSS Protocols
    d. Progress Monitoring Protocols
    e. All Students/Our Students Decision-Making
    f. Co-planning and shared Decision-Making between special education and general education

2. Review and enhance the District's continuum of special education services to include the creation of an ALP in the early grades with the possible addition of a Coordinator (who may also carry an instructional caseload) and enhance the Co-Teaching initiative to incorporate station rotation and specially designed instruction.

3. Institute "Vertical Articulation" PLCs that will assist in the smoother transition of SWDs.

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Please that all of the Office

note but one Central Staff

Discipline	Interviewer 1	Interviewer 2
Central Office Administrators	5	4
Principals		6
Assistant Principals		2
Special Education Teachers/Coordinators		17
Special Education Teachers		7
ALP Coordinator/Consultant		2
Teaching Assistants		12
Speech-Language Pathologists	5	
RtI Coordinators		6
Occupational Therapists	3	
Physical Therapists	1	
Social Workers	2	
Psychologists	3	1
SEAC Representatives		2

were

Discipline	Interviewer 1	Interviewer 2
Out of District Representatives	4	
Total Interviewees	**23**	**59**

interviewed by both interviewers

APPENDIX B: WORKLOAD ANALYSIS

Discipline Workload Summary - Speech and Language Pathology

Total Hours Analyzed	**195**	
Number of Staff	**6**	
Number Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Staff	**5.6**	
Total Hours Minus Testing	**187**	
Total Testing Hours (% in italics)	**8**	*4.1%*
Total Direct Service Hours (% in italics)	**108**	*57.8%*
Individual	**41**	*38.0%*
Group	**65.5**	*60.6%*
Consult	**1.5**	*1.4%*
Total Indirect Service Hours (% in italics)	**79**	*42.2%*
Travel	**3.5**	*4.4%*
Meetings	**20**	*25.3%*
Other	**55.5**	*70.3%*

Therapist Caseload Ranges

	MIN	MAX
caseload	28	45
weighted case	28	49

Therapist Workload Percentages

	MIN	MAX
group	28	84
individual	9	72
consult	0	7
direct	46	69
testing	3	8
meetings	5	18
other	13	39
travel	0	4

	AVG	units/caseload
caseload	36	1.57
weighted case	41.2	
units	56.5	

Individual Breakdown of Weekly Workload by Therapist

SLP

Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	1	1.5	0.5	1	0.5	4.5	0.28	30.00	30.00	47.00
individual	3	2.5	0.5	2	3.5	11.5	0.72			
consult	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			RTI
direct	4	4	1	3	4	16	0.46			0
testing	0	0	1.5	0	0	1.5	0.04			
meetings	0	1.5	1	1.5	1	5	0.14			
other	2.25	1.5	3.25	2.5	2	11.5	0.33			
travel	0.75	0	0.25	0	0	1	0.03			
Total Hours	7	7	7	7	7	35	1.00			

SLP

Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	0	1.5	2	1.5	3	8	0.65	28.00	49.00	36.00
individual	0	1.25	1.5	1	0.5	4.25	0.35			
consult	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			RTI
direct	0	2.75	3.5	2.5	3.5	12.25	0.61			1
testing	0	1	0.5	0	0	1.5	0.08			
meetings	0	0	0.5	2.5	0.5	3.5	0.18			
other	0	1	1	0	0.5	2.5	0.13			
travel	0	0	0	0	0.25	0.25	0.01			
Total Hours	0	4.75	5.5	5	4.75	20	1.00			

SLP

Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	4	2.5	4	4	3.5	18	0.84	41.00	41.00	69.00
individual	0.5	1	0	0.5	0	2	0.09			
consult	0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	1.5	0.07			RTI
direct	4.5	4	4.5	5	3.5	21.5	0.61			3
testing	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	1	0.03			
meetings	0	1.5	0.5	0	0.5	2.5	0.07			
other	2.5	1.5	1.5	2	2.5	10	0.29			
travel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
Total Hours	7	7	7	7	7	35	1.00			

SLP

Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	4	2.5	4.5	2.5	0	13.5	0.77	39.00	49.00	43.00
individual	1.5	1.25	0.5	0.75	0	4	0.23			
consult	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			RTI
direct	5.5	3.75	5	3.25	0	17.5	0.50			3
testing	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.03			
meetings	0.5	0.5	0.25	0.5	0	1.75	0.05			
other	1	2.5	1.75	1.5	7	13.75	0.39			
travel	0	0.25	0	0.75	0	1	0.03			
Total Hours	7	7	7	7	7	35	1.00			

SLP

Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	2.5	2.5	1	3	3	12	0.50	45.00	45.00	89.00
individual	3	3	2	2	2	12	0.50			
consult	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			**RTI**
direct	5.5	5.5	3	5	5	24	0.69			3
testing	0	0	1	0	0.5	1.5	0.04			
meetings	1	0.5	2	1	0.25	4.75	0.14			
other	0.5	1	1	1	1.25	4.75	0.14			
travel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
Total Hours	7	7	7	7	7	35	1.00			

SLP

Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	1	2	1.5	3	2	9.5	0.57	33.00	33.00	55.00
individual	2	2	1.5	0.75	1	7.25	0.43			
consult	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			**RTI**
direct	3	4	3	3.75	3	16.75	0.48			0
testing	0	0	0	0.75	0.75	1.5	0.04			
meetings	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	2.5	0.07			
other	3.25	2.25	3.25	1.75	2.5	13	0.37			
travel	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.25	0.04			
Total Hours	7	7	7	7	7	35	1.00			

Discipline Workload Summary - Occupational Therapy

Total Hours Analyzed	**90**	
Number of Staff	**3**	
Number Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Staff	**2.6**	
Total Hours Minus Testing	**86**	
Total Testing Hours (% in italics)	**4**	*4.4%*
Total Direct Service Hours (% in italics)	**59**	*68.6%*
Individual	**46.5**	*78.8%*
Group	**9.25**	*15.7%*
Consult	**3.25**	*5.5%*
Total Indirect Service Hours (% in italics)	**27**	*31.4%*
Travel	**3.75**	*13.9%*
Meetings	**3.5**	*13.0%*
Other	**19.75**	*73.1%*

Therapist Caseload Ranges

	MIN	MAX
caseload	14	34
weighted case	25	34

Therapist Workload Percentages

	MIN	MAX
group	0	24
individual	74	92
consult	2	10
direct	49	81
testing	0	20
meetings	0	8
other	14	31
travel	3	6

	AVG	units/caseload
caseload	23.3	1.4
weighted case	29	
units	32.7	

Individual Breakdown of Weekly Workload by Therapist

OT Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	0.5	0.5	2	1.25	2.5	6.75	0.24	34.00	34.00	53.00
individual	4.5	5.5	3.5	4	3.5	21	0.74			
consult	0	0	0.25	0.25	0	0.5	0.02			RTI
direct	5	6	5.75	5.5	6	28.25	0.81			3
testing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
meetings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
other	1	1	0.75	1	1	4.75	0.14			
travel	1	0	0.5	0.5	0	2	0.06			
Total Hours	7	7	7	7	7	35	1.00			

OT Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	1	1	0	0.5	0	2.5	0.12	22.00	28.00	27.00
individual	4	3.5	4.5	4.5	0	16.5	0.79			
consult	0	0	0	0	2	2	0.10			RTI
direct	5	4.5	4.5	5	2	21	0.60			5
testing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
meetings	0	0.5	1	0.5	0	2	0.06			
other	1.5	1.75	1.5	1	5	10.75	0.31			
travel	0.5	0.25	0	0.5	0	1.25	0.04			
Total Hours	7	7	7	7	7	35	1.00			

OT

Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	14.00	25.00	18.00
individual	3	3	3	0	0	9	0.92			
consult	0.75	0	0	0	0	0.75	0.08			**RTI**
direct	3.75	3	3	0	0	9.75	0.49			0
testing	0	0.5	1	1	1.5	4	0.20			
meetings	0	0.5	0	1	0	1.5	0.08			
other	1.25	1.5	1.5	0	0	4.25	0.21			
travel	0.5	0	0	0	0	0.5	0.03			
Total Hours	5.5	5.5	5.5	2	1.5	20	1.00			

PT

Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	0	0.5	0.5	0	0	1	0.07	24.00	35.00	26.00
individual	3.5	3	4	3	0	13.5	0.92			
consult	0	0	0.25	0	0	0.25	0.02			**RTI**
direct	3.5	3.5	4.75	3	0	14.75	0.61			0
testing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
meetings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
other	2	2.5	0.25	1	0	5.75	0.24			
travel	1	1	0.5	1	0	3.5	0.15			
Total Hours	6.5	7	5.5	5	0	24	1.00			

SW

Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	2	2	1.5	2.5	2	10	0.59	6.00	6.00	6.00
individual	0.5	2.5	0	0	0.5	3.5	0.21			
consult	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	1	3.5	0.21			**RTI**
direct	3	5	2	3.5	3.5	17	0.49			49
testing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
meetings	0.5	0	2	1	1	4.5	0.13			
other	3.5	2	3	2.5	2.5	13.5	0.39			
travel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
Total Hours	7	7	7	7	7	35	1.00			

SW

Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	0.75	1	3	1.5	3	9.25	0.38	21.00	21.00	NR
individual	3.25	1.75	2.5	2	2.5	12	0.49			
consult	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	0.5	3	0.12			**RTI**
direct	4.5	3.25	6	4.5	6	24.25	0.69			101
testing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00			
meetings	1	3.5	0	2.25	0.5	7.25	0.21			
other	1.5	0	1	0.25	0.5	3.25	0.09			
travel	0	0.25	0	0	0	0.25	0.01			
Total Hours	7	7	7	7	7	35	1.00			

Psych

Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	0	0.5	3.5	1.5	4	9.5	0.63	24.00	24.00	NR
individual	0	0	0.5	0	1	1.5	0.10			
consult	2	1	0.5	0.5	0	4	0.27			RTI
direct	2	1.5	4.5	2	5	15	0.43			NR
testing	1	2.5	0	2	0	5.5	0.16			
meetings	1	2	2	1.5	2	8.5	0.24			
other	3	1	0.5	1	0	5.5	0.16			
travel	0	0	0	0.5	0	0.5	0.01			
Total Hours	7	7	7	7	7	35	1.00			

Psych

Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group	0	1.5	0	0	2	3.5	0.40	8.00	8.00	8.00
individual	0	0.5	0	0	1.5	2	0.23			
consult	0	1	0.75	0.5	1	3.25	0.37			RTI
direct	0	3	0.75	0.5	4.5	8.75	0.25			14
testing	0	0.75	0	1	0.75	2.5	0.07			
meetings	2.5	1	1.5	4	1	10	0.29			
other	3.5	2	4.75	1.5	0.75	12.5	0.36			
travel	1	0.25	0	0	0	1.25	0.04			
Total Hours	7	7	7	7	7	35	1.00			

Psych

Service	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Totals	%s	Caseload	Weighted	Units
group								NR	NR	NR
individual										
consult	not enough	info to	properly	analyze						RTI
direct										NR
testing										
meetings										
other										
travel										
Total Hours										

Explanatory Notes

1. Workloads are all student-directed activities that include both direct and indirect times and are used as opposed to caseloads given that workloads are a more valid metric to determine how the services providers are spending their time.

2. Direct services include therapy (individual or group) and consultation; "other" services are those such as preparation, paperwork, and non-travel activities.

3. A weighted statistic was used to account for the part time status of staff. For example, an S-LP that works 1 day is a .2 FTE and if her caseload were 10, then her weighted caseload would be 50.

4. The individual breakdown of each service providers' time was calculated from weekly time studies and is reported as (actual) total weekly hours in each category and in percentages in the following pages.

5. A unit is defined as 30 minutes of treatment.

<div style="background-color:#2a9fb5; color:white; text-align:center; font-weight:bold;">APPENDIX C: SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING</div>

- <u>Literature Support of SEL in Schools</u>   While high academic achievement will always be the cornerstone of public education in America, there is mounting evidence supporting the current trend that the social and emotional well-being of students contributes highly to success in school and in life. A review of SEL literature provides ample confirmation that systemic school and community-based programs focused on social emotional skill development matters in the lives of children. The Aspen Institute National Commission on Social, Emotional and Academic Development has concluded that… "The promotion of social, emotional, and academic learning is not a shifting educational fad; it is the substance of education itself." (Jones, S. et al., 2018). In a sister report, the Commission has also concluded that social-emotional skills can be taught in concert with cognitive skills (Berger, R. et al. 2018).

- Furthermore, in addition to skill-building, effective SEL programs have several common features, including options that go beyond the school building environment. Durlak et al. identified four elements that contribute to effective programming: SAFE – Sequenced activities; Active learning; Focused development of social-emotional skills; Explicit targeting of specific skills (Durlak, et al. 2011). Consequently, states across the nation are developing educational standards that reflect the importance of student-centered social, emotional and cognitive skill building.

- Rhode Island requires that "Each school and district must follow the Rhode Island Basic Education Plan (BEP). This plan requires that schools create a climate of safety, security, and belonging for all students and adults, thereby establishing an environment that builds respectful relationships, enhances productive learning and teaching, promotes school and engagement, and promotes academic success.

- Each LEA shall ensure that schools promote a positive climate with emphasis on mutual respect, self-control, good attendance, order and organization, and proper security. Each LEA shall develop protocols that…ensure that students and adults make positive behavioral choices that are conducive to a safe and nurturing environment that promotes academic success." (Rhode Island Basic Education Plan)

- RIDE has also created the <u>Rhode Island Social Emotional Learning Standards: Competencies for School and Life Skills</u> based on the CASEL framework for promoting social emotional learning: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, Responsible Decision-Making.

- Expanding upon the SAFE model, Jones et al. completed an exhaustive study looking inside and across the individual profiles of 25 leading SEL programs. The authors found that SEL programs are most effective when they:

  - ✓ Incorporate SAFE elements
  - ✓ Occur within supportive contexts
  - ✓ Build adult competencies

- Acknowledge features of broader community context
- Target a key set of skills across multiple domains of development
- Set reasonable goals

- Viewed collectively, the research literature and evidenced-based programs supporting SEL in schools suggests that local programs will be most effective if they adopt the following indicators:

  - Set a clear vision
  - Create safe environments
  - Build adult SEL capacity (i.e. principal and teacher skill sets)
  - Embed social-emotional skill development in academic learning
  - Work together with out-of-school community partners

- In partial response to the challenge of creating "…a climate of safety, security, and belonging for all students and adults…" the Barrington Public Schools Strategic Plan: 2018-2023 includes the following Social-Emotional Well-Being Goal as one of its five 2023 Goals: "Our students are engaged and empowered to grow and make valuable contributions to self and others."

- It is clear to the reviewers that elements within each of the indicators noted above have been incorporated in the Barrington district-wide SEL initiative.

APPENDIX D: PRINCIPLES OF CO-TEACHING

- Co-Teaching can be misunderstood to mean one general education teacher and one special education teacher in a classroom all day long. That may not always be the case. Co-teaching, like every other model on the continuum, can vary each day and for every class period. It does mean that based on Co-Planning, Co-Teaching, and Co-Reflection, teachers (general and special) make day to day and class to class decisions based on: (1) the needs of the special education student(s); (2) the IEP requirements; (3) the core content; and (4) the instructional requirements of these class periods.

- When new concepts are introduced, it is often important that the special education teacher conduct some pre-introduction for younger SWDs. This preview of material could be accomplished in many ways (resource room, alternative co-teaching model for a short period of time, etc.).

- During the actual direct instruction time, the co-teaching model (team teaching, station teaching, parallel teaching or alternative teaching) is most useful when it includes specially designed instruction. However, it should be noted that when students are practicing, the general education teacher in consultation with the special education teacher, should develop the classroom practices such that the special needs student(s) can participate without the special education teacher having to be present the entire time.

- The key to good co-teaching is the effective and efficient use of teacher time. That does not necessarily mean being in the general classroom every minute. Co-planning is critical to ensure that special education teacher is utilized in the most effective and efficient manner; being in the classroom and "helping, assisting, or tutoring" is not an efficient use of a special education teacher's time if a paraprofessional or peer can assist the student.

- To the extent that continuity of team partnerships typically supports student achievement via mutual respect, collegiality, competence, and the acceptance of total ownership for all students, District leadership may consider maintaining the continuity of these teams when possible and to provide the teams with as much common planning as is possible and practicable.