

# Special Education

A Presentation from the Department of Special Education  
October 2022

# Where are we starting from?

Good Evening.

I am thrilled to be here tonight. Dr. Reilly and I have been talking about coming before the Committee since July. The Special Ed Department is a very hardworking Department and as SEPAC acknowledges the “Wind Beneath Our Wings”.

So, it is a pleasure to be here and to let you know that all of the members of the Special Education Department have had opportunities to share their thoughts, highlight various areas, and contribute to this presentation.

Tonight’s presentation is focused on:

- data
- the progress the department has made over the recent past
- Next steps for the near future

The most relevant comparable data is from a school committee presentation from the Fall of 2016.

# The Vision of the Department of Special Education

Our vision, established in 2013 by the WRSD Special Education Strategic Plan, remains the same.

Our vision is on:

- Students
- Inclusion
- Rigor
- Independence

# Enrollment Data Comparison

<b>Population</b>	<b>Fall 2016</b>	<b>Fall 2022</b>	<b>Change</b>
District Enrollment	7298	6740	-558
Special Needs	1088	1149	+61
	16.7% of district	20.5% of district	
District-Wide Programs	187	198	+11
Out of District	67	84	+17
ECC	91	91	0
Devereux	37	47	+12

Given the fluid nature of enrollment and eligibility these numbers are constantly changing. Please consider these numbers our very best information we have available at this moment in time.

# Areas of Disability Data Comparison

Area	Fall 2016	Fall 2022	Change
Specific Learning Disabilities	299	322	+23
Autism	182	191	+9
Health	144	147	+3
Communication	151	165	+14
Emotional	101	117	+16
Developmental Delays	82	91	+9
Intellectual	69	56	-13
Neurological	35	37	+2
Sensory/Vision	4	8	+4
Sensory/Hearing	5	4	-1
Sensory Deaf+Blind		3	+3
Multiple Disabilities	10	5	-5
Physical	6	3	-3
	1088	1149	+61

# Number of SWDs @ Each Building

School	Fall 2016	Fall 2022	Change
Central Tree	71	57	-14
Chocksett	41	43	+2
Davis Hill	56	67	+11
Dawson	52	59	+7
ECC	91	91	0
Glenwood	57	46	-11
Houghton	51	52	+1
Mayo	62	57	-5
Mountview	95	107	+12
Naquag	30	42	+12
Paxton	79	94	+15
Thomas Prince	53	44	-9
WRHS	283	306	+23
	1021	1065	+44

# District-Wide Programs Data Comparison

	<b>Fall 2016</b>		<b>Fall 2022</b>	
Language Based Program Paxton	Grades 5-8 1 teacher	12 students	Grades 3-8 3 teachers	30 students
ABA Program Sterling	Prek-Post 8 teachers 43 ABA PA	43 students	Prek-Post 7 teachers 56 ABA PA	50 students
Developmental Program Rutland	Prek-post 9 teachers	89 students	Prek-Post 6 teachers	53 students
Transition Program Holden	K-8 4 teachers	43 students	K-12 8 teachers students	65

# Moderate Special Ed Staffing

## Fall 2016

Special Education Teachers 57.4

District Wide Paraprofessionals 210

## Fall 2022

Special Education Teachers 65.7

District-Wide Paraprofessionals 190



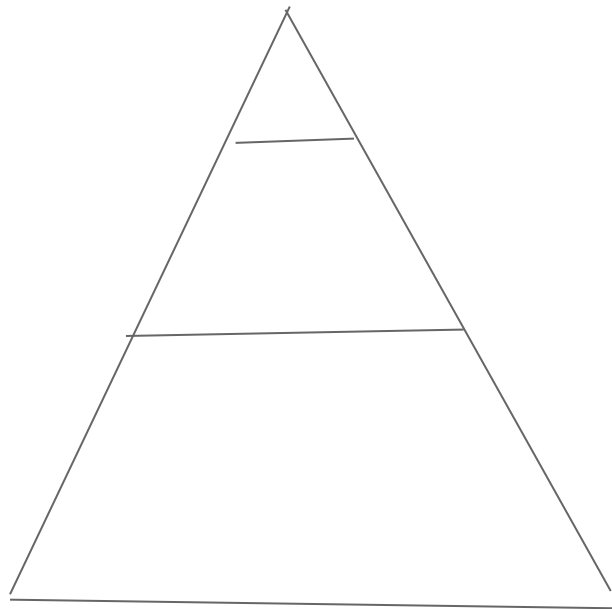
# Financial Data Comparison

	<b>Fall 2016</b>	<b>Fall 2022</b>
Medicaid Reimbursement	\$800,000.00	\$1 Million
Circuit Breaker Reimbursement	\$2.5 Million	\$3.9 Million
IDEA Grant	\$1.6 Million	\$ 1.8 Million
Specialized Transportation Costs	\$2.6 Million	\$3.2 Million
OOD Tuitions	\$5.5 Million	\$8 Million

# Let's review some of what we have done in the recent past.

Each tier calls for a different level of intervening and yet at each level Special Education is integral to the success of all students.

Using the MTSS as a framework for intervention we must consider how Special Education can and has impacted each Tier.



# Tier One

80% of School happens in this tier

Fully implemented the STAR Early Literacy/Reading Universal Screening and Dyslexia Screening for the past two years.

Fully implemented Preschool Literacy and Math Screening

Co-Teaching opportunities throughout the district with highlights at the ECC, Paxton, Mountview, and the HS. This co-teaching is when a Special Education Teacher partners with a General Education Teacher for planning and instruction.

Inclusion throughout all buildings and all grade levels. Inclusions is when a Special Education Teacher or Special Education Paraprofessional is in the general education classroom to delivering identified IEPS services.

ESY community busing to increase student access to regular busing

School Counselors that were added at the Elementary Level

Academic Support Classes at the HS as general education

Assistive Technology ensure all curriculum and life of the school is accessible .

# Tier One

80% of School happens in this tier

Instructing students in social behavior and monitoring social expectations for individual students with ABA PA support.

Opened all Special Education Professional Learning Communities to all educators.

Very knowledgeable paraprofessionals who know the academic content areas and are available to reteach in the gen ed classroom.

Many activities to assist with the transition to adult living including a website and seminars via the HS activity block.

Most schools have a WIN block or a Gen Ed opportunity for all students to participate in teacher identified skill building (not always skill deficits) resulting from multiple data points including the BAS, STAR and Curriculum Based Measures.

General Education teachers are developing progress monitoring tools, collaborating with Special Education partners, using instructional and assessment tools and providing interventions to support achievement in all areas

## Tier Two the intervention level

Any student who has a skill deficit should be placed into a targeted intervention to address that skill deficit, monitored, and assessed again.

Explicitly teaching the Science of Reading instructional strategies in intervention groups. There is careful monitoring of the student's progress on their individual ability to gain the missing skill. That's called progress monitoring. Instructors may use various resources to teach the missing skill. In WRSD, we are currently using our own "heartwords", Lexia, Foundations, Fountas+Pinnell, McGraw SRA and others.

Having related Service providers push into classes for small intervention groups.

Providing more literacy instruction by highly trained Reading tutors. These Tutors provide literacy interventions in small groups, monitor progress, and provide feedback.

Finally able to identify the equitable, minimal staffing of moderate Special Education Teachers (Resource Room or Inclusion) available across our buildings. We now have one Special Education Teacher for every six homerooms throughout K-8. This ratio of 1:6 does not get us to a level of co-teaching, but it begins to set a standard of minimal staffing.

Continuing to offer Lexia and IXL instructional programs

Looking for and reviewing "Value-Added" opportunities to address COVID LOSS. In the past we have had school vacation, summer, before and after school programs.

## Tier Two the intervention level

Any student who has a skill deficit should be placed into a targeted intervention to address that skill deficit, monitored, and assessed again.

Used Panorama data across some SST Teams to collaborate and to consider SEL supports for individual students.

Initiating, implementing and reviewing *Individualized Behavior Intervention Plans* through the SST process with the support of the Special Education staff.

Applying Multisensory Reading strategies in small group intervention blocks.

Having paraprofessionals may lead small intervention groups for re-instruction opportunities.

Including Special Ed Teachers in standards-based high quality professional development in reading and math.

# Tier Three

the smallest tier

The direct service of special education.

Increasing co-teaching and inclusion which has led to a decrease in alt-MCAS and more students successfully obtaining a HS diploma.

Always considering the needs of the students, across the district. This recently caused a shift in the teachers in the ABA district wide program as we needed an ABA teachers at the Post-grad. Therefore in June 2022 the ABA teachers were shifted to meet the population need.

Added classroom teachers to TLC at Davis Hill (2020-21) and Language Based (20-21) programs to meet the diverse needs of the students.

Providing direct individualized re-instruction of academic content at grade level by a paraprofessionals or by a Special Education teacher to ensure meaningful understanding during ASR.

Developing an Academic Support Class for Reading at the HS.

# Tier Three the smallest tier

The direct service of Special Education

Using specialized curriculum platforms that provide direct high quality, evidence based instruction. (SRA, EFL, AFLS- voc). We are using a scope and sequence of skill development for transition, functional and vocational skills.

Training an annual cohort of 30+ professionals in multisensory reading and we have an annual cohort of 15+ certified professionals in multisensory reading

Redesigning classrooms to meet our student's sensory needs with including materials and furniture.

Applying the TEACCH model of centers and independence in the ABA and DEV classes

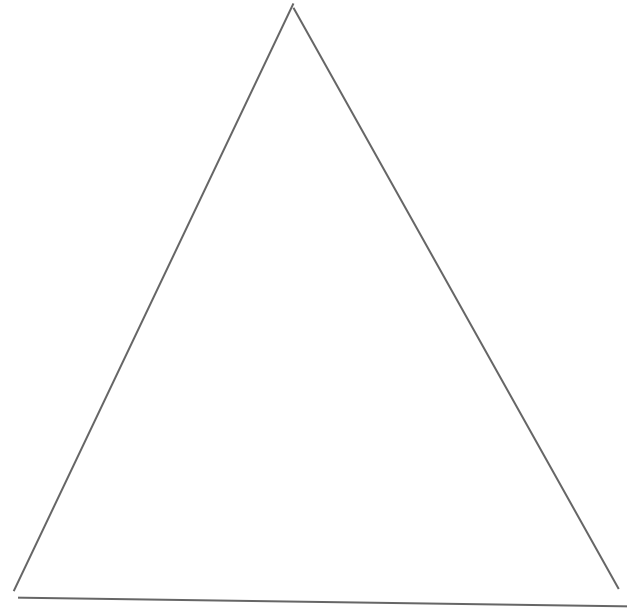
Supporting our Nationally certified Assistive Technology Team that assists our staff and students across the district.

Advancing the productivity of our entire Department by using a digital platform for testing and for IEP processing. And soon, Nov. 1 ish, we will be releasing the parent portal for signature on all IEP Documents.



**Next Steps**  
**What will WRSD need  
in the near future to  
ensure all students  
achieve their greatest  
potential, in the most  
inclusive setting, with  
the most  
independence?**

Using the MTSS as our framework for our next steps  
what are our next steps at each Tier to ensure we are  
reaching our mission for each student.



# Tier One NEXT STEPS

Continue to partner with SEPAC to improve our programs for students with special needs and explore opportunities to bring presenters to our communities.

Through partnerships with our community leaders, in response to the Panorama survey data, and in order to become a district where everyone feels a deep sense of belonging, WRSD must align resources towards the least restrictive environment and the most inclusive practices. We will layout a Strategic Action Plan for Special Education that will lead the district in increasing UDL and differentiation. This plan will address the Special Education Department's role in Superintendent Reilly's goal for collaboratively developing a defined multi-tiered system of academic and social emotional supports.

# Tier Two

## NEXT STEPS

Sustain the multi-sensory reading cohorts for training (30+ professionals annually) and certification (15+ professionals annually).

Research and apply more data systems so that we can measure and apply the most effective interventions

Create districtwide conversations about micro-credentialing for paraprofessionals as a pathways to developing professional skills.

# Tier Three

the smallest tier- the direct service of special education

## NEXT STEPS

Increase multi-sensory reading tutors and continue to increase the professional expertise and supervision of specialized reading instruction.

Review the staffing ratio of related service providers and determine an equitable path forward. As this staffing ratio is discussed, create a partnership with HR and the Special Ed Department to discuss the job descriptions for each related service provider group.

Establish clear district-wide expectations for an ongoing feedback cycle between gen ed, special ed. teacher and paraprofessionals.

Look for ways to increase community-based field trips for students who have behaviors that interfere with their family experiences in the community.

Use feedback from SEPAC, parents and school staff, determine location, transportation, and special activities for ESY 2023.

# Tier Three

the smallest tier- the direct service of special education

## NEXT STEPS

Update the District Wide Program information sheets known as Fact Sheets to be shared on the website and with potential families.

Evaluate the issue of space. As the populations of the towns fluctuate review the impact of our district wide program classrooms in each building. Can we sustain our program classrooms in these buildings? TLC- Holden, Language-Based-Paxton? All programs, including the post grad at the High School? Do we have space for a full-day pre-k for 2023-2024?

Consider that SEPAC has asked the Special Education Department to consider conducting outside program evaluations. If it is possible to allocate the funding, the department would fund this, but if not then in early 2023-2024, the Leadership of the Special Education Department could develop a collaborative group to review the outcomes of the DESE Comprehensive Review.

We express our gratitude to all who have contributed to the work that is described in this slide deck and who have given so much so that the future ahead is so very bright.

We welcome your questions and we will do our best to address them at this time.