

MONTCLAIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SPECIAL EDUCATION PRESENTATION
OCTOBER 15, 2018



Phase II:

Programs, Communication and Placements

Mr. Thomas Santagato
Director of Pupil Services

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

A REVIEW OF PHASE I

Superintendent requested a review of all aspects of Pupil Services, which included:

- A review of student data by classification, program type, race/ethnicity, school placement, referral process and evaluation,
- A presentation of the number of new referrals,
- A review of students covered under Section 504, and
- An analysis of staff members' compliance with documenting their reading of students' IEPs.

PRESENTATION GOALS

The presentation goals are to:

- Provide relevant data and assessment of Montclair Special Education programs/services by classification, number of students in each school and program
- Explain roles and responsibility of Pupil Services Administration
- Provide transparency and communicate trends in Special Education
- Explain case management roles and responsibilities
- Review out-of-district program type and student review
- Describe pending settlement agreements

MONTCLAIR SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The Montclair Public School District has a variety of programs to meet the needs of our students. From the least restrictive to a more restrictive environment. Each program is designed to meet the needs of a particular type of learner. The programs are provided on the following slides.

IN DISTRICT PROGRAMS (K-12)

- **Autism:**

Serves students who may need discrete trial training, ABA, sensory integration strategies, and visual systems to address academic, social skills, and communication skill maintenance.

- **Behavior Disability:**

Serves students with social and emotional needs who require an environment with clear implementation of behavior and classroom management strategies and supports. It has a lower student-teacher ratio for success.

- **Learning Language Disabilities - Mild to Moderate:**

Serves students who are struggling in literacy and/or math. Students receive individualized instruction in a class with a lower student-teacher ratio.

- **Multiple Disabilities:**

Serves students with various disabilities who may have academic, medical, and cognitive deficits. Students receive individualized instruction in a lower student-teacher ratio.

IN DISTRICT PROGRAMS, *CONTINUED*

- **Preschool Child with a Disability:**

Serves preschool children with developmental delays, autism, and medically complex issues with developmentally appropriate instruction for Pre-K.

- **In-Class Resource Program:**

This program serves students with disabilities who receive academic instruction in a content area by a Special Education teacher within a general education classroom.

- **Resource Room:**

This program serves students with disabilities who receive academic instruction in a content area by a Special Education teacher outside of a general education classroom.

PROGRAM TYPES AND REQUIREMENTS

Program requirements are determined by New Jersey (NJ) Administrative Code and student needs. Each program has specific guidelines for staff-to-student ratio's including the necessity of para educators. Montclair Public Schools strictly adheres to the Administrative Code and always provides services in the “Least Restrictive Environment” (LRE).

IN DISTRICT PROGRAMS COST & PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS

■ **Autistic Class:**

3-1 student-to-staff ratio is required with a maximum of 6 students in elementary and 9 students in secondary

■ **Behavior Disabilities Class:**

A maximum of 9 students in elementary and 12 students in secondary (Note: Many students in our program have 1:1 para support to increase behavioral and academic success)

IN DISTRICT PROGRAMS COST & PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS, *CONTINUED*

- **Learning Language Disabilities - Mild to Moderate:**

A maximum of 10 students in elementary and 16 in secondary; para support determined by student needs

- **Multiple Disabilities:**

A maximum of 8 students in elementary and 12 in secondary; para support determined by student needs

- **Preschool Child with a Disability:**

A maximum of 12 students with 2 paras required when the class exceeds 8 students

- **In-Class Resource Program (ICS):**

A maximum of 8 students in elementary and 10 students in secondary

- **Resource Room (RR):**

Pull-out single subject instruction - maximum 9 students in elementary, 1 para required; maximum 12 students - 1 para required

LIST BY CLASSIFICATION AS OF OCTOBER 15, 2018 COMPARED TO JUNE 2018

Classification	October 15, 2018	June 2018
Auditory Impaired (AI)	10	14
Autistic (AUT):	149	146
Communication Impaired (CI)	55	60
Eligible for Speech Language Services (ESLS)	45	49
Emotionally Disturbed (ED)	80	95
Multiply Disabled (MD)	105	136
Other Health Impaired (OHI)	425	423
Pre-School Disabled (PSD)	72	77
Specific Learning Disability (SLD)	284	310

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) recognizes that each public school district may have a variety of students requiring a variety of programs. Therefore, the NJDOE does not require school districts to have every program type in each school in the district. The following slides represent Montclair Public Schools, the programs within each school, and the number of students in each program.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN EACH PROGRAM TYPE BY SCHOOL AND GRADE LEVEL

Autistic Class (ABA)

- Development Learning Center (DLC): 13 students in Pre-K
- Bradford: 24 students in Grades Pre-K – 5
- Buzz Aldrin: 4 students in Grades 7-8
- High School: 4 students in Grades 10-12

Behavioral Disabilities (BD)

- Bullock: 14 students in Grades K-5
- Renaissance: 9 students in Grades 6-8
- High School: 15 students in Grade 12

NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN EACH PROGRAM TYPE BY SCHOOL AND GRADE LEVEL CONTINUED

Language Learners Disability Class Mild to Moderate

- Watchung: 14 students in Grades K-5
- Buzz Aldrin: 13 students in Grades 6-8
- High School: 25 students in Grade 9-12

Multiply Disabled (MD)

- Northeast: 8 students in Grades 3-5
- Nishuane: 10 students in Grades 1-2
- Buzz Aldrin: 8 students in Grade 7
- High School: 4 students in Grades 10-12

NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN EACH PROGRAM TYPE BY SCHOOL AND GRADE LEVEL

Developmental Learning Center (DLC)

- Pre School Disabled Students are ages 3-4 years old. We currently have 13 students classified as autistic and 62 students who benefit from inclusion opportunities.

IN-CLASS RESOURCE (ICR) AND PULL-OUT SINGLE SUBJECT RESOURCE (RR) BY SCHOOL

School	ICR	RR
Bradford	53	55
Bullock	13	35
Edgemont	Full Inclusion	
Hillside	42	42
Nishuane	8	4
Northeast	18	20
Watchung	10	19
Buzz Aldrin	36	9
Glenfield	68	68
Renaissance	Full Inclusion	

COMPLIANCE WITH IEP TIMELINES AND REVIEW

As of October 5, 2018 we currently have 1247 IEPs in IEP Direct. Of those, three are showing expiration dates while another 14 have missing information such as, parent signature, evaluation, reports, description of meeting type is wrong, or the “status of duration of plan” is inaccurate. As of the date of this presentation, October 15, 2018, all IEPs need to be finalized and corrected for the annual upload to NJ SMART.

Report on those findings: Correction of IEPs has been ongoing and we anticipate full compliance at the time of this presentation.

REVIEW AND SIGNING OF IEPS

All faculty members are responsible to review IEPs and sign off that they have read them. We have the ability to generate a report through Genesis, our student database system, that provides us with this data. As of October 10, 2018, 89.59% of district staff have completed this task.

REPORTING LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Parents/Guardians of students with special needs should always communicate with their assigned case manager first and/or the building level administrator. The Pupil Services administrative team has been assigned to oversee particular schools within the district as additional support. The assignments are as follows:

REPORTING LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Director: Mr. Tom Santagato

- All district related pupil services needs as well as Charles Bullock, Hillside, Glenfield and Renaissance

Supervisor: Dr. Shivoyne Trim

- Ninth Grade Annex and Montclair High School

Supervisor: Ms. Jennifer Finnerty

- DLC, Bradford, Nishuane

Supervisor: Mr. Edward Wilson

- Edgemont, Northeast, Watchung and Buzz Aldrin

CST CASE MANAGEMENT ASSIGNMENTS

All case managers are assigned by the Director and Supervisors of Pupil Services based on the following considerations:

- Staff members familiarity with student family,
- Prior program, or
- Specific student needs.

CST CASE MANAGEMENT ASSIGNMENTS

For the 2018 - 19 school year we replaced a high number of CST due to retirements and resignations. This was an opportunity to diversify our teams and provide more support for high need schools. Each school has a full team, LDT-C, School Psychologist and Social Worker the minimum of one day per week.

CST ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- CST and RS providers are assigned by the Director and Supervisors to serve as case managers in each of the 11 schools in the district
- CST staff are part of our teams in usually no more than 2 in-district schools and may case manage some Out-of-District schools
- CST staff at the High School(HS) only case manage HS students and some Out-of-District students

CHILD STUDY TEAM (CST) INCLUDING RELATED SERVICE (RS) PROVIDERS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities Include:

- Testing in their specific discipline
- Classroom observation of students on their case load
- Writing reports, IEPs and holding/attending IEP meetings
- Provide School Based Counseling and Social Skills
- RS provide school based therapy in their discipline

AVERAGE CASE LOAD BY ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

- Pre-K and Elementary Grades k-5 = 35
- Middle School Grades 6-8 = 44
- High School Grades 9-12 = 46

There is also a limited number of students who are eligible for speech language services (ESLS). These students are case managed by district speech therapist. The maximum number for one speech therapist is approximately 8-10 students with some therapist having only 1-2.

OUT-OF-DISTRICT PROGRAMS

Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities (APSSD) and NAPLES Placements

Not all schools are approved by the DOE. Schools that are not approved by the DOE are referred to as NAPLES Placements which is a reference to the NAPLES Act of 1989.

Currently we have 77 students placed in APPSSD and 17 in NAPLES placements. NAPLES are accredited private schools that often focus on student and family therapy/counseling

CURRENT NUMBER OF OUT-OF-DISTRICT (OOD) STUDENTS AND PROGRAM TYPE

- Currently we have 94 students placed in 39 different out of district programs. Since July 1, 2018 we have had 8 students move into Montclair that were placed out by their previous district.
- In this scenario our procedure is to hold a 30 day meeting to determine if these students can be educated in one of our in-district programs.

PROGRAM TYPE CONTINUED

OOD Program Types

OOD programs are selected based on student needs. Many of our OOD students are medically fragile and require extensive services beyond educational needs. Others may attend a more therapeutic program due to anxiety, school phobia or school refusal. Students in this type of program require intensive counseling services.

Others are placed due to a specific learning disability that requires a methodology not currently offered in our district.

At this time no financial terms of placements are available.

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS

Settlement Agreements occur when the district and a parent can not agree on the appropriate placement for a student. Often the student may have a unique or complex disability that denies the student the opportunity to be educated in district or in the LRE. Settlements are often a “share cost” agreement with a specific start and end date.

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS

We currently have 23 settlement cases that are pending an agreement, in litigation or have been settled. Of the 23 cases, we are actively trying to defend or settle 16 of them. The remaining 7 cases have been settled and students are placed due to the agreement.

At this time financial terms of settlement agreements are not available.

PROGRAM PROJECTIONS AND TRENDS

Montclair Pupil Services consistently monitors student needs and trends throughout the district. Program needs are determined by this analysis as students move from grade to grade and school to school.

PROGRAM PROJECTIONS

As a school district, we are not required to have every program type in every school. Our goal is to offer a wide variety of programs to meet the needs of all students within the 11 schools that comprise our district. If we can not meet the needs of a student within the district, we are required to find an appropriate program outside of the district. We must first look at other public school programs, APPSSD and finally NAPLES placements.

PROGRAM PROJECTIONS AND TRENDS CONTINUED

As our population changes - So do our programs

- Expansion of Pre-K program to address increased numbers
- Continuum of LLD grades 3-5 at Watchung
- Social Skills curriculum to be piloted in grades K-2 at Bradford, Nishuane, and Watchung
- Expansion of CBI at the High School

FINAL THOUGHTS

Special Education at every level is complex and always evolving. Pupil Services in Montclair Public Schools is dedicated to meeting the needs of all students. In order to accomplish this, consistent oversight of each program is necessary. The goal of this presentation is to communicate to the Board of Education and the public with full transparency that Pupil Services is keeping a **focused** eye on the department and the students in their charge.

NEXT STEPS

Montclair must evolve with the changing population of special need students:

- Increase Special Education law, policy and regulation awareness.
- Increase staff professional development in the area of anxiety and school refusal to address social emotional concerns.
- Increase staff with specialization in reading disabilities and multi-sensory instruction.
- Create innovative programs to address school phobic and school refusals.

PHASE III

Phase III to be completed and presented on or about the first BOE Meeting in January 2019.

Topics of discussion to include:

- Parent, student and teacher Survey Data
- Out-Of-District student monitoring
- Services provided and trends discovered
- Effectiveness of Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS)



Any questions?