



**Newburyport Public Schools**  
Special Education Ad Hoc Findings &  
Recommendations

# Breaking News.....



## DESE Coordinated Program Review Exit Interview – December 1<sup>st</sup>

### Highlights:

- School to School Transitions
- Inclusion Implementation Efforts
- Parental Involvement and Participation

# Purpose & Planning



## Our Team:

- Karen Brann, Director of Special Ed.
- Marc Kerble, Superintendent
- Barbara Kyle, former BCBA
- Beth Tremblay-Hall, Parent
- Carey Lambert, Parent
- Erin Foley, Parent
- Graceann Remmes, Literacy Coach
- John McCarthy, former TFL Nock/Molin
- Kim Spinney, Parent & PAC co-chair
- Lynn Ann Schow, Parent
- Melissa Cody, Parent & PAC co-chair
- Renee LeVerrier, Parent
- Matt Moscardini, Special Ed. Teacher at Nock
- Tammy Wolczik, former SLP Brown

Additional contributions from: Brenda Palmisano, Bruce Menin, Dan Koen, Kathleen Shaw, Kristina Davis, Steve Cole and Theresa Short.



# Our Purpose:

The charge of the Special Education Ad Hoc Committee was to gather information and collect data about:

- Student achievement
- Programs
- Inclusion Implementation
- Professional Development
- School to School Transitions
- Organizational Management

to provide the Superintendent with findings and recommendations.



# Our Questions:

## Student Achievement:

- Are IEP goals and objectives being met?
- Are special education students meeting AYP?
- How has inclusion impacted achievement?
- During planning time, do teachers discuss what is upcoming so that Sp. Ed. teachers can modify the curriculum?
- Are teachers using differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all learners?
- How are special education students scoring on our common assessments?



# Our Questions:

## Programs:

- Do we have established entrance and exit criteria for our programs?
- Do the existing programs meet the needs of ALL students?
- Language Based programming exists at the High School, why not earlier?
- How do we improve the consistency of programs between schools?



# Our Questions:

## Inclusion Implementation:

- What is our map for the Inclusion Initiative?
- Where does Newburyport fall statistically in inclusionary placements?
- What criteria exists to determine placement?
- What criteria exists for assigning para-professional support?
- What has been done and what is in place to educate parents?
- Do all students have equal access to inclusive opportunities?



# Our Questions:

## Professional Development:

- How much training have special ed. teachers received?
- How much training have classroom teachers received?
- What kind of training did they have that insures transfer from the lab setting to the classroom?
- Do any of our teachers facilitate professional development?
- What opportunities do teachers have to share and learn about best practices?



# Our Questions:

## School to School Transitions:

- Are there procedures in place for transitions between schools?
- Is the transition between schools a factor in changes in meeting target goals and AYP?
- Has the re-organization and reconfiguration of the grades had an impact on special education student achievement?



# Our Questions:

## Organizational Management:

- What is the general need of special education staff?
- How are we building internal capacity to wean away from our inclusion consultant?
- Is there ample oversight of programs and student progress?
- Are there job descriptions and clearly defined roles/responsibilities for the special education staff members?

# Preparing to Collect Data



## Our information sources:

- Cross-representation of committee members
- Brainstorming
- Key personnel to interview

## Data collection strategies:

- Identify issues and common themes.
- What are the drivers?
- Root cause analysis.....five why's.
- Interviews of key personnel



# Collecting Our Data

- Our Evaluation Process:
  - Are we getting the information we need?
  - Is our Team developing trust in the process?
  - What new questions are emerging?
  - Do we need to make adjustments?

# Making Sense of Our Findings



## Recommendations:

### **Student Achievement**

- Provide greater access to rigor in classrooms that differentiate instruction.
- Build greater capacity for implementing positive behavioral support plans.
- Increase opportunities for teachers to receive consultation from Special Ed., OT, PT, Speech, ABA and BCBA.
- Provide time and training on providing targeted interventions with progress monitoring.
- Provide programs before or after school to supplement services.
- Share AYP targets for special education with all stakeholders and hold regular progress monitoring meetings.
- For students not meeting AYP targets, write and implement action plans for improvement.

# Making Sense of Our Findings



## Recommendations:

### **Programs**

- Expand language based programming to Molin/Middle.
- Bring alternate programming options to Molin for kids who need a more functional academic program (pre-life skills).
- Expand social emotional program to Middle School.
- Establish written entrance/exit criteria for existing programs.
- Publish the continuum of services (programs) on website.

# Making Sense of Our Findings



## Recommendations:

### **Inclusion Implementation Efforts**

- View “Including Samuel” at PTO for general education families.
- Ensure that teachers have the knowledge and resources to adequately differentiate instruction.
- Provide training and oversight to Tiered Model of Intervention.
- Continue to spiral professional development for new teachers.
- Build capacity within district to phase out Inclusion Consultant.
- Create a parent’s network of resources, reference materials and possible workshops around inclusion.

# Making Sense of Our Findings



## Recommendations:

### **Professional Development**

- Provide intensive training in RTI
- Provide intensive training in Differentiating Instruction
- Provide training that improves data analysis skills, progress monitoring and on-going formative assessment.
- Provide time for special education teachers to collaborate, share and plan together.
- Train teachers to understand and implement positive behavior support plans
- Re-train in the IEP process so IEPs are of high quality and there is consistency across the district.
- Provide Inclusion Professional Development to parents .



# Making Sense of Our Findings

## Recommendations:

### **School to School Transitions**

- Continue MAPS process for high need students.
- Establish transition timeline in January and identify transition activities for all special education students.
- Provide better resources for parents (parent's nights, coffees).
- Provide opportunities for teachers to have vertical planning meetings throughout the year.

# Making Sense of Our Findings



## Recommendations:

### **Organizational Management**

- Create an organizational chart of staff, roles and responsibilities
- Standardize the method of assessing and reporting
- Provide parents with a glossary of terms and/or resource library
- Examine the consistency of programs from school to school and assign program oversight.
- Practice “learning walks” with administrators and teachers to see that we are employing inclusionary best practices.
- Include curriculum coaches in teacher planning for special ed.
- Build a culture of inclusion for “our” students.

# Implications for our work (next steps):



- Schedule Program Meetings to develop entrance and exit criteria for our existing programs.
- Establish a sub-committee to develop an organizational chart that defines the roles and responsibilities of Special Education Staff.
- Seek and schedule professional development opportunities for:
  - RTI Training
  - Differentiated Instruction
  - Data analysis and progress monitoring
  - Parents workshop on Inclusion
- Examine teacher resources for before/after school intervention programs for students in need of further instruction,
- Establish a sub-committee to set a timeline for adding language based programming to Molin and Middle School.
- Establish Transition Time Line with key staff in January of 2011.

# Improvements we can expect:



- Increased Student Achievement
- Improved AYP for students with disabilities
- More consistency from school to school
- Improved transition planning
- Increased teaching capacity from Professional Development
- Clearly established entrance/exit criteria for programs
- Written procedures and protocols for all staff to follow