



**Student Services Report to  
School Committee  
May 20, 2019**

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## **Office of Student Services**

The Office of Student Services for the Weston Public Schools hosts a broad range of student services, programs and supports including:

- Special Education and Related Services for students ages 3-22
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- English Language Education
- Guidance
- Health services
- McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
- Home-based Services

Many of these supports are in place as a result of federal and state laws and regulations. Other services are provided to all students in Weston Public Schools to support them throughout their school and community.

## **Goals for 2018-2019**

- Continue to promote Special Education/General Education collaboration and inclusive best practices ***(on-going)***
- Continue to clarify transition process and procedures at all levels ***(on-going)***
- Complete ELE program evaluation ***(completed August 2018)***
- Conduct Guidance Program internal review ***(completed May 2019)***
- Update program district descriptions and clarify ACCESS program ***(expected completion June 2019)***
- Continue to expand our supports for students with social/emotional and behavioral challenges ***(on-going)***

## **Update on Special Education Enrollment**

Students qualify for special education services after a comprehensive evaluation. Assessments conducted are based on the student's suspected area of disability. Students are deemed eligible if they are identified as having a disability and requiring specialized instruction in order to access and be successful in the general education curriculum. The total number of students eligible for special education services is 373. Of those, 30 are placed out of district. 2/3 of those are in private day schools, others are in collaboratives or are in residential settings.

**In-district Students Eligible for Special Education Services as of March 1, 2019**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Total</b>
PreK	19	
K	14	
Grade One	19	
Grade Two	15	
Grade Three	19	
		<b>86</b>
Grade Four	18	
Grade Five	25	
		<b>43</b>
Grade Six	27	
Grade Seven	31	
Grade Eight	32	<b>90</b>
Grade Nine	32	
Grade Ten	28	
Grade Eleven	32	
Grade Twelve	31	
Post	0	<b>123</b>
<b>Total:</b>		<b>342</b>

\*Note: The numbers for Preschool students are accurate but often, after receiving intervention through EI and in preschool, the number of students requiring specialized instruction decreases by Kindergarten. Some of the students in Preschool receive only related services, i.e. OT, PT, or Speech/Language.

**Update on Numbers of Students by Disability**

<b>Primary Disability</b>	<b>3/1/18</b>	<b>10/1/18</b>	<b>3/1/19</b>
Autism	35	37	37
Communication	37	45	41
Developmental Delay**	41	40	38
Emotional	31	27	32
Health	87	86	89
Intellectual	9	9	10
Multiple Disabilities	*	*	*
Neurological	20	24	27
Physical	0	0	0
Sensory/Deaf Blind	0	0	0
Sensory/Hearing	*	*	*
Sensory/Vision	*	0	0
Specific Learning	108	98	95

\* Indicates a number too low to report and ensure confidentiality.

\*\* The diagnosis of Developmental Delay is only applicable to students under age 9. Students are often re-evaluated and their disability identification changed as a result.

## Update on Out of District Placements

When a student's needs cannot be met within Weston Public Schools, an appropriate out of district school is identified by the team, including the family (and student if appropriate). Students may attend another public school program, a collaborative or a DESE approved private school.

## Students in Out of District Placements by Disability

<b>Primary Disability</b>	<b>3/1/18</b>	<b>10/1/18</b>	<b>3/1/19</b>
Autism**	9	8	8
Communication	4	4	4
Developmental Delay	0	0	0
Emotional**	8	8	9
Health	0	0	0
Intellectual	4	5	6
Multiple Disabilities	*	*	*
Neurological	4	*	*
Physical	0	0	0
Sensory/Deaf Blind	0	0	0
Sensory/Hearing	0	0	0
Sensory/Vision	0	0	0
Specific Learning	*	0	0

\* Indicates a number too low to report and ensure confidentiality.

\*\*We continue to see a slight rise in students with Autism and students with Emotional Disabilities needing out of district placements with specialized supports.

**Students Eligible for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act** (as of May 2019)

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Number of 504s</b>
PK-3	17
4-5	7
6-8	21
9	6
10	16
11	18
12	30
TOTAL	115

At the elementary level, many students are on 504 plans for specific learning and health disabilities such as diabetes or ADHD. At the secondary level, students are on 504 plans for specific learning, health disabilities, or social/emotional disabilities.

**English Language Education (ELE formerly known as ELL)**

Our English Language Education Program continues to support students across the district in all schools. As of 5/1/19, we are supporting 70 students in grades K-12.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>5/1/17</b>	<b>5/1/18</b>	<b>5/1/19</b>
K	12	3	2
1	7	13	8
2	10	6	14
3	10	6	6
4	7	8	5
5	8	4	6
6	8	4	3
7	7	5	3
8	2	5	6
9	6	0	7
10	10	2	2
11	0	10	2
12	2	0	6
Total	89	66	70

We continue to see a rise in the number of students at all levels arriving with a WIDA score of 1, 2 or 3 and requiring the most support.

Weston has students who speak the following as their primary language:

Arabic	German	Polish	Swedish
Cantonese	Icelandic	Portuguese	Vietnamese
Dutch	Japanese	Romanian	
Farsi	Korean	Russian	
French	Mandarin	Spanish	

### **Internal ELE Review Information**

The district conducted an internal review of our ELE programming as indicated by the Corrective Action Plan, stemming from the district's Coordinated Program Review during the 2017-2018 school year. From May-September, 2018 a district team including administrators, ELE teachers and general educators met and reviewed

- ACCESS and MCAS scores
- parent engagement based on surveys
- ELE student participation in classes, extra curricular activities and access to support services

Upon review, the team found:

- ELE teachers are looking at more specific data to support students with test language and preparation.
- Parent involvement has varied. There is a need for translators at school events.
- Students are participating in many activities, which varied by school. Some English learners are experiencing academic and emotional stress as identified by teachers, counselors and students.

Based on the results of this work, ELE teachers worked in their buildings and as a team to develop the following: (partial list)

- EL parent handbook for families.
- Elementary EL parent coffee.
- HS parent meeting for regarding course selection (translators present).
- Translators present for Back to School Nights at all levels.
- Teamed with Guidance and Adjustment Counselors to work with Newton Wellesley's Resilience Project on supporting ELE students experiencing stress.
- English Language Education Club to provide social opportunities and connections.

Our ELE teachers are also participating in several district, state and national projects to enhance supports for our ELE students:

- Maria Morong was invited to the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington DC to serve on the Bias and Sensitivity Review Team for the new WIDA Kindergarten Screener.
- Tamar Jeniski and Michelle McElwaine presented to middle school faculty regarding the cultural differences, academic needs and trajectory of language acquisition of English Learners.
- Michelle McElwaine presented at the New England Educational Research Organization conference on Ethnic Studies in a symposium on curriculum controversies.
- Maria Morong embedded ELE curriculum standards in a self-designed unit called "Developing Academic Conversation and Writing Skills Through a Mock Caldecott". She received a Linda



Shulman Innovation Grant through MATSOL in order to purchase materials for the project. Maria will be presenting this at the MATSOL conference in May.

- Tamar Jeniski established a PLC focused on supporting teachers in providing support, and evidence-based strategies to ELE students in writing and reading comprehension.
- Summer department work will focus on enhancing our ELE website and a workshop on “Best Teaching Practices for English Learners”.

## **Program Updates**

### **Integrated Preschool Program**

Weston Windows, our integrated preschool program, offers a developmentally appropriate, enriching curriculum. Through play and planned activities, our preschoolers develop their skills, creativity and curiosity. Teachers support social skill development through an engaging social skills curriculum, modeling language, guiding interactions and establishing clearly defined expectations. Within a caring and respectful classroom community, teachers adapt and modify activities based on the needs of each child to ensure all students' full participation. Related service providers (OT, PT, Speech Language Pathologists) provide support to students within and outside of their classrooms.

As of 3/1/19, we are serving 48 students within our preschool programs at the Country and Woodland Schools.

This school year, preschool teams at both elementary schools continued to meet weekly to revise and update forms, questionnaires and the Preschool Parent Handbook with the goal of clarifying processes and procedures. The Asst. Director of Student Services, Team Chairs and the Preschool administrative assistant work with Early Intervention case coordinators from Riverside to schedule and conduct Transition Planning Conferences. Close collaboration among teachers, related service personnel and, as needed, BCBA's, nurses and others has helped us welcome and ensure a smooth transition for children from EI to Weston Windows this year. We'll continue to focus on promoting family and community connections by hosting an end-of-year Parent Coffee, and through ongoing participation in DESE Early Childhood workshops and events hosted by Riverside.

## **Language-Based Programs**

Our Language-Based Classrooms at the Woodland, Field, Weston Middle School and Weston High School are classrooms designed to provide explicit, multisensory instruction in reading and written expression and specialized support for content subject areas to students with language-based learning disabilities. In addition to daily classroom instruction, students receive specialized, small group intervention based on individual needs. Providing students with opportunities for success academically, socially, and emotionally within a fully inclusive classroom is an essential goal of this program. Developing a positive attitude, self-confidence and self-advocacy is also emphasized.

**Students in LBC classrooms by grade**  
(May 2019)

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>
2	5
3	7
4	5
5	5
6	8
7	10
8	12
9	9
10	4
11	10
12	6

Given the effectiveness of this program, the number of children with language-based learning disabilities who we have been able to serve within a fully inclusive classroom, in-district, has increased. Students from private schools have returned to Weston Public Schools and we've received referrals from neighboring towns inquiring about potentially placing students in our Language-Based classrooms. Regarding our LBC teachers professional development, this school year they visited similar programs in nearby districts. They also participate in a professional learning community (PLC) with their special education colleagues to review best practices for assessment, instruction and intervention.

## **ACCESS**

The ACCESS program is a highly individualized program that serves students with complex academic, social and behavioral needs at Country, Field, Weston Middle School and Weston High School. While this program was initially designed to serve students with autism, it has evolved to meet the needs of students with a broader range of profiles. Students are fully included in general education classes and may receive small group instruction with a special educator, outside of the classroom. The common goal for students in the ACCESS program is for them to participate fully in the school community. Staff provide a range of academic and behavioral supports to help students participate in the general education curriculum and the classroom and school community.

Total number of students in ACCESS program K-12:

- Elementary: 5
- Middle School: 9
- High School: 11

In addition, our ACCESS teachers at Country, Field and the Middle School are providing behavioral consultation to their schools. As a district, we are looking at ways to expand programming within ACCESS to support students with more social/emotional/behavioral needs.

## **Middle School Transitions Program**

Transitions is a general education program for students returning after an extended period out of school due to medical hospitalization or social/emotional needs. Transitions is in its second year at the middle school. The District Psychologist serves as a resource for clinical decision-making. As of 5/1/19, the Middle School Transitions Program has provided support to 8 students in grades 6-8.

## **High School Transitions Program**

At the High School level, Transitions is also a general education program for students returning from extended time out of school as a result of medical hospitalizations or social/emotional needs. As of 5/1/19, 11 students accessed the Transitions program in grades 9-12.

- 6 freshmen/sophomores
- 5 juniors/seniors

Four of these students were referred for special education evaluations.

## **High School Bridge Program**

The Bridge Program is a therapeutic, highly specialized program that supports students with significant social and emotional needs. A common goal of the Bridge program is to provide students with support to establish positive relationships so that they can develop the confidence and skills necessary to take academic and social risks, and to increase their independence. Students in Bridge benefit from small

group academic support, access to clinical support services, as well as organizational and study skills instruction.

As of 5/1/19, for the 2018-2019 school year: 14 students are currently in Bridge.

- 5 freshmen/sophomores
- 9 juniors/seniors

## **Health Services**

Laurie Melchionda was hired in September 2018 as our new Director of Health Services. She transitioned into the role by meeting with Patty Wright for two full days at the end of August, as well as meeting with school and district administrators.

In December 2018, Weston applied for the Comprehensive School Health Service (CSHS) grant, a grant similar to the Essential School Health Services grant that the district has had for the past 19 years. The scope of the grant focuses on student health status, resilience and well-being. As part of the grant application process, Laurie met with Dr. Midge Connolly, Dr. Kimo Carter, Ms. Jennifer Truslow, all school Principals, Guidance Director, Metco Director, and Director of Nutritional Services to review and identify the needs of students.

In April, 2019, Weston was awarded this \$75,000 grant. Funding from the Comprehensive School Health Service grant will assist the district in ensuring the integrity and continuous improvement of Weston's school health programs and our students' health and safety. Specifically, the grant will help strengthen the capacity of the district's schools by providing health care coordination activities and support to students with more significant health needs; continuous quality improvement through data collection and analysis; and programs that provide access to care to address health disparities and racial inequities in the community and reduce chronic absenteeism.

The goal of the grant is to foster the growth, development, and educational achievement of all students by promoting their health and well-being. Funding will assist with monitoring the health status and identifying and addressing the unmet needs of students, families and school personnel. It will also support building public and private partnerships to connect quality services that are effective, culturally appropriate, and responsive to the diverse and changing needs of our students and community through the following initiatives:

- Providing health care coordination activities in each school setting that addresses the needs of students with chronic health conditions, including medical, social emotional, behavioral, and other areas so that all students with these conditions may attend school safely. The activities will provide each school nurse with substitute coverage for two hours a week to actively engage with healthcare providers in the community, to provide strategies for meaningful access to services in order to address disparities and inequities, and improve school attendance and academic achievement.
- Enhancing collaboration with the entire school community, families, and community partners through weekly case management activities as appropriate in order to provide comprehensive school and community-based health programming.

- Providing the Weston High School Transitions program with a full-time licensed counselor who will work to enhance and sustain the program for students returning to school after an extended absence for reasons such as social/emotional hospitalization, medical needs or concussion. The need for a separate counselor for the Transitions program was identified through data collection and consultations with the current Transitions/Bridge staff. Having a dedicated counselor will allow more students to access the supports provided in the program.

In addition, Weston was awarded the CSHS Regional Nurse Consultant Program grant; \$150,000 a year. Weston will host a Regional Consultant who is both an expert in school health services in the region as well as the coordinator for other districts in the area who are grant recipients. Hosting the Regional Consultant will give the Weston community access to increased supportive services and professional development funding.

These are four-year grants, after which time Weston can re-apply for six additional years, for a total of ten years of grant funding.

### **Guidance**

As the first step in the Comprehensive Program Review of Weston Public School's district-wide Guidance/Counseling Program, counselors conducted an extensive in-depth self-assessment and review of practice. This self-study will guide the focus for an external review committee visit in 2019-20. The final phase of the Review will be completed when counselors respond to the external review, developing an implementation plan that addresses proposed enhancements to the counseling program. The self-study work had the input of an oversight committee, which included representative counselors, teachers and administrators from every level. All eleven K-12 school counselors contributed to this critical first step of the review process.

This process was positive and very informative, and we look forward to sharing results and implementing changes, resulting in positive impact on students.

### **Professional Development**

For the 2018-2019 school year, Student Services Professional Development shifted to school-based meetings with

- Allan Blume: Continued updates on IEP and goal development (All)
- Elise Wulff: Executive Function, Transition and Anxiety (MS and HS)
- Jim Ellis, BCBA Consultant (monthly meetings with school staff and school consults)

During the district's full day of Teachers teaching Teachers on January 18, 2019, Student Services staff presented to colleagues on the following topics:

- Laurie Smith-Michaels: Supporting Students on the Autism Spectrum
- Laurie Melchionda: Substance Use Awareness and Resiliency
- Bridge Team: Anxiety in the Classroom

All presentations were well received and may be repeated at faculty meetings in the future.

Learning Assistants also participated in 4 trainings with Elise Wulf on topics such as Anxiety, Social Communication and Providing/Fading Support.

***Foundations Update:*** Professional development this year also included teacher training and ongoing support as part of the implementation of two evidence-based instructional programs. Given definitive research showing that all students benefit from explicit, multisensory phonics instruction, and many students require it, kindergarten and Grade 1 teachers implemented the Foundations program as part of their classroom reading instruction. Last fall, the Asst. Director of Student Services and Literacy Specialist provided trainings, visited classrooms and held on-going meetings with teachers over the course of the year. This close collaboration resulted in many positive outcomes. By mid-year, teachers reported that students were applying learned strategies to decode and spell words. Many reported that their students' handwriting improved as a result of the explicit instruction and practice. Teachers reported that they are able to use data, gathered daily, to inform their next steps and to provide supplemental, targeted instruction for those needing it. Ninety percent of K and Grade 1 students reached end of year targets by mid-year for critical phonological awareness and beginning phonics-decoding skills.

Last summer, second grade teachers received training in Foundations and over the course of this school year, a Foundations/Wilson Language Program Consultant provided four coaching days that included model lessons in second grade classrooms, reflection with teachers and study group time. In the interest of building capacity, one second grade teacher is being trained as a teacher trainer for Foundations.

***Lucy Calkins Writing:*** *The Teachers College Units of Study for Writing*, by Lucy Calkins has been implemented in some grades in consultation with the Literacy Specialist. Last summer, teachers participated in a four day workshop. This evidence-based general education instructional program includes tools and strategies that are highly effective for small group instruction for struggling writers, as well as classroom instruction.

## **Goals for 2019-2020**

Student Services is comprised of departments throughout the district that impact all schools, teachers and students. As a result, collaboration is critical. Conversations with teachers, administrators and families, as well as survey data, have informed our decision-making and goal setting for the 2019-2020 school year.

Next year, the Student Services department will focus on Systems, Communication and Opportunities for Collaboration.

### **Systems**

- Working in collaboration with the Office of Teaching and Learning, support faculty in understanding DCAP, Tiered Supports, RtI, IST and the role each plays in supporting students academically and socially.
- Continue to clarify processes to ensure smooth transitions between grades and schools for students with disabilities.
- Continue to remain nimble with scope of programs to meet needs of students.

### **Communication**

- Through regularly scheduled meetings there will be an increase in communication both between Student Services and other departments and within the varied Student Services departments.
- Establish a Steering Committee with representatives from all departments for quarterly meetings.
- Reinstate PK-5/6-12 Student Services meetings throughout the school year.
- Publish department newsletter.

### **Collaboration**

- With principals, identify specific times for general education and special educators to meet consistently.
- With principals, provide professional development on topics such as special education laws, the IEP process, and inclusive practices.
- With Office of Teaching and Learning, refine IST process, progress monitoring and differentiation strategies.
- Continue to support ELE and general education teachers' Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) that focus on sharing best practices and strategies
- Continue to build relationships with neighboring districts to support students and programs.