

## SPED Board Report 2016-17

Beginning in 2015, Mrs. Johnson became the Special Education Director with Mrs. Jamison assisting. For the current school year, the special education department is organized with Mrs. Findlay teaching K-4, Mr. Moore working with 5-8 students, Mrs. Detjens teaching grades 9-12 as well as working with the alternative learning student that is in the transition program. Mrs. Smith works with alternative learning students in the elementary school. In addition, she is the case manager for St. Paul's resource students. Mrs. Jamison also teaches middle school math and works with HAL students. Mrs. Washburn is the Speech Pathologist for the district. She is now full-time as there was a need for additional S/L services (see attachment).

For clarification purposes, resource students are primarily those that have learning disabilities but function well in a normal school setting with peers. Alternative learning students need more instruction in the life skills area.

### 1. Multi-cultural Aspect

- Our department works with diverse groups on a daily basis. Many students are dually represented in the Special Education subgroup as well as Free and Reduced Lunch.
- Curricular programs such as *Unique Learning* and the Reading Street series address many cultures through literature on a daily basis.

### 2. What do we want students to learn?

- We want students to increase their proficiency in reading, math and writing with a strong focus on independent self-accountability.
- Implementation of curriculum such as *Unique Learning* and *Read Naturally* for the alternative learning students; the vast majority of resource students are now taught exclusively in the regular classroom with the general curriculum.
- Math specialty labs for special education students at the high school level in need of additional interventions.
- Continued practice with choice reading to increase student motivation for the resource students (supported by research from Reis, National Reading Council, Guthrie, Renzulli); DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) and SSR (Sustained Silent Reading) implemented on a regular basis (supported by research from Cullinan, Krashen, Gardiner).
- Essential learning changes with Alternative Learning students include the continued implementation of a transition program for select students to receive work and life skills experience.
- An increased presence of VR (previously known as Vocational Rehab) will allow our secondary students to explore vocational opportunities to ensure that they are college and career ready as they graduate from high school.
- Continued use of The *Unique Learning* program to address reading comprehension for alternative students.
- Continued implementation of essential learnings with resource students address the NeSA deficiencies.
- Alternative students work on social skills and peer interactions as both specific lessons and in the context of their day.
- The Speech/Language program's goal is to ensure that all students are effective communicators. Interventions are provided in 1:1 and small group settings as well as some large group settings when appropriate.
- Implementation by the state for Targeted Improvement Plans that will address the gap between special education students and regular education students. The Arlington Public Schools goal is as follows:
  - Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP) five year goal.
    - Over the next 5 years, the NeSA reading performance for students with disabilities in 3rd and 4th grades will improve from 65% proficient (average of 3rd and 4th grade scores) to 70% proficient as measured on the NeSA Reading assessments.

- 2015-16: 66%
- 2016-17: 67%
- 2017-18: 68%
- 2018-19: 69%
- 2019-20: 70%

- Actual 2015 NeSA data was 92% of special education students in grades 3 and 4 were proficient in reading (*Note: after discussion with our regional state director, it was deemed most appropriate to continue current goal to ensure that trend data continues to show growth*)

### 3. How do we know students are learning?

- Best practices
  - Students spend more time reading (choice/SSR)
  - Fluency monitoring
  - Pre and post testing
  - Use of learning labs in math
  - One-to-one or small group testing (for any student needing alternative settings)
  - Re-take tickets for students to show remediation before test re-takes
  - ESP/GRIP for students that need to make up work
  - Modified tests/quizzes and materials when appropriate
  - Interdisciplinary units
  - Focus on relationship building to ensure students feel as though they are in a safe and trusting environment
  - Evidence based intervention models for speech/language lessons are employed for articulation, fluency, voice and language disorders and are determined by each student's IEP.
  - Implementation of new reading curriculum and push-in practices
  - Reorganizing elementary schedule for common subject time for grade levels, allowing for students to be flexibly grouped more effectively.
- Assessments used to gather data
  - NeSA
  - MAPS testing for grades 1-9
  - Fountas and Pinell data for elementary students (previously we used Dibels data)
  - Classroom assessments
  - Anecdotal records for Alternative Learning students
  - Unique Learning System benchmarks (taken three times per year) and reported on alternative assessment report cards.
- Measureable student growth
  - NeSA results
  - MAPS testing
  - Fountas and Pinell data
  - Fluency monitoring
  - Transition students are monitored on the job and completion of life skills
  - Unique Learning System

### Data to support learning

#### 4. How do we respond when students are not learning?

- Middle school SPED students (along with all MS students) are assigned an ESP (Eagle Success Program) when regular assignments are not finished. Assignments are given to increase learning, so unfinished work hinders success in the classroom.
- Elementary students follow the same protocols through the Lunch Bunch program.

- High school students can be assigned GRIP (Grade Recovery Intervention Program) when failing a class. SPED students may be assigned GRIP even when not failing as it often takes them longer to recover from a failing assessment or assignment.
- Middle school SPED instructor is part of the middle school team to ensure that conversations are ongoing when a student is struggling.
- Strategies we use are differentiated instruction, small group settings, para support, and other accommodations as required by their IEP (Individualized Education Plan).
- Individual classroom strategies include: test retakes, one on one learning opportunities, specialized labs, modified assessments and other practice opportunities.
- Measureable data includes Fountas and Pinell, STARS, and *Read Naturally* for alternative learning students. Classroom assessments are also used to measure student progress. Results of those assessments guide instructional practices.

5. How do we enrich the learning for students who exceed proficiency?

- Students at the elementary level are grouped for language arts instruction that is commensurate with their abilities
- Students in grades 3-6 that show advanced potential in math are pulled during an intervention period to work on M-cubed curriculum.
- Students that exceed proficiency are given open ended projects and tasks to reach their potential.
- SPED students are often involved in extracurricular activities such as Future Cities that allow enrichment in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) fields.
- Workshops
- Coding club, MathCounts and independent studies on choice topics and other enrichment opportunities

6. Other information

- As stated earlier, the secondary SPED program is making a concerted effort to not only improve student learning, but also the department as a whole through targeted instructional practices for certified and non-certified staff. Collaborative time will examine ways to implement training for all personnel that work with SPED students.

Additional Data

Five Year Trends  
2011-2015

Total Number of Special Education Participants

Grade Levels	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Pre-School	6	12	13	12	11
K-2	17	13	12	7	9
3-6	30	14	14	17	19
7-8	7	9	12	7	7
9-12	20	18	16	14	19

	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Total SPED Students	79	66	67	57	65
Students with SLI verification only (Speech/Language Impairment)	17	6	6	8	12
100% or near 100% Teacher/Para support	7	8	5	4	4

