

Special Education Budget Presentation FY 2021

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Our Students...

2057 Identified Students ages 3 – 21 88 Students in the Special Education Process*

- 222 students in Preschool
- 1432 students in regular education with special education supports
- 296 students in Specialized Programs: 19 Intensive Needs Classes, 9 Project Achievement Classes and 5 Signs of Learning Classes
- 92 students in Out of District Placements (Court and Educational Placements)
- 15 students attending Brentwood Academy

*As of January 31, 2020

Who we are...

The Nashua Special Education Department consists of:

- SEAT (10): Director, 2 Assistant Directors, Preschool Coordinator, Out-of-District Coordinator, Chief School Psychologist, Brentwood Academy Coordinator, Office Manager and 2 Administrative Assistants
- 138 Case Managers
- 27 Speech Language Pathologists
- 18 Occupational Therapists
- 8 American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters
- 3 Teachers of the Visually Impaired
- 3 Behavior Specialists
- 354.9 Para Educators
- 15.5 School Psychologists (and 2 interns)
- 7 Physical Therapists
- 5 Teachers of the Deaf (TOD)
- 3 Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA)



The Special Education Process

- *Referral Received* – District has 15 business days to meet with the parent(s) to determine suspected area(s) of disability
- *Permission to Evaluate* – District has 60 calendar days to evaluate and meet with parent(s) to review results
- *Student found Eligible* – District has 30 calendar days to develop an IEP and meet with parent(s) to review
- *IEP agreed upon* – District must propose placement (determined based on Least Restrictive Environment)
- School vacations, weather cancellations, etc. do not interrupt the timelines

What we do...

Provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Provide Specially Designed Instruction to address the unique needs of students to ensure access to the general curriculum to meet educational standards

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) & The NH Standards for the Education of Children with Disabilities

Provide students with high quality related services to provide access to the general curriculum and assure reasonably calculated progress within the curriculum

Provide a continuum of services for students ages 3 – 21: preschool classrooms, regular classrooms, resource rooms, self contained, special day schools, residential programs, home instruction and hospital or institution

A few success stories...

- **Student A:** Is a junior at Nashua High South. She came to us as an 8 year old with a profound hearing loss and did not have access to language or education in her home country. She joined our Signs of Learning program and was supported by an ASL interpreter throughout her school day. She has now completed Driver's Education, was asked to apply for the National Honors Society and the only 4 year Liberal Arts college for the Deaf (Gaulaudet University) is actively recruiting her. She is currently a successful, college-bound student with an incredibly bright future ahead of her, due to the educational interventions she has received in Nashua.
- **Student B:** Is a 3rd grader in a Project Achievement Classroom and has been in the program since Kindergarten. When she first started, she was oppositional and below grade level in all academic areas. She required constant support from the Project Achievement staff including the School Psychologist. Due to these supports early on, she is now fully mainstreamed and works independently in all academic areas. Her reading skills are above grade level expectations and she is expected to return to her neighborhood school (LRE) for next school year.

A few more success stories ...

- **Student C:** Is a student who is identified as having an Intellectual Disability. He has received modified curriculum throughout his educational career and has been placed in Intensive Needs programs from Elementary through High School. He participates in a career training program and is currently interning at a local hospital. His team is optimistic that at the end of the internship, he will have a job offer (or 2).
- **Student D:** Is a student who has experienced significant trauma in his life. When he started in school, he had very limited language and would act out aggressively when he was unable to communicate his wants or needs. The Speech Pathologist, School Psychologist and Classroom Teacher worked together to develop an appropriate plan in order to best support the student. In a matter of 4 months, the student's language developed from about 3 words per utterance to 8+ words per utterance. His incidents of aggressive behaviors reduced from an average of 39 per day to 2 per week.

What we are requesting...

- One (1) Additional American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter at Fairgrounds Middle School (Appendix 7E)
- One (1) Additional School Psychologist (Appendix 7F)
- One (1) Additional Middle School Intensive Needs Classroom (Appendix 7G)
- One (1) Additional Elementary Project Achievement Classroom (Appendix 7H)
- One (1) Additional Speech Language Pathologist (Appendix 7I)

Why we are requesting ...

- All budget requests ensure students are receiving a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) within the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) in accordance with IDEA.
- To maintain compliance with IDEA and the NH Standards for the Education of Children with Disabilities.
- Requests are intended to decrease the number of Out of District Placement referrals by ensuring students' IEPs and unique needs can be met within the Nashua School District.

Rationale for Additional ASL Interpreter

- Next year, 5 students in grades 6 and 7 whom require ASL Interpreters in order to access their educational environment will be at Fairgrounds Middle School.
- The current allotment of 2 interpreters will not meet the needs of all 5 students as they will not be in the same classes.
- Interpreters assigned to Elementary and High School are unable to be reassigned due to the number of students at each level.
- Prevent out of district placements and possibly result in an additional revenue source as the district will be able to accept additional students in grades 6-8 from other districts.

Rationale for School Psychologist

- 396 students' IEPs call for direct support from a school psychologist
- Provide support to special and regular education students across all 17 school buildings and Brentwood Academy
- Complete evaluations in a timely manner (633 evaluations this school year); support proactive interventions and meet the needs of students who are experiencing crisis
- Meet the services outlined in students' IEPs and prevent Out of District Placements

Rationale for Additional Middle School Intensive Needs Program

- Provide a continuum of support from Preschool to High School
- 32 students have been referred to 3 existing programs for next school year
- Continue to provide support to our students who require highly modified instruction in small group settings in the least restrictive environment, reducing the referrals to out of district placements

Rationale for Additional Elementary School Project Achievement

- Currently, there are 41 students in Project Achievement (PA) classrooms at the Elementary level
- During this school year, 15 referrals for PA were received. For next school year, there are 16 additional referrals
- Continue to provide early intervening therapeutic supports and services in the Least Restrictive Environment to promote school success and reduce referrals to Out of District Placements

Rationale for 1 Additional Speech Language Pathologist

- Currently, there are 27 Speech Pathologists providing services to 732 students
- Speech Pathologists provide consultative support to Regular Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Preschool Teachers, Intensive Needs Teachers and Para Educators throughout the district
- The District will be able to continue to meet students' IEP services within the Least Restrictive Environment