



# Bedford Public Schools Special Education Program Review - 2007-2008

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# Key Factors Guiding Review

Department of Education's Coordinated Program  
Review May 2006.

Increasing % of enrolled students receiving  
special education services.

Increasing % of special education students  
enrolled in Collaborative and special education  
schools.

Rising financial impact of Special Education.



# Factors Influencing Provision of Special Education in Bedford

Size of District

Increasing intensity of presenting need

Changing professional practices for providing special education services



# Program Review Phases

Study all Out of District Placements

Comparison data gathered from other Districts

Study impact of our building transition years.

Investigate how the special education process is implemented across the District.



# Review of OOD Placements - Key Observations

Compared 1998-99 data with 2006-07 for 8 year view

School Year	Total Enroll	Special Ed	OOD	% sped in OOD
1998-1999	2093*	365*	60	16%
2006-2007	2285*	469*	115	24%

\*DOE data

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# Review of OOD Placements - Key Observations

Preschool/Developmental K ages 3-7 = 36% OOD

Students aged 14-19 = 44% of OOD

Autism and Developmental Delay = 38% of OOD

Students with Learning Disabilities or Intellectual Impairment that are placed OOD are not placed until Middle School or High School.

Since 2003-2004 year 39 students moved into Bedford with IEP's that led to OOD placement.

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# What Are Other Districts Doing?

## -Comparisons-

Difficult to compare - even when we filter for common factors.

Districts present a range of programming profiles.

Norwell/Weston have very low OOD numbers <20

Lexington/Concord have high OOD numbers >95

Bedford OOD numbers are among the highest of the districts reviewed.



# Questions We Asked Ourselves

Why are our OOD numbers so high?

Are we employing the most appropriate research supported practices to address special education services according to current mandates?

Can we alter our practices to provide services/supports in district based upon research to support stronger outcomes for our special education students?





# Information Gathered in District

Bedford has adopted an inclusive approach to special education.

Identified many strengths in current practices

- K-2 intervention - Response to Intervention model evolving with data collection to monitor 'at risk' students.



# Information Gathered in District

- Language Learning Lab Program K-12 for students with language based learning disabilities.
- Talented, Responsive, Dedicated, Professional staff
- Special Education is integrated into the educational teams of the Bedford Schools.



# Identified Areas of Need

## Action Steps Taken

- 1. Consistency in OOD liaison work.
  - Hired Assistant Director for Special Education
- 2 Redirect or add resources in district to create services/supports.
  - Transitions program at JGMS
  - Lane restructured staff assignments.
  - BHS & Lane working hard to meet needs of 'move in' students that typically would be OOD based upon past practice.



# Identified Areas of Need

## Action Steps Taken

- 3. Identify students in OOD that are ready for in district services.
- 4. Development of new general education initiatives to support at risk/special education students
  - Bedford High School - RISE program



# Identified Areas of Need Action Steps Taken

- 5. Steps taken to bring consistent standard of practice across the district.
  - Pre-referral/intervention process
  - Evaluation/identification for special education
  - Provision of services/supports



# Next Steps

## GOAL:

- Maintain high quality outcomes for Bedford students including those with special education needs;
- Develop supports and services in district through a broader inclusion model;
- Reduce the number of students in OOD placement.



# Next Steps

Develop a 3-5 year plan to institutionalize necessary changes.

Identify work to be done to achieve goal.

Continue affiliation with Collaborative programs

Continue to identify action steps that can be taken to reduce movement of students from in district to OOD placements in the short term.



# Conclusions

What we are proposing is challenging and difficult work.

- Particularly hard to shift concepts of 'best practices' in a community and educational staff that view their work/schools as a high performing, successful school district.
- Talented staff doing a great job providing educational services to students. Capture talent and creative ability as we work as a community to identify a path to our goal.





# Final Thought

It is important to emphasize:

We are looking at a model that research says will improve the outcomes for all students.

Inclusive practices have demonstrated positive outcomes for students, schools, and whole communities.