

**To:** Carol L. Costello, Superintendent of Schools, The Berlin-Boylston Regional School Committee

**From:** Jannel Fitzpatrick, PPS Director

**Date:** October 5, 2023

**Regarding:**

[Preschool Update](#)

[Instructional Materials and Resources in Special Education](#)

[Special Educators and Service Providers in Berlin-Boylston](#)

[Unique Learning System \(ULS\)](#)

### [Preschool Update](#)

2023-2024 Preschool enrollment data for children without disabilities:

| <b>Tahanto 3-day program</b> | <b>Tahanto 2-day program</b> |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 13 of 16 slots               | 3 of 8 slots                 |
| <b>Berlin 3-day program</b>  | <b>Berlin 2-day program</b>  |
| 13 of 16 slots               | 7 of 8 slots                 |

2023-2024 Preschool enrollment data for children with disabilities:

| <b>Tahanto Program</b> | <b>Berlin Program</b> |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 10                     | 8                     |

In several prior school years, preschool spots for children without disabilities were full and/or there were waiting lists.

In accordance with the District Improvement Plan item 2.4.1

“Execute a preschool study at BES, BMS, and TAH for the purpose of restructuring the location of the preschools and expansion of programming”

An Integrated Preschool Program Evaluation will be conducted for the district’s Preschool Programs, located at the Berlin Memorial Elementary School and the Tahanto Regional Middle/High School, to determine how inclusive early childhood practices are being implemented to support students with a range of disabilities and educational needs. We have contracted with ACCEPT Collaborative for this evaluation.

The evaluation will begin in January 2024, and a report is expected March 2024.

The guiding questions of this evaluation are as follows:

- 1) What are the recent data trends in the District’s Integrated Preschool Programs enrollment and how can this data be leveraged to anticipate future needs and inform long-term planning?
- 2) Is the organization of staff resources efficient and effective to meet the needs of students across the District’s Integrated Preschool Programs?
- 3) What types of resources and planning considerations would be needed to assist the District in potentially moving the preschool program currently offered at Tahanto Regional Middle-High School to the Boylston Elementary School?
- 4) How is the District’s Integrated Preschool Program meeting the needs of students with Autism with a focus on the implementation of evidence-based practices?
- 5) Does the Integrated Preschool Program’s options for community peers meet the needs of families in the district, and are tuition rates comparable to other local public school preschool programs?

### Instructional Materials and Resources in Special Education

Special education supports and services are specified in a student's Individual Education Program (IEP.) The IEP is developed by a team that knows the child and includes caregiver/s, classroom teachers, and service providers (special education teachers and related service providers such as psychologist, adjustment counselor, BCBA, OT, PT and SLP) as well as a special education coordinator who is a DESE certified Special Education Administrator.

Individual goals that address areas of the child's disability are the core of the IEP. IEP goals specify knowledge, skills and/or behaviors that are preventing the student from progressing in the general education program. Goals are aligned with the Massachusetts Frameworks. Specially designed instruction is detailed in the IEP and delivered by special educators to enable the child to make effective progress in their individual goal areas.

Special educators and service providers individually design instruction and select the instructional materials appropriate for the goals. (A chart of BBRSD service providers is provided below.) If a child is not making expected progress, the educator must adapt the interventions, including materials, as needed.

As children develop and progress, new specially designed instruction and instructional materials are needed to meet the evolving needs of the child.

As a result, special education routinely acquires and uses a wide variety of instructional materials. New instructional materials, ranging from a \$10 practice workbook to a \$3,000 set of reading materials, are needed on an ongoing basis to meet the unique needs of students and provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), as required by state and federal law.

Special Educators and Service Providers in Berlin-Boylston

| <b>Role</b>                                    | <b>Berlin Memorial</b> | <b>Boylston Elementary</b> | <b>Tahanto Regional</b>    | <b>BBRSD District</b>                            |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Special Education Teacher</b>               | Amanda Benson          | Deb Malo                   | Tricia Symmes              |                                                  |
| <b>Special Education Teacher</b>               | Michelle Lamacchia     | Hilary Johnston            | Laura Banas                |                                                  |
| <b>Special Education Teacher</b>               | Liz Borstel            | Roshan Valipour            | Chad Collins               |                                                  |
| <b>Special Education Teacher</b>               | Sarah Whitehouse       | Eileen MacQueen            | Sheila Coomey              |                                                  |
| <b>Special Education Teacher</b>               |                        |                            | Michelle Petersen          |                                                  |
| <b>Special Education Teacher</b>               |                        |                            | Matt Hager                 |                                                  |
| <b>School Psychologist</b>                     | Linda Checola          | Robin Milaszewski          | Kim Trainor                |                                                  |
| <b>School Adjustment Counselors</b>            |                        | Katie Ward                 | Kara Ford<br>Katie Schmidt |                                                  |
| <b>SLP (Speech Language Pathologist)</b>       | Courtney Mullins       | Katie FanFan               | Kris Cassidy               |                                                  |
| <b>OT (Occupational Therapist)</b>             |                        |                            |                            | Betsy Trudeau                                    |
| <b>BCBA (Board Certified Behavior Analyst)</b> |                        |                            |                            | Amy Thompson<br>Liz Putelis                      |
| <b>PT (Physical Therapist)</b>                 |                        |                            |                            | MaryJo Flatley<br>(Assabet Valley Collaborative) |
| <b>TVI (Teacher of Visually Impaired)</b>      |                        |                            |                            | Jean Sauer (Keystone Collaborative)              |
| <b>Special Education Coordinators</b>          | Sherry Trainque        | Sherry Trainque            | Sherry Burke               |                                                  |

### Unique Learning System (ULS)

Unique Learning System is needed as an instructional resource at Tahanto. We plan to use the system as a tool for instruction in core subject replacement classes and/or for transition/life skills for the small group of students requiring such instruction.

Cost: Approximately \$1500/year

The system has been trialed by the teacher for several weeks in collaboration with other special educators at Tahanto, with positive feedback.

The system has been reviewed for bias and stereotyping by the Director of Curriculum and Grants, Grades 6-12 and the Special Education Teacher. See the rubric [here](#).

Unique Learning System sample materials can be viewed [here](#).

“As our population of special education learners grows, our needs also have become more diverse. The Unique learning program provides students with a systematic, leveled, comprehensive curriculum that is data-driven while aligned to Massachusetts curriculum standards. Currently, the life skills program which supports our most at risk and intensive needs learners are using curriculum materials from various sources and little cohesiveness. A comprehensive, age appropriate and high interest curriculum meets the needs of the group by providing both whole group and leveled materials, while being easily adapted for accessibility (ie speech to text, highlighting, enlarged print). Unique also provides data reporting critical to tracking student progress and provides opportunities for independence within academics which these students often do not have.” - Michelle Peterson, Special Education Teacher, Tahanto, 10/4/2023