

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SOUTH ORANGE AND MAPLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY
525 Academy Street, Maplewood, NJ 07040

Peter P. Horoschak, Ed.D.
Superintendent

973-762-5600 X 1821
FAX: 973-378-9464

MEMORANDUM

TO: BOE Members

FM: Peter P. Horoschak

RE: Budget Analysis # 7– Special Education

DATE: February 6, 2006

This analysis, along with other analyses produced in response to the Board's request for information, build on similar budget analyses produced in prior years. All analyses may be found on the district's website:
<http://www.somdsd.k12.nj.us/finance/AllYearsRpts.htm>.

The following analysis has been completed in order to explore the possibilities for budget savings relative to the provision of services to students with special needs. A review of the current state of special education and the return of students from out of district settings will be explored along with the provision of related services and the growing number of referrals to the Department.

Current State of Special Education

Students with special needs attend neighborhood schools unless they require a highly specialized self-contained program. The district currently offers resource programs¹ in every school and self-contained programs in Marshall Elementary School, Clinton Elementary School, Tuscan Elementary School, South Orange Middle School, and Columbia High School. Please refer to Table 1 for the specific locations of self-contained programs and Appendix 1 for a thorough explanation of the district's special education programs.

Table 1: Self-Contained Programs

School	Self-Contained Programs
Marshall	2 P.L.A.C.E. (Preschool Learning and Communication Experience)
	2 A.P.P.L.E. (Autistic Preschool Program Learning Experience)
	2 L.E.A.P. (Language Enrichment Acquisition Program)
	2 Integrated Kindergarten
Clinton	2 Diamond (Multiple Disabilities)
Tuscan	1 Aspire (Autistic K-5)
SOMS	1 Diamond
CHS	1 Emotionally Disturbed
	1 Behaviorally Disabled

To date, 1055 students are currently involved with the Department. These students are either receiving services or are in the referral process. Of the 1055 students, 691 receive services in district programs, 153 are placed in out-of-district settings, 97 receive speech only services, and 114 are in the referral process. A year to date comparison indicates an increase of 51 students in district and 20 students out of district. Of the 20 students in out of district settings, two transferred in with IEPs that required out of district placements and 18 were placed out of district as a result of severe behavioral episodes and/or significant academic delays.

¹ Resource Programs include pull-out support, in-class support, pull-out replacement, and multiple pull-out replacement.

As the number of students with special needs increases, the district is required to expand its professional and support staff to provide appropriate services. The Department is currently comprised of one Director, one Supervisor, five secretaries, 19 child study team members, 69.6 special educators, 9.4 speech/language specialists, 59 paraprofessionals, and 3.2 counselors. The district continues to contract with Livingston Services² for occupational therapists and physical therapists; with the Morris Union Jointure Commission (MUJC) for behavioral support³; with Douglass Outreach for a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)⁴ for in district programs; and with the NJ Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired for blindness services⁵. The district employs several vendors to provide home programs for children on the autism spectrum.

A year to date comparison indicates an increase of 4.7 teachers, eight paraprofessionals, and one child study team member. Two teachers and six paraprofessionals were hired to accommodate two programs opened in September 2005; 2.7 teachers and two paraprofessionals were added to accommodate the increase in student population. One additional child study team member was added to the middle school team to accommodate the ever growing number of referrals and students. Administrative positions and speech/language specialist positions remain constant.

Return to District

As stated previously, 153 students are educated in out of district settings. Please refer to Table 2 for a breakdown of out of district programs organized by program type. Department personnel have worked diligently during the last few years developing a rapport with parents and counseling parents regarding the benefit of educating students in district. Unfortunately, many parents remember the lack of support in years past and are unwilling to return their children to district. To date, child study team members have engaged in discussions with parents who are interested in a return to district schools. Most of these students are in grades PK-5 with a few students of middle school and high school age.

Table 2 lists 17 students in grade 12. Districts are required to educate students with special needs until they graduate or through their 21st birthday. Only six students listed in grade 12 will graduate in June.

Table 2: Out of District Placements

Program Type	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Auditorially Impaired	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	5
Autistic	5	0	3	1	3	3	1	0	4	3	3	0	1	1	28
Behaviorally Disabled	0	0	0	1	4	2	2	9	5	7	9	6	7	3	55
Cognitively Impaired Mild	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	1	8	16
Cognitively Impaired Moderate	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	8
Cognitively Impaired Severe	0	0	0	5	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	4	14
Emotionally Disturbed	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
Language/Learning Disabled	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	3	4	2	0	0	0	13
Multiple Disabilities	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	5
Preschool Disabilities	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6

² Livingston Services continues to provide occupational and physical therapies in a cost efficient manner.

³ Deb Kiraly, Ph.D. provides both general educators and special educators with behavioral strategies to reduce behavioral outbursts and increase student on task behavior. Additionally, she provides social skills lessons in self-contained programs and conducts functional behavioral analyses. Dr. Kiraly is in district 3 days per week.

⁴ BCBAs are required to assist in the program development for students on the autism spectrum. A BCBA is in district 2 days per week to assist with the A.P.P.L.E. and Aspire programs.

⁵ Blindness services are provided via the NJ Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired and range in price from \$1000 for consultation to \$11,000 for direct instruction. Fees include the provision of materials and equipment.

TOTAL	13	0	5	11	12	6	7	12	14	17	17	8	14	17	153
-------	----	---	---	----	----	---	---	----	----	----	----	---	----	----	-----

The anticipated return of 19 students to district schools will reduce tuition costs \$968,359 and transportation costs \$285,722. One additional self-contained program is required for five students returning to district since the remaining 14 students will enter existing programs. This self-contained program will also enroll students in district who are aging out of preschool programs or who require a self-contained program. The expenditure for one elementary self-contained program will total approximately \$215,000 for one teacher and three paraprofessionals along with materials and equipment. Two students returning to district may require personal paraprofessionals totaling \$76,800. It is recommended that Tuscan Elementary School house the self-contained program to supplement the Aspire program.

Total savings – Return to District: \$962,281

Provision of Related Services

The demand for counseling services and behavioral intervention services has increased dramatically over the last few years. As with any related service, counseling and behavioral intervention services must be provided when the child's disability requires such assistance. Due to the lack of sufficient social/emotional interventions, especially at the middle school level, many students with special needs receive counseling and behavioral intervention services due to conditions that are not related to their disabilities. The department currently employs 1.4 FTE social workers at the elementary level, 0.8 FTE social worker at the middle school level, and 1.0 FTE social worker at the high school who provide both individual and group counseling sessions to students as indicated in each child's IEP. Additionally, the district contracts with MUJC three days per week for behavioral intervention support/social skills training.

A full-time social worker is recommended at each middle school to provide counseling, behavioral intervention strategies, teacher training, and crisis intervention. This will allow the district to discontinue the contract with MUJC and will allow for crisis prevention/intervention strategies to be employed; behavioral interventions developed for general education students (avoiding the need to refer to the department); staff development; and student assistance.

The department currently employs a 0.8 FTE social worker to complete the counseling sessions for students in both middle schools. Since she also oversees the social work intern program her schedule does not allow time for crisis intervention, behavioral support, or staff training and support. The additional of one social worker at the middle school level results in an expenditure of \$79,800 and the discontinuation of the contract with MUJC results in a savings of \$88,000.

Total savings – Related Services: \$8,200

Referrals

The Department continues to receive referrals from parents, Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) Teams and Special Child Health Services (SCHS)⁶. Refer to Tables 3 and 4 for an analysis of referrals received July 1, 2005 through December 6, 2005.

⁶ SCHS is an agency funded by the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services. SCHS provides services to students aged Birth – 3 years and refers students to the district of residence 120 days in advance of each child's third birthday. These children typically qualify for special education and related services.

Table 3: Referrals – Organized by School

School	Transferred in with IEP	Parent Referred	SCHS Referred	I&RS Team Referred	CST Denied	Eligible	Ineligible	Pending
Clinton	2	1	0	9	0	5	0	7
Jefferson	1	7	0	8	1	1	3	11
Marshall	1	18	13	1	0	4	1	28
Seth Boyden	2	3	0	30	0	16	2	18
South Mountain	6	11	0	3	0	13	2	5
Tuscan	2	8	0	10	0	6	2	12
MMS	11	8	0	0	0	11	1	7
SOMS	3	12	0	0	0	3	2	10
CHS	13	8	0	4	0	12	2	11
TOTAL	41	46	13	65	1	81	15	109

Table 4: Referrals – Organized by Grade

Grade	CST Referrals	Speech Referrals	Transfers	Parent Referrals	I&RS Team Referrals	Total
PK	33	0	0	15	18 (SCHS)	33
K	3	1	2	1	1	4
1	13	6	3	6	10	19
2	18	0	4	6	8	18
3	18	1	1	6	12	19
4	14	1	1	7	7	15
5	14	0	3	4	7	14
6	6	0	0	6	0	6
7	15	0	8	7	0	15
8	4	1	3	2	0	5
9	12	0	9	1	2	12
10	4	0	2	1	1	4
11	2	0	0	2	0	2
12	2	0	0	2	0	2

Special education staff reductions are not recommended due to the significant increase in referrals and classified students. One additional special educator is required in each middle school and one additional learning consultant is required in the high school to accommodate the increase in student population.

Total expenditure for two special educators and one learning consultant totals \$239,400.

Total savings - Referrals: -\$239,400

Potential savings: \$731,081

School District of South Orange & Maplewood, NJ

DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL SERVICES

The South Orange and Maplewood School District offers a wide-variety of programs designed for students with special educational needs. Instruction follows the district's curriculum and is modified in accordance with each student's individualized educational plan (IEP). Paraprofessionals are provided to assist in the provision of behavioral supports and supplemental instruction. Occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech and language specialists, counselors, and assistive technology specialists provide ongoing services, therapies, and evaluations as needed to encourage and support student success and independence.

Program Descriptions**Self-Contained Programs****Preschool Learning and Communication Experience (P.L.A.C.E)**

This half-day program is designed for children aged 3-5 years with disabilities. These students demonstrate a broad range of learning, cognitive, communication, physical, sensory, and social/emotional differences that require adaptations to the early childhood education program. Adaptations are not intended to compromise learning outcomes. Instead, adaptations provide students with the opportunity to develop their strengths and compensate for their learning differences as they work toward learning outcomes for all children. The supportive learning environment is created through structured activities that provide stability and familiarity necessary for young children. Children are expected to demonstrate improved self-confidence and self-direction. They are encouraged to identify and express feelings while establishing positive interactions with other children and adults. Emphasis is put on developing appropriate social behaviors, attending and focusing skills, and participation in group routines. Class size is limited to 12 students with 2 paraprofessionals.

Autistic Preschool Program Learning Experience (A.P.P.L.E.) and Aspire

These full-day Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) programs are offered to students who are on the autism spectrum. The A.P.P.L.E. program is offered to students aged 3-5 and Aspire is offered to students in grades K-5.

These students typically have marked deficits in attention, sensory modulation, communication, socialization, and motivational skills. This program provides an intensive early educational experience with a focus on engagement in the form of sustained attention to an activity or person, reduction of challenging behaviors, expansion of a communication system, social skills and self-management development, fine and gross motor skills, and functional use of skills.

Instructional methods are adapted to meet the range of ages, abilities and learning styles of the students with autism. Methods emphasize naturally occurring reinforcers (rewards), promote high rates of successful performance, encourage communication and social skills, and encourage spontaneous generalization and use of learned skills in different settings. These methods may employ techniques offered in Applied Behavior Analysis, floor time, incidental teaching, pivotal response training, verbal behavior techniques, shared control, and direct individual or small group instruction.

The student-teacher ratio of 1:1 or 2:1 with a class size limit of 6 students with 1 special educator and 3 paraprofessionals is maintained. A Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) provides oversight in the development of individualized programs. The program emphasizes communication and language, social skills, play, imagination and creativity, engagement, academics, replacement of challenging behaviors, self-management, fine and gross motor skills, and opportunities for generalization.

Diamond

This multi-faceted program is offered to elementary and middle school aged students with multiple disabilities. Students receive specialized instruction and intensive therapies to meet their educational needs. Students in this program present with concomitant impairments that significantly impact their ability to learn. Lessons follow the district's curriculum and are modified to meet the academic and social needs of students.

Language Enrichment Acquisition Program (L.E.A.P.)

This K-2 program is designed for students who demonstrate significant delays in expressive and/or receptive language and academic skills that are not related to cognitive impairments. These students require a small group setting with instruction in a language enriched environment and tailored to individual learning styles. Specific language development skills are an integral component of the program. Speech and language specialists provide both consultative and direct services. Class size is limited to 12 students with two paraprofessionals.

Emotionally Disturbed

This program is currently in place at Columbia High School and is designed for clinically diagnosed students with average to superior cognitive abilities who have not been successful in the general education classroom. A special educator provides instruction in the core academic subjects with counseling provided by a social worker. Class size is limited to nine students without a paraprofessional and 12 students with a paraprofessional.

Behaviorally Disabled

This program is currently in place at Columbia High School and is designed for students with pronounced cognitive and behavioral disabilities who have not been successful in the general education classroom. A special educator provides instruction in the core academic subjects. Counseling will be provided by a district social worker. Class size is limited to nine students without a paraprofessional and 12 students with one paraprofessional.

Integrated Kindergarten

This full-day Kindergarten program offers students with special needs the opportunity to participate in the half-day general education kindergarten program along with a half-day self-contained setting in which they receive specialized instruction and therapies. Students enrolled in this program display functional receptive and expressive communication skills, are mostly independent in self help skills, exhibit basic school readiness skills. They also demonstrate a functional level of behavioral self controls and social skills conducive to developing social relationships with peers. Class size is limited to 8 students with 1 general education teacher, 1 special education teacher, and 1 paraprofessional integrated into the general education kindergarten program.

Resource Programs**In-Class Support (ICS)**

This program is provided throughout the district to students who require modifications to the presentation of curriculum in the general education classroom. Students are expected to meet the curriculum requirements for the grade and/or subject being taught. A special educator and general educator collaborate to develop lessons that include modifications to the presentation of the curriculum and instructional strategies in accordance with each student's individualized education plan. Students who require in-class support cannot exceed 6 per classroom in grades K-5 and 9 per classroom in grades 6-12.

Pull-Out Replacement

This program is provided throughout the district to students who are unable to meet the requirements of the general education curriculum. A special educator provides instruction in a specific content area that parallels the district's curriculum, but the content is modified and presented in accordance with each student's individualized education plan. Students who receive replacement instruction in the special education classroom will not exceed 6 in grades K-5 and 9 in grades 6-12. Total student enrollment will increase to 9 in grades K-5 and 12 in grades 6-12 when a paraprofessional is provided.

Pull-Out Support

This program is provided throughout the district to students who receive instruction in the general education classroom, but require additional academic support provided by a special educator. Supports include pre-teaching, re-teaching and reinforcement of content. Class size is limited to 6 without a paraprofessional and 9 with a paraprofessional.

CHS Study Skills

This pull-out support resource program, which has its own curriculum, is provided at Columbia High School for students who are taking courses in the general education classroom and require support (emotional and/or academic) in order to meet curricular requirements. Supports include general education curricular reinforcement, help with assignments in the general education classroom, and direct instruction from the curriculum specifically developed for this course. Class size is limited to 9 students, 12 when a paraprofessional is present.

Extended School Year

Extended School Year (ESY) programs provide for the extension of special education and related services beyond the regular school year. An ESY program is provided in accordance with each student's IEP when an interruption in educational programming causes the student's performance to revert to a lower level of functioning and recoupment cannot be expected in a reasonable length of time. The IEP team makes a yearly individual determination regarding the need for an ESY program.

ME/PPH/sas