

# Student Services

## FY25 Update



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December 2, 2024

# Student Services Department Update

1. Inclusion Statement
2. Key Questions: Responsibilities, Services and Resources
3. Key Questions: Special Education Trends
4. Student Needs
5. Curriculum and Specialized Program Updates
6. New Mandates and Professional Learning Priorities
7. Department Pressures
8. Extended School Year
9. Additional Information
10. SEPAC Survey
11. Questions



# ***ALL Means All***

*... for EACH and EVERY student.*



# All means all.

Sudbury Public Schools is committed to being an inclusive environment where all students are full members of our school community. We hold to the belief that all individuals should be respected, valued, and included by peers, teachers, parents, and the community at large. We are an inclusive environment where all students feel safe and thrive socially, emotionally, physically and academically.

*~SPS Inclusion Statement*



# Inclusion in Sudbury



- Inclusion is expected.
- All students are general education students.
- Engage in discussions.
- Our language matters.
- Everyone has responsibility.
- Relationships are most important!

# The Purpose of Special Education:



*To minimize the impact of disability and to maximize the opportunities, achievement and independence of each student in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).*

# Key Questions

1. What are the responsibilities of the Student Services Department?
2. What services and resources are supported by the Student Services Department?
3. What are the noticeable trends and updates in the Student Services Department?

Key Question: 1

# The Three Big “Responsibility Buckets” of the Student Services Department

- 1) Supporting Students, Families and Staff
- 2) Providing Professional Resources and Structures
- 3) Upholding Legal Mandates





# 1) Supporting Students, Families and Staff

- Ensuring student learning outcomes
- Communicating with families
- Connecting families with staff expertise and district resources

## 2) Identify Professional Resources and Department Structures

- Plan professional development opportunities to maintain research-based instructional practices
- Oversee resource allocation
- Develop specialized programs: long and short-term program planning to ensure structural supports

### 3) Uphold Legal Mandates

- Adhere to legal procedures and timelines
- Provide a continuum of services
- Follow Child Find regulations
- Tiered Focused Monitoring with the State
- Ensure implementation of 504 Accommodation and Individualized Educational Plans

Key Question: 2

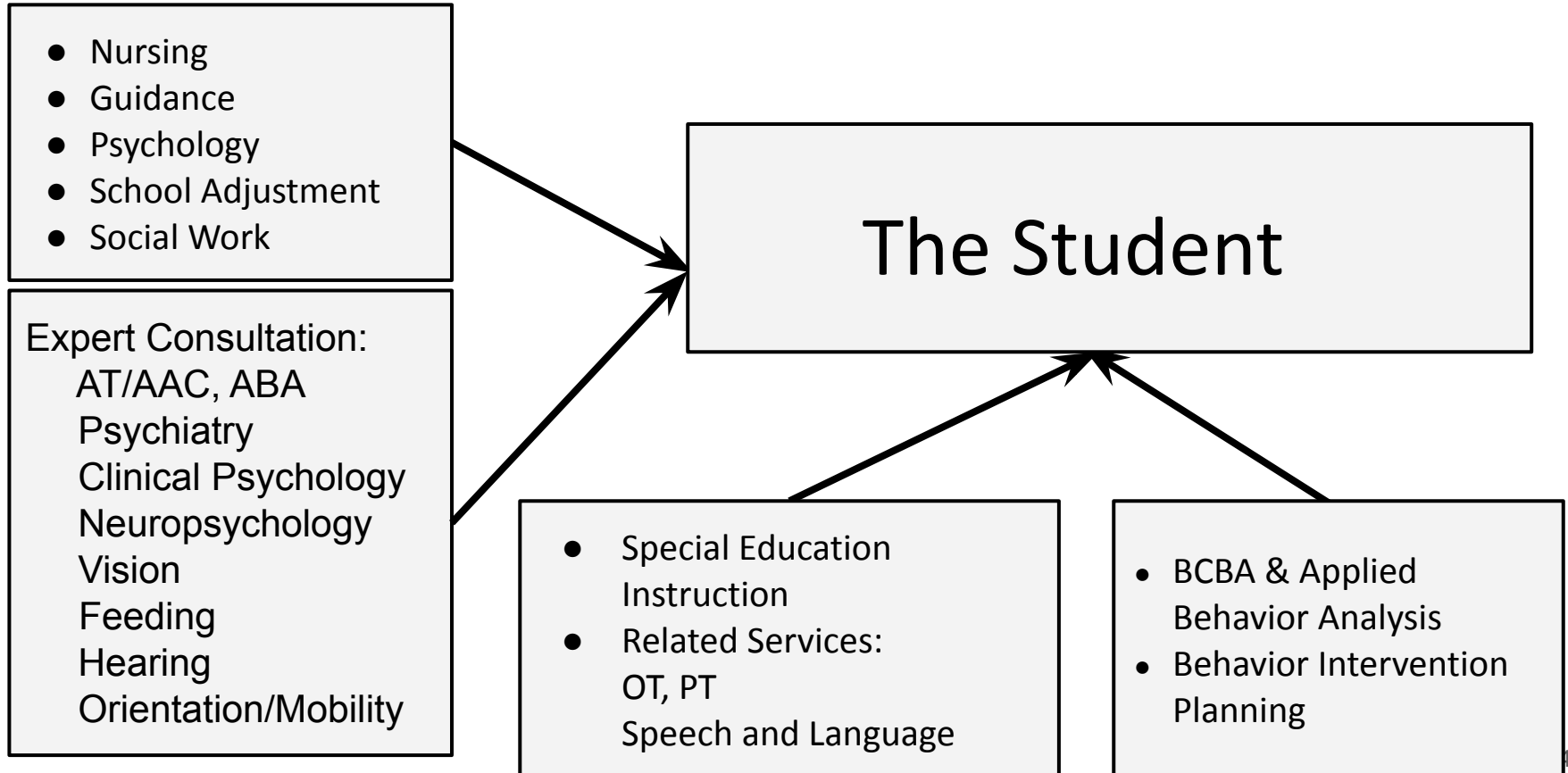
What services and resources are supported by the Student Services Department?

# Student Services and Resources

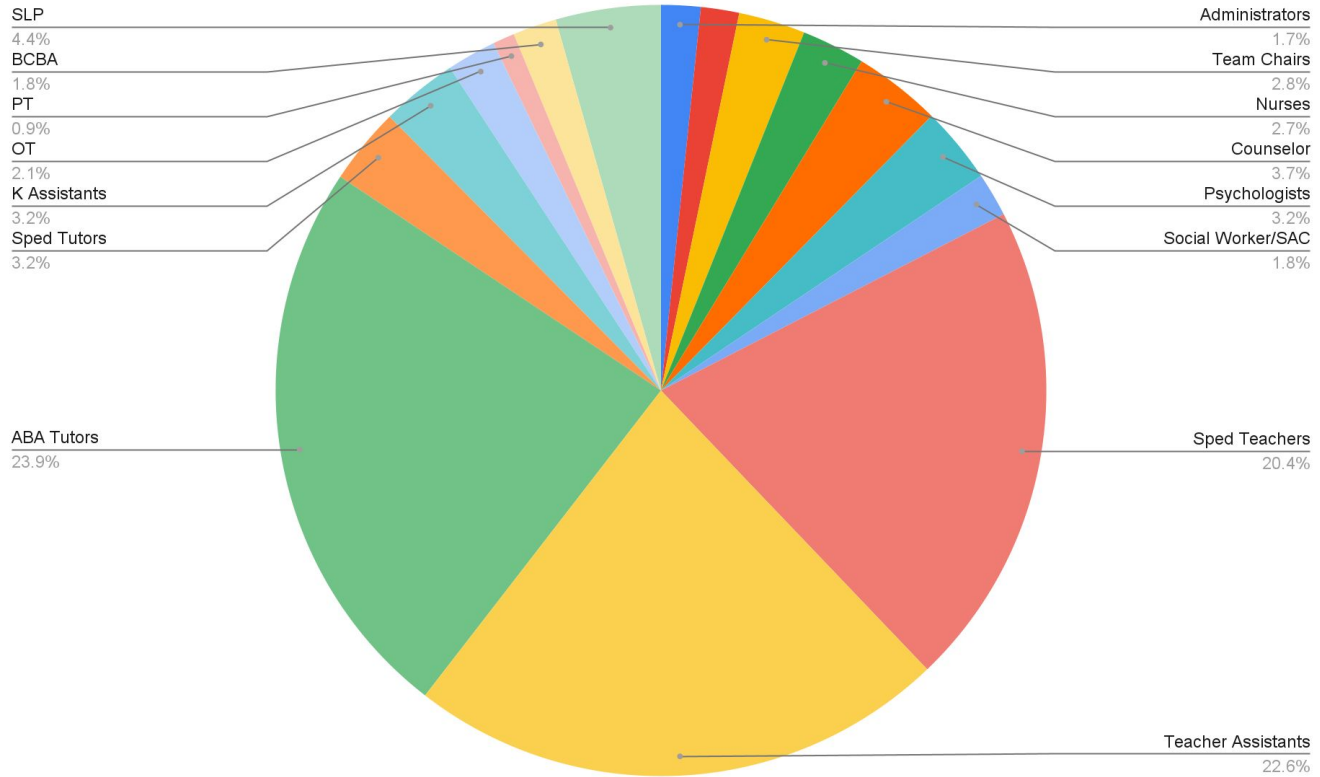
- Personnel with specialized training
- A continuum of intensity of service delivery
- An array of diverse services

*\*These services impact ALL students.*

# District Services



# Student Services Staffing FY25



217.7 FTE

# FY25

## SPS Student Services Department

*A Continuum of Service Delivery*

- Nursing
- Guidance
- BCBA
- 504 Teams
- Student Records
- Support Staff
- Registration

Universal Design  
DCAP: District  
Curriculum  
Accommodation  
Plan

- Special Education  
Teachers
- Psychologists
- Related Services
- OT, PT, SLP, BCBA
- Support Staff

- ABA
- Wrap Around  
Therapies
- Consultants

All Students

Students on IEPs

Students in Specialized  
Programs

Students  
in Out of District Placements



Key Question: 3

What are the noticeable trends  
and updates in the  
Student Services Department?

# Enrollment & Special Education Data Trends



# Section 504 Accommodation Plan Demographics

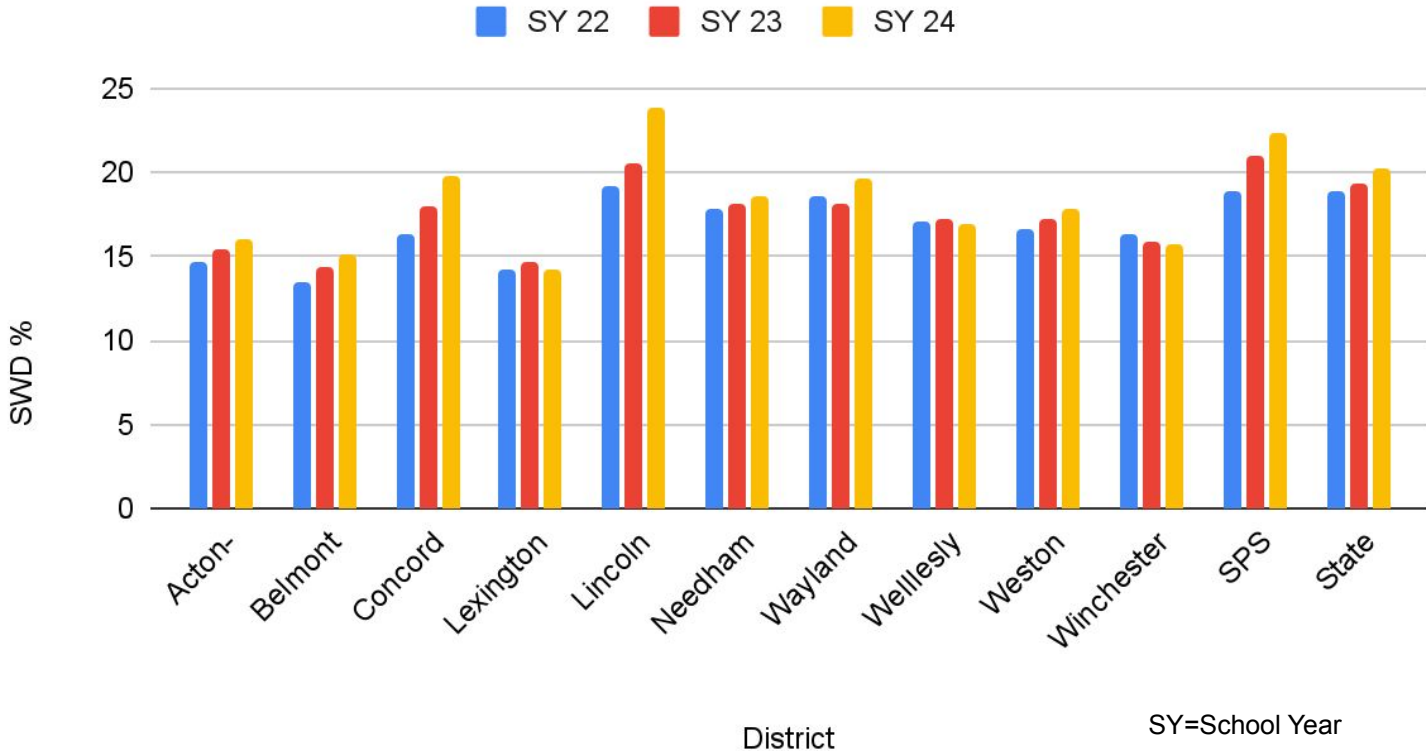
	October 1, 2020	October 1, 2021	October 1, 2022	October 1, 2023	October 1, 2024
504s	93	95	94	106	136
Enrollment	2,521	2,517	2,535	2,539	2,529
Prevalence	3.7%	3.8%	3.7%	4.1%	5.4%

# Special Education: Individualized Education Program (IEP) Demographics

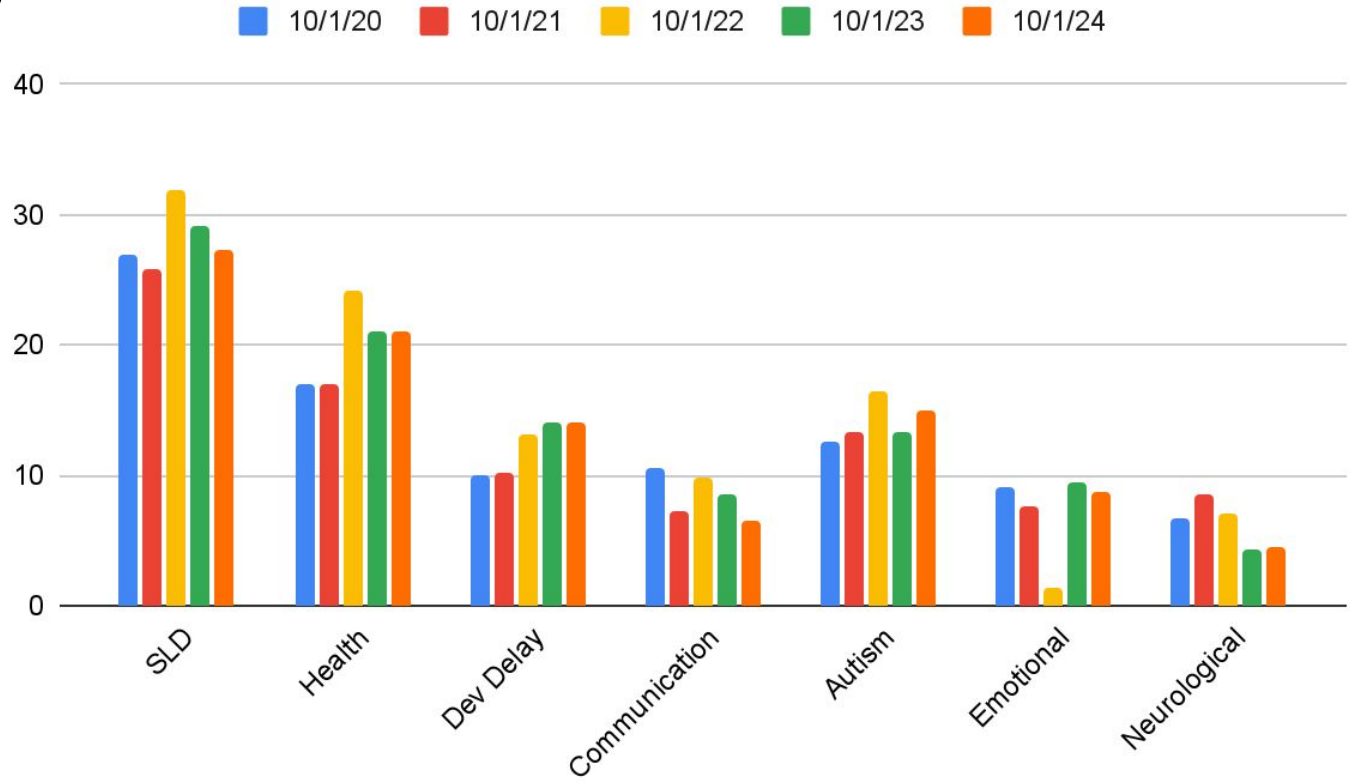
	2020-2021 Oct/June	2021-2022 Oct/June	2022-2023 Oct/June	2023-2024 Oct/June	2024 Oct
IEPs	451 / 525	476 / 577	542 / 587	555 / 588	531
Enrollment	2,521 / 2,542	2,517 / 2,550	2,535 / 2572	2539 / 2552	2529
Prevalence %	17.9 / 20.7	18.9 / 22.6	21.4 / 22.8	21.9 / 23.0	21.0

*School Year (SY) 2024 State average is 20.2% (increase of .8% SY23)*

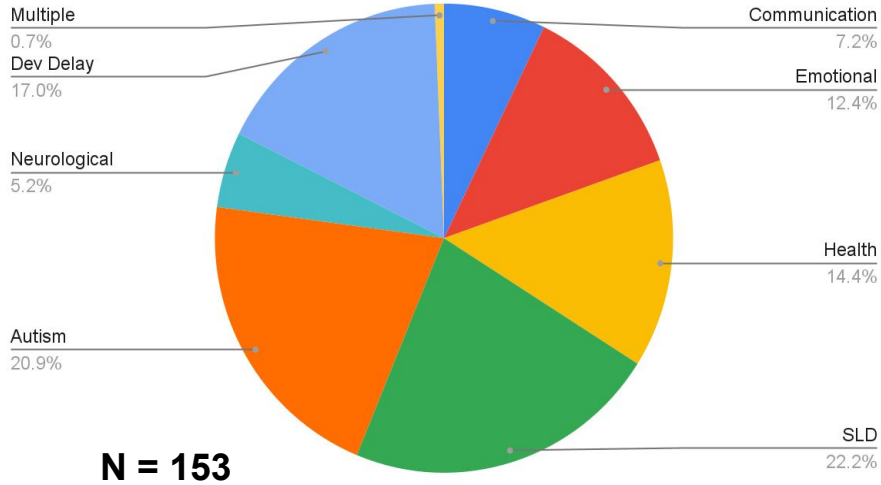
# Students with Disabilities (SWD): Prevalence



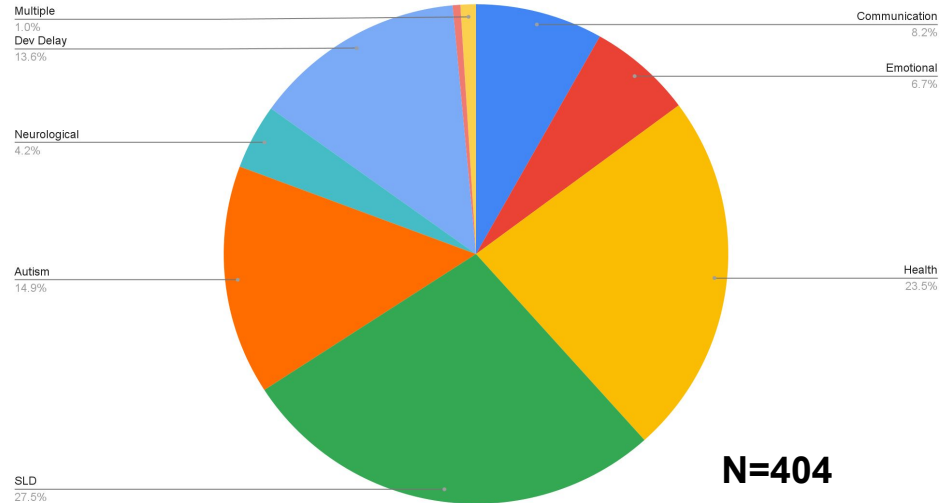
# Percent of Students by Primary Disability Category



## Primary Disability for Non-White Students



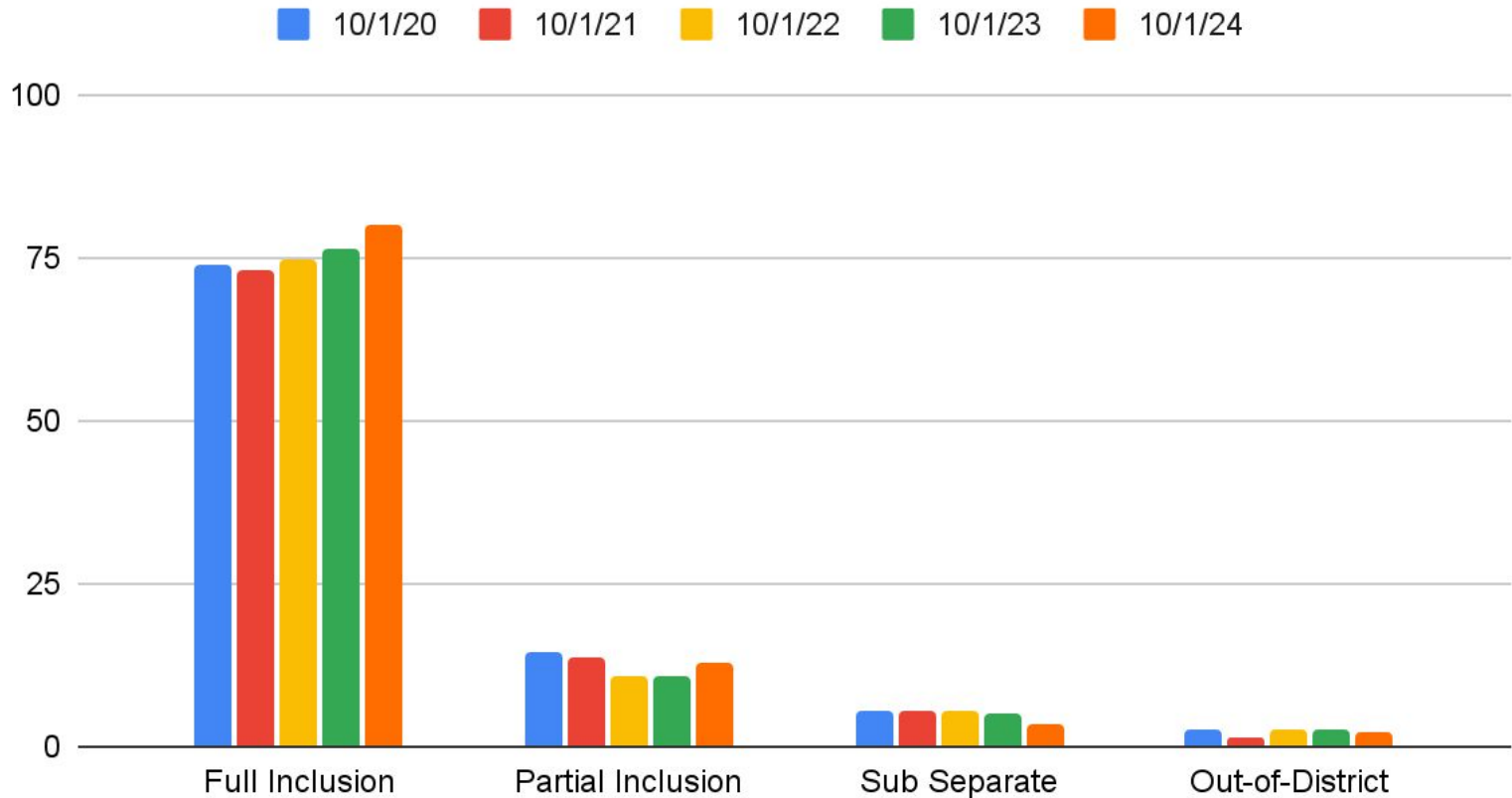
## Primary Disability for White Students



# FY25 Comparison of Student Disability Category by Race

*\*Note: This total N is taken from 11/5/24 ASPEN data.  
Pink: Physical Disability*

# % of Students by Placement





# Student Needs: Mental Health Trends & Support



# Mental Health Resources

- Coordinated effort of district, elementary and middle clinical teams
  - *Collaboration and professional development*
- Tiered Social Emotional Learning (SEL) supports for students: Tier 1,2,3
  - *Universal screening tools and specialized counseling services*
- Ongoing professional development
- Increased allocation of support: Clinical Team Members/ BCBA
- Two-way support for families: family to school/school to family
- Family resources: [Social Emotional Resource Website](#)
- Town social workers: <https://sudbury.ma.us/socialworker/>
- William James College Interface Referral System (see resource slides)

# Mental Health & Social Emotional Behavioral Needs Remain a Primary Concern



# Clinical Team

Clinical Team members continue to focus their efforts on Tier 2 and 3 services. Many have reported:

- intensive, dysregulated behavior and crisis work
- anxiety, depression, stress symptoms (students/families/staff)
- signs of students struggling with school avoidance
- parental requests for support/workshops/training
- increased outside evaluations, number of student check-ins, & risk assessments
- efforts to connect families with community resources

***\*Teams are starting to provide more Tier 1 and Tier 2 services.***

# Clinical Team Observations

- *“I am seeing less extreme externalizing behaviors, but an increase in internalizing behaviors (anxiety, avoidance, masking)...”*
- *“...parents feeling students are masking at school and exploding at home.”*
- *“Increase in outside evaluations.”*
- *“Increase in initial referrals. Also, increase in re-evaluations being moved up due to various concerns.”*
- *“A lot of families struggling with parenting and behavior.”*
- *“Most frequent needs are around anxiety, self-regulation, social skills, and school refusal.”*

# Addressing Anxiety and School Avoidance

- Clinical Staff Training
  - a) Expert Consultation: Dr. Alex Hirshberg on school refusal
  - b) Clinical Team Job-Alikes
- SEL website for SPS educators on school avoidance
- Family website to support development of coping strategies for school refusal
- Faculty meetings to support the strategy development of all educators

# District Psychological Testing & Mental Health Caseload Trends

	<b>Evaluations</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>	<b>Tier 3</b>
<b>2020-2021</b>	465	60	103
<b>2021-2022</b>	407	162	200
<b>2022-2023</b>	315	252	275
<b>2023-2024</b>	277	247	221
<b>Fall 2024 (4 months)</b>	79	124	247

\*Psychological testing numbers include reevaluations for academic and mental health referrals.

\*Tier 2 cases numbers are variable as services rotate over 6-8 week periods.

\*Caseloads do not capture variation in weight/intensity.

# Increase in Mental Health/Behavioral Support Staff

School Year	Mental Health/Behavioral Support Staff
<b>2019-2020</b>	2.0 Adjustment Counselors
<b>2020-2021</b>	0.5 BCBA
<b>2021-2022</b>	1.0 Adjustment Counselor
<b>2022-2023</b>	0.5 Psychologist 1.3 Adjustment Counselor 0.2 OT Therapist (Self-Regulation Support) 0.6 BCBA
<b>2023-2024</b>	1.0 Psychologist/Counselor 1.0 BCBA
<b>2024-2025</b>	.2 Psychologist

*\*This does not include the increase in Special Education Teachers & Support Staff who support the mental health and wellness of students.*



# Mental Health Resources for Families

- Interface Referral Services through William James College 888-244-6843
- 988 - Suicide and Crisis Hotline, available 24 hrs
- The Department of Mental Health: [Behavioral Health Help Line](#) that people can call or text at **833-773-2445**. It is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week in more than 200 languages.
- Sudbury Social Workers: Nina Lurie and Kirstin Wilcox
  - Website: <https://sudbury.ma.us/socialworker/>
  - Contact: [socialworker@sudbury.ma.us](mailto:socialworker@sudbury.ma.us) or (978) 440 - 5476
- [Social Emotional Resources Website for Families](#)
- Clinical Team Members at every building to support students and families with mental health needs.

**Questions? Please email: [student\\_services@sudbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:student_services@sudbury.k12.ma.us)**

# Highly Specialized Programs

## Haynes

Partner  
Steps

Learning Centers - Skills  
in ALL Schools

## Loring

LAB  
Bridges

## Nixon

Access  
Preschool



## ECMS

LAB  
Leap  
Flex  
Access  
Partner  
Bridges

## Noyes

Foundations  
LAB  
Preschool

# Brief Program Overview

## **Learning Center/Resource Rooms/Skills Classes**

Serves students grades K-8 of all disabilities, in a wrap around services delivery model that includes in class and/or pull out support for students. Students are taught academic skills for content as well as organization and executive functioning.

## **Language Achievement and Beyond (LAB) Program**

Serves students grades 3-8 with language based learning disabilities. Provides specialized instruction with a systematic and multisensory methodology in either a co-taught or substantially separate structure with both individual and small group instruction.

## **Steps/Leap Program**

Serves students with academic, intellectual, and/or communication disabilities with both sub-separate and small group learning in general education content area classes.

## **Foundations/Flex Program**

Provides highly-specialized instruction and services to students primarily with autism, communication, self-regulation and social/pragmatic language needs in either an integrated or substantially separate structure.

**Out of District:** A variety of specialized programs to meet individual needs of students.

## **Partner Program**

Serves students (K-8) primarily with Autism Spectrum Disorders as well as other students who require intensive Applied Behavior Analysis programming. A highly structured and individualized program supported by BCBA's from the New England Center for Children (NECC).

## **Access Program**

Serves students primarily with social emotional disabilities in grades K-8. The psychologists/school adjustment counselors provide ongoing therapeutic support and social skill instruction. BCBA's work in consult with all staff.

## **Bridges**

A transitional and/or special education therapeutic program which serves students in both general and special education. Students are supported after a long-term absence, anxiety or social emotional needs while under evaluation.

## **Sudbury Preschool Program**

Integrated classrooms for students with diverse needs supported by general/special education teachers and related services, such as speech, physical, and occupational therapy.

# Curriculum and Specialized Program Updates





# Pilot: Disability Awareness Curriculum

## Learning About Disabilities

### Objectives:

- Students will develop a foundational understanding of various disabilities, encouraging respectful interactions and supportive attitudes toward individuals of all abilities.
- Students will learn how to create a more inclusive environment by identifying and practicing ways to make their actions, language, and spaces more accessible and inviting for everyone.

# Disability Awareness Curriculum

<b>3rd Grade</b>	What is a Physical Disability?	How the Brain Works: Dyslexia	Speech & Language: Stuttering
<b>4th Grade</b>	How the Eyes Work: Visual Impairments	How the Ears Work: Hearing Impairments	Autism
<b>5th Grade</b>	How the Brain Works: Anxiety	How the Brain Works: Cognitive Differences	Down Syndrome

*\*Here are the lesson topics. There is ongoing assessment and refinement for this pilot curriculum.*

# Library Component

## Collection of 8 Titles

- What is a Disability?
- Disability Etiquette
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Disability Pride
- How to be a Disability Advocate & Ally
- Disability and the Media
- Disabilities and Relationships
- Service Dogs





# Early Childhood: A Solid Foundation in SPS Preschool





# General John Nixon



# Peter Noyes

# One Unified Program - Two Locations

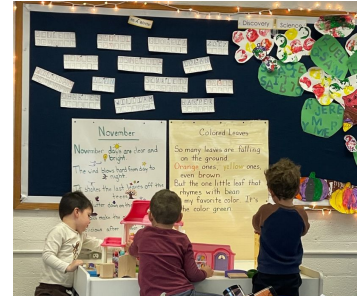
- Seamless transition to two locations!
- Same curriculum and thematic units
- Nixon community has been supportive and inclusive
- Parents are positive about both locations
- High enrollment interest in both locations

## Challenges:

- To accommodate all parent requests for location choice
- To accommodate all parent requests for hours
- To fulfill the proposed expansion with no half day programming.



# Early Childhood: A Solid Foundation

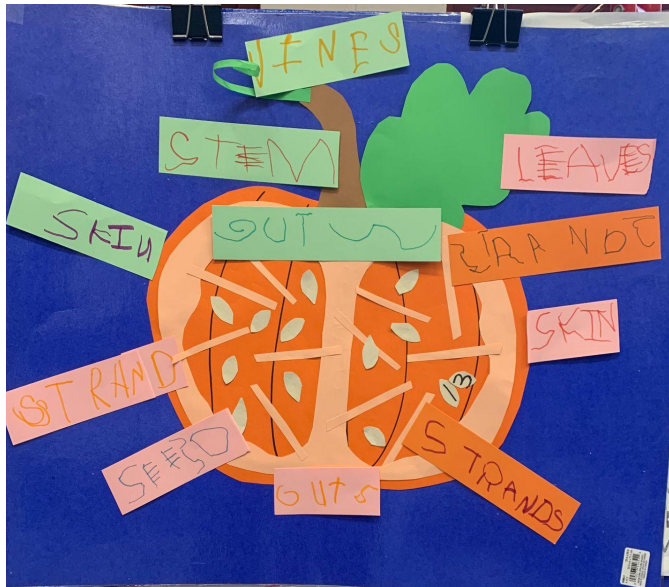


## A Strengthened Curriculum

- PD with Global Early Education
- Curriculum Framework Crosswalks
- Integrated Preschool Curriculum

## Stronger Communication

- SeeSaw Communication platform for Parents/Guardians
- Monthly Newsletter
- Consistent Communication with Staff



# Early Childhood: Historical Enrollment

Year	FY23 BOY/EOY	FY24 BOY/EOY	FY25 Oct 1
<b>Itinerant</b>	14/16	5/5	1/5
<b>IEP</b>	17/35	37/43	20/33
<b>Tuition</b>	41/44	35/45	44
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	58/79	72/88	74
<b>% SPED</b>	29%/44%	51%/49%	43%

# Early Childhood: Special Education



Preschool	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
# Early Intervention Referrals	21	25	30	12 (as of 10/1)
Community Screening Referrals	37	33	28	15 (as of 10/1)
Total Preschool Evaluations	56	58	50	24 (as of 10/1) (20 known upcoming)

# Early Childhood: Parent Feedback Survey

## What are the strengths of the SPS Preschool Program?

- *“Wonderful teachers, faculty and resources”*
- *“Everything has been great this year, from the provided lunches to the teacher communication, drop-off system and everything in between. Our son is very happy there.”*
- *“Good academic topics”*
- *“The educators and staff are all incredible.”*
- *“The staff is amazing! Especially the special education teams who are great about regular progress meetings.”*

## What challenges do we need to consider addressing?

- *“We're only about 2 months in so don't see any challenges yet! Keep up the good work!”*
- *“Can't think of any”*
- *“None, we love the program”*
- *“The half day hours are really tough for working families”*



# Early Childhood: Parent Feedback Survey

This year, our preschool program has had a change of location and is now between two schools: Nixon and Noyes.

**How has this impacted your family?**



- *“Great to go to Nixon this year as we’re districted here for kindergarten.”*
- *“It’s been great, allowing our son to get familiar with the school he’ll be attending for his Elementary years - hoping his sister will be able to join him there next year for Pre-K ;)”*
- *“Was very helpful as we were able to enter the whole day program instead of half day as we had last year.”*
- *“It’s been no problem at all with drop off or pick up- we have one kid at Noyes (PK) and one at Nixon (K).”*
- *“Glad the program is able to grow because it seems like it is in high demand!”*

# Highly Specialized Program Updates and Adjustments

## Language-Based (LAB) Program Expansion (Elementary):

- Increased a grade level at Noyes

## Middle School:

- Specialized curriculum consultation
- Hybridizing of programming
  - Community Outings with curricular focus
  - After School Activity Participation
  - Inclusive PE Program: Wellness Team
  - Unified Games





# Unified PE

Unified PE is designed to ensure that **all students**, regardless of their abilities or needs, have the **opportunity to participate** in physical education activities.



## Peer Partner Roles

- Provide positive feedback and encouragement
- Model prosocial behaviors
- Build healthy relationships and have fun with their peers
- Be a partner for skills or a teammate during a game
- Demonstrate movement skills
- Help peers transition from one activity to the other

# Feedback From Peer Partners

*"I gained a lot of patience, and empathy for people who are different than me in many other ways."*

*"I have learned a lot about working together and being supportive of peers. The program was very fun and I really enjoyed the experience!"*

*"I have gained a good bond with both of the students I worked with"*

*"It helped me build relationships with new people and understand how different people can learn and improve in their own ways."*

*"I have gained skills, such as empathy and leadership, from this program."*

# Unified Games

- Successful pilot program last year
- 25 students participated
- Fee-based this spring to support the sustainability of program
- Community building throughout the school and town



# New Mandates and Professional Learning



# IEP Improvement Project



Statewide Implementation of the  
New IEP Document in the Fall of 2024

# The New IEP Timeline

<b>Fall 2023</b>	<b>Winter 2024</b>	<b>Spring 2024</b>	<b>Summer 2024</b>	<b>Fall 2024</b>
LSRHS & LPS  Team Chair training  Aspen released new IEP in November	ILAP & trainings  District trainings with LSRHS & LPS	ILAP & trainings  Administrators & general education teachers  Family communication	Ongoing professional development	<b>We are Here!</b>  New IEP rollout  Family forum  Ongoing training

# The New IEP Document

## **New Features / New Areas of Focus:**

- Focus on student strengths, interest areas and preferences
- Enhanced student vision section
- Clearer focus on student present status: academics, behavior/social/emotional and communication
- Accommodations/modifications: in classroom but also extracurricular, community and workplace
- Sections dedicated to: English learners, assistive technology, augmentative and alternative communication, autism, bullying, deaf/hard of hearing
- Data: measurable goals, clear baselines for goals/objectives

# Staff Feedback on the New IEP:

- *“The new IEP is a more transparent and streamlined document that highlights the strengths of the student and clearly describes the impact of their disability in and outside of the classroom.”*
- *“I find myself incorporating more student input in terms of interests, activities, and their school experience and vision for the future.”*
- *“It provides a more thorough view of the whole child and does emphasize a strength based approach. It also provides clarity around the school year and extended school year services. Restructuring goals has helped to refine emphasis on key concepts.”*
- *“ I would say it's more student centered, strengths based, and incorporates student feedback.”*
- *“The training SPS staff received last year to prepare for the New IEP really helped us to feel prepared and comfortable with the new forms.”*



# Next Steps for “The New IEP”

It will not be **NEW** for much longer!

- Ongoing refinement
- Workshops
- Surveys from stakeholders
- January 29: professional development day with Team Chair leadership

# FY25 Student Services Professional Development

- New IEP Training
  - De-escalation training/strategies for all staff
  - Safety-Care/CALM Training
  - Say Something: Clinical Team
  - IEP Goal Writing Training
  - Dyslexia Screening Training
  - Keys to Literacy: Writing
  - Mental Health/Trauma & Medical Consultation
  - Seeing Stars Literacy Training
  - Visualizing Verbalizing Literacy Training
  - Just Words, Wilson Reading System, Orton-Gillingham
  - Medicaid Reimbursement and Billing
  - Inclusive Practices and Neurodiversity with Elise Wulff from MGH
  - School Avoidance with Dr. Hirshberg
  - Autism- MGH Medical Team
  - Nurse specific Training
  - Related Service Specific Training
- Upcoming:
- Dr. Melissa Orkin: Targeted Literacy Strategies: January
  - Culturally Responsive IEP Meeting Training: TBD

# FY25 504 Process and Manual

- Working Group over two years
- Developed a 504 manual
- Developed unified District forms
- Codified District procedures and Aspen Tracking
- Updated District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP)

# Department Pressures



# Staffing Challenges

- Across the state the trend to hire qualified staff continues to be a challenge due to a competitive and limited labor market.
- SPS staffs according to student needs. Meeting those needs in a consistent manner is challenging when positions are unfilled, taking a toll on staff and sometimes requiring contracted services.
- SPS experienced some hiring success by expanding our Human Resource outreach. Also helpful are the alternative licensure pathways which DESE has created in order attract qualified staff from outside the education world.

# Specialized Transportation Challenges

- Providing necessary specialized transportation for many of our special education students has continued to be difficult due to a continued driver shortage. SPS is experiencing this challenge along with our neighboring communities.
- We have expanded our contracts to new companies in an effort to address this concern though we are still unable to fulfill the demand.
- When additional companies are used to fulfill this transportation mandate, there is significant impact on the budget.

# Department Challenges

- New Curriculum: impacts special education teams, interventions and accommodations with new learning and structure
- Unexpected student needs
- Anxiety around outside evaluations
- Timelines with new mandates

# Extended School Year (ESY)





# Extended School Year - SMILE - Explore

- Promoted inclusion opportunities
- Access to Explore programs
- Kindergarten transition program
- Ongoing program development



# Extended School Year (ESY) Determination

## ESY is:

- a team decision that is reviewed annually.
- provided to mitigate summer regression of specific skills.
- based on data demonstrating a regression in a specific skill area after previous time off from learning.
- determined in isolation from the SMILE program.

# Additional Information





# IEP Transition Information Dates

## **8th to 9th Grade IEP Transition Information Evening: (L-S, LPS, SPS)**

- January 15, 7:00-8:30 pm Virtual
- March date TBD: In person Visitation for 8th graders

## **Preschool to Kindergarten Transition Information Evening:**

- January 28, 7:00-8:30 Virtual
- Kindergarten Orientation: June 4

## **5th to 6th Grade IEP Transition Information Evening:**

- February 27: 6:00-8:00pm In Person

*\*Note: These sessions are for parents/guardians, not students.*



Thank you to the Town of Sudbury and Working Group!



The Curtis Outdoor  
Health & Wellness  
Space



May 2024



# Sudbury SEPAC Survey 2023-24



# Who is Sudbury SEPAC?



## Sudbury SEPAC Mission

The Sudbury SEPAC's mission is to advocate for the education and safety of all Sudbury students with disabilities in grades Pre-K to 8. We seek to achieve this mission by:

- Building understanding, acceptance, connection, and inclusion;
- Providing information about community and district resources;
- Creating family networking and support opportunities;
- Offering community and special education workshops and events; and
- Collaborating with the school committee and the administration to continuously improve student outcomes and well-being.

# Survey Purpose & Collaborative Process



## Purpose

- 1) Fulfill the SEPAC's regulatory responsibility, which includes but is not limited to **"advising the school committee** on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities" and **"meeting regularly with school officials** to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school committee's special education programs." *See M.G.L. c. 71B sec. 3; See also 603 CMR 28.07(4); and MA DESE Guidance for Special Education Advisory Councils (2010)(stating that Chapter 71B "assigns both an **advisory and participatory** function to the PAC" and "information gathered from a needs assessment can be used to fulfill the PAC's responsibility to 'participate in the planning, development, and evaluation' of the district's special education programs.)*
- 2) Better understand **the needs of Sudbury students** in grades Pre-K to 8 who attend an SPS school or an out-of-district or private school.
- 3) Highlight areas of **strength** and where there may be **opportunities for growth** or improvement.

## Collaborative Process

Fall 2023: Created the survey and gathered feedback from the directors of Student Services before finalizing.

January 2024: Launched survey - SEPAC Newsletter, Facebook, emails from SEPAC and Student Services, and other media. Accepted responses until January 31, 2024.

February - March 2024: Reviewed/Analyzed the results, shared a redacted summary with the directors of Student Services, and discussed themes arising from the data.

Spring/Fall 2024 - Requested opportunity to present survey results to the Sudbury School Committee, discussed trends with the Sudbury SEPAC Board, prepared slide deck, and reviewed the slide deck with directors of Student Services.

December 2, 2024: Presented slides to the Sudbury School Committee.



# Survey Focus Areas



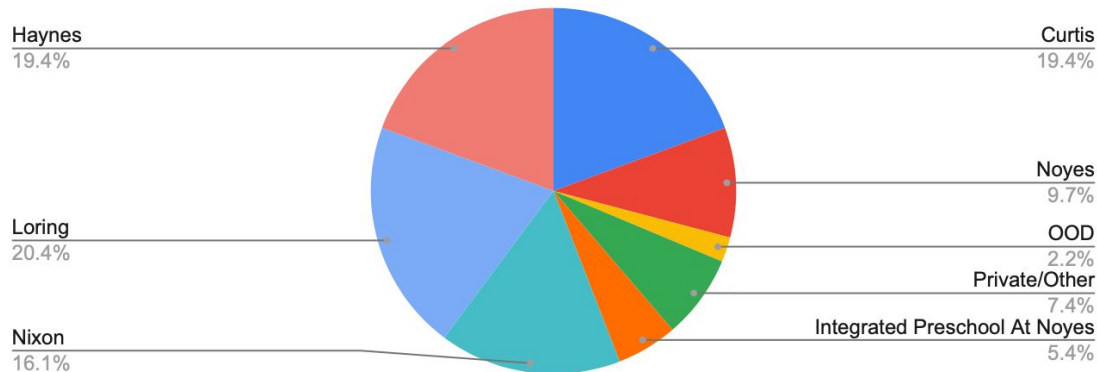
1. Evaluation/Re-evaluation Process
2. Implementation of IEP
3. Effective Progress
4. Placement/Least Restrictive Environment
5. Strengths/Opportunities for Improvement  
(comment only)
6. Programs - Satisfaction & Inclusion
7. Quality of Instruction
8. Private Tutoring - What Services & Why
9. Equal Access to School and School  
Activities



# Who Responded to the Survey ?

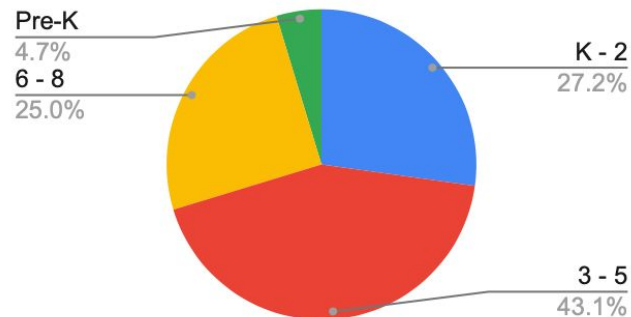
## 93 Respondents

### School



Relative number of respondents among schools; Noyes marginally less than others.

### Grade of Student



Noticeably higher number of respondents in grades 3-5.



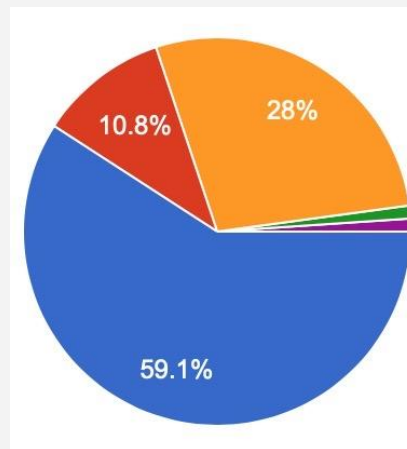
# Who Responded to the Survey? (cont.)

## IEP Eligibility Categories Covered:

- ADHD/Executive Functioning
- Autism
- Communication
- Developmental Delay
- Dyslexia
- Other Specific Learning Disorders
- Emotional
- Health
- Neurological

\* Breakdown by category available by request.

## IEP, 504 Plan, Other...



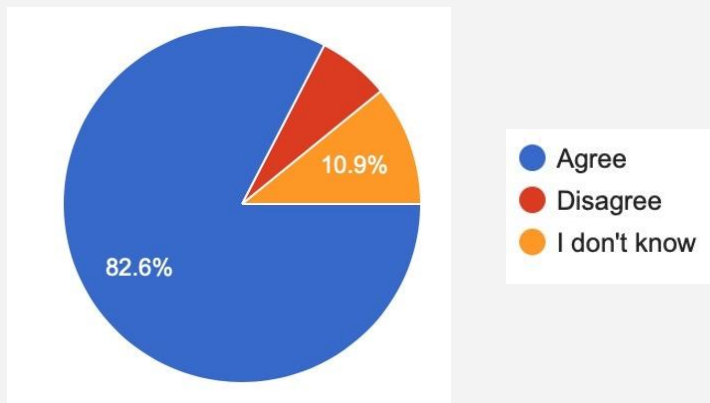
- My child has an IEP
- My child has a 504
- My child does not have an IEP or 504
- Had an IEP, just switched to 504
- Recent diagnosis; awaiting in house testing



# Strengths: 1) SPS Teachers

## Survey Question:

My child's teacher(s) are working hard and care for my child.



## Relevant Comments:

"Teachers are **kind** and **encouraging**."

"Personnel are **talented** and **emotionally available**."

"Teachers and staff genuinely care and **show attentiveness**."

"Teachers and special educators are **warm** and **caring** and give so much of themselves to their students."

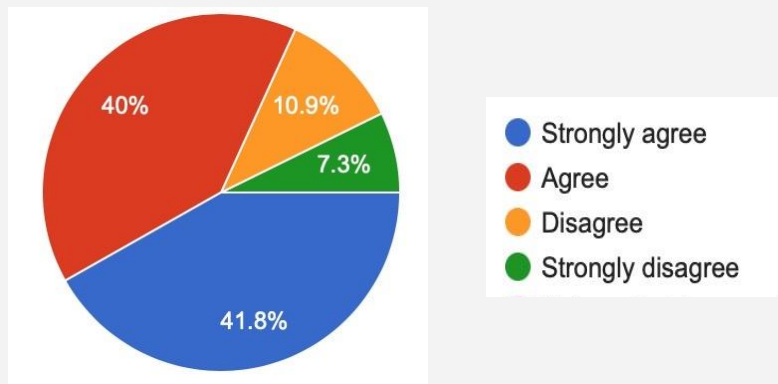
"They truly do their **absolute best** for their students."

# Strengths: 2) Responsive & Collaborative Teams



## Survey Question:

I felt included in the team discussion about my child's placement in the least restrictive environment.



**Over 80%** strongly agree or agree that they feel included in the discussion on LRE.

## Relevant Comments:

"Special educators are **responsive** to my inquiries."

"We've always felt **included** in the conversations and that our voices were **heard**."

"Overall, staff is **proactive, supportive, and communicative**."

"Special educators have worked **collaboratively** with our family."

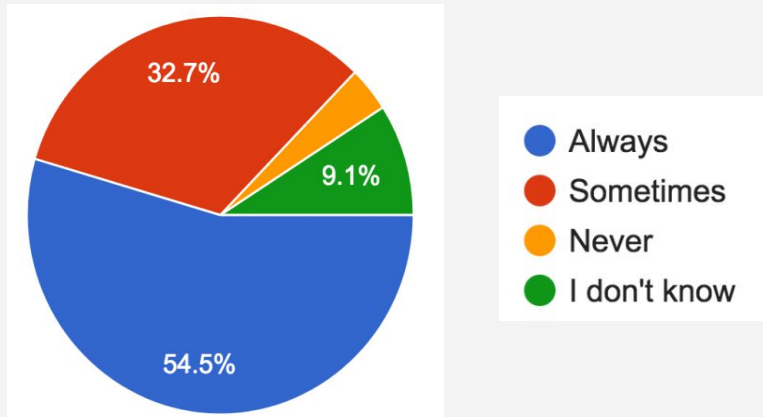
"I always felt **included** and **well-informed**."

# Strengths: 3) Strong Continuum of Services & Programs



## Survey Question:

When discussing placement, my child's team considers the range of accommodations, modifications and services, in light of my child's abilities and needs, that would facilitate my child's placement in the least restrictive environment.



## Relevant Comments:

"SPS provides a **strong continuum of services**, from learning center to highly specialized programs."

"SPS has **many specialized programs**, which keeps many students in the district who might otherwise need an OOD placement."

"I love that an **executive function skills** class is available."

"The **differentiation**, the people."

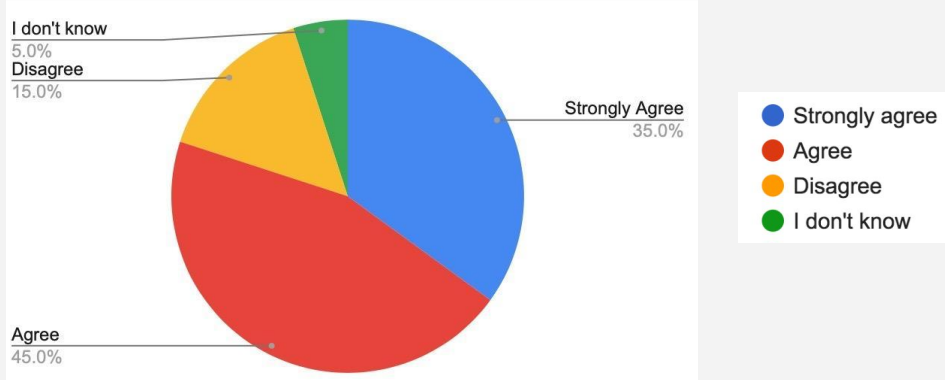
"I like the **fluid nature of the programs**."

# Opportunity for Growth: 1) Inclusion in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)



## Survey Question:

My child has meaningful opportunities for inclusion with their peers in their general education classroom.



*\*This question pertains to highly specialized programs.*

## Relevant Comments:

"I would like to see **lower class sizes.**"

"I would like to see **co-taught classrooms** where a special educator is teaching with a teacher in an inclusion classroom."

"**More time in the general education classroom.**"

"**More inclusion** classrooms so special education kids aren't being pulled out so much."

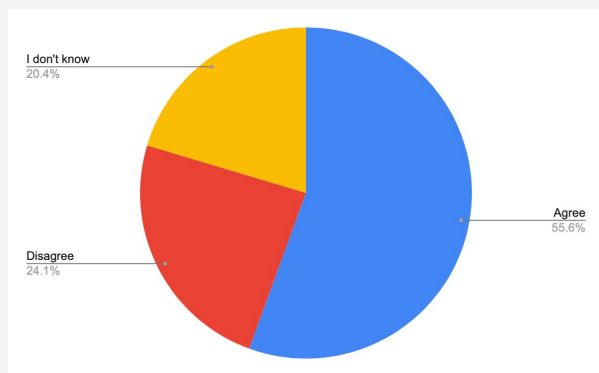
"LAB program or co-taught classroom in every school to provide **more inclusion**, and access to language based instruction."



# Opportunity for Growth: 2) Hiring/Retention

## Survey Question:

I feel confident that my child's school provides all of the services and accommodations documented in my child's IEP.



■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ I don't know ■ Not applicable

## Relevant Comments:

**"There is a concerning amount of staff turnover."**

**"Shortage of staff** and constant changes of staff have **impacted implementation** of services & accommodations."

**"Frequently aides are pulled to do other tasks leaving my child without their services."**

**"Special educators have too much on their respective plates."**

**"Not enough educators to provide the necessary support."**

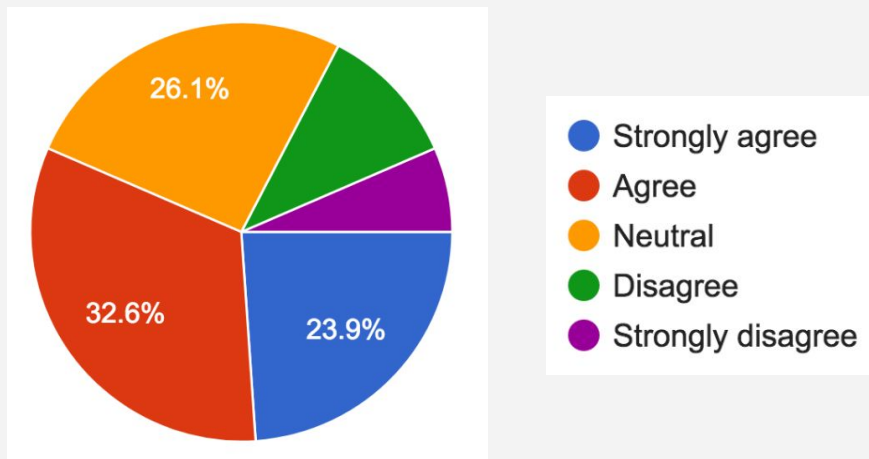




# Opportunity for Growth: 3) Training

## Survey Question:

I feel confident that my child's teachers educate all students about diversity and inclusion in the classroom.



## Relevant Comments:

"More training about **diversity and inclusion.**"

"Teaching **neurotypical kids** about **neurodiversity.**"

"More **anti-bullying** training."

"**Differentiation of instruction.**"

"**2E Students & Executive Functioning.**"

"**Social emotional** disabilities."

"**Phonemic awareness** and **pre-reading skills.**"



# Recommended Focus Areas

## Primary: Enhance Inclusion

- **Add inclusion and belonging to the SPS Equity Statement** or add a separate inclusion statement.
- Keep inclusion (in addition to equity) at the forefront of all discussions and decision making from IEP table to School Committee meetings (classroom, specials, recess, field trips and school sponsored activities).
- Consider forming a working group to explore **implementing co-taught classrooms and/or LAB programs** in each elementary school to increase inclusion and decrease class sizes and strain on specialized programs.
- Provide teachers **sufficient** and **effective planning and team consultation time** regarding differentiation of instruction, modifications to curriculum, and accommodations.

## Secondary: Explore Hiring/Retention Challenges & Continue to Enhance Training for Teachers & Students

- Explore reasons behind hiring challenges and turnover and ways to improve retention (i.e., staff surveys, exit interviews, stay interviews). **How can we better support our teachers?**
- Continue to **enhance training** on diversity and inclusion, understanding learning differences, and bullying prevention for teachers and student. See 603 CMR 28.03(a)(1-3).



# Student Services Department Web Page

If you have any questions related to special education or student services, please see the district webpage under the Student Services tab at <https://www.sudbury.k12.ma.us>, or contact us at:

[student\\_services@sudbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:student_services@sudbury.k12.ma.us)

(978) 639-3202



Questions