

Student Services

Linda S. Chase, Interim Administrator for Student Services

The Lincoln Public Schools offers a variety of services and supports to meet the needs of children with disabilities. There is a strong commitment to quality education and inclusive learning opportunities for all students. Special education and general education faculty and staff work in collaborative partnerships to effectively meet each child's needs in the least restrictive environment. Through the development and implementation of Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs) and 504 Accommodation Plans the Lincoln Public Schools makes a full range of supports, adaptations and services available to eligible students.

The Lincoln Public School District acts in accordance with state (603 CMR Section 28.00 Special Education) and federal laws (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 known as IDEA, Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973), regulations and policies. Under these laws, all eligible children with disabilities are provided with a free appropriate public education (FAPE) through the process of identification, evaluation and eligibility determination. This process may lead to the development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 Accommodation Plan.

Special Education Faculty

Special education services are delivered by highly qualified faculty who collectively possess a comprehensive repertoire of knowledge, experience and skills. The faculty includes special education teachers, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech and language pathologists, social workers, school psychologists, a Board Certified Behavioral Analyst (BCBA)/ Therapeutic Intervention Specialist (TIS) and paraprofessionals. All are appropriately licensed and trained in research-based, instructional strategies and specially designed curriculum.

The following tables provide information regarding the staffing model used in the Student Services Department. The administrative support model at the district level has remained consistent.

District-wide Administrative Support by FTE					
	October 2011	October 2012	October 2013	October 2014	October 2015
Administration					Interim
Administrator for Student Services	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.6
Administrative Support					
Administrative Assistant District-wide Administration and Preschool (Fiscal Calendar)	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0

Campus-based Administration, Faculty and Paraprofessionals by FTE								
	Oct 2012		Oct 2013		Oct 2014		Oct 2015	
	Lincoln	Hanscom	Lincoln	Hanscom	Lincoln	Hanscom	Lincoln	Hanscom
Administration								
Special Education Coordinator	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Preschool Coordinator	.2	.7	.2	.7	.2	.8	.2	.8
Administrative Support								
Secretaries	1.0	1.0*	1.0	1.0*	1.0	1.0*	1.0	1.0*
* Shared with Principals								
Faculty								
Special Education Teachers (K-8)	7.8	7.0	7.8	7.0	8.0	7.0	8.0	7.0
Preschool Teachers	1.0	6.6	1.0	6.6	1.0	6.6	1.0	5.4
Speech/Language Pathologists	1.9	2.7	1.9	2.7	1.9	2.7	1.9	2.7
Occupational/Physical Therapists	1.6	1.4	1.6	1.4	1.6	1.4	1.6	1.4
Psychologists	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.8	1.2	1.8
Social Workers	2.9	2.0	2.9	2.0	2.9	2.0	1.9	2.0
Nurse	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
BCBA/TIS								1.0
Paraprofessionals								
Special Education Tutors	4.0	13.0	4.0	17.0	6.0	17.0	6.0	17.0
Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant	0.25	0.75	0.25	0.75	0.25	0.75	0.25	0.75
Preschool Aides/SPED Assistants	0.7	7.4	0.7	7.4	0.7	7.4	0.7	7.0
Preschool Tutors	1.0	3.2	1.0	3.2	1.0	3.2	1.0	3.8
Health Assistants	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0

Special Education Population Demographics

Each year data is collected on October 1st regarding the students with disabilities and their programmatic needs. The current data showed that the number of students in special education has varied very little in the past seven years and the percentage has increased and has slightly surpassed the state average.

(Source for State: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoervices/reports/enroll/>).

**Students (PreK-8) in Special Education
in the Lincoln Public Schools as of October 1st**

Year	Lincoln	Hanscom	Total	District Percentage	State Percentage
2007	78	83	161	13.21%	16.87%
2008	78	78	156	13.85%	17.12%
2009	64	61	125	11.90%	17.00%
2010	66	71	137	12.72%	17.00%
2011	71	72	143	12.34%	17.00%
2012	86	93	179	14.20%	17.00%
2013	91	98	189	14.67%	17.01%
2014	94	92	186	14.66%	n/a
2015	109	114	223	17.68%	17.1%

The special education population has increased by 3.02 percent over last year. The children's needs have had an impact on how the district uses and hires faculty and staff. This increase has resulted in a hiring of a BCBA for the Hanscom campus and an increase from a 0.8 FTE to a 1.0 School Psychologist for Hanscom and Lincoln (preschool) students. The following table displays the differences in the groups since 2012. It is notable that there is a larger population of students with disabilities placed out of district on the Hanscom campus.

**Students (PreK-8) in Special Education in the Lincoln Public Schools
by comparison of October 1st 2012 to October 1st 2015**

	Oct 1 st 2012	Oct 1 st 2013	Oct 1 st 2014	Oct 1 st 2015
Lincoln Resident PreK	7	7	7	6
Hanscom Resident PreK	22	17	15	18
Lincoln School K-4	35	40	38	45
Lincoln School 5-8	40	42	45	50
Hanscom Primary School	35	41	41	36
Hanscom Middle School	28	31	26	43
Lincoln Out of District	4	2	4	8
Hanscom Out of District	7	9	10	17
	179	189	186	223

In accordance with IDEA, school teams categorize students by their most educationally relevant disability. An examination of the special education population has revealed that, consistent with state and national trends, many of the students in special education have the diagnoses of communication disorders, developmental delay, health impairments and specific learning disabilities. In Lincoln, overall, the number of students by category has remained relatively the same for the past several years.

It is important to note that the Lincoln Public Schools has a higher percentage of students with Autism, Neurological Impairments, Health Impairments, Developmental Delays and Specific Learning Disabilities in comparison to the state. Children with these disabilities

may require a more intensive level of programming that would include low student to teacher ratios and the support of related services providers and paraprofessionals. As each student's IEP is individually developed, there are many more unique characteristics among the students who fall within the same category than there are characteristics in common. This offers a challenge, both programmatically and financially, to the district in predicting the future needs of students.

Percentage of Students with disabilities in the Lincoln Public Schools by category as of October 1 st								
Primary Disability	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	State 2014
Autism	9.60	6.57	9.93	10.61	10.58	15.05	22.9	8.89
Communication	24.00	27.74	21.00	23.46	20.10	15.05	26.9	17.17
Developmental Delay	13.60	12.41	11.19	14.53	14.28	13.44	22.2	10.73
Emotional	6.40	5.11	4.26	3.35	5.29	5.38	7.9	8.82
Health	12.80	16.06	21.28	15.08	14.28	14.52	22.2	11.09
Intellectual	0.80	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.52	0.54	.79	5.74
Multiple	0.80	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0	2.76
Neurological	8.80	6.57	9.93	14.53	12.69	13.44	19.8	5.35
Physical	0.80	1.46	0.71	0.56	1.58	1.08	1.5	.79
Sensory/Deaf/Blind	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0	.11
Sensory/Hearing	0.00	0.00	1.42	2.79	1.58	1.61	2.3	.74
Sensory/Vision	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0	.38
Specific Learning	24.00	24.09	20.57	14.53	19.04	19.89	32.5	26.43

*Source: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/enroll/>

While the categories provide information regarding the types of disabilities students have, the District also collects information regarding the level of student needs. Using a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's rubric, students are identified as scoring between 1 and 4 with 4 being the highest need. The criteria are based on the number of hours of service per week, the student placement, the service providers and the percent of program time receiving special education. The criteria are:

- One: Low (less than 2 hours of service per week)
- Two: Low (2-5 hours of service per week)
- Three: Moderate
- Four: High

The following table displays the level of need by setting. This information is utilized by the administration in determining the appropriate level of resources and staffing. It is common for two students to have the same disability by category but there is a great range in terms of the services and supports needed to provide them with an appropriate education. The percentage of students with a high level of need on the Hanscom Campus has been a factor in how Hanscom Schools have been staffed and how programming has been determined for students. The children often need 1:1 assistance and special education teachers, related service providers and tutors who provide those supports.

**Students (PreK-8) in Special Education
in the Lincoln Public Schools by Level of need as of October 1st 2015**

	One	Two	Three	Four
Lincoln Resident Preschool Students	0	0	4	2
Hanscom Resident Preschool Students	0	0	17	3
Lincoln School K-4	3	4	28	4
Lincoln School 5-8	8	7	35	2
Hanscom Primary School K-3	3	4	22	4
Hanscom Middle School 4-8	2	0	23	3
Lincoln Out of District	0	0	0	8
Hanscom Out of District	0	0	1	17
Total	16	15	131	43
Percent	1.26	1.18	10.38	3.40

The Lincoln Public Schools is committed to a quality inclusive program to meet the needs of students with a range of disabilities across all grade levels. Inclusive schools provide children with disabilities a diverse stimulating environment for learning; increased social interactions, relationships and networks; peer role models for academic, social and behavior skills; increased achievement of IEP goals; enhanced skill acquisition and generalization; and higher expectations. Hence, the majority of the students with special needs are educated in the public schools. There are 25 students (8 from Lincoln K-8 and 17 from Hanscom PreK-8) who require more intensive placement in a collaborative or private school program. Student Services Coordinators and Special Education Teams monitor student's progress.

Special Education Eligibility

Determining special education eligibility is a comprehensive process. A school-based team of professionals who examine formal, informal and curriculum-based assessment data determines eligibility for special education in partnership with the family. This determination may also be based on information from a child's medical providers, private evaluators, parents and caretakers, and other school districts.

Eligibility for special education is based on the presence of a disability that results in the student not making effective progress as a result of the disability, and a need for specially designed instruction. Specially designed instruction is special education that may include content, methodology or performance criteria that is different from what is available through general education.

The special education eligibility determination process takes a significant amount of time to complete. When the referral to the Student Services Coordinator is made, a "Consent for Evaluation" form is completed and submitted to the parent for signature within 5 school days. Upon receipt of the signed Consent for Evaluation form, the school team begins to gather data from observations, formal and informal tests, checklists, and other tools to create reports that include educationally relevant recommendations. The team is

allowed, and most often needs, 30 school days to complete this process. Once the reports are completed the team has another 15 school days to have a meeting with the parents, determine eligibility and to develop an IEP for the parent's consideration.

Not all students who are referred to special education meet the rigorous eligibility criteria. When this happens the administrators and faculty monitor this group of children and supports are put in place through general education to meet any presenting social, emotional and academic needs. The table below indicates the students that have been evaluated and not found eligible for special education over the past 6 years.

Students Evaluated and Found Not Eligible for Special Education							
Year	2008- 2009	2009- 2010	2010- 2011	2011- 2012	2012- 2013	2013- 2014	2014- 2015
Number	17	14	19	10	24	20	22

Sometimes, students with disabilities make such substantial gains that they are exited from special education. When this happens the student no longer shows evidence of the disability, is making effective progress, and/or no longer requires specially designed instruction provided by a special educator. The table below displays the data for the past 7 years.

Students Evaluated and Found No Longer Eligible for Special Education (Exited)							
Year	2008- 2009	2009- 2010	2010- 2011	2011- 2012	2012- 2013	2013- 2014	2014- 2015
Number	8	4	5	4	6	10	12
Percent	5.2%	3.2%	3.6%	2.2%	3.3%	5.29%	5.3%

Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

Individualized, student-centered special education programs are cooperatively developed by an individual education planning (IEP) team, which includes parents, general education and special education teachers, administrators, and, when appropriate, other specialists. These teams make every effort to provide appropriate special education programs to children in a setting as close to the general classroom as possible.

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) has several required components. These include:

- A statement of the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, including how the child's disability affects his or her involvement and progress in the general education curriculum;
- A statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals;
- A description of how the child's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured, and when periodic progress reports will be provided;

- A statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services to be provided to the child, or on behalf of the child;
- A statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided to enable the child to advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals; to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum and to participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities; and to be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and nondisabled children;
- An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with nondisabled children in the general education class and in extracurricular and nonacademic activities;
- A statement of any individual accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on State (MCAS) and district-wide assessments; and
- The projected date for the beginning of the services and modifications, and the anticipated frequency, location, and duration of those services and modifications.

When students require services beyond the capacities of the Lincoln faculty, the district hires consultants and experts to collaborate with the schools or seeks special education placement out of the district. Historically, the needs of the students have required consultation from a Pediatric Psychiatrist, a Behavioral Consultant and a Developmental Pediatrician. With district resources including consultation, Lincoln offers a broad range of service delivery options that progress from inclusive to segregated educational settings.

Student Placement and Continuum of Services

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that all children with disabilities must be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE) that is appropriate for them. The spirit of this requirement is to ensure that children are not unnecessarily removed from the regular classroom or isolated from other non-disabled children of their age. LRE decisions are made based on children's learning needs and vary from child to child. The LRE is the educational setting that maximizes a child's ability to receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) while participating in a regular educational environment as much as possible. The general education classroom is the most LRE for many students with disabilities.

IDEA also requires that schools provide a full continuum of services ranging from regular classrooms with support to special classes, and special school placements as needed. The Lincoln Public Schools offers the full continuum of services for children with disabilities, with some options accessed through the EDCO or CASE Collaborative, private day schools and neighboring district programs. The Lincoln Public Schools is committed to offering appropriate services to students in full inclusion environments.

Parent Involvement and Communication

The involvement of parents in the special education process is essential to the

development of programs and services at the individual, group and district level. The involvement of parents in the special education process is essential to the development of programs and services at the individual, group and district level. Parents provide important information regarding their child’s social, emotional, behavioral and physical wellbeing and provide essential feedback for program improvement. The Student Services Department works closely with the Lincoln Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) to support their mission of promoting and supporting an innovative educational environment where children with special needs have equal access to educational opportunities and a school and community environment. The SEPAC meets regularly with school administration and offers informative meetings presented by speakers with specialized expertise on relevant topics and general informational meetings to parents and the community. Information about the SEPAC can be found on its website at: <http://www.lincolnsepac.org>

504 Accommodation Plans

504 Accommodation Plans may be developed to meet the needs of a student with a disability who is not eligible for special education. The "504" in "504 plans" refers to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, which specifies that no one with a disability can be excluded from participating in a public education program. "Disability" in this context refers to a "physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities". This can include physical impairments; illnesses or injuries; communicable diseases; chronic conditions like asthma, allergies and diabetes; and learning problems.

A 504 plan documents the adaptations and accommodations that will be needed for these students to have an opportunity to access school with their peers within the general education setting. It is written to assure that the students will be provided with the appropriate accommodations to prevent discrimination on the basis of their disability.

Students with 504 Accommodation Plans							
Year	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
Number	9	10	13	19	29	32	31

Title 1 Services

Title I provides federal financial assistance to school districts to provide supplemental educational services to meet the educational needs of disadvantaged children. The Student Services Office has the responsibility of development and implementation of Title 1 programs. The District will receive \$62,437.00 and the funds are to be used for during school English language arts and mathematics tutoring (supplemental educational services), and summer academic programs for Hanscom students.

Grants and Revenue

Federal Special Education Grant Funds for Lincoln		
Year	Amount	Change from Previous Year
FY08	\$ 242,342	--
FY09	\$ 243,980	\$ 1,638
FY10	\$ 245,923	\$ 1,943
FY11	\$ 233,735	(\$ 12,188)
FY12	\$ 238,113	\$ 4,378
FY13	\$ 251,892	\$ 13,779
FY14	\$ 256,865	\$ 4,933
FY15	\$ 263,918	\$ 7,053
FY16	\$ 258,005	(\$ 5,913)

The state “Circuit Breaker” program – a special education reimbursement program enacted by the Legislature [St. 2000 c. 159, § 171] – was first implemented in FY04. The “Circuit Breaker” program’s goal is to provide additional state financial assistance to school districts that have incurred exceptionally high costs in educating individual students with disabilities. The law supports shared costs between the state and the school district when costs rise above a foundation level. Massachusetts state funds are available to reimburse a school district for students with disabilities whose special education costs exceed four times the state average foundation budget per pupil.

For FY15, ten students (double the FY14 number) met the criteria for eligibility for reimbursement. Reimbursement for a portion of their eligible expenses will be received in FY16 and applied to the FY17 budget.

Circuit Breaker Reimbursements for Lincoln Public Schools		
Year	Amount	Reimbursement Rate
FY07	\$ 98,924	75.00%
FY08	\$ 93,374	72.00%
FY09	\$ 84,438	42.34%
FY10	\$ 30,841	43.66%
FY11	\$ 117,466	65.00%
FY12	\$ 53,903	70.00%
FY13	\$ 57,442	74.50%
FY14	\$ 62,384	75.00%
FY15	\$ 85,691	72.00%
FY16	\$ 138, 027	73.00%

Budget Information

The special education budget for FY17 has been developed with an emphasis on providing the students with disabilities with a high quality education in the least restrictive environment. The staffing of special education teachers, therapists and other service providers has been calculated to meet this goal. A careful review of each student needs assessment is conducted prior to assigning personnel.

On the occasion when the Lincoln schools cannot meet a student's needs within our programs, the child's IEP is written for placement in a special education program or school outside of the district. The proposed budget identifies funds for their tuition and transportation. In the past few years we have experienced a number of students who require a higher level of need, programming and services.

Other components of the special education budget include curriculum materials, translation of special education documents, professional membership fees and resources, office supplies, evaluation supplies, repair and maintenance of equipment, and new materials necessary to implement student programs. A significant resource to the district comes through its paid membership to two local collaboratives – the Concord Area Special Education Collaborative (CASE) and the Education Collaborative for Greater Boston (EDCO). These regional organizations offer an array of programs for student, professional development for staff, consultation in specialized areas and transportation for students with disabilities.

Revenue resources specific to special education include federal IDEA grant entitlements, early childhood grants, state circuit breaker funds, and federal Medicaid reimbursements. The amounts provided vary year by year, but are most often based on the number of students with disabilities in the district and the services they receive. The Lincoln Public Schools uses the Federal Special Education Entitlement Grant to fund special education paraprofessionals to provide services and supports to students.