

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Student Support Team Process	The Student Support Team (SST) needs to be more uniformly practiced throughout the district and aligned with the RtI (Response to Intervention) and MTSS (Massachusetts Tiered System of Supports).	There are varying degrees of implementation of the SST process throughout the district. For the process to be more effective at each school, a more deliberate structure is required. Once the process is more uniformed and consistently practiced, referrals for special education may be reduced.	Creation of a shared drive for all schools to access SST materials, protocols, resources; District team participation in year-long Systemic Student Support "S3" Academy run by Boston College and the Rennie Center.

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Student Support Team Process	The Student Support Team (SST) needs to be more uniformly practiced throughout the district and aligned with the RtI (Response to Intervention) and MTSS (Massachusetts Tiered System of Supports).	If utilized properly, the SST process is an effective tool. When a student has been referred to special education for an evaluation after going through the SST process, the referral is considered to be a more legitimate referral. There is currently a sense that the SST process can be an obstacle to making a referral, suggesting that it is “just another step to go through.” There are reported examples where parents will circumvent the process by writing a letter to the school administration and requesting an evaluation under special education. While this cannot be completely prevented, further education for parents, and a more effective usage of the SST process, can lead to fewer parental and staff referrals.	District gathers this information annually and shares with building administrators on both referral source and eligibility determination. This information was not requested during the external evaluation process.
Student Support Team Process	The Student Support Team (SST) needs to be more uniformly practiced throughout the district and aligned with the RtI (Response to Intervention) and MTSS (Massachusetts Tiered System of Supports).	There needs to be a data review of those students who were processed through the SST team so that it can be determined which ones were found ineligible for special education. This type of analysis can provide the district with information that will indicate the kind of training that the SST team members should receive so only legitimate referrals are processed.	District gathers this information annually and shares with building administrators on both referral source and eligibility determination. This information was not requested during the external evaluation process.
Student Support Team Process	The Student Support Team (SST) needs to be more uniformly practiced throughout the district and aligned with the RtI (Response to Intervention) and MTSS (Massachusetts Tiered System of Supports).	The SST process is a general education process and members should be general educators. Based on their given expertise, special educators should be brought in to provide insight on students.	This recommendation expresses some inconsistencies in best practices for Student Support Teams. Special educators can and should be members of the Team.

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Student Support Team Process	The Student Support Team (SST) needs to be more uniformly practiced throughout the district and aligned with the RtI (Response to Intervention) and MTSS (Massachusetts Tiered System of Supports).	On a consistent basis, building administrators need to participate as members of the SST process. Research clearly demonstrates that more effective change occurs in teaching practices when building administrators engage in the SST process.	This recommendation has been shared with District administrations and one barrier to the consistent implementation of this practice is the singular role of the elementary principal.
Student Support Team Process	The Student Support Team (SST) needs to be more uniformly practiced throughout the district and aligned with the RtI (Response to Intervention) and MTSS (Massachusetts Tiered System of Supports).	On a scheduled basis, SST team members need to rotate through team memberships so that all building staff members eventually participate in the process. This participation by all staff increases staff ownership to the process.	This recommendation is inconsistent with the local collective bargaining agreement
Student Support Team Process	The Student Support Team (SST) needs to be more uniformly practiced throughout the district and aligned with the RtI (Response to Intervention) and MTSS (Massachusetts Tiered System of Supports).	In order to gain a greater awareness and insight into effective strategies of intervention, professional development needs to be made available to the SST teams. Coaching of team members should also be part of the training experience so that their strategies of intervention can be assessed, revised, and expanded.	Applied for 2019 School Climate Transformation Grant Program. Grant application outlines extensive proposed actions; District team participation in year-long Systemic Student Support “S3” Academy run by Boston College and the Rennie Center.

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Student Support Team Process	The Student Support Team (SST) needs to be more uniformly practiced throughout the district and aligned with the RtI (Response to Intervention) and MTSS (Massachusetts Tiered System of Supports).	An updated manual that specifically outlines the purpose and function of the SST team should be developed. The roles and responsibilities of team members, uniformed applications that are consistently used, and a suggested list of intervention strategies based on the presenting student's central issue(s) should be included.	Creation of a shared drive for all schools to access SST materials, protocols, resources
Student Support Team Process	The district needs to continue the efforts that have been put forth in the implementation of the RtI (Response to Intervention) and MTSS (Massachusetts Tiered System of Supports).	There is confusion, on the part of school-based personnel, as to whether or not the district is going to use the problem-solving strategy of RtI/MTSS. Staff members need to be informed that the district is moving forward with it and receive an explanation on how it will be implemented.	Student Support Teams are required under the legislation and MTSS is the DESE's guiding initiative. It is unclear what directive this recommendation is seeking.

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Student Support Team Process	The district needs to continue the efforts that have been put forth in the implementation of the RtI (Response to Intervention) and MTSS (Massachusetts Tiered System of Supports).	<p>The RtI/MTSS problem-solving model is a systematic approach that reviews student strengths and needs, identifies scientifically based interventions, frequently collects data to monitor student progress, and evaluates the effectiveness of the interventions implemented with the student. Problem-solving is a model that is used, as the first means, to solve student difficulties within the general education classrooms. If problem-solving interventions are not successful in general education classrooms, the cycle of selecting interventions and collecting data is repeated with the assistance of the Problem-Solving Team</p>	Data-wise training provided by Teachers21 to District Admin and volunteer school-based staff.

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Student Support Team Process	The district needs to continue the efforts that have been put forth in the implementation of the RtI (Response to Intervention) and MTSS (Massachusetts Tiered System of Supports).	The purpose of the problem-solving process is to assist the classroom teacher and parent(s)/guardian(s) in designing and selecting strategies for improving student academic and/or behavioral performance. The intent is to develop academic and behavioral intervention strategies that have a high probability of success. A structure is provided for addressing the academic and/or behavioral concerns identified by teachers or parents. A problem-solving process requires full collaboration among a team of professionals, along with parents, to identify a specific measurable outcome, and to design research-based interventions that address the concerns. The district must integrate the use of data, both to guide the development of effective interventions, and to provide frequent monitoring of a student's progress. The process includes an assurance that interventions are implemented with fidelity. Family engagement in the process is vital to guarantee that all information which might impact success is considered.	Data-wise training provided by Teachers21 to District Admin and volunteer school-based staff; District team participation in year-long Systemic Student Support "S3" Academy run by Boston College and the Rennie Center.

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Student Support Team Process	The district needs to continue the efforts that have been put forth in the implementation of the RtI (Response to Intervention) and MTSS (Massachusetts Tiered System of Supports).	<p>The RtI/MTSS process is similar to the SST process. Many consider the RtI/MTSS process to be more comprehensive in scope and more grounded in evidence-based “best practice.” These two approaches could be wedded so that school-based personnel have the “best of the two” to assist them in formulating instructional and behavioral interventions for assisting students who exhibit difficulties in learning and self-regulation.</p>	<p>Under the DESE's guidance, MTSS is not a process, but a framework. SST exists <i>as part of</i> a multi-tiered system of supports and the distinction made in this recommendation is inconsistent with this understanding; District team participation in year-long Systemic Student Support “S3” Academy run by Boston College and the Rennie Center.</p>

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Student Support Team Process	The district needs to continue the efforts that have been put forth in the implementation of the RtI (Response to Intervention) and MTSS (Massachusetts Tiered System of Supports).	<p>The RtI/MTSS process has proven to be an effective, preventive intervention for students experiencing learning, social, and behavioral difficulties when special education and general education are merged.</p>	<p>Under the DESE's guidance, MTSS is not a process, but a framework. SST exists <i>as part of</i> a multi-tiered system of supports and the distinction made in this recommendation is inconsistent with this understanding.</p>
Co-Teaching Model of Instruction	The district needs to review the current co-teaching and in-classroom support practices and establish a clear and consistent approach to these models across the district.	<p>To properly operate the co-teaching and in-classroom instructional support models, there needs to be clear, concise, and agreed upon statements that stress the purpose and intent of these two separate models of instruction. There is confusion among school staff as to exactly what the co-teaching and in-classroom models are and how they are to function. Additionally, throughout the district, there are varying perceptions of the role and function of a special education teacher assigned to a general education classroom.</p>	<p>General ed/special education teams sent to off-site Co-teaching workshops</p>

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Co-Teaching Model of Instruction	The district needs to review the current co-teaching and in-classroom support practices and establish a clear and consistent approach to these models across the district.	Based on the requirements of the district's Department of Special Education, the district's belief system, its culture, and its mission, co-teaching and inclusion descriptors need to be framed.	General ed/special education teams sent to off-site Co-teaching workshops
Co-Teaching Model of Instruction	The district needs to review the current co-teaching and in-classroom support practices and establish a clear and consistent approach to these models across the district.	The descriptors need to incorporate evidence-based "best practice" and reflect the positive components of current practices at the individual schools.	General ed/special education teams sent to off-site Co-teaching workshops
Co-Teaching Model of Instruction	The district needs to review the current co-teaching and in-classroom support practices and establish a clear and consistent approach to these models across the district.	The descriptors need to indicate which model or models of instruction will be utilized and when they will be utilized. The four models commonly referred to are Supportive Teaching, Parallel Teaching, Complementary Teaching, and Team Teaching. A resource reference is A Guide to Co-Teaching: Practical Tips for Facilitating Student Learning. R. Villa, J. Townsend & A. Nevin. Crown Press, California. Another resource is Co-Teaching, a handbook for creating and sustaining effective classroom partnerships in inclusive schools. Marilyn Friend, Greensboro, NC 27455-2590, www.coteach.com	General ed/special education teams sent to off-site Co-teaching workshops

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Co-Teaching Model of Instruction	The district needs to review the current co-teaching and in-classroom support practices and establish a clear and consistent approach to these models across the district.	The descriptors need to be developed in collaboration with all current participants of the co-teaching and in-class models, and these descriptors should be subject to periodic reviews and updates. The descriptors need to include a clear outline of the role each involved person plays in providing instruction within the classroom.	General ed/special education teams sent to off-site Co-teaching workshops
Co-Teaching Model of Instruction	The district needs to review the current co-teaching and in-classroom support practices and establish a clear and consistent approach to these models across the district.	Many districts are gradually eliminating the in-class model of support and are moving toward the co-teaching model of instruction, as Arlington is doing at the secondary level. This is a step that the district may want to explore at the elementary level to help reduce confusion over the two models. This change has enabled other districts to expand the roles of the two collaborating teachers and their impact on instruction. The distinction between the two models is that in class support is provided by paraprofessionals and sometimes special education teachers, while special and general education teachers conduct the co-teaching model.	this work will begin after working on the currently established partnerships (gr 6 -12). Implications for staffing, class assignment, scheduling need to also be addressed
Co-Teaching Model of Instruction	Should the district move toward developing more co-teaching models across the grade levels, there will be a need to maintain a balanced enrollment in co-teaching classes.	The evaluators have observed, in previous program evaluations, that co-teaching classes have a tendency to either become special education self-contained classes, or class enrollment becomes a higher percentage of students on IEPs than typical students.	Opened more sections at the high school to allow for this balance. Expanded co-teaching to more learning communities at Gibbs

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Co-Teaching Model of Instruction	Should the district move toward developing more co-teaching models across the grade levels, there will be a need to maintain a balanced enrollment in co-teaching classes.	Current research indicates that student ratios in co-teaching classes should be approximately two-thirds general education students to one-third special education students. However, the ratio certainly can vary, slightly, based on the type of needs (intensity) of the clustered group of students within a section.	Opened more sections at the high school to allow for this balance. Expanded co-teaching to more learning communities at Gibbs
Co-Teaching Model of Instruction	Should the district move toward developing more co-teaching models across the grade levels, there will be a need to maintain a balanced enrollment in co-teaching classes.	Should the number of co-teaching classes be expanded throughout the district, greater consideration must be given to matching students with "like needs" as they are clustered together into co-teaching sections. These groupings should have similar needs so that the instructional methodology presented by the collaborating teachers is relevant to the students' needs. One structural model that has been observed is the designation of one class at each grade level at the elementary level, and at least one content class at each grade level at the secondary level. Expansion of this example can occur as more staff members become interested in participating in the model. As more special education instructors decide to participate in the co-teaching model, the practice of "pull out" time for special needs students will be reduced.	Whether a student receives services in the "B grid" (inclusion) or "C grid" (pullout/sub-separate) is a team decision driven by the needs of the student and not based on whether a teacher prefers to participate in co-teaching. Any removal from general education has to be justified in the "Non-participation Justification" portion of the IEP.

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Co-Teaching Model of Instruction	Should the district move toward developing more co-teaching models across the grade levels, there will be a need to maintain a balanced enrollment in co-teaching classes.	Consideration has to be given to the learning styles of the students and the teaching styles of the co-teachers. Along with clustering students by needs, pairing teachers to the students is essential to make the model more effective with regards to student progress.	It is the responsibility of the teacher(s) to meet the needs of all students as highlighted in the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework and the DESE created the Educator Effectiveness Guidebook for Inclusive Practices. Current practices for student placement take into consideration a wide number of factors and is done with the input of teaching staff and administrators.
Co-Teaching Model of Instruction	Should the district move toward developing more co-teaching models across the grade levels, there will be a need to maintain a balanced enrollment in co-teaching classes.	The district also needs to be cognizant of the number of English Language Learners and students on 504 plans that are placed in co-taught classes.	Current practices for student placement take into consideration a wide number of factors and is done with the input of teaching staff and administrators.
Co-Teaching Model of Instruction	Should the administration make a firm commitment to the co-teaching model, several practices will need to be in place.	A continuation of the structured common planning blocks is imperative. The collaborating teachers need to have common planning time on a weekly, if not bi-weekly basis. Currently, all but three co-teaching teams have weekly common planning time.	
Co-Teaching Model of Instruction	Should the administration make a firm commitment to the co-teaching model, several practices will need to be in place.	Scheduling students for these co-teaching classes prior to the development of the master schedule is necessary.	
Co-Teaching Model of Instruction	Should the administration make a firm commitment to the co-teaching model, several practices will need to be in place.	There needs to be a clustering of students with special needs, emphasizing the need of balanced classes.	collective bargaining contract considerations
Co-Teaching Model of Instruction	Should the administration make a firm commitment to the co-teaching model, several practices will need to be in place.	Co-teaching teams need to be committed to the model and remain together for several years in order to develop the cohesiveness that is required for this model to be effective.	

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Co-Teaching Model of Instruction	Should the administration make a firm commitment to the co-teaching model, several practices will need to be in place.	Professional development needs to be an ongoing activity for those staff engaged in the co-teaching model.	General ed/special education teams sent to off-site Co-teaching workshops
Co-Teaching Model of Instruction	Should the administration make a firm commitment to the co-teaching model, several practices will need to be in place.	Co-teaching coaching support should be another aspect of professional development that is incorporated for support of the model and the staff.	General ed/special education teams sent to off-site Co-teaching workshops
Co-Teaching Model of Instruction	Should the administration make a firm commitment to the co-teaching model, several practices will need to be in place.	Periodic meetings should occur throughout the school year for the collaborating teachers, building administrators, and curriculum department heads. These meeting should allow for the participants to explore and discuss their concerns, issues, success, and what changes need to be considered.	
Co-Teaching Model of Instruction	Should the administration make a firm commitment to the co-teaching model, several practices will need to be in place.	Current participating staff members articulated that guidelines are lacking that address the issue of the roles and responsibilities of the two collaborating teachers within the co-teaching model.	

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Co-Teaching Model of Instruction	Should the administration make a firm commitment to the co-teaching model, several practices will need to be in place.	An operating manual/handbook needs to be developed that provides guidelines with respect to grading, homework assignments, examples of curriculum and instructional accommodation, sample behavioral intervention strategies, types of shared teaching activities that can be conducted, effective use of common planning time, suggested strategies for problem solving, sample test forms, progress reporting forms, suggested systems of communication, and the “how,” “when,” “what,” “where” and “who” statements, etc. This type of organizational product will reduce, if not eliminate, confusion between and among teachers.	Shared resources may be developed and/or collected, but will likely exist in a shared drive or other electronic resource tool
Co-Teaching Model of Instruction	Should the administration make a firm commitment to the co-teaching model, several practices will need to be in place.	The teachers, with administrative assistance and oversight, should develop this operating manual. This can be conducted as a study group or as a summer workshop activity	Such a determination would come out of the work with our selected consultant

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Professional Development	For all school personnel, the district needs to develop a more comprehensive approach to professional development experiences that focus on regular and special education topics.	The district has done commendable work in providing professional development experiences on numerous topics of curriculum and instruction to school-based personnel over recent years. Professional development for all school personnel regarding a number of issues related to special education, however, has not been in place. Some examples of such development experiences include: best practices for instructing students with disabilities, legal issues, SST practices, the RtI/MTSS model, eligibility determination for services, dealing with challenging behaviors in the classroom, students with mental health needs, working with different disabilities categories in the classroom, etc.	Created an "all district" training for the "basics" of special education that is now part of the required annual staff training at the beginning of the school year. Creation of a weekly communication to all special education staff regarding state and federal special education regulations and requirements. New Teacher Orientation for special educators included a "scavenger hunt" of district and state resources on special education policy, procedure, & regulations. Annual mandatory training during Aug in-service days. New Special Staff Orientation training will orient staff will provide overview of programming, resources, and where to find them. Continuation of weekly communication to special ed and administrative staff. Legal counsel presentation to administrative staff during August retreats.
Professional Development	For all school personnel, the district needs to develop a more comprehensive approach to professional development experiences that focus on regular and special education topics.	Arlington has many very highly qualified special education personnel with significant experiences that could be utilized to plan, develop, and provide trainings to faculty on a number of the topics.	Annually all school staff participate in a variety of mandated trainings during our return to school. The special education department created and received approval from the DESE for our presentation.
Professional Development	For all school personnel, the district needs to develop a more comprehensive approach to professional development experiences that focus on regular and special education topics.	Professional development needs to be consistent across the district, and themes established for each school year should be maintained throughout.	AEA joint committee on Special Education spent the year collecting and analyzing district-wide data on staff needs for professional development/training as it relates to the inclusion of special education students and diverse learners. Shared this analysis with each building principal, Curriculum Directors, Asst Supt.

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Professional Development	For all school personnel, the district needs to develop a more comprehensive approach to professional development experiences that focus on regular and special education topics.	<p>Interviewed staff members expressed an interest in having more frequent and in-depth training opportunities that focus on the following: 1. Techniques/strategies for teaching students from social/emotional classes ✓ How to work as a team ✓ Establishing rules (for ourselves and for students) ✓ How to plan ✓ How to best provide instruction 2. Limited English students that may have a disability 3. What is a learning disability? 4. RtI levels 5. Co-teaching 6. Universal design 7. Strategies for general education teachers 8. How to assist the struggling student 9. Who is the average student? 10. Using the IEP as a learning tool 11. Modifying and accommodating 12. Classroom management of challenging behaviors 13. “More social emotional training and less curriculum” 14. Avoiding the pitfalls in special education 15. How to avoid litigation 16. How to work with various disabilities 17. IEPs and IEP writing 18. Working with students on the autism spectrum 19. How to fill out forms 20. Overview of special education laws and regulations</p>	<p>AEA joint committee on Special Education spent the year collecting and analyzing district-wide data on staff needs for professional development/training as it relates to the inclusion of special education students and diverse learners. Shared this analysis with each building principal, Curriculum Directors, Asst Supt.</p>

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Professional Development	For all school personnel, the district needs to develop a more comprehensive approach to professional development experiences that focus on regular and special education topics.	Interest was expressed for training in the area of eligibility determination. Staff members want a greater understanding of the difference between a typical student who is struggling and a student who is eligible for specialized instruction. They also want clarification on exactly what specialized instruction is.	
Professional Development	For all school personnel, the district needs to develop a more comprehensive approach to professional development experiences that focus on regular and special education topics.	There needs to be a discussion of the issues of “What is right?” or “What is fair?” There was some expressed concern, frustration, and a lack of understanding regarding appropriate grading, student workload, and assignments for students with disabilities. Interviewed staff expressed interest in these issues and suggested that a study group format would be useful.	

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Professional Development	For all school personnel, the district needs to develop a more comprehensive approach to professional development experiences that focus on regular and special education topics.	Training needs to be designed by groups of professionals and support staff so that it is meaningful to them. The training experience should be designed with respect to the professional experience of the audience. Not all staff should be presented with the same information. Training needs to be designed with respect to the current knowledge and experience of the various groups and audiences. Specialists such as school social workers, speech and language therapists, psychologists, guidance counselors, etc., should have the opportunity to attend training that is specific to their field of expertise. In some cases, this may require off-site attendance at conferences and/or workshops. Another option would be to approach neighboring districts, through a collaborative, to see if they are interested in participating in the development of training for “low incidence” professionals. On-line training for school-based staff on these the above stated topics is another approach that should be considered.	District Professional Development Committee formation
Professional Development	For all school personnel, the district needs to develop a more comprehensive approach to professional development experiences that focus on regular and special education topics.	When training is structured so that topics are dealt with in-depth and are combined with follow-up opportunities to review implemented practices, they have a more significant impact.	

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Professional Development	For all school personnel, the district needs to develop a more comprehensive approach to professional development experiences that focus on regular and special education topics.	Coaching and follow-up sessions should be ongoing experiences for all participating staff.	
		Team chairpersons are often the initial contact for parents through the referral process, and they play a role with parents throughout the student's educational experience. Training needs to continue to assist chairpersons with techniques for working with parents in a collaborative manner, encouraging them to be significant members of their child's team.	Recommendation not connected to a particular finding. Team Chairs have attended trainings of this sort offered through our collaborative (EDCO.) They also have the opportunity to participate in a monthly role-alike/roundtable with member districts.

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Professional Development	Recognizing the limited time available to teaching assistants, the district needs to provide these assistants with substantial professional development and ongoing support.	Teaching assistants spend considerable time working directly with individual students and small groups of students. These individuals have varying backgrounds and experiences. If the district is going to continue to rely on these positions to support special needs students in general education classes and in substantially separate programs, then the district must provide greater exposure to training opportunities so that assistants have a more extensive knowledge of the various disabilities, curriculum frameworks, strategies of instruction and intervention, management of behavioral issues, provision of in-classroom support, and the making of curriculum accommodations and modifications. These paraprofessionals need to have a greater understanding of how instruction is provided to students with special needs.	Paraprofessionals engaged in an year-long series of professional development during the early release department time on topics from data collection, implementing behavior plans, Responsive Classroom, fostering independence in the inclusion setting, and cultivating a mindfulness practice. Opened Responsive Classroom core training to TAs.
Professional Development	Recognizing the limited time available to teaching assistants, the district needs to provide these assistants with substantial professional development and ongoing support.	Teaching assistants need to know how they are to be utilized in the various instructional settings. All too often, when paraprofessionals are assigned to general education classes they do not know how to function in that setting. Additionally, in many instances, the general education teachers do not know how to effectively use paraprofessionals. It is essential that training is provided to the paraprofessionals that will give them the strategies that they need to use in all settings.	Paraprofessionals engaged in an year-long series of professional development during the early release department time on topics from data collection, implementing behavior plans, Responsive Classroom, fostering independence in the inclusion setting, and cultivating a mindfulness practice. Opened Responsive Classroom core training to TAs.

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Professional Development	Recognizing the limited time available to teaching assistants, the district needs to provide these assistants with substantial professional development and ongoing support.	Teaching assistants who have mastered certain skills and strategies could be used to assist in conducting some of the training experiences.	Collective bargaining did not result in the establishment of separate paraprofessional PD committee. Agreement allows for soliciting of feedback on topics. Paraprofessionals participated in District-wide Professional Development Committee
Professional Development	The district needs to continue with the design of a district-wide training program to be shared with all staff that will increase their general awareness level regarding special education terminology, practices, procedures, regulations, and available services within the district.	There is considerable misunderstanding of the various terms that are used in special education. School-based personnel do not have a clear understanding of the distinctions among in-class support, inclusion, the co-teaching model, accommodation, adaptation, and modification. Staff may interchange these terms, one for the other, despite the fact that there are clear distinctions among them.	Many of the terms used in this recommendation are not terms used in the District, but by the external evaluators; Created an "all district" training for the "basics" of special education that is now part of the required annual staff training at the beginning of the school year.
Professional Development	The district needs to continue with the design of a district-wide training program to be shared with all staff that will increase their general awareness level regarding special education terminology, practices, procedures, regulations, and available services within the district.	The distinction among the disabilities categories is another area of training that is needed. Staff members need to have a greater understanding of the various disabilities, what they mean in terms of an impact on learning, and what the "best practices" are that they should be utilizing as interventions.	Created an "all district" training for the "basics" of special education that is now part of the required annual staff training at the beginning of the school year. AEA joint committee on Special Education spent the year collecting and analyzing district-wide data on staff needs for professional development/training as it relates to the inclusion of special education students and diverse learners. Shared this analysis with each building principal, Curriculum Directors, Asst Supt.

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Professional Development	The district needs to continue with the design of a district-wide training program to be shared with all staff that will increase their general awareness level regarding special education terminology, practices, procedures, regulations, and available services within the district.	Some confusion remains as to what constitutes a student's eligibility for specialized instruction. There seems to be a pattern developing among general educators where one student becomes eligible, so if another student appears to have similar needs, then that student should become eligible as well. This misunderstanding creates confusion among staff and could lead to an increase of referrals for special education evaluations.	Created an "all district" training for the "basics" of special education that is now part of the required annual staff training at the beginning of the school year. AEA joint committee on Special Education spent the year collecting and analyzing district-wide data on staff needs for professional development/training as it relates to the inclusion of special education students and diverse learners. Shared this analysis with each building principal, Curriculum Directors, Asst Supt.
Professional Development	The district needs to continue with the design of a district-wide training program to be shared with all staff that will increase their general awareness level regarding special education terminology, practices, procedures, regulations, and available services within the district.	During the interviews, when discussing the inclusion of students with disabilities and the reason for doing so, it was not mentioned, with any consistency, that access to the general education curriculum was the reason to include students with disabilities into general education classes. This is not a major error on the part of any one individual, but it is an indicator of the thinking of school-based personnel with respect to why students are being included, and that all school-based staff are responsible for the education of all students.	Created an "all district" training for the "basics" of special education that is now part of the required annual staff training at the beginning of the school year. AEA joint committee on Special Education spent the year collecting and analyzing district-wide data on staff needs for professional development/training as it relates to the inclusion of special education students and diverse learners. Shared this analysis with each building principal, Curriculum Directors, Asst Supt.

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Professional Development	The district needs to continue with the design of a district-wide training program to be shared with all staff that will increase their general awareness level regarding special education terminology, practices, procedures, regulations, and available services within the district.	<p>There are some exceptional programs for students with disabilities that begin at the pre-school level and continue to the high school level. However, general education personnel, and some special education personnel, are not aware of the various programs and services that are available. There is a need to ensure that all staff members have an understanding of the varied programs and services that are offered through special education. This may need to be addressed annually, during teacher orientation, or when other department or building meeting forums are held. Whenever it occurs, it is necessary to ensure that all staff members have a greater appreciation of the programs offered by the district.</p>	<p>Annual training developed for all staff includes information on district programs and services</p>
		<p>Given that these varied programs exist, the job descriptions, roles and responsibilities of the various special education personnel need to be periodically reviewed and updated when necessary. There is confusion and a lack of understanding of the various special education positions within the district. Over time, positions become defined by the individuals who fill them. In one school a special education instructor may function in a particular capacity; yet, in another school, an individual in the same position may function differently.</p>	<p>This recommendation is not tied to a particular finding. This information (job descriptions) was not requested or reviewed during the external evaluation. The AEA Joint Committee worked the previous year (2017-18) on reviewing job descriptions. The related service providers have been working with Wediko Children's' Services on a logic model description of the services they provide.</p>

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Professional Development	The district needs to continue with the design of a district-wide training program to be shared with all staff that will increase their general awareness level regarding special education terminology, practices, procedures, regulations, and available services within the district.	There are different interpretations of the team chairperson’s role and responsibilities, depending on the individual who fills this position. A clearer definition of responsibilities needs to be put in place and shared with building staff and administration.	This information (job descriptions) was not requested or reviewed during the external evaluation. The AEA Joint Committee worked the previous year (2017-18) on reviewing job descriptions. The related service providers have been working with Wediko Children's' Services on a logic model description of the services they provide.
Team Meetings	The director should consider the following strategies to maximize administrative efficiencies and communication within the department.	<i>Establishment of Special Education “Chain of Communication Command”</i> A clear line of communication needs to be established to ensure that all involved teachers, chairpersons, principals and coordinators are aware of the decision-making process within the department. Information indicating how decisions are made, how communication is shared, and what timelines are involved needs to be established and shared with all appropriate personnel	This document was created and exists both for families and for staff members. The one for families can be located on the District website and the internal document has been shared and is provided to new staff annually.

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Team Meetings	The director should consider the following strategies to maximize administrative efficiencies and communication within the department.	<p><i>Establishment of an Assessment Handbook</i></p> <p>There needs to be an assessment handbook developed that outlines the roles and responsibilities of the special education staff, the related services providers, and the special education service providers with respect to the evaluation process. This handbook should outline the assessment/testing requirements, determine who is responsible for what type of assessment, and describe how the assessment reports should be developed. In addition, the handbook should outline the various assessment tools that each specialist utilizes for the various evaluations that are conducted.</p>	This document already exists and was not requested nor reviewed during the external evaluation.
Team Meetings	The director should consider the following strategies to maximize administrative efficiencies and communication within the department.	<p><i>Procedural Manual</i></p> <p>A manual should be developed that defines the process necessary for staff to follow, ensuring that staff know where to find all special education policies and procedures, and they are aware of how to access them. This can be done by having each staff member complete a review at the beginning of the year to include how/where to access information when needed.</p>	This already exists as an internal Google site. This site was not requested nor reviewed during the external evaluation.

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Team Meetings	The director should consider the following strategies to maximize administrative efficiencies and communication within the department.	<p><i>Team Decision Making</i> To alleviate the lack of input at team meetings, consideration should be given to having special education teachers conduct the initial standardized educational assessment. This would also ensure that the person most likely to service an eligible student has a formal understanding of the student's needs and how much service time is required. Team chairs should also review the assessments that they are seeking as part of the initial team process.</p>	This recommendation was addressed by the District prior to the external evaluation and resulted in an action from the AEA.
Assigning Teaching Assistants	The district needs to establish guidelines by which teaching assistants are assigned to a student, a group of students, a program, or a classroom.	The teaching assistants provide a beneficial service to students with disabilities, but it is not clear to all staff members how the final recommendation is made to assign a paraprofessional to a special needs student, a group of students, a program, or a classroom.	Began a review of rubrics shared from other districts

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Assigning Teaching Assistants	The district needs to establish guidelines by which teaching assistants are assigned to a student, a group of students, a program, or a classroom.	Given the number of teaching assistants within special education, and the growing requests for additional positions, it is imperative that the district maintain clear guidelines for why an assistant is being assigned to a student. The assignment of a teaching assistant to a student because of health and safety, a foremost reason from an administrator’s point of view, and the usage of teaching assistants in a substantially separate program are both fairly clear reasons. Beyond these reasons, however, it becomes less certain as to “how” or “when” a paraprofessional should be utilized.	Began a review of rubrics shared from other districts
Assigning Teaching Assistants	The district needs to establish guidelines by which teaching assistants are assigned to a student, a group of students, a program, or a classroom.	The decision-making process needs to be clear and understood by all those who have input in the process. The research on the decision-making process is scant (Freshi, 1999; Giangreco, Broer & Edleman, 1999). The idea that a paraprofessional is utilized to implement the goals of an IEP should be due to the district’s current inability to implement these goals without the use of this additional support. A recommended starting point is the DESE Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2014-13 – Identifying the Need for Paraprofessional Support.	All special education staff training focused on the use of adult support in the inclusive classroom and the emphasis on promoting independence. DESE advisory also shared with participants.

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Assigning Teaching Assistants	The district needs to establish guidelines by which teaching assistants are assigned to a student, a group of students, a program, or a classroom.	The district should study the following various strategies that are commonly practiced: trading teaching assistant positions for special education positions, increasing ownership by the general education staff, providing time-limited assignments, and using assistants to free up special education personnel from burdensome paperwork so that special educators are able to spend more time with students. (“Alternatives to Overreliance on Paraprofessionals in Inclusive Schools.” Giangreco, M., Halvorsen, A., Doyle, M., Broer, S. Journal of Special Education Leadership, October 2004.)	
Assigning Teaching Assistants	The district needs to establish guidelines by which teaching assistants are assigned to a student, a group of students, a program, or a classroom.	Roles and responsibilities of the teaching assistants should be reviewed and updated. Specific functions for which they are responsible need to be documented so that cooperating staff members have a full understanding. Practices and procedures should also be spelled out on how the assistant is to function in various instructional settings such as working with groups, working one-on-one, monitoring test taking, etc.	Both general education and special education departments utilize paraprofessional staff and needs to be a district-wide undertaking. AEA Committee to undertake evaluation procedures

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Assigning Teaching Assistants	The district needs to establish guidelines by which teaching assistants are assigned to a student, a group of students, a program, or a classroom.	The district also needs to establish a process/protocol for the scheduling of teaching assistants. Building principals, along with the Director of Special Education and Special Education Coordinators, should develop a process to determine when teaching assistants are scheduled, who makes the assignment, and who monitors the ongoing need for the assignment.	Both general education and special education departments utilize paraprofessional staff. Within the special education department, paraprofessional assignment is determined through the Team Meeting process and is a determination of the educational team. The learning specialists/special education teacher schedule the paraprofessionals who are assigned, by the building principal, to work with them.
Administrative	Administrative oversight of special education programming, services, and special education personnel needs to be redefined as to the structure within the Department of Special Education.	Arlington has experienced a number of changes in the position of Director of Special Education and in the coordinator's position over the past years. Given the turnover in these important leadership roles, it is important to allow the prevailing director the opportunity to review the current administrative staffing for the department and develop recommendations that will enable proper ongoing oversight to occur.	
Administrative	Administrative oversight of special education programming, services, and special education personnel needs to be redefined as to the structure within the Department of Special Education.	The role of the team chairperson has a different interpretation depending on the individual filling the role. A clearer definition of chairperson responsibilities needs to be put in place and shared with the building staff and administration.	The AEA Joint Committee worked the previous year (2017-18) on reviewing job descriptions. The related service providers, including Team Chairpersons, have been working with Wediko Children's Services on a logic model description of the services they provide.

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Administrative	Administrative oversight of special education programming, services, and special education personnel needs to be redefined as to the structure within the Department of Special Education.	As new special education positions evolve over time and staff members change at the building level, administrators' requests, expectations, and building needs change. It appears that this has been one factor that has led to a significant turnover in this very important position.	
Administrative	Administrative oversight of special education programming, services, and special education personnel needs to be redefined as to the structure within the Department of Special Education.	A clear line of communication needs to be established to ensure that all involved teachers, chairpersons, principals and coordinators are aware of the communication process. Information indicating how decisions are made, how communication is shared, and what timelines are involved needs to be established and shared with all appropriate personnel.	This recommendation is unclear and the District has responded by creating a "Communication Ladder."
Administrative	Administrative oversight of special education programming, services, and special education personnel needs to be redefined as to the structure within the Department of Special Education.	The district provides a very comprehensive orientation for new staff each year. However, for staff members that start after the completion of the orientation, access to computers, email set up, training on IEP process, access to a key card, and knowledge of their caseload is difficult for these staff members to navigate. The district should consider a mini orientation for staff that begin after the formal orientation, particularly for individuals that are in a long term substitute role.	Director of Human Resources with input from Asst Supt and Director of Special Education created a "Google Classroom" for staff that begin after the orientation period

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Transition Practices	Transition practices need to be structured in a more sequential and consistent manner between the various school levels.	Transition activities are conducted each year for students moving from one level to the next. A written transition procedure exists for transition from the elementary school level to the middle school level. Procedures need to be written for other levels, as well, to ensure that requirements and timelines are consistently in place. Without a written procedure, timelines and expected activities can change every year.	Memorialized the PK - K transition procedures/timelines; Used existing transition procedures from fifth to sixth and again at sixth to seventh grade transitions.
Transition Practices	Transition practices need to be structured in a more sequential and consistent manner between the various school levels.	Staff members are performing the steps for transition that need to occur, but the process varies throughout the district. It would be beneficial to review the steps with all involved staff members to ensure that practices and procedures are being consistently followed.	We have a singular process for special education at each level and this recommendation is referring to general education procedures.
Transition Practices	Transition practices need to be structured in a more sequential and consistent manner between the various school levels.	It is not only essential to have written procedures in place that designate timelines for various activities, but definitions of the roles and responsibilities of those engaged in the transition activities at each level should also be included. It is recommended that the district develop very specific steps for the transition process from one level to the next. Communication should be structured throughout the spring months based on a set timeline for the various activities to ensure that the actual transition of the student is completed in a manner that defines success. The current start time of February will allow for the process to be successful.	Memorialized the PK - K transition procedures/timelines; Used existing transition procedures from fifth to sixth and again at sixth to seventh grade transitions.

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Evidence-Based Practice	There needs to be a thorough review of evidence-based practice that is applicable to the various special education instruction, in-classroom support, and support programs currently operating within the district.	The district offers an array of various programs and support services that are designed based on the designated disability category of the special education population. This is an effective approach for servicing the diverse special education population within the district. However, because the needs of the population are continuously changing, revisions in students' needs warrant a change in the approaches that special education instructors utilize to service students.	This is the process that was described and shared with the evaluators regarding the work the District has been doing since 2015 with Wediko Children's Services and the "Logic Model" and is on-going. This work was not reviewed by the external evaluators.
Evidence-Based Practice	There needs to be a thorough review of evidence-based practice that is applicable to the various special education instruction, in-classroom support, and support programs currently operating within the district.	District leadership needs to begin a review process with special education staff to determine the following: ✓ What evidence-based practices are currently being utilized? ✓ How effective are these practices on student outcomes? ✓ Do they meet the identified needs of the students?	This is the process that was described and shared with the evaluators regarding the work the District has been doing since 2015 with Wediko Children's Services and the "Logic Model" and is on-going. This work was not reviewed by the external evaluators.
Evidence-Based Practice	There needs to be a thorough review of evidence-based practice that is applicable to the various special education instruction, in-classroom support, and support programs currently operating within the district.	An example of a best practice that needs to occur is in the academic support periods. It appears that staff members are struggling with "getting the work done" on home assignments, term projects, and test preparation at the secondary level. Although special education staff were observed teaching study skills, a practice needs to be in place whereby the bulk of student time is spent on learning "how to" get the home assignments completed at home, "how to" prepare for a test, and "how to" complete a term project.	

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Evidence-Based Practice	There needs to be a thorough review of evidence-based practice that is applicable to the various special education instruction, in-classroom support, and support programs currently operating within the district.	Students need to learn the skills that will assist them in becoming independent and successful learners. Certainly, they may require some assistance with various assignments, with reviewing new concepts, with having content re-taught, or with getting their work organized, but the ratio of this type of support to learning “how to do it independently” should be no more than two out of five periods. Some districts have established a practice where study skills are taught for three quarters of the period and school assignments are the vehicle by which the skills are taught. The remainder of the period is spent on teacher assistance with the various work assignments. Another approach that is utilized is using three days a week for skill development and two days a week for assistance with assignments.	

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Evidence-Based Practice	There needs to be a thorough review of evidence-based practice that is applicable to the various special education instruction, in-classroom support, and support programs currently operating within the district.	Changes in strategies of instructional and behavioral intervention practices should be aligned with the true definition of the various programs, along with the intent, purpose, function, and outcome for the students within the programs. Many positive experiences of teaching and providing instruction were observed throughout the high school, but there needs to be a review of all programs and services. The work currently taking place with Wediko is to have various special education programs review their missions and values while also determining that they are current with evidence-based practices for the intervention and support that the programs are intended to provide.	Program staff were not interviewed, nor were documents or procedures reviewed for our sub-separate programs during this external review. This is the process that was described and shared with the evaluators regarding the work the District has been doing since 2015 with Wediko Children's Services and the "Logic Model" and is on-going.
Evidence-Based Practice	There needs to be a thorough review of evidence-based practice that is applicable to the various special education instruction, in-classroom support, and support programs currently operating within the district.	Staff members need to design strategies which will allow students to be shared among programs and services. Students should have access to other special education program options and choices. They do not always fit nicely into one model or service. The sharing of a student among special education staff and programs may enable the student to benefit from the expertise of other special education staff and other program designs.	Program staff were not interviewed, nor were documents or procedures reviewed for our sub-separate programs during this external review. This practice is in place throughout the District.
Evidence-Based Practice	There needs to be a thorough review of evidence-based practice that is applicable to the various special education instruction, in-classroom support, and support programs currently operating within the district.	Recommendation 13 applies to all the models of instruction and programs, including the in-classroom support model (inclusion).	

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Evidence-Based Practice	The administration should have a unified data collection system for measuring student progress against student IEP goals.	The special education staff members are using various data sheets to measure progress. The effectiveness of the current approaches could not be determined based on the time available for this evaluation. It does appear, however, given the various computer models available, that it would be a worthwhile endeavor for the staff to begin reviewing various options and determine what data system is most appropriate for their needs.	Evaluators determined data collection was in place, but noted they were varied in format.
Evidence-Based Practice	The administration should have a unified data collection system for measuring student progress against student IEP goals.	It is important for the program staff to have the data that indicates treatment/behavior/academic goals are being addressed and progress is being recorded. The data needs to be reported in a format that is understood by both students and parents and can be used to drive instruction and supportive interventions by the school-based personnel.	Evaluators determined data collection was in place, but noted they were varied in format. Evaluators did not review any individual data collected for students, nor is the recommendation based on review of any group or individual data presentation.

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Evidence-Based Practice	The administration should have a unified data collection system for measuring student progress against student IEP goals.	<p>The staff should form a study group to research what systems are available and begin to test out some systems. Google Form Spread Sheet, Microsoft Excel Pivot Table, and Developing Minds software are a few of the many models and systems that can be adapted for a specific use. There are some staff members attempting to use Google School, but this is an individual endeavor; it needs to be district-wide.</p>	Evaluators determined data collection was in place, but noted they were varied in format.
Program Development	The district needs to further develop and expand program options for the special education population.	As noted in the Commendations section of this report, the district has invested significant resources in program development at all levels. The increasing cost of special education, especially the out-of-district expenditures, is a difficult issue for all school districts. There are variations in each district's percentages and numbers as well as in the innate characteristics that will impact on the capacity and responsibility to meet the mandates of special education. Until appropriate state and federal resources are provided to assist in offsetting the financial demand of special education, the district will continue to be burdened with costs that may seem unreasonable.	

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Program Development	The district needs to further develop and expand program options for the special education population.	The immediate reaction is to push back. Although the district has responded to the needs of the students by building capacity to serve students within the district, it is going to have to further that capacity should it want to reduce the expenditure for out-of-district placements and accompanying transportation costs.	The evaluators did not observe our sub-separate programs or interview program staff. They did not provide any data to support this finding with specific programming recommendations. . The department reviews placement data annually as part of our budgeting process and seeks funding based on our evaluation.
Program Development	The district needs to further develop and expand program options for the special education population.	Through the implementation of many of the recommendations, the number of students in special education can be reduced; therefore, some costs may be reduced over the next three to five years. The determination is to be proactive. The issue of costs for special education has been an issue since 1974 and will continue to be an issue for cities and towns. A proactive approach will go further in reducing the budgetary impact on the district.	

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Program Development	The district needs to further develop and expand program options for the special education population.	A formal approach to clinical supervision needs to be in place for social workers and psychologists, on a consistent basis. Again, as with the specific program staff, this group of professionals needs to have access to clinical supervision. They need assistance with formulating treatment plans, setting student goals, providing guidance to administrators regarding the risk level a particular student may present, providing assistance with building capacity, and assisting staff with targeting improved understanding and management of complex students and families with mental health needs.	The District has provided this resource to special education staff. This is not required by the DESE, as it is a requirement of individual professional licensure. Individuals and teams elected to do group supervision when scheduling concerns arose
Program Development	The district needs to further develop and expand program options for the special education population.	As internal programs have been developed, the need to address utilization of staff becomes a more significant requirement. The district needs to develop a process to maintain continued access to staff schedules in order to assist with the decision making for staff assignments, show where overloads may be, and see available time for various staff members.	Special Education Coordinators and building administrators oversee these schedules. Collective bargaining determines timeline.

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Program Development	The district needs to determine which disability categories it will select to develop further program capacity in order to assist with reducing the exiting of students to out-of-district placements.	<p>At the time of this report, the district has 109 students in out-of-district placements. This represents 12% of the special education population. The FY 17 state-wide average for out-of-district placements is 6.9% of the special education population. The district's out-of-district percentage for FY 17 is 14.1% of the special education population. The district clearly has a significantly higher percentage of students in out-of-district placements than the state-wide average. A reduction can occur through internal program development, building capacity. Not all students can be served within the district, but when the out-of-district census is at these numbers, an analysis of the placements needs to occur to determine who can be served within the district should a program be in place.</p>	These figures included students for whom we were programmatically responsible, but not fiscally responsible.
Program Development	The district needs to determine which disability categories it will select to develop further program capacity in order to assist with reducing the exiting of students to out-of-district placements.	The district expended 7.3 million dollars in FY 17 for out-of-district tuitions to collaborative, public day, private day, and residential placements. It is projected that the district will expend 8 million dollars for FY 18.	

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Program Development	The district needs to determine which disability categories it will select to develop further program capacity in order to assist with reducing the exiting of students to out-of-district placements.	benefit of developing in-district programs for specific disability groups of students. With the increased pressure of the special education budget on the whole school budget, the district should formulate a strategy to expand and develop further in-district appropriate programming over the next three to five years. The cost of one out-of-district placement and the amount for the transportation for that placement can support, on the average, one experienced professional position. The statewide average cost of a day school placement is \$61,000.00. To reduce the number of students in out-of-district placements and build program capacity to lower the number of students exiting the district, further internal program development will be required. Factoring in transportation costs, the district would be able to start a program that is fully staffed and appropriately equipped. For example, if one additional tuition student is returned to the district, the district would be able to provide the required support services to a program. The district is accessing its collaborative for	

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Program Development	The district needs to determine which disability categories it will select to develop further program capacity in order to assist with reducing the exiting of students to out-of-district placements.	The Germaine Lawrence School also impacts the district. This private, special needs school adds students to the middle and high school special education census. Districts like Arlington that have private, special needs schools and/or group home residences within their district face additional challenges in that students attending the district schools create an increased demand for special education services. The Commonwealth and DESE have not effectively addressed this issue from a financial perspective for Arlington and other districts that have group homes and private special needs schools within their community.	The Germaine Lawrence program closed in SY18/19

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Program Development	The district needs to determine which disability categories it will select to develop further program capacity in order to assist with reducing the exiting of students to out-of-district placements.	<p>In-order to effectively construct in-district programs that are appropriate, based on student population cohorts, resources need to be dedicated to this endeavor.</p> <p>Appropriate space, staffing, materials, and supplies must be built into the equation that leads to program development. Many times, a district needs to set the priority of program development to a specific disability population and begin the implementation on a small scale. These efforts will produce results because the district will have a program in place to accept students that transition from one level to the next, as well as unanticipated student move-ins. The effort to build capacity will reduce the reliance on out-of-district placements, reduce the exiting of students from the district, and may enable a student(s) to return to the district. These steps will assist in containing, and possibly reducing, the growth in tuition expenditures.</p>	The department reviews placement data annually and determines where needs arise as part of our budget process

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Program Development	The district needs to determine which disability categories it will select to develop further program capacity in order to assist with reducing the exiting of students to out-of-district placements.	As the district has experienced growth at the Early Childhood level, it is also experiencing growth in students with emotional/social/behavioral health needs. These populations require intensive staffing with an array of related services to appropriately support these students. There are no easy answers, but the district must decide that they will continue, in the long term, to develop in-district programs when there are sufficient cohorts to sustain programming. This proactive approach will assist in reducing the number of students that are placed outside the district, and, over a period of time, the growth in special education expenditures for out-of-district tuitions and transportation costs will be contained.	The department reviews placement data annually and determines where needs arise as part of our budget process

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Program Development	The district needs to determine which disability categories it will select to develop further program capacity in order to assist with reducing the exiting of students to out-of-district placements.	The reality is that “good programming” is costly. It is labor intensive and requires a substantial commitment from the administration and the district’s teaching staff. It can, however, also be cost-effective. When districts develop a full continuum of services, they can provide quality programs for special needs students. The benefits of having an appropriate continuum of programming across the district, for all disabilities, at all levels, will lead to the prevention of students exiting the district, the containment in the growth of the cost for special education, and the means to provide for students within the district by building capacity. Out-of-district placements, next to personnel expenditures, are the single largest impact on a special education budget. Arlington Public Schools needs to continue to monitor student needs and trends in placements to ensure that internal program options are available to meet student needs.	

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Program Development	The district needs to determine which disability categories it will select to develop further program capacity in order to assist with reducing the exiting of students to out-of-district placements.	The administration needs to decide which disability category they will try to reduce from exiting the district. Once a decision is made, an action plan needs to be developed as to when the budgetary process will allow for the expansion and implementation of new programming to address this concern. In reducing further exiting from the district, those funds earmarked for out-of-district placements would be used for program development.	The department reviews placement data annually and determines where needs arise as part of our budget process
Program Development	The district needs to determine which disability categories it will select to develop further program capacity in order to assist with reducing the exiting of students to out-of-district placements.	As more students remain in the district, they will have greater access to general education classes at all level. This, in turn, will provide students with LRE experiences. Another benefit is that students currently in sub-separate programs may have the opportunity to move into general education classes as other recommendations are implemented.	Dr. Elizabeth Keefe (Lesley University) worked with AHS & Stratton SLC-A . Wediko Children's services continued consultation to Dallin SLC program and worked with RSPs throughout the year
Program Development	The district needs to determine which disability categories it will select to develop further program capacity in order to assist with reducing the exiting of students to out-of-district placements.	Concern was raised through the interview process that a need exists at the middle school level for a Life Skills Program. This issue needs to be reviewed to determine the actual level of need.	The department reviews program needs throughout the year. The need identified here was curricular in nature, rather than development of a new/additional program

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Entrance/Exit Guidelines	There needs to be clear and concise entrance and exit guidelines in place for all special education programs and services that are well-established and followed.	The district has put forth a good deal of effort in developing programs and services to accommodate moderate to severe special needs programs. This investment has been beneficial to the district as quality programming and related services for students have been provided. Interviewed personnel were not able to articulate what they perceive as the entrance guidelines for their specific program, and they were less specific regarding exit guidelines.	Evaluators did not interview program staff. This work is being addressed by the Wediko consultation and development of the logic model
Entrance/Exit Guidelines	There needs to be clear and concise entrance and exit guidelines in place for all special education programs and services that are well-established and followed.	For all of the programs and related services, stated entrance and exit guidelines need to be in place that are based on evidence-based practice, current research, and reflect the mission and goals of each program. For the programs and services that provide a continuum of programming and services, it is essential that entrance guidelines, exit guidelines, and referral protocols are adhered to as stated, and they must be structured in a sequential manner for each district-wide program.	Evaluators did not interview program staff. This work is being addressed by the Wediko consultation and development of the logic model. Dr. Elizabeth Keefe (Lesley University) worked with AHS & Stratton SLC A .

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Entrance/Exit Guidelines	There needs to be clear and concise entrance and exit guidelines in place for all special education programs and services that are well-established and followed.	If programs have entrance and exit guidelines, they are not clearly understood by some special and general education personnel. The establishment of these guidelines can be completed, in collaboration, when program descriptions and personnel roles and responsibilities are being updated.	Evaluators did not interview program staff. This work is being addressed by the Wediko consultation and development of the logic model. Dr. Elizabeth Keefe (Lesley University) worked with AHS & Stratton SLC A .
Entrance/Exit Guidelines	There needs to be clear and concise entrance and exit guidelines in place for all special education programs and services that are well-established and followed.	The same needs to be done for the related services of speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and counseling services. There are established professional standards for these services that outline the guidelines that need to be in place. Arlington is not unlike many school districts with regards to related services. The evaluators have observed, in many other program evaluations, that discharge from these services is infrequent, even when stated goals have been mastered. It is essential that exit guidelines be formulated and followed so that when students succeed, they can either move to less service time or be discharged.	Related Service Providers (SWs, OTs/PT, SLPs, School Psychs, Team Chairs, TVI, BCBA, AT & AAC) met throughout the year during early release time to create logic models and service delivery goals/objectives, establish short and long-term goals for service and discharge

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Entrance/Exit Guidelines	There needs to be clear and concise entrance and exit guidelines in place for all special education programs and services that are well-established and followed.	If the related service providers of speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy have written entrance and exit guidelines in place, this would ensure that caseloads are appropriate and that students are recommended for a change in services at the appropriate time, not just at annual reviews and re-evaluations. Too often, students continue to receive a related service for an undetermined time, such as a full year, or year after year. With established entrance and exit guidelines, students will be able to have a service reduced, when necessary, or be discharged from that service at the appropriate time.	Related Service Providers (SWs, OTs/PT, SLPs, School Psychs, Team Chairs, TVI, BCBA, AT & AAC) met throughout the year during early release time to create logic models and service delivery goals/objectives, establish short and long-term goals for service and discharge
Entrance/Exit Guidelines	There needs to be clear and concise entrance and exit guidelines in place for all special education programs and services that are well-established and followed.	The establishment of entrance and exit guidelines, based on evidence-based practice, will assist the district in reducing the number of students on IEPs, the possible length of time a student is assigned to a specific program, and determine the duration of time that a student receives a specific service. Practices like these can also lead to the potential increase of time for students from these programs to have access to general education.	This work is being addressed by the Wediko consultation and development of the logic model. Related Service Providers (SWs, OTs/PT, SLPs, School Psychs, Team Chairs, TVI, BCBA, AT & AAC) met throughout the year during early release time to create logic models and service delivery goals/objectives, establish short and long-term goals for service and discharge

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Program and Staffing Oversight	The district has developed and invested in some very successful programs for disabled students within the district. Efforts need to be made to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the students for whom they were developed, and that staff members receive the supervision required to remain effective.	<i>Establishing a mechanism of program oversight</i> Arlington has developed many in-district programs to meet the needs of the disabilities of Autism, Intellectual, Emotional, and Developmental. It is critical that the programs continue to service the needs of the students for which they were intended. The decision-making process for placing students into a program within the district, as indicated, is unclear. A formal procedure needs to be developed and made aware to all appropriate stakeholders. The evaluators have witnessed, through numerous program evaluations, many quality programs that have been compromised by having students that do not meet the specific program guidelines placed into a specific program.	Evaluators did not interview program staff. This work is being addressed by the Wediko consultation and development of the logic model
Program and Staffing Oversight	The district has developed and invested in some very successful programs for disabled students within the district. Efforts need to be made to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the students for whom they were developed, and that staff members receive the supervision required to remain effective.	The district has made a substantial investment in program development over the past ten years. It is not in the best interest of effective program sustainability for the personnel of these programs, and the programs themselves, not to receive the ongoing oversight that they deserve. To accomplish this, Arlington needs to determine the “who” and “how” with respect to overseeing, evaluating, and monitoring of all programs. Consideration should be given to a written brochure for each program/service.	The oversight of the programs is shared by the building administrator and the special education department. Specifically supervision and evaluation of staff is shared by the Special Education Coordinator and the Principal or his designee per the collective bargaining agreement.

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Program and Staffing Oversight	The district has developed and invested in some very successful programs for disabled students within the district. Efforts need to be made to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the students for whom they were developed, and that staff members receive the supervision required to remain effective.	<i>Establishment of an annual review of program populations</i> An annual review of students placed in each program should be considered to ensure that the programs continue to meet the specific population for whom they were developed. Teachers and building administrators should be consulted to assess their input. Much effort has been committed to the programs, and efforts to assess that their continued effectiveness will be of benefit to all students, teachers, parents, and administrators. Conducting such a review will also allow the Special Education Department to remain proactive to such student needs as identifying reasons for increased reading instruction demands at the middle and high schools, and being proactive in addressing programs and services to address these factors.	Evaluators did not interview program staff nor observe the sub-separate programs. Programming is reviewed annually as part of our budget process, along with the specific program work we are doing with Wediko Children's Service.
Program and Staffing Oversight	The district has developed and invested in some very successful programs for disabled students within the district. Efforts need to be made to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the students for whom they were developed, and that staff members receive the supervision required to remain effective.	<i>Assistance to building administrators in supervising special education personnel</i> Principals need to be prepared to supervise the special educators in their buildings. The district needs to provide training and assistance to allow them to perform this task.	The oversight of the programs is shared by the building administrator and the special education department. Specifically supervision and evaluation of staff is shared by the Special Education Coordinator and the Principal or his designee per the collective bargaining agreement.

CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION	ACTION STEPS SY18-19
Program and Staffing Oversight	The district has developed and invested in some very successful programs for disabled students within the district. Efforts need to be made to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the students for whom they were developed, and that staff members receive the supervision required to remain effective.	<i>Clarification of building and central office responsibilities</i> The monthly meeting agenda with building principals should contain an item to ensure that a clear delineation of which office (school or special education) is responsible for reacting to staff needs be developed. This will allow staff at the school level to get answers to their concerns in the most-timely fashion. Issues as simple as “Who arranges interpreters?” and “How are the costs covered?” should be made clear.	Monthly meetings with individual principals and special education coordinators have been in place since 2014 and continue each year. Staff communication ladder created and distributed.

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
<p>District Team attended (Supt, Asst Supt, Sp Ed Director, SEL/Guidance, Math Director, ELA Director, ELL Director, High School Principal, Middle School Principal, and (2) Elementary Principals for DESE MTSS Institute in Sept/2019. District-wide team is registered for Feb 2020 follow-up Institute</p>	<p>GE/SE</p>	<p>Assistant Director for School Counseling and SEL</p>

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
	SE	
	SE	
	GE/SE	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
	GE	Elementary assistant principals
	GE	
<p>District Team attended (Supt, Asst Supt, Sp Ed Director, SEL/Guidance, Math Director, ELA Director, ELL Director, High School Principal, Middle School Principal, and (2) Elementary Principals for DESE MTSS Institute in Sept/2019. District-wide team is registered for Feb 2020 follow-up Institute</p>	GE	<p>Assistant Director for School Counseling and SEL; Elementary assistant principals</p>

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
	GE/SE	
	GE	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
<p>provided by Teachers21 to District Admin and reading specialists and volunteer school-based staff; District Team attended (Supt, Asst Supt, Sp Ed Director, SEL/Guidance, Math Director, ELA Director, ELL Director, High School Principal, Middle School Principal, and (2) Elementary Principals for DESE MTSS Institute in Sept/2019. District-wide team is registered for Feb 2020 follow-up Institute</p>	<p>GE</p>	<p>grant funding & operating budget</p>

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
<p>provided by Teachers21 to District Admin and reading specialists and volunteer school-based staff; District Team attended (Supt, Asst Supt, Sp Ed Director, SEL/Guidance, Math Director, ELA Director, ELL Director, High School Principal, Middle School Principal, and (2) Elementary Principals for DESE MTSS Institute in Sept/2019. District-wide team is registered for Feb 2020 follow-up Institute</p>	<p>GE</p>	<p>grant funding & operating budget</p>

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
District Team attended (Supt, Asst Supt, Sp Ed Director, SEL/Guidance, Math Director, ELA Director, ELL Director, High School Principal, Middle School Principal, and (2) Elementary Principals for DESE MTSS Institute in Sept/2019. District- wide team is registered for Feb 2020 follow-up Institute	GE	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
<p>District Team attended (Supt, Asst Supt, Sp Ed Director, SEL/Guidance, Math Director, ELA Director, ELL Director, High School Principal, Middle School Principal, and (2) Elementary Principals for DESE MTSS Institute in Sept/2019. District-wide team is registered for Feb 2020 follow-up Institute</p>	<p>GE/SE</p>	
<p>On-site coach/consultant, Dr. Elizabeth Stringer Keefe, currently work with staff in grades 6-12</p>	<p>GE/SE</p>	<p>Consultant/ professional development</p>

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
On-site coach/consultant, Dr. Elizabeth Stringer Keefe, currently work with staff in grades 6 - 12	GE/SE	Consultant/ professional development
On-site coach/consultant, Dr. Elizabeth Stringer Keefe, currently work with staff in grades 6 - 12	GE/SE	Consultant/ professional development
On-site coach/consultant, Dr. Elizabeth Stringer Keefe, currently work with staff in grades 6 - 12	GE/SE	Consultant/ professional development

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
On-site coach/consultant, Dr. Elizabeth Stringer Keefe, currently work with staff in grades 6 - 12	GE/SE	Consultant/ professional development
New elementary schedule implemented to allow for common instructional blocks across grade levels	GE/SE	Learning specialists staffing increases
On-site coach/consultant, Dr. Elizabeth Stringer Keefe, work with administrative team	GE/SE	general & special education staffing increases

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
On-site coach/consultant, Dr. Elizabeth Stringer Keefe, work with administrative team	GE/SE	general & special education staffing increases
	GE/SE	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
	GE/SE	
	GE	
On-site coach/consultant to work administrative team	GE	General education & learning specialists
On-site coach/consultant to work administrative team	GE	
On-site coach/consultant to work administrative team	GE/SE	
On-site coach/consultant to work administrative team	GE/SE	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
On-site coach/consultant currently work with staff in grades 6 - 12	GE/SE	Consultant/ professional development
On-site coach/consultant currently work with staff in grades 6 - 12	GE/SE	Consultant/ professional development
On-site coach/consultant currently work with staff in grades 6 - 12 and administrators	GE/SE	Consultant/ professional development
On-site coach/consultant currently work with staff in grades 6 - 12	GE/SE	Consultant/ professional development

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
On-site coach/consultant currently work with staff in grades 6 - 12	GE/SE	Consultant/ professional development
On-site coach/consultant currently work with staff in grades 6 - 12	GE/SE	Consultant/ professional development

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
<p>New Teacher Orientation special education training will focus on supporting students in inclusion; Common planning time/team time in elementary schedule.</p>	<p>GE/SE</p>	
<p>see on-going professional development topics shared annually</p>	<p>GE/SE</p>	<p>Professional development</p>
<p>see on-going professional development topics shared annually</p>	<p>GE/SE</p>	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
see on-going professional development topics shared annually	GE/SE	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
<p>DESE revising professional tool "Is Special Education the Right Service." District special education administrators, team chairs, and psychologist participated in state-wide feedback sessions. Follow-up from state is forthcoming, as well as other stakeholder feedback sessions.</p>	<p>GE/SE</p>	
<p>Grade level planning times/ department meetings/ building meetings should be considered for this topic</p>	<p>GE/SE</p>	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
see on-going professional development topics shared annually	GE/SE	
see on-going professional development topics shared annually	GE/SE	Request for instructional coaches; job-embedded, on-site consultants

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
see on-going professional development topics shared annually	GE/SE	Request for instructional coaches; job-embedded, on-site consultants
	SE	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
<p>BCBA delivering PD during the early release schedule related to the implementation of behavior plans, data collection, report writing, de-escalation, and behavior management strategies from Therapeutic Crisis Intervention.</p>	<p>SE</p>	
<p>New Teacher Orientation: special education training focus on supporting students in inclusion and use of paraprofessionals in the general education setting</p>	<p>GE/SE</p>	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
Paraprofessionals have representation on the AEA Joint Committee on special education	SE	
	GE/SE	
	GE/SE	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
<p>DESE revising professional tool "Is Special Education the Right Service." District special education administrators, team chairs, and psychologist participated in state-wide feedback sessions. Follow-up from state is forthcoming, as well as other stakeholder feedback sessions.</p>	<p>GE/SE</p>	
<p>DESE revising professional tool "Is Special Education the Right Service." District special education administrators, team chairs, and psychologist participated in state-wide feedback sessions. Follow-up from state is forthcoming, as well as other stakeholder feedback sessions.</p>	<p>GE/SE</p>	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
	GE/SE	
<p>Related service providers working with Wediko Children's' Services on a logic model description of the services they provide and adopting shared practices/interventions .</p>	SE	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
	SE	
	SE	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
	SE	
New Special Education orientation includes a "scavenger hunt" of on-line department resources	SE	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
	SE	
Implementing pilot of selected rubrics; Business office and human resources created internal checks in hiring practices	GE/SE	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
<p>Implementing pilot of selected rubrics; Business office and human resources created internal checks in hiring practices</p>	<p>GE/SE</p>	
<p>New teacher training for all educators provided by the Special Education Director focuses on the use of adult support in the inclusive classroom and the emphasis on promoting independence. DESE advisory also shared with participants.</p>	<p>GE/SE</p>	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
	GE/SE	
During the establishment of the Paraprofessionals contract it was determined that a committee would be formed to determine the evaluation tool and responsible staff.	GE/SE	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
<p>During the establishment of the Paraprofessionals contract it was determined that a committee would be formed to determine the evaluation tool and responsible staff.</p>		
	SE	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
	GE/SE	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
Memorialize the middle to high school transition procedures/timelines	SE	
	GE	
Memorialize the middle to high school transition procedures/timelines; The procedures have been defined for special education and similar work needs to be done for general education	GE/SE	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
on-going consultation w/ Wediko		
on-going consultation w/ Wediko		Wediko Consultation
Purchase of an "Executive Function" curriculum for pilot in the middle school. Need to develop family education/training on purpose of academic support. Also needs to be embedded into the work of general educators.	GE/SE	Instructional materials

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
<p>Purchase of an "Executive Function" curriculum for pilot in the middle school. Need to develop family education/training on purpose of academic support. Also needs to be embedded into the work of general educators.</p>	<p>GE/SE</p>	<p>Instructional materials; Professional development; Professional development</p>

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
Wediko consultation is on- going	SE	Professional development/consultat ion
	SE	
	SE/GE	Professional development; Consultant; Instructional materials

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
<p>Progress monitoring tools and data collection are often very specific to the goal itself. In a review of IEPs it is becoming clear that it's not a uniform collection tool that needs to be created/purchased, but rather training for staff on goal writing that begins with data collection in mind.</p>		

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
<p>Progress monitoring tools and data collection are often very specific to the goal itself. In a review of IEPs it is becoming clear that it's not a uniform collection tool that needs to be created/purchased, but rather training for staff on goal writing that begins with data collection in mind.</p>		

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
	SE	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
<p>Director of Special Education & Director of School Counseling creating a district-wide Behavioral Health Team to address needs of this professional population, as well as assess district resources and capacity.</p>	SE/GE	
	SE/GE	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
<p>In SY18-19, District had 91 students in OOD placements. Currently there are 85 students in OOD placements.</p>	<p>SE</p>	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
<p>Added staffing to the Summit Program at OMS and the Compass program at AHS.</p>	<p>SE</p>	<p>The SLC figures have dropped at Brackett & Dallin (12 & 10 students respectively as of Nov 2019) and projections based on current student populations do not predict a significant increase. Therefore there is not an increase requested in staffing for next school year at the elementary level.</p>

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
Added staffing to Summit Program at OMS. High school Summit program participating in consultation with MacLean's Hospital.	SE	MacLean's consultation currently funded by the hospital.

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
Added staffing to our Summit program at OMS and Compass program at AHS.	SE	
Dr. Keefe (Stonehill College) will continue to work with AHS/Stratton. Wediko will be working with Dallin SLC, AHS - Compass & Summit, OMS - Summit, Gibbs - Tier II programming	SE	Consultant
Patterns of exiting students did call for the expansion of the Compass program at AHS.		Instructional materials; professional development

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
continuation of Wediko consultation	SE	Professional development/consultat ion
Dr. Keefe (Stonehill College) will continue to work with AHS/Stratton. Wediko will be working with Dallin SLC, AHS - Compass & Summit, OMS - Summit, Gibbs - Tier II programming & RSPs	SE	Professional development/consultat ion

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
<p>Dr. Keefe (Stonehill College) will continue to work with AHS/Stratton. Wediko will be working with Dallin SLC, AHS - Compass & Summit, OMS - Summit, Gibbs - Tier II programming & RSPs</p>	SE	Professional development/consultat ion
<p>RSPs continue to meet during release time to identify consistent practices across schools and provide training/share resources around these practices</p>	SE	Professional development/consultat ion

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
RSPs continue to meet during release time to identify consistent practices across schools and provide training/share resources around these practices	SE	Professional development/consultation
RSPs continue to meet during release time to identify consistent practices across schools and provide training/share resources around these practices	SE	Professional development/consultation

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
continuation of Wediko consultation	SE	Professional development/consultat ion
	SE	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
	SE	
	GE/SE	

SY 19 - 20	GE/SE	Budget implication FY21
	GE/SE	