



# Special Education Update

Prepared for the Milton School Committee  
February 28, 2024

# Agenda

- Task Force update
- Programming updates
- Transition Planning
- New IEP adoption/PowerSchool Special Programs
- SEPAC



# Task Force

- MPS Special Education Program Review completed in the spring of 2023
  - Outlined areas of strength and highlighted concerns
- Developed a multi-disciplinary Task Force to tackle challenges in Special Education through the lens of the Program Review
  - Participants: special and general educators, educational assistants, related service providers, specialists, building and district administrators, a SEPAC representative, and a School Committee Member
  - Meets monthly at Pierce Middle School
- Goal: Gain a deep understanding of the Program Review and generate priorities for the development of a multi-year plan for progress in Special Education

# Task Force

- First two sessions were reviewing the common strengths and challenges across the district
- Session three clarified challenges, identified common special education language barriers, and created prioritization lists based on common themes
  - Highlighted more immediate priorities
  - Discussion of the need for a common understanding of inclusion and the least restrictive environment
- Immediate priorities
  - Vertical alignment of programs, including clarity, common language, and understanding of the needs of students in these programs
  - Continuum of Professional Development plan that is meaningful for special educators, related service providers, and educational assistants
  - Ongoing improvement of Tiered Systems of Support
- Other priorities
  - Curriculum review for a diverse range of students with disabilities
  - Ongoing planning, understanding, and development of co-teaching across the district as a service

# Program development

- Ongoing analysis to determine MPS program design, assessment and evaluation
- Analysis and understanding of current data sources and use of data to identify program needs
- Lack of alignment and increased confusion for students, educators, support staff, and parents
  - Need continuity of criteria across programs within the district
- Need for clearer communication across the district and community regarding access to programs
- Currently 65 student placed out of district with a variety of disabilities, but primarily ASD, Emotional, SLD, and Neurological



# Program Development Progress

- Draft form of program grid currently being reviewed by Team Chairs
  - Include vertical alignment of program names
  - Indicators and student needs within each program
  - Next step will be for building leaders and special educators to review
- Clarify systems for using data to ensure appropriate individualized support in the least restrictive environment
  - Data supports closing the educational gap while building independence
- A working draft of a program guide by next school year
  - Include the program grid
  - Special Education definitions
  - Available for all stakeholders

# Transition planning

- Area of need as expressed through program review with common theme through all stakeholders
  - Specific concerns in the process of transitioning between schools/programs (e.g. PreK-K, fifth to sixth grade, eighth grade to ninth grade, twelfth grade to post graduate)
- Ongoing agenda item during monthly building based Special Education meetings
- February early dismissal focused on current systems for transition and needed improvements
  - Worked on beginning to build structure and caseloads
  - Building process for ongoing communication, support, and attendance at IEP meetings
- Will meet again in March/April to further clarify student needs and generating caseloads
- Have begun meeting with building leadership to identify scheduling needs for special education

# New IEP adoption

- Requirement of a September 2024 roll out by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)
  - Milton will roll out the new IEP at the start of the 2024 school year
- Team chairs and special education leaders have attended the initial DESE supported meetings
- Initial educator/related services training
  - Began in December
  - Follow up training in the spring in alignment with PowerSchool onboarding
- Identifying training opportunities for general educators, building leaders, and curriculum coordinators/directors
- Working with SEPAC on parent engagement and training



# New IEP/PowerSchool Special Programs

- Using PowerSchool as our current student information system (SIS)
- Frontline is current IEP/504 System
- PowerSchool and Frontline were not compatible, looked into PowerSchool Special Programs
  - Held stakeholder meetings with special educators, team chairs, related service providers to get their feedback on Frontline and potential move to PowerSchool Special Programs
  - Team Chairs met with PowerSchool Special Programs
- Moving forward with PowerSchool Special Programs
  - New IEP currently available
- Digital signature available with parent agreement
- Access to Team Chairs, Educators, and Related Service providers will be available in April
  - Piloting the system
  - Identifying any questions or concerns to work out before actual roll out
  - 18 hours of PowerSchool Special Programs training to help with onboarding



# Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)

- Ongoing attendance at monthly SEPAC meetings
  - Provide updates and answer special education related questions
- Monthly meetings with co-chairs to move collaborative work forward
  - Potential parent training
  - Increase in parent engagement
  - Prioritize communication between caregivers and district faculty/staff

Thank you!



