

School Committee Presentation-Special Education Updates

December 13, 2012

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Agenda

Grant Initiatives

- Grant 274: Special Education Program Improvement
- Grant 235: Concurrent Enrollment
- Grant 324: Massachusetts Tiered System of Support: Next Steps in Universal Design in Learning

Collaboration with CTE and Special Education

Other Initiatives

- Increased use of technology
- Program Evaluation-working with students who have emotional and behavioral challenges
- Observations at other schools/districts who are fully inclusive

Grant 274-Special Education Program Improvement

- Grant 274 is funded through the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Districts who applied are required to develop professional development activities that support ARRA-IDEA Investment activities
- To advance the knowledge and skills of educators working with students with disabilities
- To provide high –quality, job-embedded and sustained professional development activities

Priority Areas

- Strengthening Curriculum and Instruction
- Secondary Transition

Purpose of the grant

- To fund professional development activities that will improve the skills and capacity of educators to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities
- To promote inclusive practices across all settings
- To have all teachers work collaboratively to improve outcomes for students

2011-2012 Implementation

- 22 special education and general education teachers who teach students in grades 5-12 partnered with each other to develop curriculum using the principals of Universal Design in Learning
- Together these teachers attended training at the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) that focuses on Universal Design in Learning
- Throughout the year, teacher partners worked together to develop curriculum that is universally designed so that all students have access
- CAST had follow up sessions with the teams of teachers
- All curriculum that was designed was put on a shared drive at each level so all educators have access
- A number of books on Universal Design for Learning were purchased through the grant to allow for sustainability of content

2011-2012 Implementation

- Secondary Transition Binders provided to all special educators in grades 7-12
- Textbook on Secondary Transition provided to all special educators in grades 7-12
- Work Opportunities contracted to review records and provide professional development to teachers
- Planning for first Transition Fair in Weymouth-November 2012

Teacher Comments on Grant 274-UDL

- *The files on the shared district drive are very helpful as exemplary unit plans, lessons and activities are easy to access.*
- *The in-house professional development day where Weymouth teachers and staff from CAST shared our knowledge was very helpful.*
- *I'm so glad you secured the grant again*
- *Attending the workshops at the CAST office helped me to look at the way we differentiate in a different way. CAST has a lot of resources that they shared with us.*
- *More than anything else, my experience helps me to conceptualize the path our students take to access content. The new Core Standards set an excellent benchmark for student achievement, but UDL helps me understand what students need to meet those marks.*
- *It also helped me to understand the inherent logic of Universal Design. I still think about the e-mail and curb-cut anecdotes on a daily basis. Learning happens in a global sense, and any tool I provide or effort I make to help one student has a great chance of helping all students.*
- *I now plan lessons with common goals, and a continuum of tools to help students learn.*

2012-2013

- Grant 274 has been approved for \$51,731
- Teacher teams will be formed at PK-4 grade levels
- Teams will again work with CAST, an educational non-profit research and development organization on Universal Design in Learning (www.cast.org)
- Study groups/PLC's will utilize texts that were purchased last year so that more teachers will learn about Universal Design in Learning and Secondary Transition
- Lessons will continue to be put on shared drives so all teachers have models and access
- Continued professional development for Secondary Transition will be provided

Grant 235-Concurrent Enrollment

- The grant is funded through the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Districts are required to partner with a state institution of higher education
- Weymouth has worked with Bridgewater State University and a number of other districts since September, 2011
- 2012-2013-Weymouth has increased the number of students who participate in this grant

Purpose of Grant

- To develop partnerships between public high schools and state public institutions of higher education
- To offer inclusive concurrent enrollment opportunities for students with significant disabilities ages 18-22
- To improve systems that serve these students
- To promote and enhance academic, social, functional, and employment skills and outcomes for students

Grant 324-District and School Implementation: Massachusetts Tiered System of Support (MTSS): Next Steps in Universal Design for Learning

- Competitive Grant offered through the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (\$27,588)-Office of Massachusetts Tiered System of Support
- Focus- Professional Development around Universal Design in Learning (UDL)
- Administrators and personnel from one school will participate in a UDL Academy offered through Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST)
- Dates of program- December 2012-June 2013

What is MTSS?

- Massachusetts has developed a blueprint outlining a single system of supports that is responsive to the academic and non-academic needs of all students. This blueprint, the Massachusetts Tiered System of Support (MTSS), provides a framework for school improvement that focuses on system structures and supports across the district, school, and classroom to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students, including students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are academically advanced. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mtss/>
- Schools and districts are encouraged to work toward an integrated approach to support students' academic and social-emotional competencies. All students receive academic instruction and behavioral supports that include differentiation and extension activities and are guided by the three [Universal Design for Learning](#) principles (multiple means of representation, multiple means of action and expressions, and multiple means of engagement).

What is CAST?

- CAST is an educational research & development organization that works to expand learning opportunities for all individuals through Universal Design for Learning.
- Founded in 1984 as the Center for Applied Special Technology, CAST has earned international recognition for its innovative contributions to educational products, classroom practices, and policies

What is Universal Design in Learning?

- **Universal Design for Learning**
is a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn.
- UDL provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone--not a single, one-size-fits-all solution but rather flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs.

Collaboration with Career Technical Education

- Meeting November 7, 2012 with Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, and Career Technical Education staff and students
- The goal is for high school CTE students to build equipment for students who have physical disabilities and to come to understand how their skills benefit others

Other Initiatives

- Increased use of technology and professional development related to technology
- Program Evaluation regarding our work with students who have emotional, behavioral and social issues
- Observations at other schools who are fully inclusive