

TRI-TOWN SCHOOL UNION
SPECIAL EDUCATION SPRING REPORT: 2010

ENROLLMENT and REFERRAL / EVALUATION DATA:

Our current status:

BOXFORD:

The total number of special education students in Preschool through grade 6 (including those students in out of district placements) is 157; (3 of these students attend private schools at parent expense and have an IEP being monitored by the district; however, parents have chosen not to have their children access the proposed services.) This is a decrease of 2 students from June 1, 2009. Based on the 157 students that do attend district sponsored programs and access services, the current percentage of special education students in Grades K – 6 is 15.9%, which is an increase of 0.2% from Spring, 2009 (even though our headcount decreased slightly, the overall enrollment has decreased more, therefore the percentage shows a minimal increase.)

MIDDLETON:

The total number of special education students in Preschool through grade 6 (including those students in out of district placements) is 153. This is an increase of 29 students from Spring, 2009, and an increase of 5 students since October, 2009. The current percentage of special education students in Grades K – 6 is 17.2 %, a 2.8 % decrease from last year.

Given the state average of special education students is about 16%, I was concerned about the rising numbers and percentage in Middleton over the past three years. The decline this year is encouraging.

Our evaluation batteries have expanded over the years and are more sophisticated than those used by most districts, and typically examine more dimensions of learning and memory; which could explain some of the higher than average numbers; however, it is important for all to remember that within the range of typical learners, there will be children who show uneven cognitive development and/or skills acquisition; it is not uncommon for children (and adults) to have distinct learning style preferences and weaknesses, and not every weakness is indicative of a disability.

TOPSFIELD:

The total number of special education students in Preschool through Grade 6 (including those students in out of district placements) is 121. This is an increase of 5 students from last Spring. Our Kindergarten – Grade 6 special education headcount is 102, which is divided by the total K-6 population (including our out of district students) to obtain the special education percentage for this report. The current percentage of special education students in Grades K–6 is 16.3%, a 0.6% increase over last year. This is consistent with the State of Massachusetts average.

Referral/ Evaluations:

I have included Referral / Evaluation data in the district specific charts at the end of this report. As the evaluation process alone consumes anywhere from 8 to 36 hours of staff time per child, it is helpful to examine how many children per year are referred and evaluated for special education eligibility within our district. Please refer to the attached charts detailing evaluation and other data from the past six years.

The implementation of a “Response to Intervention (RTI)” framework for monitoring all students’ achievement and tracking individual student progress will be helpful in ensuring that not every student who struggles is referred for a special education evaluation. The RTI framework is one that expects all students’ progress in key curriculum areas (Reading, Writing, Mathematics) will be assessed regularly and those results analyzed not only to track individual student progress, but also to inform instructional decision making so that teaching/instruction is altered based upon these ongoing progress monitoring results; this assessment-driven teaching approach is also referred to as a Tiered Instructional Model or Differentiated Instruction. The RTI framework is also used as an entrance and exit gateway to and out of regular education support services, such as the programs currently in place to provide supplemental instruction in Reading, Writing, and/or Mathematics. RTI cannot be used as a means to delay students’ referral for a special education evaluation, so embedded in best practices under RTI is the expectation that, when necessary, some students can still be referred for a special education evaluation without going through a ‘full cycle’ of RTI intervention programs.

The districts’ assessment calendar with common progress monitoring assessment protocols identified in each grade level will be helpful for to analyze data results and look for patterns so that teachers may adjust and modify curriculum to ensure that any ‘curriculum’ gaps are filled. These common assessments will also help teachers recognize those children that may be lagging behind and through consultation with curriculum specialists/ principals and their grade level colleagues, be able to devise more intense instructional plans for struggling learners. With earlier and more targeted intervention by classroom teachers, regular education support programs and curriculum specialists’/principals’ oversight, it is expected that the students will be able to make progress within the regular education programs framework and not require special education referral and/or services.

As the vast majority of elementary level Initial special education evaluations are made due to a student’s difficulty in learning to read, the implementation of a Guided Reading model for the provision of reading instruction should also have a positive impact upon special education referrals, meaning a decline in referrals. Within a Guided Reading framework, teachers design reading lessons to include whole class instruction, small group work (where students are grouped flexibly throughout the year), as well as individual instruction and independent work. Teachers adjust the small group and individual instruction, and independent work according to assessment data (including quick ‘dip-sticking’ or checking for understanding. This allows teachers to really push those accelerated learners beyond typical lesson outcomes, target students who require a second re-teaching of a concept/ strategy, and identify students who need additional practice beyond what the lesson plan/script recommends. As teachers individualize the reading instruction within this framework, students who need more time (re-teaching) and/or additional practice are handled within the regular education framework of reading instruction and will be less likely to be identified as a student in need of special education.

BOXFORD:

The Preschool number of children referred for evaluation remained the same as last year at 15, 7 of these children were referred through Early Intervention (EI).

The number of children referred for an Initial Special Education Eligibility determination in grade 2 also stayed the same at 12 students this year. There was an increase in the numbers of students referred for evaluation in grades K and 1, from 7 to 13 and from 8 to 12, respectively.

In examining the numbers in both grades 2 and 3 over the past three years, one can see a decline in the grade 3 referrals for initial evaluation and an increase in the grade 2 referrals; we are catching the struggling learners earlier.

In examining the initial referral numbers for the Spofford Pond School, grade 5, while 2 less students were referred for an evaluation this year compared with last year, if one looks at the past 5-year history, grade 5 has nearly the highest number of referrals than any other grade level; this is unusual as a more typical pattern is for the highest number of referrals to be in grades 2 and 3, with then declining referrals in grades 4-6.

MIDDLETON:

There is an 11 student decrease from Spring, 2009 to this year (and a 2 student decrease from two years ago) in the number of children referred for *Initial* special education evaluations at the Fuller Meadow School. The largest area showing a decrease of initial referrals this year over last year is for Preschool age children. Our Kindergarten & Grade 1 students are down slightly from last year showing a minimal decrease. Grades 4/5 were equal to last year, however Grade 6 referrals this year showed the largest increase of 6 this year compared to only 1-2 students for the previous 3 years.

The number of Re-Evaluations decreased quite a bit this year; 54 this year versus 67 last year.

The total number of students who had an evaluation at the Fuller Meadow School this year totals 68 compared to 90 evaluations last year. At Howe Manning School, 38 students had evaluations this year compared to 32 last year. Clearly, a very time and labor-intensive process, and one that is three times as likely to require far more staff time at FM than at HM.

TOPSFIELD:

We had 1 less referral for Initial Evaluations this year and the same number (45) of Re-Evaluations as last year. However, in comparing Initial evaluation data to two years ago, there is a substantial decrease from 49 to 31. This year were 25 initial evaluations at the Steward School compared with 31 last year. There were 6 initial referrals at Proctor this year compared to only 1 last year, one of which was a 'carryover' from grade 3 to 4. The 6 initial referrals were equally divided between all grade levels at Proctor.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM and PLANNING NEEDS:

Enrollment / Program Models Update:

Preschool Programs:

Under federal regulations, we are required to evaluate children BEFORE their third birthday and if they are deemed eligible for special education, they are entitled to begin accessing those services ON their third birthday. This is the age group that is the most difficult to plan for, as many children are not even involved in Early Intervention (the birth to age 3 special education system) at the time we are planning our staffing and budget needs for the following year. Therefore, relationships with the 5 different local early intervention agencies is critical so that we can be informed as early as possible of those children likely to require a preschool program especially those children with extensive needs.

Integrated Preschool programs operate in all three primary schools across the Tri-Town. These programs offer not only an exceptional education to students with disabilities; they also educate another 50-60 students that are typically developing. Our Preschool teachers are all licensed as Special Education Teachers, and are very experienced early childhood educators. We are fortunate to have had the same preschool teachers for many years, with our 'junior' member of the preschool staff having served for 7 years and the others for more than a decade.

Enrollment data by town:

BOXFORD:

There are 65 children enrolled in the Boxford integrated preschool program. Five (5) of those children have an IEP that includes the integrated preschool program; the remaining 60 are tuition paying peer models. There are 14 children who either have an IEP for therapy services only, (some of whom then also pay tuition for the preschool program), attend other preschools, or are at home.

MIDDLETON:

There are 64 children enrolled in our integrated preschool programs. Four (4) of those children are special education students; the remaining 60 are tuition paying peer models. There are another 8 preschool-age children who come for therapy services only and either attends another private preschool or is at home. We also have 2 Middleton students that attend the Intensive Preschool Program at the Steward School in Topsfield.

We have a decline in enrollment projected for our three-year old classes next year, therefore, we are not running the Tuesday/Thursday morning session of preschool for three year olds. This decline is felt to correlate with the poor economy the past two years; more people are either out of work and therefore do not need or cannot afford preschool, or more families have both parents working and therefore require full day care for their children. We have noticed the same decline in Topsfield and are piloting a few extended day program options there next year. We will also be examining new marketing and recruitment strategies next fall in order to bolster our Middleton preschool enrollment for the following school year.

TOPSFIELD:

Our two *integrated preschool* programs currently have 16 special education students with IEPs who attend the program and 29 typically developing (tuition paying) children enrolled in our integrated preschool programs which totals 45 children ages 3-5 receiving early childhood education with us. Ten (10) of the special education students also pay a fee to attend a Lunch Bunch/Extended Day program as this program is not part of their IEP. Thus, tuition fees are collected for 39 children.

The Topsfield Schools *Intensive Preschool* program is a high quality program accessed by students in all 3 communities of the Tri-Town. This program was originally set up by the Topsfield Schools and is therefore staffed with Topsfield employees, who have all developed tremendous expertise in educating our youngest most vulnerable students. This program offers up to 25 hours of education/ week; the typical integrated preschool program offers 5-12 hours of education/ week.

The Topsfield School Committee establishes a tuition rate for the Intensive Preschool to offset the actual costs of the special education teacher and aides as well as a “Therapy Rate” for the Psychologist/ Speech/ OT/ and/or PT services that are delivered as part of a student’s IEP. Should any student require other specialized services for which we need an outside service provider, (such as a Vision Teacher), the district of the child’s residence is billed directly for those costs.

Current Intensive Preschool Enrollment by town:

| | |
|------------|---|
| BOXFORD: | 2 |
| MIDDLETON: | 1 |
| TOPSFIELD: | 1 |

Substantially separate classrooms:

We have Language-based Learning Center-1 (LLC-1) programs at 5 of the six schools with Cole School being the only one without a specific LLC program; the Cole staff are able to provide similar types of services, if needed, within the resource room model at Cole. A LLC program is one that provides special education to students whose disabilities are language-based, meaning they have particular difficulty understanding and using language efficiently, and therefore, require additional and specialized instruction in order to acquire literacy skills, namely to read and to write effectively, and across the curriculum. Teachers in LLC-1 programs tend to have additional training beyond special education licensure requirements in order to further enhance their knowledge of specialized teaching methodologies.

The Spofford Pond School has 2 LLC-1 programs which has worked well as this creates more flexible grouping options for the students; student needs can fluctuate year to year so having two classrooms has enabled us to design more individually tailored programs.

We also have another type of Language-based Learning Center Program (LLC-2) at 3 schools, Fuller Meadow, Proctor, and Spofford Pond. The Spofford Pond program is jointly staffed by Boxford and Middleton staff, as the enrolled students are residents of both towns. We were able to use some of our Boxford ARRA grant funding (federal stimulus program) to purchase additional materials and pay for teacher training. Middleton funds one-half the teacher salary and the full aide salary for their staff assigned to this program using a portion of

their ARRA grant funds. This program provides more highly specialized educational services for children with neuro-developmental disabilities, including Autism, neurological, and cognitive disabilities. By operating this as a partnership program, we are able to create a program comparable to a collaborative or private special education school within our own community, which is advantageous to the students, parents and the district. The Spofford Pond (and Boxford) community have embraced these students and the staff work closely with general education colleagues to plan and implement individualized integration opportunities. Given the current proportion of students is more heavily weighted by Middleton, in addition to the staffing contribution, Middleton Schools also pay Boxford Schools tuition based upon actual program operating costs.

The LLC-2 program at the Proctor School is in its second year of operation and has provided its student population with a combination of intensive academic, language and social-behavioral instruction, as well as fully-supported inclusion opportunities. This program 'looped up' from the Steward School.

The LLC-2 program at the Fuller Meadow School is also in its second year of operation and has been able to individualize the educational experience for its enrolled students to best reflect their cognitive, emotional, and language needs. Some students spend nearly all their time in the LLC-2 classroom, while others are included into general education classrooms for the majority of the week. This program also has one Boxford student enrolled.

As we examine the students' needs across the three towns in planning for next and future school years, we will continue to consider student needs from across our three towns to develop and operate program models to serve students with unique needs in one location whenever possible; this allows us to develop the talents and skills of staff at a particular school in order to best meet the needs of these students, while also providing students with a larger peer group with whom to affiliate. The social needs of students with more intensive disabilities require special attention and there are times that these students can feel isolated from their peers if there is no one else with similar needs, therefore, to combine students from the different towns not only helps us to create cost-effective programs, it also has had a positive impact upon the students sense of belonging.

Partial and Full Inclusion Models:

The vast majority of students enrolled in special education programs (K-6) are provided specialized instruction within the context of the general education classrooms and/or with minimal time pulled out, and the next most common model is a Partial Inclusion program, meaning a special education student can spend anywhere from 21% to 59% of his/her week pulled out from a general education classroom and educated within a resource room or learning center, with the remaining students participating in self-contained or out-of-district programs. The special education teachers work very closely with their classroom teacher colleagues to ensure accommodations and modifications are in place that enable students to succeed. This inclusion philosophy and approach is consistent with longitudinal research that students benefit more from special education services provided within a general education setting; research indicates that students have improved self-esteem, have access to higher level thinking from peers, have access to a more complete curriculum experience/exposure, and have more peer models who exhibit positive behaviors for longer periods of time when educated in the general education setting.

| | <u>FULL INCLUSION</u> | <u>PARTIAL</u> | <u>SELF-CONTAINED</u> | <u>ODP</u> |
|------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|------------|
| BOXFORD: | 74% | 21% | 1% | 4% |
| MIDDLETON: | 39% | 53% | 7% | 2% |
| TOPSFIELD: | 69% | 16% | 14% | 3% |

In Middleton, the higher number and percentage of Partial Inclusion rather than Full Inclusion programs warrants further review by the Middleton Leadership Team as we want to ensure that students are not recommended for pull out programs without serious consideration given to providing the special education services within the general education classroom, with appropriate modifications to the curriculum and /or instruction rather than defaulting to a ‘pull out’ model of service delivery. With continued training and support for teachers as well as Principals/Curriculum Specialists emphasis on incorporating Differentiated/ Tiered Instructional models within the general education classrooms and the increased use and comfort with Guided Reading frameworks for literacy instruction, classroom teachers will continue to add to and strengthen their teaching strategies tool kit enabling more students with disabilities to remain within the general education setting for more of their week.

SUMMER PROGRAMS:

We are currently preparing for the special education summer programs for those children who would experience substantial regression of skills during the summer months. (We are not obligated to provide summer programming for children who would simply “benefit” from additional instruction.) Topsfield is our “host district” this summer; and we have planned for over 200 Tri-Town special education students to participate in 4 different programs. We begin July 6th and end August 13th.

The *Instructional Skills Program* is the program most commonly accessed for students with IEPs (about 200 students have been recommended for this program). This program provides small group instruction in Reading, Writing and Mathematics, for up to 24 hours during the summer. This program will operate July 6th through August 13th. Many Tri-Town teachers and aides will be providing this instruction for our summer programs.

We will operate two *Preschool* programs for 5 weeks, July 6th – August 5th, 3 days/week for 3 hours/day. One *Intensive Needs Preschool* will operate 4 days/week for 3.5 hours/day for 6 weeks, from July 6th – August 12th.

We are also offering two program models for children with neuro-developmental disabilities; these are our *Social Skills Pragmatic Language and Academic Development Program*. One program will provide academic instruction 3 mornings/ week for 3 weeks and 3 weeks of 5 full days (9-4), at the Beverly YMCA/Sterling Center. The Beverly YMCA has fairly well-developed Adaptive Programs and we have been co-planning for the summer with their Adaptive Programs and Summer Programs directors to ensure our students with significant weaknesses in social and pragmatic language skills can be integrated into their small group camper programs. We have hired our own staff to work within this program supporting our students to ensure the camp experience can be tailored and adapted as necessary, to provide the optimum exposure and practice opportunities. Mary (Channell) Thomas, our Intensive

Needs Education/Autism Specialist has been the main person working on this program development; she will also work as the summer coordinator for this program. We have a 3-day training program planned for the last week of June and Mary also provided training this past Saturday to over 100 YMCA staff involved in their camp programs regarding how best to support children with disabilities.

The other *Social Skills Pragmatic Language and Academic Development Program* we are planning is housed at the Proctor School and is a partnership program with the Topsfield Recreation Department camp program. This program operates 5 days/week, 9:00-1:00, and we have hired 2 teachers to work on academic skill reinforcement, a school psychologist to provide explicit social skills instruction, and several social coaches to help the students practice and apply the taught social skills during the various camp games and activities run by the Topsfield Recreation Department. This program was very successful last year and we worked with a small group of parents during this school year to identify ways to further enhance and specialize the experience for children; we look forward to another successful year in this partnership.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION INFORMATION:

Neither the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), nor the Federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), has issued new special education regulations or directives this year. Next year we are on the DESE calendar to have a mid-cycle Coordinated Program Review (CPR). During a mid-cycle CPR, the DESE Program Quality Assurance Liaison to the districts will follow up on any area requiring corrective action during the prior full CPR (of which there were very few for us); they will also look for updates to our practices and policies regarding any new regulations or legislation. This will mean the CPR will examine how the districts have implemented the new Anti-bullying legislation.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION:

Mary (Channell) Thomas, the Tri-Town Intensive Needs Educational/Autism Specialist, received an award from the Northeast Arc, the largest and most influential regional non-profit agency devoted to improving the lives of people with developmental disabilities. Mary has organized and led a bicycle-riding clinic during April vacation every year for the past 7 years, at the Proctor School. This bike clinic has grown over the years and Mary is helped by many volunteers. Another volunteer, also recognized at the Awards ceremony, is Grace Serpa, a Boxford parent, who has also donated not only her time, but coffee and food to fuel the volunteers. Bicycle riding is an activity enjoyed by many families, so learning to ride a bike has not only helped the individual child, it has also resulted in families having one more activity in which all family members can participate. This bike clinic has now taught nearly 200 children with disabilities how to ride a bike; no small feat given the disabilities these children have to overcome.

SPECIAL EDUCATION FUNDING MECHANISMS / PROGRAMS:

The *Circuit Breaker* law (State legislation) was reimbursed at 40% as the final reimbursement amount for the claims reported at the end of the FY '09 school year; it is unclear what our reimbursement rate will be for FY '10 as the State struggles with trying to balance its budget. This fiscal reimbursement program is to provide funds to cities/towns for expenses related to the education of those individual students whose education programs cost more than 4 times the state foundation rate, meaning that the state will reimburse a city/town for up to 75% of the expenses over that 4 x foundation threshold, which is \$38,636 for FY '10. The money each town receives is for documented, allowable expenses from the prior school/fiscal year. Monies received through this program are deposited into a school department account that is used to pay out of district tuitions and related special education expenses during the year in which the funds are received.

REIMBURSEMENT (at 40% for FY '09 expenditures):

| | |
|------------|----------|
| BOXFORD: | \$ 5556 |
| MIDDLETON: | \$69,254 |
| TOPSFIELD: | \$29,900 |

The final quarter payment is not received until September; we anxiously monitor information related to this program.

MUNICIPAL MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT PROJECT:

This project has undergone major revisions over the past several years due to increasing Federal reporting requirements and restrictions. As you likely know, Medicaid is a medical insurance program and therefore the reporting requirements and restrictions are aimed at the medical community and billing practices. As a result, school districts, especially small districts, are finding it difficult to meet all the requirements without outside 'expert' assistance. As a result, we contract with *UMass Medical Center for Healthcare Finance* to conduct our billing for us. They process our "Direct Service" claims and the Administrative Activity claims throughout the school year. The Administrative Activities Claim (AAC) portion of our reimbursements is also a small percentage of our overall reimbursement and requires a significant amount of time from our therapists, the special education office, and the business/personnel office in the reporting of claims data.

| | | |
|------------|----------|--------------|
| BOXFORD: | \$13,900 | (5 students) |
| MIDDLETON: | \$10,587 | (6 students) |
| TOPSFIELD: | \$ 9800 | (4 students) |

GRANT PROGRAMS:

Early Childhood and Federal IDEA:

These are both our "entitlement" grant projects and serve to enhance our programs by allowing us to partially fund a variety of positions. In Boxford and Middleton, the Early

Childhood grant (fund code 262) has been between \$10,000 and \$11,000/annually, and between \$3000 and \$3500 in Topsfield; in all 3 towns the funds offset salary of a preschool teacher and required benefits costs.

| | <u>FY 2010 allocation</u> | <u>FY 2011 allocation</u> |
|------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| BOXFORD: | \$10,327 | TBD |
| MIDDLETON: | \$11,289 | |
| TOPSFIELD: | \$ 2489 | |

The federal IDEA (fund code 240) money remained stable with the prior year’s grant amount; this grant money partially offsets special education teacher/ psychologists’ and aides salaries; roughly 10% of those salary costs must also be accounted for in the grant to pay for benefits (9% to Teachers’ or Essex County (aides) Retirement and another nearly 1% for other federal mandates.) This leaves a small amount available for consultation, supplies/materials, and staff training initiatives.

| | <u>FY 2010 allocation</u> | <u>FY 2011 allocation</u> |
|------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| BOXFORD: | \$198,208 | TBD |
| MIDDLETON: | \$196,582 | |
| TOPSFIELD: | \$121,712 | |

ARRA/ Early Childhood:

We chose to delay our application for these funds until FY 2011 in all three towns; this will allow us to combine the 2-year allocation into one grant, giving us a larger pool of money to work with.

We did just receive a competitive grant, \$5000, to fund staff time to examine our Early Literacy Practices to identify those methods and practices that best support students with disabilities; thanks to Julie Jayne, Early Childhood Coordinator, Boxford and Katie Lyons, Special Education Teacher/PS Coordinator, Topsfield, who co-authored the grant proposal. Teachers from the public and private tri-town area preschools and kindergartens, will work together this summer to share materials, literacy education philosophies, and develop common ‘exit outcomes’ for preschool students so that children entering Kindergarten from any preschool program are more universally prepared to meet the Literacy demands of Kindergarten. I would like to delay applying for our Early Childhood ARRA grants pending the outcome and recommendations of this study group, which will conclude its work by August 31st.

ARRA/ IDEA:

I have included in previous School Committee meeting packets information about the Federal government stimulus grant funds made available through existing funding streams/ grant programs, and will end in the upcoming fiscal year.

The ARRA grant program is one that requires the district to identify whether the funds will be used for “Recovery” or “Investment” programs/ efforts. *Recovery* programs are generally described as those that preserve jobs for staff, even if those jobs are configured

differently. *Investment* programs are those that are geared towards improving a district’s capacity to educate and improve the outcomes for students. As this money is coming to us through the special education federal grant program, IDEA, all our ARRA money must be expended in a way that benefits the educational outcomes of students with disabilities (i.e.: students with IEPs.)

In all three towns, the School Committees have approved budgets that use some portion of the ARRA funds to offset the school district operating costs, in Topsfield, it is 90% of the total grant, in the other two towns, it is about 50% of the grant award. The remaining dollars are used for *Investment* efforts, which include Professional Development, (including Teacher to Teacher projects,) a Homework/Study Skills before and after school program in Boxford, additional staff to supplement prior staffing levels in Middleton and Boxford, and supplies/materials, including instructional software.

Some of the professional development activities aimed at enhancing teacher knowledge of various instructional strategies that more effectively address the varied learning profiles of students include:

- Staff attending a Mathematics course: Diagnosis and Remediation of Learning Problems in Math, Topsfield and Middleton
- Staff attending: Three Keys to Literacy; Strategies that Teach Comprehension and Organizational Strategies across the curriculum, Middleton
- Inclusion Strategies for Special Education Aides, all towns
- Mathematics and Literacy Instruction for Special Education Aides, all towns
- Mathematics Benchmark T2T project, Boxford
- Scoring Writing Bursts to develop local norms and expectations to help with improving writing progress monitoring expectations, Boxford
- Instructional materials to supplement ‘core’ curriculum to enable students with lower reading levels the ability to access the same concepts, all towns
- Technology to improve access to curriculum and facilitate student output, all towns
- Teacher to Teacher Activity projects that explicitly expand the instructional approaches and strategies to engage more students with disabilities in the general education classroom, all towns
- Response to Intervention (RTI) study group, Middleton
- After School Teacher Training programs, largely targeting teachers within their first 3 years of employment, as part of the Induction portion of our Mentor/Induction program

The ARRA grant amounts for this school year in each town are:

| | <u>FY 2010 allocation</u> | <u>FY 2011 allocation</u> |
|------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| BOXFORD: | \$108,881 | |
| MIDDLETON: | \$108,830 | |
| TOPSFIELD: | \$ 75,407 | |

Program Development/ Professional Development grant:

This grant program ended last school year after several years of declining funds.

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL:

The Tri-Town Special Education Parent Advisory Council's (SEPAC) general mission is to:

Support children with a wide range of individual needs to access the general education curriculum and reach their full potential.

Towards meeting this mission, the Tri-town SEPAC Executive Board continues to seek input and help from parents regarding the following:

- Developing program plans for next year's parent education sessions
- Planning and conducting fundraisers
- Working with the special education director to provide information on program planning, evaluation, and communication with the school committees regarding the needs of students with disabilities
- Ideas and assistance in maintaining their website

The SEPAC has been fairly low key this year with only a couple of presentations. Training was offered for parents in understanding the regulations and parent/student basic rights, which took place in the fall. We also offered a presentation on educational software and assistive technology used in our schools; Heidi Canner, special education teacher at Spofford Pond, presented. The parents who attended really enjoyed the interactive presentation. Anyone interested in participating or just learning more about the Special Education Parents Advisory Council is encouraged to contact the Special Education Office.

I'd like to take this opportunity to especially thank Mrs. Deanna Shanahan, our Boxford SEPAC co-president, for her many years of service to the SEPAC Board and the families and children of our three towns. It is likely she will continue her supportive efforts for the children and families of Masconomet in the years to come.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon D. Lyons, M. Ed.
Special Education Administrator